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REVOLUTION IN THE EGYPTIAN CINEMA

Master's Thesis

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**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
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My interest in Egyptian started at a young age. It was the first Cinema I was introduced to. I believe that it marked me in many ways and instilled the love of this art in me. Therefore, when searching for a thesis topic, I decided to show homage to the Egyptian Cinema and study it in relation to an event that marked the Egyptian society lately.

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ABSTRACT

REVOLUTION IN THE EGYPTAIN CINEMA

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This thesis examines Egyptian cinema in relation to the 2011 Revolution. A reciprocal relationship between the film industry in Egypt and the political condition has been demonstrated from the year 2005 until present. The uprising had an impact on films and their political engagement, which proved the ongoing connection between the two. Scholarship on cinema and revolution is represented in this thesis mainly in other national circumstances such as Iran, the Soviet Union and China. These researches highlight the usage of film as a medium of political expression and cultural documentation. During post-revolutionary periods, film movements have used "innovative" cinematic techniques and created new cultures. Films continue to address social concerns, while the Censorship of Artistic Works continues to restrict films that oppose present authorities. The thesis is based on studies of film, culture, and revolutionary changes, with an emphasis on the Arab Spring.

I examine film content using textual analysis of pre- and post-revolutionary films' themes, ideologies, and narratives. Starting from 2005 movies such as independent films and even popular dramas contributed to the increasing political awareness during the last few years of Moubarak's rule. These films represented subjects of repression, poverty, bribery and police violence during that period and awaited an approaching revolution. Following that, fiction and documentary films depicting the revolt historicized incidents and interpreted the commonly encountered struggle. The realist independent film wave that emerged during the pre-revolution period was a cause of both the technical advances and the revolution. The wave continued spreading post-revolution by documenting it through using real life location as sets, casting new actors, and ignoring mainstream commercial formats. Unfortunately even if Egyptian movies kept depicting social and political awareness, yet, they failed at being "revolutionary"

Keywords: Revolution, Politics, Egypt, Film, Cinema.

ÖZET

MISIR SİNEMASI'NDA DEVRİM

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Bu tez, Mısır sinemasını 2011 Devrimi ile bağlantılı olarak incelemektedir. Mısır'daki film endüstrisi ile siyasi durum arasında 2005 yılından günümüze kadar karşılıklı bir ilişki ortaya koymaktadır. Ayaklanmanın, filmler ve politik katılımları üzerinde etkisi olması ve bu ikisi arasında devam eden bağlantıyı kanıtlanmıştır. Sinema ve devrim üzerine yapılan akademik çalışmalar genellikle İran, Sovyetler Birliği ve Çin gibi diğer ulusal koşullar ile temsil etmektedir. Bu araştırmalar aynı zamanda, filmin politik ifade ve kültürel belgeleme aracı olarak kullanımını vurgulamaktadır. Devrim sonrası dönemlerde film hareketleri "yenilikçi" sinema tekniklerini kullanmış ve yeni kültürler yaratmıştır. Sanat Eserleri sansürü, mevcut otoritelere karşı çıkan filmleri kısıtlamaya devam ederken, filmler sosyal kaygıları ele almaya devam etmektedir. Tez, bu bağlamda Arap Baharı üzerinde durularak film, kültür ve devrimci değişimler üzerine yapılan çalışmalara dayanmaktadır.

Film içerikleri devrim öncesi ve sonrası filmlerin temaları, ideolojileri ve anlatılarının metinsel analizini kullanarak incelenmektedir. 2005'ten itibaren bağımsız filmler ve hatta popüler dramalar, Mübarek yönetiminin son birkaç yılında artan siyasi bilinçte katkıda bulundu. Bu filmler o dönemdeki baskı, yoksulluk, rüşvet ve polis şiddeti konularını temsil ederken ve yaklaşan bir devrimi hazırlamışlardır. Ardından isyanı anlatan kurmaca ve belgesel filmler olayları tarihselleştirdi ve yaygın olarak karşılaşılan mücadeleyi yorumlanmıştır. Devrim öncesi dönemde ortaya çıkan gerçekçi bağımsız film dalgası, hem teknik ilerlemelerin hem de devrimin nedeniydi. Dalga, gerçek yaşam konularını set olarak kullanarak, yeni aktörler seçerek ve ana akım ticari formatları görmezden gelerek belgeleyerek devrim sonrası yayılmaya devam etti. Ne yazık ki, Mısır filmleri toplumsal ve politik farkındalığı tasvir etmeye devam etseler de, "devrimci" olmayı başaramadılar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Devrim, Politika, Mısır, Film, Sinema.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The year 2011 was the year where millions around the world witnessed the birth of several revolutions in the middle-east, or what we call now the "Arab Spring". The most prominent of those revolutions was definitely the Egyptian one. Millions of Egyptian citizens marched through the streets of Cairo, and other big cities in the country, like Alexandria, Ismailia, and Almansura. The main gathering of protestors was in Tahrir square – which translates to the "liberation square"-then became one of the revolution's main symbols. The cause of this uprising was the accumulation of factors related to the political system and its effects on society for decades. The summer of 2010 witnessed the police assault of blogger Khaled Said. The incident led to popular anger. The second factor that led to that turning point (the decision to organise a protest) was the frustrating results of the legislative elections.

Several political movements, in addition to groups of young people, called for demonstrations on Egyptian Police Day, which falls on January 25, and if the number of protestors two months ago did not exceed 500, the number of demonstrators that day ranged from fifty to seventy thousand people, only in Cairo and its suburbs. Hence, the beginning of the revolution. After 18 days, the protesters succeeded in overthrowing Housni Mubarak after his three decades of rule on 11 February 2011.

After the fall of Mubarak, the lead member of the Muslim Brotherhood, Mohamed Mursi, was elected as the president of Egypt in June 2012. President Mohamed Mursi faced widespread criticism for his actions during his first year in power, which included a declaration extending his legislative authority and the implementation of a new constitution revised by Islamists in November 2012. He eventually faced protests, including millions of Egyptians returning to Tahrir Square on June 30, 2013, demanding his departure.

A couple of days later, on the 3rd of July, the army interfered and removed Mohamed Mursi from office. Later, in the presidential elections of May 2014, Al Sisi won with more than 95 percent of the votes, after a public demand that he run in the presidential elections. Egypt's recent movies that address social dissent, revolution, and political change are analysed in this thesis by looking into their narratives, social meanings, and how they contributed to the growing political activism during the pre-revolution years. Also, the argument that the films post-revolution have constructed a cultural memory for the Egyptians is represented.

Social media gained a lot of attention during the 2011 revolution. Yet, cinema has played a major role in contributing to and representing it. Egyptian cinema has been widely popular not only in Egypt but across the whole Arab world. Movies including socio-political text have gained more popularity through the use of some scenes as memes on social media to comment on the political scene. Scholars have different opinions on whether, as Gabriel (1982, p. 25) believes, the cinema provokes and leads the audience to action or not. Tabishat (2012, p. 395) believes that films produced prior to the 2011 Egyptian revolution did not cause the uprising. Instead, he describes them as depicting the frustrations of unfairness experienced by some groups. Only feelings of distrust, fear, and anxiety were embodied in those films.

Digital cameras and video sharing platforms offer an alternative space to document and archive events. Yet, films are also extremely important. Film has also been an important means of documenting the revolution, and building cultural memory by integrating some of the footage shot by random protestors into their narratives. Similarly, almost every revolution has been linked to film movements that document and narrate revolutionary struggles. Numerous studies have inspected films that support activist change, including the Third Cinema, anti-colonial, and nationalist movements (Solanas and Getino, 1970; MacBean, 1975; Naficy, 2011). These researchers have examined the role of film in creating new cultures based on new ideologies of revolutions.

One of my early research interests was to know if the 2011 revolution was to change the film style like other previous cases. For example, the use of montage after the Soviet 1917 revolution by Eisenstein. Even though Egyptian filmmakers did not really develop a radical style, they represented the struggle in artistic and realist ways that deserve consideration.

The study bases the question "What is the relationship between Egyptian cinema and the 2011 Revolution?" In order to answer this question, first, an understanding of how film scholars explored the relationship between film and revolution in other national contexts, such as China, the Soviet Union, and Iran, must be taken seriously. The literature exploring these cases has considered film as both an industry and an art form. During times of social change, film narratives and styles have always been shaped by the structure of the film industry and the support and regulation of governments. Which brings us to the following sub-question "How have Egyptian films portrayed political crisis, dissent, and social change in revolutionary times?"

In this thesis, the main covered areas of literature are Cinema Studies and Revolutionary Change. Scholars theorised the relationship between film, politics, and revolution in several ways. As an example, film scholars such as John Street, Douglass Kellner, and Mark Wheeler have articulated the reciprocal relationship between film and politics. Street (1997) looked at the special relationship between film and politics and pop culture from two angles: the political relevance of popular culture and how politicians use it (p.3).

Hollywood was the interest of Kellner (1995) and Rayan and Kellner (1998). The political significance of a movie, – according to them- is determined by its response to political issues. Also, the role of the state in making the Hollywood industry become a global one was looked into by Wheeler (2006).

By applying Marxist ideologies to Godard's films, Macbean (1975) stated that those movies were revolutionary by being able to create new artistic values. All of the studies above, amongst others, have constituted a better understanding of the ongoing relationship between film and politics.

This research is also situated in Egyptian cinema history. For Egyptian film scholarship, to understand the relationship between Egyptian cinema and politics, they have examined the history of Egyptian cinema according to the major political periods: the colonial period, Abdelnasser, Essadat, and Moubarak. Studies by Samak (1977), Schochat (1983), Gaffney (1987), Sharaf Eddin (1992), and Armbrust (2011) explored how social and political changes have molded cinema throughout these eras.

This thesis consists of four chapters except for the introduction and conclusion. The first chapter is titled cinema and revolution, where the relationship between the two is analysed through examples of other international cinemas, such as the Chinese and Iranian cases that previously dealt with revolutions. The chapter reveals the usage of film as a platform for pre-revolution activism and how later it became a tool to document those revolutions, and then it showcases the impact a revolution may have on film texts and styles.

The second chapter is titled "The History of Egyptian Cinema." In this chapter, not only the general history of the Egyptian film industry is provided, but similarly, an elaborated analysis of the four main eras (colonial, Abdelnasser, Essadat, and Moubarak) that shaped the industry is also provided. The chapter explains the hardships the industry faced during all eras, but differently. Starting from the censorship of artistic works to the economic crisis, all the way to the neglect of some leaders. We finally end up with only a few filmmakers willing to resist mainstream and dominant ideologies and styles.

The third chapter argues that the pre-revolution films contributed to the growing political engagement and awaited the revolution, since through some scenes or sequences they revealed the dissent and anger of the citizens held against the government at that time. All genres of movies raise awareness and politicise viewers through different narrative styles. Mostly, they represented issues of unemployment, extreme poverty, corruption, and the immigration dream that unfortunately, a large number of Egyptians could relate to.

Finally, the fourth chapter deals with both fiction and documentary after the 2011 revolution and how they documented the uprising. In order to achieve a realistic and authentic feel that reflects their experiences, filmmakers whose movies were produced during the following couple of years used real footage from the protests, some re-enactments of events caught on digital camera by either witnesses or journalists, and they cast non-professional actors. Plus, through representing stories of regular people, poor districts of Cairo, and oppositional political views that faced neglect in the mainstream media, these movies constructed Egypt's cultural memory.



