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A 'Tidal Wave of Revolt: 'How World Editorials Framed the 2011 Egyptian Revolution

By Yu-li Chang & Dale E. Zacher

This article first examined how the world editorials framed the Egyptian uprising by looking into three aspects of framing analysis --- causal responsibility, moral judgment and treatment responsibility. It then investigated how three extrinsic factors in international communication research -- political freedom, religion and geopolitical regions affected the frames. Most editorials framed the Egyptian uprising in this way: It was mainly caused by the political woes inherent with the Mubarak dictatorship; it served as a moral lesson in that the uprising could trigger political, social or economic repercussions in other countries, especially countries with dictators; and Egypt's future could be secured by the new government starting democratic reforms immediately. The three extrinsic factors examined in this study affected in various degrees how the editorials framed the Egyptian uprising, especially in moral judgment – the lessons to be learned from the events in Egypt.

The uprising caused by a young man's immolation in Tunisia in late 2010 not only toppled the Ben Ali dictatorship but also awakened millions of Egyptians to rise up against their dictator, Hosni Mubarak. This tidal wave of revolt drew the world's attention to Egypt. As the *Cyprus Mail* opined:

When a young vegetable seller in a provincial Tunisian town doused himself in petrol and burned himself to death after police seized his cart back in December, no one would have

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thought this act of despair would unleash a tidal wave of revolt across the Arab world. In just a few weeks, the protests sparked by his death had overthrown President Ben Ali in Tunisia, sweeping away his cronies and much of the old regime. Now copy cat demonstrations in Egypt --- the region's most populous state and bellwether of political trends --- have brought President Mubarak to the brink ("Arab Democracy Need Not Threaten Western Interests," February 6, 2011).

As this editorial from the *Cyprus Mail* newspaper noted, the swift current of political change in the Middle East that became known as the "Arab Spring" surprised most observers, especially when it came to the streets of Egypt. Within 18 days, a people-power uprising in Egypt ended President Hosni Mubarak's 30-year dictatorship. Fueled by basic demands for political freedom, calls for respect of human rights and a revulsion against the corrupt dictatorship, protestors took only 18 days from late January to early February 2011 to win the Egyptian army's support and force Mubarak to abdicate his presidency.

Mass demonstrations against the Mubarak regime began on Cairo's Tahrir Square on January 25. Because of the scope of this uprising and its implications for regional and world politics, the Egyptian uprising drew a great deal of media attention from around the world. As the world audience struggled to understand the unexpected turn of events, journalists moved quickly to provide meaning by analyzing and interpreting the causes of this uprising, solutions to the crisis and lessons to be learned from this event. While journalists may or may not realize that their interpretations help "frame" the uprising in certain ways (Gamson, 1989), political scientist Entman (2004) has pointed out that "framing is an inescapable feature of representation and that increases the political influence of the media" (p. 21). In addition, framing strategies should be most explicit in political editorials because they are written to express opinions on important issues without being bound by the conventional norm of objectivity (Chang & Chang, 2003; Eilder & Lüter, 2000; Gamson, 1989).

The purpose of this study is first to determine what frames were used by the world's English-language newspaper editori-

als to interpret the Egyptian uprising to their readers. Instead of focusing on certain newspapers from a handful of countries such as the United States, Israel, Saudi Arabia, etc., this study takes a broader approach by including English-language newspapers from all over the world. The reason is mainly because the "Arab Spring" has become a movement that has commanded media attention from every corner of the world, and the future development of this movement will have profound impact on global politics. English-language newspapers are chosen because English is the *lingua franca* of the world and their readers include the expatriates and the elite, diplomatic community, and in some cases government ministerial overseers, who all serve as opinion leaders; therefore, these papers are often among a nation's most influential (Merrill, 1991; van Leeuwen, 2006). In addition, these newspapers also symbolize or showcase their countries to the world stage (Messner & Garrison, 2006).

This study also aims to provide some understanding into what factors might have affected the frames world editorials used to analyze the Egyptian revolution. Scheufele (1999, p. 115) referred to this step of investigation as frame building, in which "the key question is what kinds of organizational or structural factors of the media system, or which individual characteristics of journalists, can impact the framing of news content." Rather than investigating these micro-level factors, this study borrows concepts from international communication research, in which macro-level extrinsic factors such as geographic proximity, language ties, political system, political freedom, etc. have been investigated. Due to the political nature of the Egyptian uprising, this study will examine the following political factors: political freedom, religion and geopolitical region.

Theoretical Framework

Using Framing to Study World Opinion

Most framing studies distinguished between two types of frames --- media or news frames and audience or individual frames (Druckman, 2001; Scheufele, 1999). Media frames refer to "attributes of the news itself," while audience frames refer

to “information-processing schemata” of individuals (Entman, 1991, p. 7). In other words, mass media actively set the frames of reference that readers use to interpret and discuss news events, and the way media frame certain issues can affect people’s perceptions of those issues and influence public opinions (Eilders & Lüter, 2000; Gamson, 1992; Iyengar, 1991; McClosky & Zaller, 1984; Tuchman, 1978). At the same time, audiences process the media’s frames of reference using preexisted meaning structures or schemas (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Entman, 1991; Friedland & Zhong, 1996; Gitlin, 1980; Gamson, 1992; Kosicki & McLeod, 1990) or individuals’ general personality traits (Matthes, 2009). Individual frames, according to McLeod *et al.* (Cited in Scheufele, 1999), describe how the audience makes sense of political news and are defined as cognitive devices that “operate as non-hierarchical categories that serve as forms of major headings into which any future news content can be filed” (p. 10).