2. CINEMA AND REVOLUTION

Movies play a vital role in assisting revolutions leading to social change by setting up awareness and consciousness resisting/rejecting mainstream ideology. Besides that, movies, both fiction and documentaries, were significant in documenting revolutions visually. In his work "The Political Unconscious", Frederick Jameson emphasized the role of texts in documenting social conflicts (Jameson 1981). Hence, movies about social unrest were a supplement to earlier historical narratives. Revolutions also affected the style and content of the film industry, since most post-revolution governments encouraged movies that established revolutionary values as a means of propaganda through innovative film language.

This chapter reviews the perception of previous studies towards the relationship between political circumstances and cultural production and examines scholars' understanding of the relationship between movies and politics, such as those by Kellner (1995), Street (1997), and Wheeler (2006), who approached the controversial relationship between politics and films in Hollywood. MacBean (1975) was more specific and confirmed the presence of revolution in film forms and content. Then, this chapter will provide a framework for the relationship between film (as an art form and an industry) and revolution by examining studies of film during the upheavals in Iran, China, and the Soviet Union. This chapter also examines the different aspects of the relationship between film and revolution, including the role of film in sensitizing the public and documenting the conflicts, and the impact of the revolution on the content and style of films.

Scholars examined various types of filmmaking during the revolutionary period. These studies and examples have shaped our perception of the relationship between film and revolution. These aspects can be classified into two main categories: (1) Film as a form of political involvement; (2) Documenting revolutions on film. In the first category, filmmakers use films to convey messages implicitly or explicitly. These films were made not only after the revolution, but before the revolution, and played a significant role in politicizing the audience. The filmmakers created these films, which were the first types

of "revolutionary films" that resisted mainstream ideology. The second category deals with the role of film in the recording revolution. These "revolutionary films" promoted cultural memory of revolutionary events. The movie "The Battle of Algeria" (Jilo Pontekovo, 1966), is one of the best examples of revolutionary films, which tells the story of the fight of Algerians against the French colonial government.

The study examines Egyptian films during the 2011 uprising. It allows us to understand the evolution of the relationship between filmmaking and revolution throughout history, as well as the continuity and discontinuity related to the 2011 Egypt case. Egyptian cinema actively dealt with socio-political issues during the pre-revolutionary period and was an important tool for documenting them during the uprising. Advances in digital technology have made it easier to produce and distribute independent films. The effects of the 2011 revolution on politics and the economy affected the film industry badly. In contrast to other revolutions, the emergence of a counter-revolution in 2011 came with a government that did not have support for the film industry and prohibited the production of "revolutionary cinema". Moreover, the rise of a counter-revolution, which ended up with the 2013 coup, did not help filmmakers to constitute a post-revolutionary film tendency. However, filmmakers portrayed the conflict depending on their own experiences and styles, which were in many cases based on conventional approaches.

An example of a context which is much the same as the situation in Egypt after the revolution is when Gramsci's prison notes were written. Gramsci characterized this post-revolution period as a period of crisis that "generates situations which are critical in the short-term, since all the social classes can not adjust themselves evenly rapidly, or reconstruct at the same pace." (Forgacs 2000, p. 128). Egyptians were confused after the revolution due to political instability. Censorship of Artistic Work was not sure about which side to support (for or against revolution). At the same time, filmmakers were making efforts to produce their films, via digital technologies, in an anti-revolutionary context. However, a new stability was found (as Gramsci explained) when the traditional ruling class preserved power after the 2013 coup. Despite the current government acknowledging the circumstances of 2011 as a revolution, oppositional voices were restricted at the expense of counterrevolutionary ones in the mainstream media. The

restrictions set by the government were applied by the Censorship of Artistic Works and resulted in limiting artistic freedom, which Gramsci pointed out as a stimulus to a new culture and was obvious in cases like Latin America.

After the political trend of Latin America in the 1960s, mainly after the Cuban revolution, interviews, films, speeches, and policy statements suggested the assimilation between cinema and revolution. These texts used terms like 'revolutionary films' and 'political cinema' and hence created different definitions that brought about open-ended discussions around them. For instance, film directors like Getino and Solanas released statements calling for 'revolutionary cinema', a cinema that is socio-politically conscious, that confronts the mainstream style of filmmaking and maintains the revolution's values. In the meantime, researchers that addressed the relationship between cinema and revolution in specific circumstances include Benham (2014) and Naficy (2012) in the Iranian example, Yau (1997) and Pang (2002) in the Chinese example, and Malitsky (2013) and Kenez (2001) in the Soviet Union's case. These researchers have studied changes in texts and the film industries of the countries amid the revolution period. Exploring common filmmaking and political practices within these models will help us understand the properties of the relationship between cinema and revolution. For instance, the interference of the post-revolution government in filmmaking processes and the use of film as a means of propaganda and education are obvious in all examples. However, prior to exploring the relationship in different contexts, it is important to explain how cinema and revolution are related.

One of the significant theories about how cinema and revolution are connected within cultural and political discourses is Stuart Hall's articulation. Articulation is explained by Hall in the following paragraph:

"An articulation is thus the form of the connection that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time. You have to ask, under what circumstances can a connection be forged or made? So the so-called 'unity' of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be rearticulated in different ways because they have no necessary 'belongingness'. The

'unity' which matters is a linkage between that articulated discourse and the social forces with which it can, under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily, be connected" (Grossberg 1986, p.53)

However, cinema and revolution are not just a simple articulation between two different constituents, but an accumulation of social, cultural, political, and technological impacts. In the case of the 2011 Revolution, movies were used to document social change and depict the political opposition. Technological developments provided wider opportunities for demonstrating the uprising by facilitating the making of films and distribution of films. On the other hand, governments were interested in cinema and met filmmakers to discuss the crisis of the film industry, but they did not take further actions to deal with challenging problems like piracy. Films that oppose and criticize military force or police were not permitted screening by the Censorship of Artistic Works. Instead, propaganda films were encouraged and promoted by the state. Such constraints prevented the production of opposing texts which tackled the post-revolution socio-political situation in Egypt and established a new 'revolutionary' culture.

2.1 HOLLYWOOD AND POLITICS

The relationship between cinema and politics is not restricted to revolutionary circumstances. Ryan and Kellner (1988) and Wheeler (2006) have explored the mutual relationship between Hollywood and politics. They put focus on the connection between movies and social movements, their venerating of Reaganite ideologies, and the backing of governments to the film industry.

In *Camera Politica: The Politics and Ideology of Contemporary Hollywood Film* (1988) Ryan and Kellner maintained that famous Hollywood movies made between the 1960s and 1980s are strictly related to political conflicts of that time. Most of the late 1960s movies were a reaction to social movements that were prevalent during the Cold War, like: militarism, feminism, poverty, counterculture, and taking a stand in the dispute over the Vietnam War. Ryan and Kellner claimed that "debate significant social issues, and many, operating from a left-liberal perspective, attempt to use the traditional representational formats and conventions for socially critical ends" (p. 2). They used, for

example, *The Graduate* (Mike Nichols, 1967), in which youth indifference was exposed, and *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, 1969), representing the Hippie counterculture. In addition to the social and progressive movements of the 1960s, the industrial movement also affected the significant and stylistic forms that Hollywood embraced. Filmmakers had more control over their projects due to the regression of the impact of the studio system, thus producing more socially conscious movies.

The argument of Ryan and Kellner illustrates the attachment of movies to political and social issues, which can be demonstrated via classical forms and are not restricted to radical filmmaking patterns. Their argument also fosters the role of the film industry and its political economy in creating film styles and content. The impact of the political administration of the film industry on the content of the movies was also obvious in Egypt. While some films exposed the 2011 Revolution, only a very few related to the post-revolution context were produced because of censorship.

Kellner extended the relationship between politics and the media in *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity, and Politics between the Modern and the Post-modern* (1995). He proposed that media culture should be read politically since they are very political and ideological. Media culture represents relations of power by promoting or opposing prevailing ideologies. Kellner confirmed that media culture texts take either a leftist or rightist stand on representations of race, gender, and sexual liberty. According to Kellner, portraying prevalent social texts establishes the political image by which people see the world and analyse political figures and events. Therefore, these representations transform ruling and opposing attitudes. Besides, political ideology is founded on a series of representations like New Right conservatism, which transform political texts and load emotions, understanding, and consent toward political attitudes. (Kellner 1995).

To support his claim, Kellner (1995) explored some cases of Hollywood movies in association with political disputes in the era of President Ronald Reagan. He presumed that Hollywood films proclaim disseminated rightist and militarist values, which consist of reducing the government's role, promoting individualism, and the infestation of Grenada and the war in Libya. Kellner's interpretation of *Rambo* (1982, 1985, and 1988)

and *Top Gun* (Tony Scott, 1986) confirmed that they "articulate conservative imperialist/militarist fantasies which in turn transcode Reaganite anti-communist and pro-militarist discourses" (1995, p. 74). They also added that the movie *Rambo* implicated the victory of the character over the "evil communists", which is depicted as a "mythic redemption" (Kellner 1995, p.69). Kellner compared this "mythic redemption" to Reagan's use of force to settle political disputes. Hence, Kellner proposed that Hollywood movies, like *Rambo*, *Top Gun*, *Indiana Jones* (1981, 1984, 1989), and *Star Wars* (1977, 1980, 1983), afford propaganda for Reagan's militarism and maintain Reaganist reactionary ideology. Kellner's work viewed the role of movies in maintaining and normalising political ideologies, which depicted one major aspect of the correlation between movies and politics.

This view can be employed in Egyptian cinema, which maintained political ideologies of leaders such as Socialism (President Nasser) in *Bur-Said* (Port Said, 1956), and *Rudda Qalbi* (Return My Heart, 1957) of Izz Edin Zulfuqar. In the post-revolution period, some movies promoted the government's view of representing police officers as heroes, like in *al-Khaliyya* (The Cell, 2017) by Tariq Alarian, and *Gawab itiqal* (An Arrest Letter, 2017) by Muhammed Sami, which represented Islamists as criminals and terrorists to promote the ideology of President Sissi's state. On the other hand, the shooting of some movies was censored, like *ily hasal finil Hilton* (The Nile Hilton Incident, 2017) by Tariq Salih because it represents the corruption of police officers before the revolution. Although the movie was shot in Morocco, viewers were prevented from attending the screening of the movie in Egypt by police officers.

To understand the relationship between cinema and politics, we need to consider the economic dependence of the government on film and the cinema, and the extent to which the industry is supported by the state. The support can be in different forms, like financial assistance and tax cuts. Hollywood is one of the best examples of an industry shifting to a worldwide business with the help of the government. The United States government recognized the importance of Hollywood's productions in increasing the Gross Domestic Product and thus contributing to the growth of the country's economy by exporting American products and culture.

In *Hollywood Politics and Society*, Mark Wheeler (2006) explored the motion picture industry's political economy in terms of production, distribution, and exhibition, and the role of the American government in constructing and improving the industry. Wheeler linked the recovery of the industry in the 1970s (after the invention of television and the decrease in audiences in the 1950s) to the constitutional rearrangement of the industry in addition to the government's tax system revision (Wheeler 2006, p.36). Bringing investment tax credits again raised employment and production and boosted profits. Wheeler (2006, p.37) also highlighted the industry's growth because Reagan supported vertical integration of movie production, distribution, and exhibition. Nevertheless, the support of the government was not just financial but also in terms of regulation. Street (1997) discussed the role of censorship in controlling popular culture. Censorship was viewed by advocates as a "source of dangerous or anti-socialist ideas and practices" (Street 1997, p.32) and as a progressive medium by critics. Censorship in many countries, like Egypt, authorizes the shooting of some films based on ambiguous regulations like protecting "public morals".

In addition to the studies mentioned, which clarify the relationship between cinema and politics, other researchers limited their framework of research to the relationship between cinema and revolutions. The importance of revolutionary film form and content was emphasized by James Roy MacBean in *Film and Revolution*. MacBean focused on Godard's work to illustrate the application of creative narrative structures in exposing revolutionary themes.

2.2 ADAPTED FILM FORM AND CONTENT

As mentioned before, a clear-cut definition of 'revolutionary film' does not exist in literature. The term was used by scholars to refer to movies that oppose the dominant ideologies and promote revolutionary movies which document the events of revolutions. James Roy MacBean used Marxist ideas in his work *Film and Revolution* (1975) to explore the relationship between film and revolution in Godard's work. He considered many examples of movies that depict revolutionary ideologies, such as, *British Sounds*

(Jean Luc Godard, 1969), *La Hora de Los Hornos* (Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, 1968), and *La Prise de Pouvoir par Louis XIV* (Roberto Rossellini, 1966). MacBean claimed that these movies promote revolutionary awareness by evolving materialist and strata analysis of political attitudes. He confirmed that these films surpass the simple provision of sentimental support, not like in *The Battle of Algiers* (Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966), for instance.

MacBean did not take into consideration the classification of films into Second and Third Cinema. However, he explored films that took part in revolutionary conflicts to establish an insight into the connection between film and revolution. MacBeacn confirms that the connection implies focusing on all the relations between film and ideology, which are demonstrated in the connections between sounds and pictures in a movie and in political themes selected and interpreted by the filmmaker when exploring film texts or film criticism conceptions (MacBean 1975).

Therefore, not every film which is associated with revolution is considered a revolutionary film. Form is as important as content in representing a revolution. Discussions about the correlation between films and politics (including MacBean's work) imply ideology at the core of their interpretations. Somehow, they referred to Althusser's (1971, p. 145) ideas, which considered the arts as one of the cultural devices that operate by ideology in preference to violence. MacBean (1975) restated the use of cinema as a means by the ruling class to promote its ideology, to consent or adjust to current events, as well as to restrain calls for reform. He contended that revolutionary work must consider dismantling current ideologies and establishing new ones. MacBean claimed that generating revolutionary work is necessarily an act of destruction and construction. It should dismantle the current values and construct new ones at the same time, which will be revolutionary as it will confront the prevalent confusion and suppression in art (MacBean 1975).

In this case, the film works as a representative of a revolution. It functions as a cultural tool for spreading revolutionary values and opposing dominant ideologies. In terms of establishing new artistic values, MacBean labeled Godard's work as 'revolutionary'. From

MacBean's point of view, Godard made a revolution in art as he incorporated revolutionary themes into the content of his films and also into the form, liberating them from the traditional narrative structure. MacBean confirmed Godard's engagement in revolution via his 1967 movies, like *Weekend* and *La Chinoise*, where he "revolutionizes the way people look at art" (1975, p. 59). MacBean also defined movies like *La Hora de Los Hornos* (1968) as revolutionary cinema. The film established a relationship between cinema and revolution as it implied activist groups that had never been seen before. Hence, the revolution embedded itself in the film and vice versa, bringing about the filmmakers' reconsideration of their conception of film and revolution (MacBean 1975). As reported by MacBean, the film's consistent use of quotes that proclaim freedom (Third Cinema technique) affects the viewers' emotions and encourages them to take the stand of the lead character (MacBean 1975).

Thus, films promoted revolutionary values not only in their texts but also in their form and style. In the wake of the 2011 revolution in Egypt, filmmakers resorted to digital technologies to make their movies freely, ignoring commercial market restraints. However, the films produced were not radical in terms of style and form, since they used styles that existed before the revolution. Although some filmmakers expressed themselves and depicted the revolution in a creative way, their attempts can be considered individually because of their distinct techniques and production modes.

Macbean's study on the connection between form and content in revolutionary movies can be implemented in different national contexts, like Iran, China, and the Soviet Union. The governments in these countries encouraged the film industry after the revolution to establish 'new' cultures and make movies that glorify the revolution. Exploring the connection between cinema and revolution in a national context manifests constancies like the use of movies as a means of documenting historical events and expressing political ideologies.

2.3 REVOLUTION IN WORLD CINEMAS

We will examine in this part examples which represent the relationship between films and revolutions in other national contexts compared to the Egyptian 2011 Revolution. They confirm the important role of movies in withstanding dominant ideologies which persisted in the 2011 Revolution in Egypt. The examples show the rise of film movements after the revolutions, like Third Cinema, in which new film language and techniques were used to depict revolutionary conflicts. However, films after the Egyptian Revolution did not use common techniques. Instead, they used similar forms of realistic cinema like non-dramatic scenario structures.

2.3.1 Cinema as a Form of Propaganda

The example of the Soviet Revolution illustrates the use of revolutionary cinema by governments after a revolution to maintain the values of the revolution. Contrary to the Egyptian example, the Soviet post-revolution government promoted the film industry and supported the making of educational films and the construction of a new society. However, the economic crisis after the revolution resulted in the reduction of the audiences in both cases (the Soviet Union and Egypt).

Lenin encouraged film production after the 1917 Revolution as a major means of propaganda. The Soviet government frequently controlled cinema to protect its ideology from foreign products, yet the government did not nationalise the industry in that period. Besides that, censorship hindered anti-Soviet and pornographic films (Kenez 2001). After nationalising the industry in 1919, documentary films and newsreels were used by the government to educate and unify the masses due to their economic efficiency. However, because of the 1920s economic crisis, the number of audiences decreased after the government imposed higher taxes on film tickets (Kenez 2001).

The complex relationship between cinema and the Soviet Union can be compared to that of Egypt. Both revolutions were followed by political and cultural unrest and chaos (World War I, Civil War in the Soviet Union and the 2013 Coup d'état, Muslim

Brotherhood rise in Egypt). These facts led to economic hardship, which affected film production. In contrast to the Soviet example, the Egyptian post-revolution government did not support and nationalise the film industry. Al-Sisi's regime priority was to confront "terrorism" and develop the economy, ignoring the role of cinema in achieving these objectives. The Soviet example illustrates the effect of revolutions on the film industry (as well as on wars and the economy), which consequently affect the style and model of films. However, the Soviet Union's engagement in international and local conflicts obstructed the development of particular new film styles and texts until 1925. Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Vertov, are among the film directors who marked the "Golden Age" of cinema by acknowledging and experimenting with its political significance. During this time, more than one-third of films assimilated revspectacles (Kenez 2001, p. 54). Some of these "revolutionary spectacles," as labelled by Kenez, emphasized symbols rather than stories and characters. The Soviet Union's encouragement and support for cinema confirmed the function of films in establishing national identity and culture and deconstructing pre-revolution ideologies. Cinema was used by the Soviet Union as an educational instrument and a form of propaganda for socialism.

2.3.2 The Politically Engaged Chinese Cinema

Studies on political films confirmed the importance of the role of films in revolutions. Like in the Chinese example, few films tried to confront mainstream film production and oppose dominant ideologies throughout Egypt's history. However, in China, criticism of political ideologies was limited to a left-wing film production movement, which is not the case in Egypt. Mainstream films in Egypt before the 2011 Revolution, dealt with dictatorship, poverty, and political corruption, using popular styles of comedy and drama. On the other hand, both governments prioritized films after the revolution differently, which led to the development and improvement of the film industry in China and a decrease in revolutionary films in Egypt. The Chinese government, after the revolution, recognized the importance of films in cultivating the public and supported the film industry financially. However, due to the decline of post-revolution government support for the film industry in Egypt, very few independent initiatives have diffused new filmmaking forms and styles. *Sinima fi kul Makan* (Cinema Everywhere) was an example

of those independent initiatives launched by Wagih al-Laqani to screen alternative films in local clubs, cafes, and schools.

'Revolutionary Cinema' emerged in China before the revolution. Pang (2002), examined the Chinese left-wing cinema movement that began in 1932 to withstand the spread of commercial films which were famous for their pornographic and violent scenes. The movement, which was generated after the Japanese incursion of China in 1931, implicated films that triggered issues of social criticism and strata conflicts – like *Chengshi Zhi ye* (City Nights, Fei Mu, 1933). Pang (2002) explored the emotionalist and realist approaches of the movement's films. She stated that the complex relationships between political, cultural, and social contexts affected the films' stylistic practices (Pang 2002, p. 197). The popularity of the movement's films among the public, as Pang (2002) stated, maintains the claim of Solanas and Getino (1970) that revolutionary films add to the revolution and come before the revolution. In addition to that, the movement's resistance to dominant and mainstream films asserts our perception of films as challenging conventional film styles and forms and contributing to socio-political matters.

Like other post-revolution governments, promoting and developing the film industry was a priority for the Chinese government after the revolution. Yau (1997) perceived the remarkable evolution of the Chinese film industry in the first ten years of the revolution. The growth of the film industry was manifested in the augmentation of the numbers of films, film personnel, audience, studios, and film theatres. Films of this period contained newsreels, animation, feature-long dramas, and (like in the Soviet Union) educational shorts tackling matters like healthcare. The Chinese mobile cinema project broadcast these films to the countryside and rural areas. Films about workers, soldiers, and peasants substituted Hong Kong and Hollywood films to promote "a socialist reconstruction of the country" (Yau 1997, p. 694). However, the different backgrounds of filmmakers result in depicting the revolution in various forms and styles. The strategies were diverse, from conventional Hollywood forms to 'revolutionary realism', which Yau characterizes as "classical realism" as filmmakers adopted conventional dramatic styles and coordinated time and space according to realism principles (Yau 1997). However, before the Cultural

Revolution in 1966, many officials who called for reform began to criticize post-revolution films and considered them as "poisonous weeds" (Yau 1997, p. 695).

Although the Cultural Revolution exposed the political importance of film, as confirmed by Gabriel (1982, p. 65), it is important to acknowledge the growth of the Chinese film industry after the revolution. The film industry, which was destroyed because of the Japanese invasion, was reconstructed within a decade after the revolution. The film industry was refreshed by the support of the post-government and its prioritization, which asserted the government's recognition of the importance of film as an educational medium. In contrast, the significance of the film industry in establishing new cultures, and assisting social and economic growth, was ignored by the post-revolution government in Egypt. After the 2011 Revolution, no serious actions were taken by the government to support the film industry. Only a few private and individual production initiatives, like Cimatheque, Zawayya, and Hassala, tried to assist alternative and independent films.

Despite the difference in supporting the film industry between the post-revolution governments of China and Egypt, they have some similarities. In both cases, films that depict social criticism came before the revolution; however, in the Chinese case, films had a definite approach to film forms and styles, whereas in the Egyptian case, different film forms were adapted, such as political satire, popular drama, and independent productions. In addition to that, in both cases, various forms and styles to depict revolutionary conflicts were adapted. Classical Realism styles were used shortly before the revolution to oppose mainstream film forms by Egyptian filmmakers to express their frustration, ambition, and hope.