This study investigated only the news frames. A news frame can be defined as “a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events.... The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, p.143), or as working routines for journalists or news organizations to organize, interpret and present information for efficient relay to their audience (Entman, 1993; Gamson, 1989; Gitlin, 1980; Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Framing theory suggests that journalists use news frames to simplify, prioritize and structure the narrative flow of events. By selecting to prioritize some facts or developments of an event over others, journalists promote a particular interpretation of that event (Entman, 1993). Pan and Kosicki (2005) also stated that in newspapers writers have limited space to get their ideas across, so “framing” an issue capitalizes on the fact that readers hold distinctive values and strive for coherent understanding of that issue. In short, media framing studies examine “the selection and salience of certain aspects of an issue by exploring images, stereotypes, metaphors, actors and messages” (Matthes, 2009, p. 349).

Matthes (2009), after conducting a comprehensive study of media framing research, found that Entman’s (1993) definition of media frames was the most influential among various definitions

of framing. Entman (1993) defined "media frames" as referring to some aspects of a perceived reality made more salient in a communication text to "promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (p. 52). In other words, news framing in the media's coverage of political events has four basic functions -- defining the problem, identifying causes, conveying moral judgment and prescribing remedies (Entman, 2004). In a similar line of thinking, Snow and Benford (1988) said that a political story line is often organized through diagnostic and prognostic framing. A diagnostic frame deals with identification of the problem and attribution of causal responsibility. A prognostic frame suggests the remedy to an issue.

Using Entman's (1993, 2004) definition of news framing, this study first examined three aspects of framing, namely: (1) assigning causal responsibility, (2) stating a moral judgment and (3) suggesting a treatment remedy in reaction to the event. In other words, three questions were asked: What did the world's newspaper editorials say caused the uprising? What lessons did they say could be learned from Egypt's experience? What did they say should be done now that Egypt had ousted its long-standing dictator?

Using Editorials with Framing Analysis

This study used editorials instead of news reports because political "framing" is most obvious in editorials. Gamson (1989, p. 158) argued that to "identify frames, the information content of news reports is less important than interpretative commentary that surrounds it." The distinction between news and editorials corresponds with the distinction between information knowledge and opinion. News reports are represented by the newspaper's interpretation of reality based on factual accounts or summaries of events; editorials express opinions and give evaluations of reality or map the reality for their readers (Rupar, 2007). Reese (2007, p. 148) also noted that "framing suggests more intentionality on the part of the framer and relates more explicitly to political strategy." Editorials are the only place in a

newspaper where the views of the paper as an organization are represented. In freely selecting and presenting issues according to their own agenda, editorials take an active role in engaging the public in the deliberations and discourse of politics (Firmstone, 2008).

Because editorials are written to express opinions and are intended to lead mass opinion, the ideas, positions and arguments articulated or “framed” by editorial writers have the potential to structure the thoughts of a wider public. Therefore, editorial opinions constitute an area of research that can make a significant contribution to our understanding of the relationship between the press and politics (Chang & Chang, 2003; Eilder & Lüter, 2000; Firmstone, 2008; Rojecki, 2008; Ryan, 2004).

Using Theory and Methods from International Communication Research

In a global media event like the Egyptian uprising, theory and methodology related to international news coverage can help us understand what factors might have affected the editorials’ framing of the protests. International communication scholars have studied two lines of factors affecting international news coverage: “intrinsic” or “event-related” factors, referring to newsworthiness of the event such as human interest, deviance, prominence/importance, conflict/controversy, timeliness and proximity (Chang *et al.*, 1987; Cooper-Chen, 2001; Wanta & Chang, 2001) and “extrinsic” or “context-related” factors, referring to extra-media components such as trade relations, diplomatic and military ties, cultural similarities, or political variables (Adams, 1986; Ahern, 1984; Gaddy & Tanjong, 1986; Ishii, 1996; Kim & Barnett, 1996; Nnaemeka & Richstad, 1980; Robinson & Sparkes, 1976; Rosengren, 1974, 1977; Wu, 2000).

Among the extrinsic factors, political variables such as political freedom and press freedom were found to be strong predictors of international news coverage (Ahern, 1984; Kim & Barnett, 1996; Robinson & Sparkes, 1976; Nnaemeka & Richstad, 1980). Chang and Chang (2003) also found religion as a factor of international editorials’ coverage of the September 11 attacks. Other

factors were also found to be good predictors, but in an inconsistent manner. Kim and Barnett's (1996) findings supported geographical proximity and language ties as determinants of international news flow. Adams (1986), analyzing the nightly U.S. television coverage of 35 natural disasters around the world, concluded that where the earthquake occurred made a big difference. The effect of geographic proximity did not surface in Chang *et al.*'s (2000), Cooper-Chen's (2001), Gaddy and Tanjong's (1986), Ishii's (1996) and Wu's (2000) studies, however.