2.3.3 The Iranian Islamic Cinema

The previous examples confirmed the use of cinema by governments after the revolution to promote their ideologies. The example of the Iranian revolution in 1979 is much similar -cinema was used as a means to criticise religious figures' ideologies – where films which promoted Islamic ideologies were supported by Ayatollah Khomeini. However, different styles were used by a collective of filmmakers to resist Islamic government ideology.

Although the post-revolution governments in Iran and Egypt have distinct ideologies, some filmmakers have shown opposition via film texts in both countries. In Egypt, very few movies confronted the mainstream media's support for the government's social and political ideology. They tackled social persecution through the movies' characters' conflicts. In both countries, these films were marginalized by post-governments because of their resistance to dominant ideologies. In both cases, the role of films in documenting the revolution was evident.

A new wave of Iranian cinema emerged during the 1970s as a reaction to commercial cinema, which was criticised for using the same themes and for its poor quality. The originality of screenplays and the 'realistic' development of characters were the focus of the new-wave filmmakers, such as Reza Allamehzadeh, Hushang Baharlu, Hajir Dariush, Bahman Farmanara, Ali Hatami, Abbas Kiarostami, Masud Kimiai, Dariush Mehrjui, and Kamran Shirdel (Naficy 2011, p.327). Naficy (2011, pp.335-336) claimed that these filmmakers worked with independent and leftist writers and paved the way for a new generation of actors, which boosted the realistic quality of their films. Issues such as fear of the totalitarian regime, modernity, patriarchy, internal enemies, and external powers, were exposed by the pre-revolution new-wave films. Dariush Mehrjui's *The Cow* (1969), was one of these films which engaged rural impoverishment. Naficy (2011) and Mirbakhtyar (2006), examined the film for its initiative to oppose commercial films. Naficy (2011) claimed that the film emphasized rural areas, in opposition to mainstream media which focused on urbanisation. Also, picturing villagers instead of the famous tough-guy type was deemed as a "return to the authentic bedrock of Iranian society and psychology" (p.339). Although it was censored, the film was exported and screened at the Venice Film Festival. Due to the success of the film, it was unbanned by the censorship department and the government started to support new-wave films.

After the 1979 Revolution, the educational role of films was emphasized by Ayatollah Khomeini. The government recognized the function of cinema as a strong propaganda instrument. The state tried to authorize cinema, which was considered as a 'godless sigh' by Mullahs before the revolution and resulted in the destruction of many film theatres. Anti-cinema clerics followed a media effects approach before the revolution and claimed

that cinema raised questions among individuals about its "corrupt" ideologies. On the other hand, Khomeini's state restricted all foreign films which withstand Islamic values. The Islamization of cinema resulted in filtering pre-revolution undesirable values and substituting them with Islamic values. Filtering consisted of changing the names of cinemas to revolutionary or Islamic names, and editing pre-revolution films and posters to go along with Islamic values. Films are approved or rejected by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance according to their compliance with Islamic values. Many filmmakers were either exiled, executed, or prosecuted by the Islamic state because of their relationship with the pre-revolution government. Khomeini's strategy to eliminate pre-revolution ideologies by establishing a new Islamic culture validates the deconstruction and construction process like in previous cases. Also, Iran's example confirms the use of films by the post-revolution governments as a propaganda tool and their intervention in the film industry to make filmmaking conform to the revolution's values.

A group of independent filmmakers led by Abbas Kiarostami opposed the regime. The new-wave movement, which tackled socio-political matters such as social injustice and rebellion against persecution through different film forms and styles during the pre-revolution period, persisted after the revolution (Behnam 2014). Benham (2014), claimed that films like *Tangna* (*Impasse*, Amir Naderi, 1973) foresaw the 1979 revolution by manifesting revenge. These films, together with *The Cow* (1969), were considered convenient during the revolution and thus were screened in cinemas.

Post-revolution independent films such as art-house and experimental films questioned Islamic regulations like banning suicide and the existence of life after death and denounced Iran's social structure and the post-Iraq war situation. The combination of documentary and fiction forms managed to escape censorship from time to time. These films were labelled 'underground' by the government to restrain their oppositional ideologies threat. The term incorporates the insurgent role of this alternative film culture and its artistic response to the restrictions and censorship in Iran (Benham 2014).

The independent film movement after the revolution approved the concept of "liberating cinema". Like in other examples, independent films emerged to resist censorship and political ideologies by representing social injustice and oppression, like in Iran, or by establishing a new national identity, like in Third Cinema. In Egypt, very few independent films are made to criticise political and social issues. In the same way, as in Iran, some filmmakers and the mainstream media ignored the making of alternative films.

In *A Social History of Iranian Cinema*, Naficy (2012) explored films documenting the revolution. He characterized some professional filmmakers, like Karman Shirdel (16mm), and amateur recordings of events and moments during the revolution, such as the Shah's departure and Khomeini's appearance. These recordings were arranged into a "compilation of films" (Naficy 2012). Filmmaker Shahdust rectified some of these recordings in *The Pulse of History* (*Tapeshe Tarikh*, 1980), which is a feature-length film. The example of the documenting revolution in Iran is very similar to that in Egypt. Amateurs and filmmakers used digital and mobile cameras to record the uprising in Egypt. In both cases, recordings were edited into short and feature-length films and screened in public places in both cases. However, the internet helped to archive the recordings and made them accessible to filmmakers and viewers.

Like other examples, the post-revolution government in Iran used cinema to spread and promote its ideology. The social and political unrest after the 2011 Revolution in Egypt (from 2011 to 2013), limited the production of revolutionary cinema. Very few filmmakers express their emotions and frustration through independent films. The governments after the revolution, in both cases, ignored these films and classified them as "underground" and "independent". Also, the resemblance covers the use of revolutionary moments and events in documentary and fiction films in both examples. In the example of the Egyptian Revolution, digital technology enabled the making of a few original films.

To conclude, researchers explored the connection between revolution and cinema via two main aspects. The first aspect considered films as a form of political involvement. Films were used by filmmakers to express their opposition and expose themes like colonialism

and oppression to confront mainstream ideologies. In the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, for instance, films were made, and took part in the revolution. The development of revolutions was reinforced through the use of technological means, such as in the case of Iran. The recordings of the events of the Egyptian revolution by amateurs' mobiles and cameras were used in some films and documentaries and enabled some filmmakers to express their emotions about the resistance.

After the revolutions, a new-wave film movement emerged and used new techniques and film forms, which led to "revolutionizing" conventional styles and forms. These films sought mindful cinema and tackled socio-political issues, and resisted mainstream ideologies (or glorifying revolutions, such as in Iran). Furthermore, these films raised debates about filmmaking and forms among film fans and enthusiasts.

These aspects can be applied to the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. The film was a form of documenting events and exposing the people's opposition to the regime before the revolution. At the same, creative techniques and new film forms were used by young filmmakers with the help of digital technologies to depict the resistance and uprising.

3. HISTORY OF EGYPTIAN CINEMA

The Egyptian film industry was founded in the 1920s, and it is considered the biggest and oldest in the Arab region. It helped the spread of Egyptian dialects in the Arab World and affected the cultural preferences of the region. Film critics classified Egyptian cinema according to the different regime periods: Mubarak, Sadat, and Nasser. The classification shows the relationship between Egyptian cinema and political and social changes. Film production was affected by the different political ideologies of each regime. Institutions such as the Censorship of Artistic Works, were used by different governments to control film production according to their ideologies. Exploring the history of the film industry and production in Egypt in connection with political circumstances and events brings forth insights into modern political practices.

As in the studies of other cases mentioned in the previous chapter, Egyptian film researchers also explored the relationship between film and politics. They have examined the impact of each regime on the form and style of the film industry. The chapter sections are structured according to the main political periods of Egypt, which are as follows: the Colonial period (from 1920 to 1950), Nasser's period (from 1953 to 1970), Sadat's period (from 1970 to 1981), and Mubarak's period (From 1981 to 2011).

Each of these periods is explored according to the evolution of film writing and culture in the film industry. This chapter exposes the connection between film and politics by exploring the impact of social and political shifts on cinema. In the next chapters, I will count on this structure to figure out to what extent the 2011 Revolution affected cinema, and how films contributed to it.

The history of Egyptian cinema shows that film is still avoiding current regime criticism. Films were allowed by the Censorship of Artistic Works to criticise previous regimes only. Censorship appeared for the first time in Egypt in 1914 when the colonial government published some rules to restrict oppositional attitudes. Censorship was dominated by the Ministry of Interior until the establishment of the Ministry of Social

Affairs in 1938. In order to control censorship of music, theatres, and cinema, after the 1952 coup, code 430/1955 was released. The code identifies the function of the censorship administration to watch over public security, morals, order, and the higher concerns of the regime (Mumtaz 1985). The code is still used by the Censorship of Artistic Work, which is affiliated with the Ministry of Culture. These laws were mainly issued to accept films that defend the current regime and limit films which oppose the dominant ideology. Initiatives of a new film wave that opposes mainstream film styles continue to emerge in Egyptian cinema. Some filmmakers tried to consider 'Egyptian Realities' during the 1960s and 1980s. After the 2011 Revolution, the tendency for new film forms persisted thanks to advances in technology which enabled the development of 'independent films' and assisted the making of different film forms.

Considering the studies mentioned, this chapter examines the main changes that occurred in the Egyptian film industry during the periods mentioned, and the transformations in film content and society. These aspects will be examined to figure out the consistencies and interruptions in the relationship between politics and cinema in Egypt. The conflict between filmmakers and the government's censorship is one of the continuities. The Censorship of Artistic Works persisted in restricting films that oppose the current government, whereas filmmakers persisted in criticising the government through figurative depictions. On the other hand, contrarily to the 1960s nationalisation of the film industry, it was ignored by the current government.

Surveys about African and Arab cinema focused on Egyptian cinema (Armbrust 2011, Shafik 2007, Shohat and Stam 1994, Malkmus and Arnes 1991). However, very few surveys explored Egyptian cinema in relation to the 2011 Revolution. Dickinson (2012), Armbrust (2012), Tartoussieh (2012) and Tabishat (2012), have studied Egyptian films in connection with the Revolution, whilst the focus was on television and digital media by most of them. The studies were conducted shortly after the revolution. Therefore, the focus was on the representation of the opposition in films made before the 2011 Revolution and their connection with the revolution. Labour policies in the film industries of Egypt and Syria after the 2011 uprisings were examined by Gordon (2013). Recently, Gugler (2015) and Arnes (2015) focused on the works of a few filmmakers who used

new forms and styles to depict political opposition in the Arab world. These filmmaking new forms and styles were examined individually and not as a collective. The film industry crisis is not mentioned in the literature of Egyptian cinema, and the films are linked to political and historical events because of their correlative relationships.

3.1 INAUGURATION OF THE FILM INDUSTRY

This part explores the inauguration of cinema in Egypt during the colonial period (1920-1952). In this period, cinema in Egypt has undergone many changes parallel to the political contexts like the 1919 Revolution and WW2. This period marked the establishment of the film industry in Egypt, mainly by foreigners, and after 1919, a local industry was founded. Most of the films in this period were romantic musicals featuring famous singers, like Mohammed Abdelwahab's *alwarda elbaydae* (The White Rose, Mohammed Karim, 1932), and Oum Kaltoum's *Widad* (Fritz Kramp, 1936).