Due to the political nature of the Egyptian uprising, this study focused on three political variables -- degree of political freedom, religion and geopolitical region. Geopolitical region was added as a variable because countries in a region often share some common religious, political or ethnic origins and often share similar strategic interests. The Arab Spring itself shows how ideas can spread through a geopolitical region. The mass protests in Egypt gained momentum after Tunisia ousted its president in the Jasmine Revolution. The uprising in Egypt likewise was widely regarded as a possible catalyst for reforms in the Middle East, where similar problems existed after decades of authoritarian rule and economic stagnation.

Research Questions

This study includes two sets of data – a content analysis of frames based on the world's English-language editorials and extrinsic factors related to international communication research. This study seeks to answer these two research questions:

RQ 1: What were the frames used by English-language newspaper editorials from 43 countries in the following aspects: causal responsibility, moral judgment and treatment responsibility?

RQ 2: What factors, including political freedom, religion and geopolitical region, may have affected how these editorials framed the Egyptian uprising?

Method

Sampling

Content analysis was used to examine the frames used by the world's newspaper editorials in response to the massive demonstrations in Egypt in January and February 2011. World editorials in English were drawn from the Lexis-Nexis Academic database using the search words "Egypt" and "editorials" with the dates set between January 25, the beginning of the protests, and February 15, three days after the fall of Mubarak. Editorials were also drawn from the *World Press Review* website, which provides links to newspapers around the world, and from Google by searching English-language newspapers in a certain country. Most newspaper websites would allow archival search of editorials or display editorials published several weeks or even months before; some, however, do not have these functions. In such cases, the researchers had to forego those newspapers.

Only articles identified as editorials were collected; regular news stories, news analysis pieces or other opinion pieces were excluded. This means that all opinion columns with the author's byline were left out. For countries such as the United States, Britain, Canada and South Africa with larger numbers of English-language newspapers, only four newspapers from each of these countries (16 total) were chosen for analysis. Those chosen had the largest circulations and had at least a national focus in their coverage. They were also chosen because of their availability online. After eliminating those articles that mentioned Egypt but were not related to the uprising, 190 editorials representing 43 countries were retained for analysis. All but four were originally published in English. The four non-English articles were translated into English by *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*.

Twenty-six editorials were drawn from Africa, representing seven countries -- Kenya ($n = 5$), Namibia ($n = 1$), Nigeria ($n = 3$), South Africa ($n = 14$), Tanzania ($n = 1$), Uganda ($n = 1$) and Zambia ($n = 1$). Asia contained 55 editorials represented by 16 countries -- Afghanistan ($n = 1$), Australia ($n = 6$), Bangladesh ($n = 1$),

China (including Hong Kong) (n = 5), India (n = 9), Indonesia (n = 1), Japan (n = 2), Korea (n = 1), New Zealand (n = 1), Malaysia (n = 2), Pakistan (n = 7), the Philippines (n = 1), Singapore (n = 3), Sri Lanka (n = 6), Taiwan (n = 2) and Thailand (n = 7). Thirty-four editorials came out of Europe, representing eight countries -- Bulgaria (n = 1), Cyprus (n = 2), Ireland (n = 10), Lithuania (n = 1), Malta (n = 3), Portugal (n = 1), Turkey (n = 2) and the United Kingdom (n = 14). Thirty editorials were drawn from seven countries in the Middle East and North Africa, including Egypt (n = 2), Israel (n = 4), Lebanon (n = 10), Qatar (n = 7), Saudi Arabia (n = 4), Yemen (n = 2) and United Arab Emirates (n = 1). The Americas were represented by 45 editorials from five countries -- Canada (n = 13), Trinidad and Tobago (n = 2), Jamaica (n = 1), Guyana (n = 3) and the United States (n = 26).

Editorial Frames

This study dealt with issue-specific frames -- frames that are specific to the Egyptian uprising and, therefore, may not apply to other issues. These issue-specific frames were derived by following Matthes' (2009) suggestion of conducting an initial exploratory analysis of a sample of the world's editorials.

Causal Responsibility. This variable referred to the editorial's opinions about the cause or causes of the Egyptian uprising. Some articles mentioned the lack of freedom and the abuse of power under the 30-year rule of Mubarak. Some editorials covered aspects of a failing economy that brought plight to the public ---rising food prices, widespread poverty and mass unemployment. Others blamed the United States for propping up the Mubarak regime by pumping billions of dollars of aid to Egypt and ignoring its human-rights record in exchange of the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. Of course, some editorials mentioned a combination of these causes. Four categories of causal responsibility were used for this study: (1) domestic political woes inherent with dictatorship, (2) domestic economic woes, (3) international, especially U.S., complicity and (4) other.

Moral Judgment. This variable referred to the editorial's stance on what can be learned from the mass protests from Egypt. Some emphasized that this uprising meant corrupt or unresponsive governments ultimately fail, that governments must listen to the people or that change is inevitable. Some editorials thought that the Egyptian uprising served as a model for non-violent social change or as a demonstration of people power demanding change from within. Some editorials focused on the hypocrisy or showed distrust of the West, especially American foreign policy toward the Middle East and demanded policy readjustment. The category of "self-reflections" also appeared in many editorials. It connected the lesson learned from Egypt to the editorial's country of origin, the country's response to the Egyptian uprising, or the uprising's effects on the editorial's country of origin. In summary, six categories fell under the moral responsibility variable: (1) corrupt governments ultimately fail, (2) Egypt as a model for non-violent social change, (3) watch out for ripple effects in other countries, (4) U.S. policy toward the Middle East needs readjustment, (5) self-reflection and (6) other.