Filmmaking in Egypt was initiated by foreigners in 1917. However, up till the 1919 Revolution, the intention of establishing a national industry and production emerged. Thus, different studios and production businesses were established and produced a national cinema. A group of leading studios, like Studio El Ahram and Studio Massr, were founded during the 1930s (Schochatsney 1987). Flibbert (1995) viewed the achievements of the film industry in this period, like building audiences, establishing cultural venues, and the industry's groundwork, as a significant heritage which formed Egyptian cinema.

Egyptian films during the colonial period were not only exported to the Arab world, but also to other areas of the world, like Indonesia, Madagascar, Denmark, Venezuela, and Hong Kong (Flibbert 2005). Filmmaking was the second major industry in Egypt (Flibbert 2005, p. 451). A truth that filmmakers now use to mourn the current decline of the industry after the 2011 Revolution.

Researchers have linked the shortage of political and social awareness on screens to various causes. Baker (1974) clarified that the dominant class in Egypt before the

revolution had few opponents to its egoism, rapacity, and depravity. Such a class was obviously interested in blocking out any significant engagement with Egypt's reality; cinema was an instrument for transforming society with all the flaws taken off. For instance, *Lasheen* (Fritz Kramp, 1938), was restricted for representing a brutal dictator from the middle age (Schochat 1984, p. 24). The Censorship administration deleted all the scenes that represented insurgence against the rulers in imported films (Mumtaz 1985). Shafik (2007, p.132) mentioned the Ministry of Social Affairs censorship legislation in 1949 which excluded realism by rejecting the following:

- a. The depiction of dirty streets, hand carts and donkey carts, roving sellers, poor houses and furniture, and women wearing veils.
- b. Trembling social rest by strikes, protests, and uprisings.
- c. The consent of crimes or the spread of rebellious attitudes as a means of asking for rights.
- d. Anything that contradicts traditional and eastern habits.

Despite the changes made to the censorship laws in the succeeding constitutions, censorship is administered similarly nowadays. Mumtaz (1985), who was a member of the censorship department from 1945 to 1977, stated that censorship implements unwritten laws that are suitable for the political and social contexts of that period. Researchers mentioned *Al Azima* (*The Will*, Kamal Selim, 1939) as a remarkable movie that constituted realism school by the representation of an Egyptian businessman – which was not common at that time – who denied a job position with the government. Schochat (1983) claimed that the middle class's dissatisfaction with foreign intrusion is implicitly expressed in the film as well as their determination to constitute their independence by undertaking trade and industry. In a similar way, a small number in each period tried to withstand socio-political dominant ideologies by adopting figurative representations to avoid censorship.

3.2 THE GOLDEN YEARS OF EGYPTIAN FILM

The 1952 overthrow of the government was considered a twist in Egypt's history. In fact, the period of Jamal Abdennasser (1956-1970) accompanied major transformations in cinema in Egypt. Many advantages came alongside the nationalisation of the film industry, like the creation of the High Institute of Cinema in 1959, and the promotion of movies which commemorated the revolution and established a national identity. Criticism of the previous regime was allowed by the censorship administration during Abdennasser's period and restricted content which criticised the current regime. Although the censorship rules have persisted up to now, the exploration of Abdennasser's period is important to this research. The government's support for the film industry and the promotion of films about the revolution after the 1952 coup were not similar to the post-revolution filmmaking contexts of 2011.

As researchers have claimed, the 1952 coup had an explicit impact on film content, like criticising the colonial government and representing the revolution. In addition to socio-political themes, new film topics were developed in films like *Siraa Filwadi* (Fight in the Valley, Youssef Shahin, 1955), and *Rodda Qalbi* (Return of My Heart, Azzeddine Du Elfaqr, 1957). Gaffney (1987) characterized these movies as nationalistic films that celebrated new political figures and the military, and criticised the pre-revolutionary social and political contexts in favour of the current changes made by the new regime.

The creation of new film themes in the case of the 2011 Revolution was not similar to that of Abdennasser's period. Censorship rules and the counterrevolution, as well as the film industry crisis, restricted films that are associated with revolution. Nevertheless, a few fiction movies and a number of documentary films represented the 2011 Revolution soon after the revolt, since the censorship institution was still confused and hesitant about the political situation. Gordon (2001), in characterising the film perspective in 1952, mentioned a similar event that happened during the 2011 Revolution, when a comedy by Ismail Yassin was in the making process when the coup happened, was rescripted to refer to the great event (Gordon 2001 p. 389). In addition to that, movies such as *Sarkhat Namla* (An Ant Scream, Samih Abdelaziz, 2011) and *Elfagumi* (Issam Elshammaa, 2011) were

rescripted during production to cover the 2011 revolution in their texts. Sarkhat Namla was screened at the Cannes Festival of Film as the first Egyptian film to engage in the 2011 revolution.

Studies on Egyptian cinema pointed out the use of realism in the making of films in the 1960s. According to Schochat (1983), nationalist ideology as represented in Egyptian cinema intended to issue an examination of reality for the people that claimed to change them from traditional to active subjects. She also asserted the function of cinema in this period in constructing national identity by promoting cultural values which took place after independence (p. 31). These films included *Alnassir Salaheddine* (The Victorious Saladin, Youssef Shahin, 1963), *Alharam* (Shame, Henri Barakat, 1965), and *Siraa Alabtal* (Fight of the Heroes, Taoufik Salah, 1962). However, as noted by Gordon (2001), political issues were not limited to revolutionary films, but also to comedy, romantic, melodrama, and musical films. These films initiated the involvement of social and political issues in various film forms and styles, which prevailed in the following periods.

In spite of considering the 1960s as the 'golden age' of Egyptian cinema by many critics, like Farid (2001, p.108), Abdennasser's regime was not criticised in the films. Schochat (1983) confirmed that historical and political movies were restricted from criticising the government. Instead, those that criticised the colonial period were allowed by the censorship department. Gafddine (1992) characterized cinema during Abdennasser's period as "cinema of fear" since the films produced in this period ignored social and political realities, and were thus limited to specific themes.

Contrary to the individual initiatives after the 2011 Revolution, filmmakers during Abdennasser's period responded cooperatively to the main political issues. After Egypt's fiasco in 'The 6 Days War' against Israel, the 'New Cinema Group' movement was established by fifty Egyptian filmmakers. The group published a statement in which they examined the industry's challenges and proposed procedures to address them (Malkmus, 1988, p. 33). As noted by Samak (1977), the movement was inspired by groups in other countries, such as Britain's New Cinema, France's Nouvelle Vague, Italy's Neo-Cinema, and the evolving Latin American cinema. The statement illustrates that big budgets were

not important for producing valuable films, as many filmmakers exploited the country's resources. Today, filmmakers have the same view. They produce low budget and independent feature/short films which receive international recognition.

3.3 THE DENATIONALISATION OF THE INDUSTRY

After Abdennasser's era, Anouar Essadat ruled Egypt from 1970 to 1981. The literature demonstrates a significant change in cinema during Essadat's era. Among these changes was the decline of the cinema industry due to the denationalisation process, and the propagation of commercial films with poor productions to match the viewer's interest, due to social class reconstruction. The reconstruction led to the emergence of some labour classes, who expanded their fortunes throughout Abdennasser's socialist period. The decline of the middle class and the lower class in the following periods affected the film's content and viewers' preferences. For instance, movies have depicted shanty towns and poverty since 2007, and after the 2011 Revolution, viewers opted for movies that depict violence, which inspired filmmakers to create films characterized as "thug films". Besides that, during Essadat's period, movies depicted Abdennasser's regime corruption and only a few movies criticised Essadat's Economic Openness policy. The habit of criticising the overthrown governments and the confrontation between films that resist political ideology and the ones that promote it, are some of the continuities during the 2011 Revolution.

Film criticism of Abdennasser's regime during Essadat's era revealed the persistence of film to confront previous regimes. Although, it was confirmed by Gaffney (1987, p. 62) that movies which criticised Abdennasser's regime emerged in the middle of the 1960s, most of these movies came after the October War victory against Israel in 1973. The most significant one was *Al Rissala la Tazal fi Jaybi* (The Bullet is Still in My Pocket, Houssam Eddine Mostapha, 1974). This movie demonstrated that the restraint of freedom of speech and corruption were the main reasons behind the 1967 defeat. However, the 1973 War was represented during the 1970s by very few movies from a commercial perspective (Sharaf Eddine 1992, p. 151). Sharaf Eddine (1992) claimed that major events and issues

such as Essadat's agreement with Israel, and the emergence of political parties were ignored by the film industry.

Sharaf Eddine (1992) and other scholars went on examining movies that involved political issues and viewed them as remarkable productions that resisted mainstream cinema. In contrast to Abdennasser's cinema of fear and Essadat's Economic Openness, Sharaf Eddine (1992) maintained that some movies criticised Economic Openness directly. These movies increased during Moubarak's period and represented the negative impacts of economic openness, like the spread of bribery and corruption.

3.4 THE EXPANTION OF COMMERCIAL CINEMA

Mohammed Houssni Moubarak, came to power after Essadat's assassination in 1981. Moubarak remained president until 2011, when he was forced to step down by the uprising. This section explores the changes in Egyptian cinema during Moubarak's period from 1981 to 2011 (more than three decades). The rise of technological media and satellites during the 1980s and 1990s led to a decrease in film production. The 1990s noted the creation of independent films as well as films that represented political opposition.

Cinema during the 1980s marked various authentic efforts to depict Egyptian interests. Ghareeb (1997, p. 126), characterized it as a period when realistic themes evolved by directors such as Khayri Bichara, Atef Altayeb, and Mohammed Khan. These directors went on to represent the negative effects of Essadat's Economic Openness on society. Malkmus (1988, pp. 31-32), examined some 1980s movies and their themes of identity loss, opportunity, and alienation. Among these films, *Zawjat Rajol Mohim* (Wife of an Important Man, Mohammed Khan, 1987), which won the second prize at the Damascus Film Festival in the same year. In this movie, the views and ideas of Abdennasser's period (1960s) and Essadat's period (1970s) were deeply compared through the married couple's perspectives. Another significant theme which was represented by many directors was the return to the country, which addressed Egyptian immigrants. Among these, *Awdat Mowatin* (The Return of a Citizen, Mohammed Khan, 1986). These themes were

represented by filmmakers through realistic styles, in contrast to the conventional styles of popular films.

As illustrated previously, films did not criticise a leader's ideologies until their demise. In contrast, films criticized Mubarak's regime and depicted its corruption towards the end of his period. These movies avoided censorship through imaginative stories and the casting of famous actors. Some of the issues approached by the 1990s films included, poverty, bribery, and cronyism. Although representing socio-political issues was restricted by censorship, corruption was referred to implicitly by some filmmakers. For instance, *Alnawm Fi La'ssal* (Sleeping in Honey, Sharif Arafa, 1996), which included a protest in front of the parliament. Critics acknowledged these attempts over a decade before the 2011 Revolution. Movies like *Allaib Maa Lkibar* (Playing with the Big Ones, 1991), *Alirhab wa Lkabab* (Terrorism and Kebab, 1992), and *Alnawem Fi Laassal* (Sleeping in Honey, 1996) tackled Egyptian daily problems like social injustice, bureaucracy, and poverty. The films' main characters usually confront the government through demonstrations, or holding captives, and the movies often end with a message of hope. Ghareeb (1997, p. 126) described this decade as 'courageous filmmakers who confronted conservative taboos' like sexual issues, religion, and politics. For instance, the movie *Afareet el Alsfalt* (Devils of the Asphalt, Oussama Faouzi, 1996) was criticized by the viewers for representing homosexuality and sexual relations.