Treatment Responsibility. This variable looked into the editorials' opinions about what can be done to bring solutions to the Egyptian crisis. Some editorials asserted that the solution lay in immediate reforms that could lead to democracy, or they expressed trust that the new government was able to assure peaceful transition to democracy. Some editorials viewed solving economic problems inherent or due to the unrest was the answer to the crisis. Some editorials encouraged the international community, especially the United States, to get involved to help Egypt rebuild. While some editorials lobbied for the involvement of the international community in helping shape the future of Egypt, others warned against international involvement on the grounds that what was happening was an internal affair and should be treated as such by the international community. A few editorials also warned against hasty democratization because it takes time to build up the system for democracy to function well. Overall, six categories were generated for this variable:

(1) reform now or more toward self-government and democracy, (2) solve economic problems, (3) involve international community, especially the United States, (4) no international or U.S. involvement, (5) no hasty democratization and (6) other.

Extrinsic Factors

This study examined three extrinsic factors --- degree of political freedom, religion and geopolitical region.

Political Freedom: The level of political freedom in a country was determined by the Freedom House's rankings of that nation's political rights and civil liberties. Countries were categorized as "not free," "partly free" and "free."

Religion: Data on religion was obtained from the CIA's *World Factbook*, which contains information of each country's religious profile. In countries where multiple religions prevail, the religion with the highest percentage of believers was chosen to represent that country's religion. The world religions are classified into five categories based on Religion on File 1990: Hinduism; Buddhism or other Asian religions, including Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto, Jainism, Sikhism; Judaism; Islam and Christianity, including Protestantism, Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodox. Due to the limited number of editorials originated from countries with Hinduism as the dominant religion, this category was combined with Buddhism to become one category. Editorials originated from countries practicing Judaism were also few, therefore, this category was grouped together with Christianity. The reason for this kind of grouping is based on the historical connection between Buddhism and Hinduism and between Christianity and Judaism. Even though the number of editorials originated from atheist countries was low, too, this category was retained because it doesn't make sense to group it with any other categories. In short, the religion variable contains four categories: "Buddhism and Hinduism," "Christianity and Judaism," "Islam" and "atheist."

Geopolitical Region: Countries were grouped into five geopolitical regions by using the *World Press Review's* classifications: Sub-Sahara Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East and North Africa and the Americas.

Statistical Procedures

The study unit is the editorial. The recording unit is the entire editorial for the following variables: extrinsic variables, including level of political freedom, religion and geopolitical region; and framing variables related to whether an editorial assigned causal responsibility, gave moral judgment, or prescribed treatment remedy. The recording unit is the occurrence or mention of the references to variables under the categories of causal responsibility such as "political woes," "economic woes" and "U.S. complicity"; moral judgment such as "corrupt governments ultimately failing," "Egypt as a model for non-violent social change," etc.; and treatment responsibility, including "starting reforms now," "solving economic problems," etc.

Two coders (the authors of this manuscript) coded 19 randomly selected articles (10% of all editorials) to test intercoder reliability on the framing variables. The results yielded 81% of agreement on causal responsibility assignment, 92% agreement on moral judgment and 80% agreement on treatment responsibility assignment. The overall agreement for the framing variables is 84%.

Findings

For this study, 190 editorials were found--- 26 (13.7%) from Africa, 55 (28.9%) from Asia, 34 (17.9%) from Europe, 30 (15.8%) from the Middle East and North Africa, and 45 (23.7%) from the Americas. If categorized by Freedom House rankings of the political freedom of the nations where the editorials originated, 22 (11.6%) were published in countries listed as "not free," 50 (26.3%) in "partly free" countries, and 118 (62.1%) in "free" countries. Grouped by religion, the editorials yielded 29 (15.3%) from "Buddhist and Hindu" countries, 107 (56.3%) from "Christian and Judaic" countries, 44 (23.2%) from "Islamic" countries, and 10 (5.3%) from "atheist" countries.

Table 1: How did Editorials from Nations with Different Levels of Political Freedom Frame the Cause(s) of the Egyptian Revolt ?

Nation's Political Freedom	Political/ Dictatorship Problems	Economic Problems	Failed Foreign Policy esp. by U.S.	Other	Total (n = 186)
Not Free	9 (40.9%)	7 (31.8%)	5 (22.7%)	1 (4.5%)	22 (100%)
Partly Free	25 (44.6%)	18 (32.1%)	12 (21.4%)	1 (1.8%)	56 (100%)
Free	54 (50.1%)	37 (34.3%)	13 (12%)	4 (3.7%)	108 (100%)