More studies have explored the 1990s movies which depicted social and political issues like depravity and unemployment. Film critics, such as Tabishat (2012), have discussed films' contribution to the revolution. Tabishat investigated the movie *Alirhab wa Lkabab* (Terrorism and Kebab, Sherif Arafa, 1992), which tells the story of a citizen suffering from social injustice and bureaucracy who unexpectedly occupied a government administration in Tahrir Square, and all the hostages and supporters asked the government for the expensive meal 'Kebab'. The movie was loaded with strong and constant anger resulting from various social problems, like injustice (Tabishat 2012, p. 384).

The rise of Islamism as a political movement in the 1990s led to an intense representation of the movement in films. Films were allowed to criticise the movement and not to

promote it by the Censorship of Artistic Works (Armbrust 2011, p. 238). The movement was depicted by different movies as a group of terrorists, and corrupted political parties misleading the public in the name of Islam. Among these movies are *Al Irhabi* (The Terrorist, Nadir Jalal, 1994), *Kachf Almastour* (Uncovering the Hidden, Atef Alttayeb, 1994), *Al Akhar* (The Other, Youssef Shahin, 1999), and *Toyour Eddalam* (Birds of Darkness, Sherif Arafa, 1995), in which both an Islamist and a corrupt official are imprisoned, and both know that they will come back to political life. The scene was shared among social media users and appreciated the expectation of the future by the film's writer, Ouahid Hamid.

In the late 1990s, a new wave of action, comedy, and drama movies arose, along with a new generation of actors and filmmakers. These movies were generally dramas about middle-class couples addressing the public in 'modern shopping mall theatres'. The starring of new young actors led to the spread of these movies among young viewers. A new generation of filmmakers, such as Sherif Mandour and Sameh Abdelaziz, and actors like Mohammed Hinidi and Ahmad Assaqa, substituted popular actors of the 1990s and dominated the film industry, until the 2011 Revolution, when low-budget violent movies replaced these forms because of the crisis.

Considering all of these, the present Egyptian film industry dates back to Abdennasser's era and the colonial period, where it was established and promoted by both regimes. Most of the industry's achievements at that time, like the establishment of institutions and improving filmmaking experience, are still the major virtues of the current film industry. However, during Essadat's era, the film industry was given little concern by the government due to the denationalisation process. Obviously, because of the crisis period and the absence of the state's assistance.

Prior to the 2011 Revolution, censorship restricted movies which oppose the governments' ideologies, at the expense of popular forms (comedies, dramas...) which did not confront the regimes' ideologies. Nevertheless, some movies expressed political messages via social themes, which were considered as a haven for the middle and lower classes who suffered from redundant suppression and injustice.

A new generation of filmmakers is trying to evolve Egyptian society by addressing social issues like sexual abuse and social unity. Among these filmmakers were Mohammed Diab, Amr Salama, and Ahmed Abdellah (who were considered as representatives of the 2011 Revolution). They went on referring to political themes through different genres, like comedy, romantic, and social movies. Movies, such as *Lamouakhda* (Excuse My French, Amr Salama, 2014), a black-comedy genre, debate social assimilation due to social and political splits. These movies were supported financially by different organisations, such as international film festivals, non-governmental and non-profit organisations, or minor production companies.

After the 2011 Revolution, initiatives to support independent movies through providing funds and screening centres, such as Hasala (2011) and Zaouiya (2014), emerged from some production companies and individuals. The film industry and film texts are still affected by social, political, and economic changes. The involvement of films in socio-political issues before, during and after the 2011 Revolution confirms the persistence of the mutual relationship between cinema and politics.

The history of Egyptian cinema also confirms the persistence of the government's control over the film industry and film content via censorship. Popular movies screened in cinemas still disseminate the government's ideology and avoid criticising the rulers and the military. Censorship of Artistic Works allows movies to criticize the previous regime (Moubarak), and the Muslim Brotherhood. Filmmakers still confront the government by depicting struggles and avoiding censorship. They defied mainstream filmmaking forms, as well as other common genres like comedy, romantic, and action films, which are still prevalent in the Egyptian cinema. However, there are some distinct attributes that determine the 2011 Revolution period, such as resorting to television series and the film industry's crisis. This caused producers to fund low-budget movies, which could compensate for their expenses when screening in theatres. However, high-budget movies came back progressively when the president, Al-Sissi, took over power and retrieved security as he claimed.

4. ADDRESSING THE SOCIAL CRISIS : PRE-REVOLUTION

Political movements increased during the years 2005-2006. A movement known as Kifaya (Enough) called for democratic reform in Egypt before the re-election of Mubarak in 2005. The re-election of the president for the fifth time successively triggered social resentment.

This chapter explores the role of movies produced prior to the 2011 Revolution. It affirms the contribution of some of these movies to the increasing political activism in that period. These social problems movies were exposed along with the trend of other genres like comedy, action, and romantic-comedy, which emerged during the late 1990s. Social issues such as police brutality, political corruption, and poverty are rarely addressed in some high-budget popular dramas and movies.

The Censorship of Artistic Works persisted in restricting movies that explicitly criticize the President. The President was portrayed in some movies as a generous and kind person encircled by corrupted officials. For instance, in *Tabakh Arrais* (The President's Chef, Saaid Hamid, 2008), a street food cook (Mitoualli) was hired by the President as his personal cook to inform him about the country's problems. Movies had to be imaginative in addressing political issues and picturing the president. Famous movies, such as *Hiya Fawda* (Chaos, Youssef Shahin, Khalid Youssef, 2007), were approved by the censorship only because they were associated with well-known and distinguished filmmakers (Adel Imam and Youssef Shahin). Restricting these movies would have attracted international media to question freedom of speech in the country. Mubarak's government allowed these movies to circumvent debates and assume democracy.

This chapter also examines the various styles and forms used by filmmakers before the 2011 Revolution to express the public's dissatisfaction. High-budget movies and independent productions used the drama and comedy genres to reflect on corruption, police brutality, dictatorship, and poverty before the Revolution. However, it is necessary to note that the movies mentioned in this section did not stimulate the upheaval; however,

they uncover quite clearly what was going on under the surface of Egyptian society (Tabishat 2012, p. 365-6).

The movies examined in this chapter are classified into two main categories: high-budget dramas and independent movies. Movies before The Revolution covered the public's social, economic, and political circumstances that generated the uprising and anticipated possible aftermaths (like the regime's downfall). The various genres of these movies initiated a political influence, exposing scenes of demonstrations and insurgents in response to political corruption, poverty, and police brutality.

4.1 SOCIALLY AWARE POPULAR FILMS

Contrary to the wide literature exploring the connection between the revolution and social media, only a few studies have interpreted the role of cinema in the upheaval. Tartoussieh (2012) examined the role of other forms of media in 'articulating dissatisfaction', seeing that "digital activism alone can not do justice to years of on-the-ground anti-neoliberal and pro-labor rights activism" (p. 156). He targeted the high-budget movie *Imarat Alyaaqubiyān* (*The Yacobian Building*, Marouane Hamid, 2006), which is an adaptation of the novel by Alae El Asouani (writer and political activist). The cast of the movie consists of well-known actors from the 1980s and the 1990s, like Nour Alcherif, Adel Imam, and Youssra, alongside young actors like Khaled Saleh, Khalid ELsaoui, and Hind Sabri.

Tabishat (2012) argues that films before the 2011 Revolution created a 'fictional society' with aspects of unity and fracture. He clarifies that the notions of family, nation and social class collaboration were used in these works to refer to unity, whereas disunity was represented as a result of injustice and towards the lower class and women (Tabishat 2012, p. 377). *Imarat Alyaaqubiyān* depicts various social groups and sorts of power and ideologies within the same community. It exposes the current Egyptian social structure in reference to political changes and increasing corruption. A historical approach was used by the movie to depict the social, cultural, and political changes that have occurred in Egypt during the past few decades. *Imarat Alyaaqubiyān* uses aligned storylines to

focus on social issues such as poverty, bribery, police brutality, and radicalism. The use of distinctive settings, mainly high-class flats and rooftops, visibly shows Tabishat's (2012) theory of unity and fracture. Although the elite and rooftop tenants are 'united' in the same building, the settings and use of pillars reveal the bilateral objections of both social classes. The movie is set in the city of central Cairo, which depicts the social and cultural transformations in Egypt. The 19th-century French-style buildings, which used to be elite houses, are now occupied by business offices and stores.

The movie uncovers political issues in Egypt during the Mubarak period, mainly political corruption and bribery. It validates the dominance of the president's party (National Democratic Party) and the decrease of the Muslim Brotherhood (Opposition) in the parliament as a result of an undemocratic election. When 'Hagg Muhammad Azzam' decided to run for the parliament elections, he went to see 'Kamal Alfouli', a long-serving parliament member (depicting the government's corruption in the movie), who required one million pounds in return. When 'Hagg Azzam' bargained the price, Alfouli replied that the money was not for him since he had enough, but it would be shared among different authorities. He also told 'Azzam' that he had a strong rival in his neighborhood also running for the elections, 'Abou Rehab', a member of the Muslim Brotherhood well-known for his generosity and financial help to the people. Then 'Azzam' uncovers his worries about losing against 'Abou Rehab', and 'Alfouli' tells him that this is a democracy, everyone can run for elections, but who wins is their job, not through roguery, but through controlling people's minds. In the 2010 parliament elections in Egypt, the National Democratic Party increased its representation due to manipulated voting, which was one of the major causes that led to the 2011 Revolution (Mumtaz 2011). This evokes the movies' representation of political corruption and one-party dominance. The scenes of 'Hagg Azzam' and 'Alfouli' approved political corruption during Mubarak's period and reported the dominance of one party during the Egyptian historical timeline (1937-1990s).

To narrate the stories, the famous movie *Imarat Al Yaqoubian* used the drama genre. Emotional background music was used to sympathise with the actors and portray them as victims. Furthermore, the movie conforms to common conventions of popular drama in forming hero-villain conflicts and classic narrative structure. Towards the end of the

movie, 'Taha' assassinated the officer who tortured him as an act of revenge, marking a predictable reaction of the oppressed to injustice. Optimistically, the movie ends with 'Zaki' (Elite character) marrying the rooftop tenant, 'Bouthayna', depicting hope and conformity between the distinct social classes. Nevertheless, the movie confirms the concept of an undebatable regime's power and the unfortunate impacts of taking part in politics. The movie also related the economic degradation and social and cultural deterioration to past events (1952 Coup) and did not criticize Moubarak's regime plainly.

Despite censorship rigidity with religious, political, and sexual taboos, some movies have been able to treat the problems of political depravity, homosexuality, social inequity, and Islamism. Censorship tolerance towards such movies confuses our understanding of how censors deal with productions. The flexibility of censorship rules, like preserving "public order" and "public ethics", gave them room to approve or deny movies and scripts relying on unclear norms. Although Moubarak's government allowed movies like *Imarat AlYaaqoubian* and *Hiya Fawda* to show the existence of freedom of speech, they belittled the power of the movie public and fostered public convictions of the regime's depravity and use of violence. Moubarak's government was certain of its dominance over the country. *Imarat Yaaqoubian* did not only expose social inequity and political depravity, but also addressed homosexuality through one of the characters. Although censorship restrains sexual scenes, they approved the screening of *Imarat Yaaqoubian* with a label of 'Adults Only' to narrow the audience.