Among the 105 (55.3%) editorials that dealt with causal responsibility, there were 186 mentions of the causes in which “political woes inherent with dictatorship” took the lead (n = 88, % = 47.3), followed by “economic woes” (n = 62, % = 33.3) and “U.S. complicity” (n = 30, % = 16.1). A large number of articles (n = 158, % = 83.2) provided one or more moral judgments. Among the 293 mentions of moral judgment, 23.5% (n = 69) cautioned about “watching out for ripple effects in other countries,” 21.8% (n = 64) asserted that “corrupt or unresponsive governments ultimately fail,” and 17.4% (n = 51) dealt with “self-reflections.” Moral judgments on “U.S. or international policy toward Israel and the Middle East needs adjustment” and on “Egypt as a model of non-violent social change” accounted for 15.4 % (n = 45) and 11.3% (n = 33) respectively. Almost two-thirds (n = 129, % = 67.9) of the editorials discussed treatment responsibility. Among the 173 mentions of treatment responsibility, 60.7% (n = 105) prescribed that “reform must start now or self-government/ democracy is the answer.” The treatment remedy of “international community, especially the U.S., needing to exercise influence or lend a helping hand” ranked second (n = 23, % = 13.3), and “solving economic problems” ranked third (n = 20, % = 11.6). “Let Egyptians decide their future without international interference (n = 11, % = 6.4)” trailed behind other treatment remedies.

The frequency results, broken down by the level of political freedom in each country, showed that most attributed “political woes” as the dominant cause for the revolution (“not free” – 40.9%, “partly free” – 44.6%, “free” – 50.1%), followed by “economic woes” (“not free” – 31.8%, “partly free” – 32.1%, “free” – 34.3%).

When conveying moral judgments, “not free” and “partly free” countries mentioned “watch out for ripple effects in other countries” (“not free” – 27.5%, “partly free” – 23.9%) and “corrupt governments ultimately fail” (“not free” – 17.5%, “partly free” – 31.8%) as the two dominant lessons to be learned, while the “free” countries (n = 165) focused more on “watching out for ripple effects” (22.4%) and “self-reflections” (20.6%).

Table 2: How did Editorials from Nations with Different Levels of Political Freedom Frame the Moral Judgments to be Learned?

Nation's Political Freedom	Corrupt Gov'ts Will Fail	Egypt is Model for Social Change	Watch for Ripple Effects in Other Nations	U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Egypt & Mid-East. Must Change	Self-Reflection: Our Nation's Response to Uprising or Its Effect on Our Nation	Other	Total (n = 293)
Not Free	7 (17.5%)	5 (12.5%)	11 (27.5%)	6 (15%)	2 (5%)	9 (22.5%)	40 (100%)
Partly Free	28 (31.8%)	8 (9%)	21 (23.9%)	11 (12.5%)	15 (17%)	5 (5.7%)	88 (100%)
Free	29 (17.6%)	20 (12.1%)	37 (22.4%)	28 (17%)	34 (20.6%)	17 (10.3%)	165 (100%)

All groups of countries indicated “reform, self-government or democracy must start now” (“not free” – 33.3%, “partly free” – 57%, “free” – 66.1%) as the most important remedy for Egypt, but the emphasis on “reform or democracy” weighed much less in editorials from “not free” countries. For “not free” countries, “solving economic problems” (20%) and “no international interference” (20%) and “move slowly to democracy” (20%) were also regarded as important. Contrary to the emphasis on “no international interference” from “not free” (20%) and “partly free” (14.3%) countries, “free” countries suggested “international, especially U.S. involvement” (18.3%) as a treatment remedy.

Table 3: What did Editorials from Nations with Different levels of Political Freedom Suggest as Solutions/Treatments to the Crisis?

Nation's Political Freedom	Swift Move to Democratic Self-Government	Economic Problems Must be Addressed	International Help, esp. U.S. needed	No International Interference. Let Egyptians Decide	Move Slowly to Democracy. Build on Existing Institutions	Other	Total (n = 173)
Not Free	5 (33.3%)	3 (20%)	0	3 (20%)	3 (20%)	1 (6.7%)	15 (100%)
Partly Free	28 (57%)	10 (20.4%)	3 (6.1%)	7 (14.3%)	0	1 (2%)	49 (100%)
Free	72 (66.1%)	7 (6.4%)	20 (18.3%)	1 (0.9%)	6 (5.7%)	3 (2.8%)	109 (100%)

Grouped by religion, the editorials did not exhibit differences in their emphasis on causal responsibility. All regarded “political woes inherent with dictatorship” as the main cause (“Buddhism and Hinduism” – 43.6%, “Christianity and Judaism” – 51%, “Islam” – 41.9%) and “economic woes” as the second cause (“Buddhism and Hinduism” – 31.9%, “Christianity and Judaism” – 34.7%, “Islam” – 30.2%).

Table 4: How did Editorials from Nations with Different Religions Frame the Cause(s) of the Egyptian Revolt ?

Nation's Religion	Political/ Dictatorship Problems	Economic Problems	Failed Foreign Policy esp. by U.S.	Other	Total (n = 186)
Buddhism & Hinduism	17 (43.6%)	12 (31.9%)	8 (20.5%)	2 (5.1%)	39 (100%)
Christianity & Judaism	50 (51%)	34 (34.7%)	12 (12.2%)	2 (2%)	98 (100%)
Islam	18 (41.9%)	13 (30.2%)	10 (23.3%)	2 (4.7%)	43 (100%)
Atheist	3 (50%)	3 (50%)	0	0	6 (100%)

In the area of moral judgment, editorials originated from “Buddhist and Hindu” countries and “Islamic” countries focused on either “watch out for ripple effects” (“Buddhism and Hinduism” – 29.2%, “Islam” – 24.1%) or “corrupt governments ultimately fail” (“Buddhism and Hinduism” – 20.8%, “Islam” – 25.3%). Editorials from “Christian and Judaic” countries placed slightly more emphasis on “self-reflections” (23.5%) than on “watch out for ripple effects” (20.4%) and “corrupt governments ultimately fail” (20.4%).

Table 5: How did Editorials from Nations with Different Religions Frame the Moral Judgments to be Learned?

Nation's Religion	Corrupt Gov'ts Will Fail	Egypt is Model for Social Change	Watch for Ripple Effects in Other Nations	U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Egypt & Mid-East. Must Change	Self-Reflection: Our Nation's Response to Uprising or Its Effect on Our Nation	Other	Total (n = 293)
Buddhism & Hinduism	10 (20.8%)	6 (12.5%)	14 (29.2%)	8 (16.7%)	4 (8.3%)	6 (12.5%)	48 (100%)
Christianity & Judaism	32 (20.4%)	16 (10.2%)	32 (20.4%)	26 (16.7%)	37 (23.5%)	14 (8.9%)	157 (100%)
Islam	20 (25.3%)	11 (13.9%)	19 (24.1%)	10 (12.7%)	9 (11.4%)	10 (12.7%)	79 (100%)
Atheist	2 (22.2%)	0	4 (44.4%)	1 (11.1%)	1 (11.1%)	1 (11.1%)	9 (100%)

While all three groups of editorials regarded “swift political reform, self-government or democracy” (“Buddhism and Hinduism” – 59.3%, “Christianity and Judaism” – 66%, “Islam” – 51.4%) as the most important treatment remedy for the Egyptian crisis, they had different ideas about the second remedy. “Buddhist and Hindu” countries emphasized “addressing economic problems” (18.5%). “Christian and Judaic” countries valued “providing international help, especially help from the United States” (18.4%). “Islamic” countries, however, chose “no international interference and let Egyptians decide” (20%).

Table 6: What did Editorials from Nations with Different Religion Suggest as Solutions/Treatments to the Crisis?

Nation's Religion	Swift Move to Democratic Self-Government	Economic Problems Must be Addressed	International Help, esp. U.S. needed	No International Interference. Let Egyptians Decide	Move Slowly to Democracy. Build on Existing Institutions	Other	Total (n = 173)
Buddhism & Hinduism	16 (59.3%)	5 (18.5%)	3 (11.1%)	2 (7.4%)	0	1 (3.7%)	27 (100%)
Christianity & Judaism	68 (66%)	7 (6.8%)	19 (18.4%)	1 (0.9%)	6 (5.8%)	2 (1.9%)	103 (100%)
Islam	18 (51.4%)	6 (17.1%)	1 (2.9%)	7 (20%)	1 (2.9%)	2 (5.7%)	35 (100%)
Atheist	3 (37.5%)	2 (25%)	0	1 (12.5%)	2 (25%)	0	8 (100%)

The frequency results, broken down into geopolitical regions, showed that editorials from all regions except the Middle East and North Africa attributed most of the causal responsibility to “political woes inherent with dictatorship” (“Africa” – 46.4%, “Asia” – 46.2%, “Europe” – 48.4%, “Americas” – 57.1%) and then to “economic woes” (“Africa” – 32.1%, “Asia” – 29.2%, “Europe” – 32.3%, “Americas” – 37.1%). Editorials from the Middle East and North Africa had slightly more mentions of “economic woes” (40.7%) than “political woes” (37%). Compared with the rest of the regions, editorials from the “Americas” had the fewest mentions of “failed U.S. foreign policy” as one of the causes (“Africa” – 21.4%, “Asia” – 20%, “Europe” – 12.9%, “Middle East and North Africa” – 18.5%, “Americas” – 5.7%).

The editorials from different geopolitical regions did frame moral responsibility differently. For “Africa,” “corrupt governments” (34.1%) and “self-reflections” (29.3%) topped the chart. For “Asia,” the “Middle East and North Africa,” “ripple effects” had the most mentions (“Asia” – 28.7%, “Middle East and North Africa” – 23.9%), followed by “corrupt governments” (“Asia” – 22.3%, “Middle East and North Africa” – 21.7%). “Europe” also put the most emphasis on “ripple effects” (28.3%), but “U.S. or international policy toward the Middle East needs readjustment” (19.6%) ranked second. The “Americas” contained 33.3% dealing with “self-reflections” and 18.2% with “ripple effects.”

Table 7: How did Editorials from Geopolitical Regions Frame the Cause(s) of the Egyptian Revolt?

Region	Political/ Dictatorship Problems	Economic Problems	Failed Foreign Policy esp. by U.S.	Other	Total (n = 186)
Africa	13 (46.4%)	9 (32.1%)	6 (21.4%)	0	28 (100%)
Asia	30 (46.2%)	19 (29.2%)	13 (20%)	3 (4.6%)	65 (100%)
Europe	15 (48.4%)	10 (32.3%)	4 (12.9%)	2 (6.5%)	31 (100%)
Mid-East	10 (37%)	11 (40.7%)	5 (18.5%)	1 (3.7%)	27 (100%)
Americas	20 (57.1%)	13 (37.1%)	2 (5.7%)	0	35 (100%)

Table 8: How did Editorials from Geopolitical Regions Frame Moral Judgments to be Learned from the Egyptian Revolt?