4.2 ALTERNATIVE STYLES IN INDEPENDENT MOVIES

Independent movies did not include revolutionary scenes, but they also depicted socio-political injustices throughout the pre-revolution period. They dealt with the revolution not just in their scripts but also in their film form and content. In a similar way to the movement of Third Cinema, filmmakers intended to challenge mainstream productions by making allowance for other ways of production, distribution, and presentation. Technological developments freed filmmakers from the producers' choices in the process of making the movie. Thanks to cheap digital cameras, filmmakers financed their movies with their own money, film institution endowments, and voluntary staff. The movies were

screened for a couple of weeks because they were not commercially successful. Filmmakers of these types of movies target screening their movies at local cultural centers and international film festivals. They did not adhere to the commercial market film styles by using simple narratives and new actors. Their representations of social and political issues were "realistic" because of the use of digital cameras, lively images, and scenes in real places, often with natural lighting, with the objective of attracting the viewers' feelings and exerting influence on their political views.

Towards the end of 2010, the film 'Mikrofon' (Microphone) directed by Ahmad Abdallah addressed underground arts in the streets of Alexandria, like music groups, filmmakers, and graffiti artists. A Canon camera was used to shoot the film, which was the first of its kind to be screened in theatres. This type of movie consolidates images of demonstrations and interviews, making it difficult to distinguish fiction from reality. Furthermore, they used long shots with a handheld camera to get the viewers involved with the struggles of the characters. These techniques have become basic elements of 'independent films'. Actually, the use of digital cameras in the making of these films is considered revolutionary.

Shohat and Stam (1994) discussed the question of "realism" and clarified that the oppressed used realism as a way to create a deceptive "reality effect" (p.180) to compete with the dominant productions of mainstream films. On the other hand, they claim that "reality" is not self-evidently given and 'truth' is not immediately 'seizable' by the camera" (p.180). It is essential to take into account Shohat and Sam's questions about attitudes and ideologies that constitute these movies. It is important to view these movies as representatives of voices (1994, p.180) instead of considering them to contrast with reality or truth. Pre-revolution films in Egypt carried oppositional discourses about class conflicts and social inequality.

Contrary to mainstream movies, which are often based on a leading character, independent movies consider the narratives of several characters. The filmmakers portray the characters in relevance to broad political and social issues. In some examples, the portrayal of the characters occurs within a particular area. Both *Ein Chams* (Eye of the

Sun, Ibrahim al-Battut. 2008) and Heliopolis (Ahmad Abd Allah, 2009) are named after famous neighborhoods in the city of Cairo where the stories occur. In both movies, the structural changes of areas throughout history are portrayed (representing Egypt). Ein Chams shows the ignorance of the area since it has become the capital of the country, and 'Heliopolis' represents the faded magnificence of the cosmopolitan Cairo neighborhood. Among the scenes in Ein Chams is where 'Ramadan' (the driver) talks about the history of the city to a businessman when driving him home. Following the car on one of the major avenues of the area, the camera takes the personal point of view of the driver to show the harsh living conditions and poverty, like pollution, garbage, and congested buildings around the neighborhood.

Ein Chams and Heliopolis debate-through the characters-the same theme, which is immigration. Their wish to immigrate emerges from the thwarting and hardship represented in the movies. Some stories represent immigration as a dream, while others show the actual settlement of immigration for better living conditions. In Ein Chams, "Amer" represents a working-class youth, looking to go and work in Italy. The movie figuratively relates "Amer" to his desire for freedom by showing him taking care of pigeons and flying them, and helping "Chams", who represent the younger generation, to fly a kite.

In Heliopolis, one of the characters is planning to leave the country for Canada. He was first introduced in the movie in the Canadian Embassy applying for a visa. Moreover, "Ingi", who works as a reception clerk in a motel, imagines herself in the beautiful streets of Paris. Shots of "Ingi" roving through different frames of pictures of the Eiffel Tower and the streets of Paris, animated the dream sequence. Using improvisation and new actors in real places, makes the movies look authentic to real life. This has facilitated connecting the viewer's emotionally with the characters and their conflicts, and affected their political views.

This type of movie focuses on the structure of Egyptian society by depicting different social classes. However, contrary to the general traditional comedy and drama styles, these movies used revolutionary realism style, using digital cameras, new actors, and

improvisation to address topics of poverty, suppression, and conflicts between social classes in a way considered authentic. These techniques were suitable and economical, financially speaking, for their small budget. These movies represent debates about social iniquity.

During the last term of Mubarak's regime, the increasing outrage of the public was represented heavily in various movie styles, such as political satire, drama, and independent films. The movies uncovered issues such as depravity, poverty, and police brutality through different forms and styles of films. Although they did not address the upheaval, these movies played a major role in raising political activism and exposing social issues like poverty and depravity, and hence reinforced political awareness among different social classes before the revolution. The movies visualised the circumstances leading to the 2011 Revolution and predicted possible consequences, such as the overthrow of the government in a way that was similar to the events of the 2011 upheaval.

5. DOCUMENTATION OF THE REVOLUTION

All during the 18 days of the 2011 Revolution (25 January – 11 February), many filmmakers were in a dilemma about whether to film the events or not. Even as some decided to live in the moment and only participate as regular citizens, others went on and used their personal digital cameras to document the revolution. Hours of footage was shot not only by filmmakers but also by protesters and journalists, which later facilitated the production of narrative and documentary movies within the next few months of the year.

Movies are an important form of recording images of past events. The type of movies examined in this chapter fall under what White (1988) labels as "Historiophoty" – 'the picturing of history and our attitudes and points of view about it in visual pictures and filmic discourse' (p.1193). These movies use real footage and pictures from a specific time and place to give a "realistic" feeling of the historical event (Rosenstone 1988, p. 1180). Jarvie (1978) and Rosenstone (1988) emphasized that these movies do not present the events as they are, but rather choose specific images to create a story. White (1988) asserted Rosenstone's statement about the reliability of these movies in depicting historical moments. "Movies allow us to see places, hear sounds, observe feelings as they are expressed on the face and body, or witness physical struggles between groups and individuals" (Rosenstone 1988, p. 1179). However, Jarvie and Rosenstone distrust the movies' ability to transmit the crucial and complex aspects of historical events.

Many film scholars focus on the extent to which movies represent reality. Bazin (2005b) discussed the notion of reality in movies as a composed illusion. He maintained that realism is an artistic choice, which is constituted by conventions, but also necessarily created, since "art can only exist when such a choice is made" (p.26). Nichols (1991, p. 10) pointed out the role of documentaries in creating social realities. He examined the filmmakers' control over the texts as well as the accuracy and sincerity of the narrated events. He claimed that realities are produced differently in fiction and documentaries:

"Where fiction achieves a 'reality effect' by sprinkling doses of authentic historical references across the realm of its creation – costumes, tools, vehicles, known places,

or prominent figures – the same 104 references within documentary serve as tangible evidence from the historical world in support of an argument" (Nichols, 2001, p. 28).

In their depiction of the revolution, documentaries and fiction movies have tackled Egyptian society in terms of dual conflicts. They made their stories about struggles between anti-and pro-revolution, like in "Baad Elmawaqiae" (After The Battle, 2012), which exposes the aggression between the demonstrators and the Clash of the Camel attackers. Documentaries like "Attahrir 2011: Attayeb, wa Shariss, wa Siyasi" are intended to express different views: demonstrators, policemen, and politicians. However, the film confronts police officers' testimonies by showing pictures and images of police vehicles crushing demonstrators.

This chapter contends that these documentary and fiction movies have added to the audio-visual social memory of the revolution, adopting stylistic aspects from each other to endorse filmmakers' arguments. They approached the revolution in terms of opposing dualities, and sometimes commonly promoted "patriotic feelings".

5.1 SOCIOPOLITICAL ISSUES THROUGH NARRATIVE FILMS

Film directors such as Ahmed Abdellah, Yousri Naserallah, and Ibrahim ElBattut, are famous for their help and engagement in the revolution. Their involvement in different events during the revolution affected their movies, Farsh wa Ghataa (Rags and Tatters, 2013) and Baada Elmawqiaa (After the Battle, 2012), and Ashitaa li Fat (The Winter of Discontent, 2012). These movies document specific events like the battle of the camels (2nd February 2011) and the unlocking of prisons (28th January 2011). They depicted the revolution from different points of view, including political attitudes (anti- and pro-revolution) and social classes (Lower-and Higher-classes). They also enriched the cultural memory of the revolution by recounting stories of places and individuals that were marginalised by the media. Baada Elmawqiaa, for example, approaches the Battle of the Camels from the attackers' point of view.

On the 1st of February 2011, President Mubarak made a touching speech in which he expressed his desire to die in Egypt. His statement influenced many Egyptians and turned

them against demonstrators. On the following day, people on camels and horses attacked demonstrators at Attahrir Square. Baada Elmawqiaa manifests the attackers' motivation in order to create a different memory of the event. While documenting the protests at Attahrir Square, Naserallah recounts the events from the attackers' point of view. The movie tells the story of Mahmoud (played by Basem Samra), a horse keeper from Nazlet Assemman, an area near the pyramids known for its touristic markets, camels, and horse rentals. Mahmoud took part in the attack on civilians at Attahrir Square as he is visible in many videos that were uploaded to the Youtube platform. He was humiliated and described as an ignorant by his neighbours.

On the other hand, Rim, played by Mena Shalabi, is a divorced secular woman who works in advertising and is a pro-revolutionist. Like most of the demonstrators, Rim considered the attackers to be murderers. Rim meets Mahmoud and shows sympathy towards his family. She finds out the attackers' impulse and witnesses the negative effect of the revolution on their business (tourism). The movie reveals two different worlds after the revolution, represented by Mahmoud and Rim (low/high classes and pro/anti-revolution).

The movie used images of the event along with the actors to stimulate an impression of authenticity and maintain Naserallah's story about the attack. The movie also addresses some aspects of Egyptian society after the revolution, including the growth of Islamic groups, unrehearsed and spontaneous political debates, and political parties' hype. People from the Nazlet Assemman neighborhood appeared in several scenes as secondary roles.

The actors improvised some scenes to tackle the various aspects of the matters discussed, like the cons and pros of the revolution in documentary-like scenes. These scenes enhance the sense of reality in the story and promote Naserallah's reason for clarifying the attackers' motivation. The movie interweaves recordings of the event with a re-enactment using actors (Basim Samra and Mena Shalabi). The acting was shot at the same place and from the same angle as the recorded footage, which makes it difficult to distinguish the 'real' footage from the narrative of Naserallah. The movie does not only show the revolution but also reveals the political context after the revolution. Earlier in the movie, there is a discussion about the perspective of Egyptian society towards the role of women

after the revolution in relation to the growth of Islamist groups. Rim takes part in the discussion, which seems spontaneous and improvised because of the overlapping lines, the camera movement, and the change of focus and frame frequently.

The inhabitants of Nazlet Assemman are referred to in the movie as "those people" by the supporters of the revolution who ignore the involvement of the attackers and assume that it's not their responsibility and that they were incited by other people. The movie portrays Rim as representing the demonstrators and sensitizing the inhabitants of Nazlet Assemman by explaining the advantages of the revolution and their rights as citizens. Although the movie's perception of the economic and socio-political changes after the revolution is premature, it alludes to the growth of the Muslim Brotherhood movement and the unstable society. Movies' representation of the revolution was not restricted to the events and the post-revolution context, but they were also concerned with the reasons behind the upheaval and the reaction of governmental institutions to the revolution.