Region	Corrupt Gov'ts Will Fail	Egypt is Model for Social Change	Watch for Ripple Effects in Other Nations	U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Egypt & Mid-East Must Change	Self- Reflection: Our Nation's Response to Uprising or Its Effect on Our Nation	Other	Total (n = 293)
Africa	14 (34.1%)	1 (2.4%)	6 (14.6%)	3 (7.3%)	12 (29.3%)	5 (12.2%)	41 (100%)
Asia	21 (22.3%)	12 (12.8%)	27 (28.7%)	15 (16%)	10 (10.6%)	9 (9.6%)	94 (100%)
Europe	8 (17.4%)	6 (13%)	13 (28.3%)	9 (19.6%)	5 (10.8%)	5 (10.8%)	46 (100%)
Mid-East	10 (21.7%)	7 (15.2%)	11 (23.9%)	7 (15.2%)	2 (4.3%)	9 (19.6%)	46 (100%)
Americas	11 (16.7%)	7 (10.6%)	12 (18.2%)	11 (16.7%)	22 (33.3%)	3 (4.5%)	66 (100%)

While all geopolitical regions put “political reform, self-government or democracy” as the priority for treatment responsibility (“Africa” – 73.3%, “Asia” – 62.2%, “Europe” – 67.6%, the “Americas” – 63.5%), “Middle East and North Africa” contained the lowest percentage (37%). The second most important treatment for “Africa,” “Asia,” the “Middle East and North Africa” went to “addressing economic problems,” even though the percentages were not high (“Africa” – 13.3%, “Asia” – 15.5%, “Middle East and North Africa” – 22.2%). For “Europe” and the “Americas,” their editorials emphasized “international help, especially from the United States” as the second most important treatment remedy (“Europe” – 26.5%, “Americas” – 17.3%).

Table 9: What did Editorials from Geopolitical Regions Suggest as Solutions/Treatments to the Crisis?

Region	Swift Move to Democratic Self-Government	Economic Problems Must be Addressed	International Help, esp. U.S. needed	No International Interference. Let Egyptians Decide	Move Slowly to Democracy. Build on Existing Institutions	Other	Total (n = 173)
Africa	11 (73.3%)	2 (13.3%)	0	2 (13.3%)	0	0	15 (100%)
Asia	28 (62.2%)	7 (15.5%)	4 (8.9%)	3 (6.7%)	2 (4.4%)	1 (2.2%)	45 (100%)
Europe	23 (67.6%)	1 (2.9%)	9 (26.5%)	0	1 (3.1%)	0	34 (100%)
Mid-East	10 (37%)	6 (22.2%)	1 (3.7%)	5 (18.5%)	3 (11.1%)	2 (7.4%)	27 (100%)
Americas	33 (63.5%)	4 (7.7%)	9 (17.3%)	1 (1.9%)	3 (5.8%)	2 (3.8%)	52 (100%)

Discussion

The 190 world editorials selected for this study framed the Egyptian uprising as mainly caused by “domestic political woes inherent with the dictatorship” of Mubarak’s 30-year rule. These editorials argued that the imposition of emergency law, lack of freedom, abuse by police and security forces, rigged elections and possible succession of Mubarak’s son all contributed to the uprising in Egypt. These editorials also attributed the causal

responsibility to “domestic economic woes” for a large percentage of the Egyptian population who earned less than \$2 a day and for the youth who had education but could not find employment. The failed economic policy that only benefited the rich and enlarged the gap between the rich and the poor was also blamed.

Most of the editorials provided readers with a moral judgment about lessons learned from Egypt. Among the variables under moral judgment, “ripple effects” was prominent -- revolution in Egypt could spread to other nations. The contagious nature of Egyptians’ demand for political and economic reforms, triggered by the Jasmine revolution in Tunisia, led world editorial writers to caution against possible uprisings in other countries with autocrats, especially countries in the Middle East. Likewise, “corrupt governments ultimately fail and/or reform must start now” was also a moral lesson. Mubarak’s fall as Egypt’s last pharaoh served to remind the world that unresponsive governments that ignored the people’s desire for a better political and economic system will fail. His resignation also prompted the world editorials to moralize on the importance of swift democratic reform in Egypt to respond to the newly restive, newly empowered young generation that yearned not just for food but for basic human rights, respect and dignity. Moreover, the Egyptian uprising provided room for countries around the world to “reflect upon how their governments had responded to the uprising and what impact the uprising had on their countries.”

About two-thirds of the world editorials also dealt with treatment responsibility -- what can be done to solve the crisis in Egypt. They overwhelmingly recognized the importance of “starting the reform now” to establish a democratic political system that can represent the will of all Egyptians, and they also urged the new government or expressed confidence in the new government to assure a peaceful transition to democracy.

Differences Related to Political Freedom

The degree of political freedom, an extrinsic factor, did not affect how the editorials framed causal responsibility of the Egyptian uprising. All groups of extrinsic factor countries mentioned “political woes” as the dominant cause and “economic

woes” as the second cause. In assigning treatment responsibility, most editorials regarded immediate “political reforms” as the most important remedy for the future of Egypt. Even so, the percentage of this category among “not free” countries is much lower than “partly free” and “free” countries.