While the movie *Baada Almawqiaa* addressed the events which are connected directly to the revolution, Ahmad Abdellah's *Farsh wa Ghataa* (Rags and Tatters, 2013) displays a wider view of the revolution which is not restricted to the demonstrations and Attahrir Square. *Farsh wa Ghataa* is merely a silent movie that represents a captive who was freed during the revolution. The movie attracts the viewers to take part in the production of meaning instead of plainly presenting the filmmaker's impression of the revolution. The absence of interactions and dialogues blurs some sections of the story, like the relationship between the protagonist and his family members. The movie tracks the lead character (an unnamed man) to three distinctive locations in Cairo. The protagonist witnesses the struggle and hardship of the inhabitants of these locations (marginalised neighborhoods), while watching the news on TV about the revolution.

Starting with a mobile phone camera footage of the opening of prisons indicates the story's personal perspective/experience. The movie also ends with a mobile phone recording in which the lead character states that he had made that video so that people could know what had happened. The statement speaks of Abdellah's purpose of uncovering the ground of the revolution. The movie includes interviews with people from

the neighborhoods visited by the lead character. Although pictures and images can be seen only on television, the movie deeply addresses issues of discrimination and poverty as the main reasons behind the revolution and portrays the neighborhoods as secluded locations during the uprising.

The movie raises questions related to the revolution without providing answers, and it does not document the events of the revolution. Abdellah raises his questions through the leading character, the open frames, and the lack of interaction and dialogue. These choices develop the theme of ambiguity/obscurity, where a lot of questions about the revolution are not answered, like who or why the prisons were opened. The movie also arouses these questions via the leading character's personality, which represents many Egyptians during the revolution.

5.2 ALMOST REALIST AND NEUTRAL DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Whereas very few fiction movies addressed the revolution, many documentaries represented it from different points of view (media, police officers, and protesters). The availability of footage and the demand for film festivals and news channels for movies about the revolution encouraged filmmakers to make documentaries. Like fiction movies that addressed the revolution, documentaries like *Attahrir 2011: Attayeb, wa Shariss, wa Siyasi* (*Tahrir 2011: The Good, The Bad, and The Politician*, Tamer Izzet, Ayten Ameen, and Amer Salam, 2011) take part in establishing a cultural memory of the revolution.

Despite the attempt of documentary filmmakers to cover contradicting political views, their backing for the revolution was obvious in their films. The films honour the revolution and establish national identities by incorporating different political points of view that formed the crowd.

The first part of the Attahrir trilogy, *Attayeb* (*The Good*), includes footage of Al Tahrir Square intercut with interviews with protesters from different social backgrounds, mainly a university student member of the Muslim Brotherhood, a singer, a doctor, an activist, and a photojournalist, telling their experiences during demonstrations. The interviews

take place in the locations of the told stories. The stories are supported by footage of digital cameras and mobile phones and images from the uprising. The director of this part, Tamer Ezzat, used the traditional documentary style and intercutting technique between different interviewees to establish a sense of community. "The Good" promotes nationalistic feelings by consolidating the experiences of different participants in the revolutions.

"Shariss" (The Bad), which is the second part of the film, uncovers the authorities' perspective, which was ignored by most of the productions about the revolution. This part includes interviews with four policemen who attempted to place responsibility on higher authorities. They blamed the regime's use of security forces in political, economic, and social conflicts. They also pointed out the nature of their job, which is to establish order and security.

In the third part of the documentary, "Siyasi" (The Politician), Amer Salama (director) uses a traditional advertorial style to support the interviewees' statements. The interviewees were famous politicians and intellectuals, like Dr. Ahmed 'Okasha (Professor of Psychiatry), Alae ElAsouani and Bilal Fadel (Writers), Yousri Fouda (TV presenter), and Dr. Mohammed ElBaradai and Dr. Mostapha ElFiai (Politicians). They provide information and reality about Moubarak's regime and how dictatorship was established, which the director Salama represents in a satirical tone in the form of "10 steps to becoming a dictator". This part exposes Moubarak's regime policies, such as generating fictional enemies, editing pictures of the president and dying his hair to look younger, displaying his picture and name in all administrations and locations (streets, schools, and hospitals), and dominating security, legislation, and the media. At the end of the film, Amer Salama reviews how the dictator (Moubarak) was overthrown by the people.

Attahrir 2011 is one of the first films that plainly criticised the President (Moubarak). However, like other documentaries, it focused on the events in Attahrir Square and ignored protests in other locations, such as in Mansoura, Suez, and Alexandria, which unfortunately limited the revolution to Attahrir Square.

Films were not the only medium through which resistance was depicted. During the 18 days of the revolution, artists and activists used poetry, artwork, satire, and music to communicate their feelings against Mubarak's regime. The growth of the counterrevolution during the Islamist rule in 2013 and the military since 2014, unfortunately, has reduced the portrayal of any rebellion acts. Filmmakers continued to work on low budgets and self-funded productions and relied on funding from film festivals and non-profit institutions for additional funding. To express topics of despair and hope, they proceeded to use digital cameras and new cast, as well as non-traditional story formats. The introduction of new digital devices has made it easier for young people to make and distribute short films. In contrast to previous revolutions, which were frequently followed by film movements that adopted "revolutionary aesthetics," Egyptian independent films lack a distinct and consistent filmmaking methodology.

6. CONCLUSION

The relationship between film and revolution has been explored in this thesis through different but interconnected definitions of "revolutionary film". These ideas see cinema as both an artistic means of self and an industry that adapts to changing socio-political, economic, and technological conditions. The influence of pre-revolutionary films in promoting awareness and motivating viewers is the first definition of "revolutionary cinema". These are films with a socio-political consciousness that assist toward political activism. The second definition revolves around the term 'historiophoty' (White, 1988) which considers movies a tool that develops visual memory. Considering the impact of revolutions on film industries around the world and affected their film styles and content is the third take on the "revolutionary film" since revolutions have always created new film waves.

The thesis studied the continuities and discontinuities in the connection between film and social change by focusing on the case of Egyptian cinema and the 2011 Revolution. The use of film as a form of political illustration and the documentation of revolution incidents are among the continuities, while the discontinuities include post-revolutionary authorities' support for film and film movements that use a particular artistic approach to portray oppression. An in-depth textual and visual analysis of revolutionary films pre/post 2011 was part of the evaluation process.

The movie industries as economic and cultural agents have caught the interest of scholars studying the relationship between film and politics. State support for cinema has shaped the films' texts to only represent the prevailing political views. The economic strength and value of the film industry may also be boosted by state funding. Wheeler (2006) explained how American authorities completely changed Hollywood from a local industry to a global business by changing some policies, such as tax reform. Governments recognized the importance of film in promoting revolutionary beliefs in the examples reviewed in Chapters Two and Three, and consequently sponsored film studios. Regimes

in Egypt (post-1952), the Soviet Union, and China have encouraged the production of socially conscious films through nationalization or assistance.

The Egyptian Revolution of 2011 had a significant influence on the film industry. The revolution intensified the collapse in film production that began following the global financial crisis of 2008. Opposing Nasser's aim to expand filmmaking by nationalizing the sector after the 1952 Coup, post-2011 Revolution regimes did not take the sector's difficulties seriously.

The utilization of film as a type of political engagement before revolutions has also been proven in the cases discussed in Chapters One and Two. The relevance of revolutionary films in mobilizing people and demanding action has been emphasized by filmmakers such as Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino (1970) and Sanjines (1970). Even in nations in which there were no revolutions, such as Argentina and Senegal, film movements have pushed the development of socially conscious films to increase awareness. Despite the fact that Egyptian films have always been critical of previous regimes, filmmakers have opposed Moubarak's dictatorship since the 1990s. Films began to contribute to political action in Egypt in response to public outrage following Moubarak's re-election to another presidential term in 2005. They reflect the public's rising dissatisfaction with social inequality and bribery (Tabishat 2012).

I argued that since 2006, filmmakers have used different genres and production modes to voice discontent. The third chapter addressed popular high-budget films like *Imarat ElYaaqubiyān* (The Yacobian Building, Marouane Hamid, 2006), a film that addressed concerns about corruption, poverty, and extremism in current Egypt. Films like *Ein Chams* (Eye of the Sun, Ibrahum Albattut, 2008) and *Heliopolis* (Ahmad Abd Allah, 2009), used independent creative formats such as digital cameras, new casts, and creative storytelling methods to express the realities faced by Egyptians. These films do not fall within Sanjines' (1970) categorization of "revolutionary films" because they were not made with the intention of motivating spectators. However, these films increased public awareness or encouraged socio-political crime themes.

Egyptian films have a lengthy history of depicting historical events, including the 1952 coup, the Six-Day War, and the 1973 War. The revolution was depicted in fiction and documentary films in Chapter Five. As fiction films set during the revolution, the chapter concentrated on, *Farsh wa Ghataa* (Rags and Tatters, 2013) and *Baada Elmawqiaa* (After the Battle, 2012), and *Ashitaa li Fat* (The Winter of Discontent, 2012). I also analysed the documentary *Attahrir 2011: Attayeb, wa Shariss, wa Siyasi* (Tahrir 2011: The Good, The Bad, and The Politician, Tamer Izzet, Ayten Ameen, and Amer Salam, 2011). I argued that these movies represent a sort of historiophoty, and that they reinforced the cultural visual memory of the collective struggle experienced during the 2011 Revolution, basing my argument on White (1988) and Rastegar (2015). They combined fiction and narrative elements to develop their views, documenting crucial points of the revolution. The storylines have gained a sense of reality as a result of this methodology. Both fiction and documentary films aim to express a variety of opinions by addressing Egyptian society through binary oppositions such as police versus protestors. They symbolized the various political affiliations and social backgrounds in Tahrir Square as a community with common values in order to build a sense of patriotism.

My understanding of film as a form of documentation and opposition during a time of crisis has grown as a result of this research. Egyptian films made prior to the revolution are now important resources that expose Moubarak's political corruption and injustice. They also show how mainstream and independent films contribute to the public's outrage by challenging prevailing ideas. Despite the criticism of their perspectives and similar approaches shown in this research, films that depicted the revolution are archives of a historical event. These films contradict anti-revolutionary accusations about the revolution's "conspiracy" and reveal that it's indeed a real movement.

The dominance of digitalization, which brought new energy to the relationship between film and revolution, has made the relationship between Egyptian cinema and the revolution stand out. The methods in which young filmmakers employed digital technology to create and distribute films during the uprising that reflect their orientations and opinions educate us about their involvement and autonomy. They provided filmmakers with access to a large collection of material from which to create their stories.

The rivalry between filmmakers and authorities will worsen as filmmaking methods develop and filmmakers continue to voice their political opinions.

Numerous Egyptians refer to the 2011 Revolution as a failure. Scholars such as Achcar (2013) have criticized the term "revolution" because the 2011 upheavals overthrew a dictator but did not result in a significant shift in Egypt's system or society. The continual degradation in education, healthcare, and the economy, as evidenced by recent catastrophic inflation, indicates that the revolution's essential goals of bread, freedom, and social justice have not been met. Despite the fact that the new government recognizes the events of 2011 as a revolution, the state, which is governed by a military regime that rejects the revolution and favors the previous government, shows no backing for the revolution or its causes. As a result of current political suppression, a broad mindset among youngsters has developed that encourages them to migrate in quest of a better environment.

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