This factor, however, had an impact on how these editorials framed the moral judgments – lessons to be learned from the Egyptian revolution. Editorials from “not free” and “free” countries tend to warn against the “ripple effects” triggered by Egypt, while “partly free” countries stressed the lesson about “corrupt governments ultimately fail.” The reason for “free” countries, mostly represented by the West, to opt for “ripple effects” was probably because they had more of a global strategic view of the events that unfolded in Egypt, and this view led them to express conservative optimism about the prospect of democracy spreading in the Middle East. The “not free” countries, mostly represented by authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and North Africa, felt the repercussions of Egyptian uprising closely enough to become introspective in their opinions. The “partly free” countries, having a limited level of freedom to criticize their governments, felt compelled to use this historical moment to warn their governments of the consequences of not heeding to people’s desire for more freedom.

Differences Related to Religion

Religion, another extrinsic factor, did not affect how the editorials framed the causal responsibility. They all attributed it first to “political woes” inherent with Mubarak’s dictatorship and second to “economic woes” experienced by the Egyptians under the corrupt Mubarak regime. These editorials also prescribed “swift move to reform or democracy” as the dominant treatment remedy for the future of Egypt.

The religion factor affected slightly how the editorials framed the moral judgments. For countries of “Buddhist and Hindu” and “Islamic” religions, the moral lessons were found in “watching out for ripple effects” and “corrupt governments ultimately failing.” While “Christian” and “Judaic” countries also emphasized “corrupt governments ultimately failing,” they put more

emphasis on “self-reflections” of those countries’ responses to the uprising or the uprising’s effect on those countries. The reason of this difference may be because the editorials from “Christian and Judaic” countries were largely represented by the United States and the Britain in the Western block, and their responses to the uprising were deemed influential in the Middle East.

Differences Related to Geopolitical Regions

Geopolitical regions, the third extrinsic factor, slightly affected how the editorials framed the causal responsibility. All regions, except the “Middle East and North Africa,” attributed “political woes inherent with dictatorship” as the dominant cause for the uprising and “economic woes” as the second cause. Editorials from the “Middle East and North Africa” had slightly more mentions of “economic woes” than “political woes.” This result may be explained by the fact that most countries in this region have authoritarian regimes that would want to divert the world’s attention from politics that directly challenged their legitimacy with economic problems. The same kind of mentality was reflected in the regions’ framing of the treatment responsibility. While all regions framed “swift moves to democratic reform” as the most important treatment remedy, the “Middle East and North Africa” lagged behind with their percentage.

The geopolitical regions variable also affected the editorials’ framing of moral judgments. Those from “Asia,” “Europe” and the “Middle East and North Africa” emphasized “watching out for ripple effects” as the dominant moral lesson while also recognizing the lesson of “corrupt governments ultimately fail.” For “Africa,” “corrupt governments ultimately fail” ranked first and “self-reflections of the uprising’s effects on the nation” ranked second. Many African nations have long been entangled in government corruption, so they used Egypt’s revolution to reflect upon their own struggles and warn against their ruling class about the consequences of not heeding people’s needs and aspirations. For the “Americas,” which was largely represented by editorials published in U.S. newspapers, “self-reflections on the country’s response to the uprising” was the most important

moral lesson to be learned. The influence of the United States in global politics was again demonstrated in these editorials' framing of moral responsibility.

Conclusion

Overall, most world editorials framed the Egyptian uprising in this way: It was mainly caused by the political woes inherent with Mubarak's dictatorship; it served as a moral lesson in that the uprising could trigger political, social or economic repercussion in other countries, especially countries with dictators; and Egypt's future could be secured by the new government starting democratic reforms immediately.

The three extrinsic factors examined in this study affected in various degrees how the editorials framed the Egyptian uprising, especially in moral judgment -- the lessons to be learned from the events in Egypt. The editorials from "partly free" countries deviated from those from "free" and "not free" countries by framing the moral lesson mainly as "corrupt governments ultimately fail." The dominant moral lessons for editorials from "Buddhist and Hindu" countries and "Islamic" countries focused on "watching out for ripple effects" and "corrupt governments ultimately fail." The lessons for "Christian and Judaic" countries were "corrupt governments ultimately fail" and "self-reflections." Editorials from "Africa" and "Americas" deviated from the other geopolitical regions by stressing the importance of "corrupt governments ultimately fail" and "self-reflections on the country's response to the uprising," respectively.

This study captures world opinion during a key event in the Arab Spring -- the successful revolution in Egypt -- as expressed in English-language newspaper editorials. This study, however, is limited in several aspects. First, many countries are not represented in this study because they do not publish English newspapers or their English newspapers are not available in databases or available online. Second, while editorials in English newspapers in non-English-speaking countries can mirror elite opinions, they may not be a good representation of the overall public opinion. Third, the sample for the study is skewed toward English-speaking countries such as the United States,

Canada, Britain, Ireland and South Africa because of the availability of English newspapers in those countries. Future studies should look into Egypt's continuing struggles to find its footing in the post-Mubarak years and world opinion during other important moments such as the revolutions in Tunisia, Libya and Syria to see if and how world opinion changes, especially when the events are not always as positive or bloodless. Studies of non-English papers, too, would give a fuller analysis of world opinion. From a methodological standpoint, combining framing analysis in political communication with factors influencing international news coverage has proved useful in answering not only what the world opinion was but also why it was that way.

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