China Daily's western type framing of the Egyptian Arab Spring

Minos-Athanasios Karyotakis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece
Nikos Panagiotou, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece
Nikos Antonopoulos, Department of Digital Media and Communication, Technological
Educational Institute of Ionian Islands, Greece

Abstract

Existing research has mainly focused on the role of the media in the uprisings against the regimes of the countries that were affected by the Arab Spring. However, we do not have a lot of information about the way of coverage that was conducted by well-known media organizations, especially for the online English news of Chinese news companies, which are believed to play a more vital role in the global agenda setting due to the extraordinary economic growth and active diplomacy of China that has transformed East Asia. This study examines the frames of a sample of 92 articles (the content of the videos of the examined articles was omitted) about the Egyptian Arab Spring and the resignation of the President Hosni Mubarak in the English-language websites of Al Jazeera English, British Broadcasting Corporation, and China Daily from 9 to 13 February 2011. For the extraction of the frames of each article, this study uses the free online version of Open Calais. The main finding is that China Daily's coverage differs from the previous researches on news coverage, as it is acting like a western-type news outlet.

Keywords: AJE, Arab Spring, China Daily, BBC, Egypt, News organizations, Framing

Introduction

Mass media role in providing frames and dominant interpretations to the audience is critical. Facts in journalism should be placed in a context in order to put emphasis on a specific angle or frame that could provide a "central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning" (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 143). According to Entman (1993, p. 52) "Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described". Moreover, there is a constant communication between social movements, journalists and the prominent media. Those interactions and the provided frames are evident in the content of news. There is also frame setting, which focuses more on the individuals' prior knowledge and predispositions and the influence that is caused by his communication with the media's frame. This is one of the reasons why media framing can affect society and change attitudes and behaviours of each individual, leading to alteration of decision-making and political socialization (De Vreese, 2005). Media websites are evolving and expanding their services in order to attract more audience and influence the public (Antonopoulos, Veglis & Emmanouloudis, 2016; Antonopoulos, Veglis, Gardikiotis, Kotsakis & Kalliris, 2015; Antonopoulos & Veglis, 2013).

The Egyptian Arab Spring was a revolution for a more modernized country. Digital media organizations, such as Al Jazeera, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and China Daily covered this incident in there way because of the restrictions applied by the Egyptian state. The agendas and the different perspectives of the media revealed that there is no dominant narrative for the events that took place in that particular time in the Arab world.

In this context, it is important to examine also the impact of Chinese news organizations. Their importance has grown together with the extraordinary economic growth and active diplomacy of China that has transformed East Asia alongside with the will of the Chinese government to transform the domestic media into first-class international media outlets (Kenichi, 2011). The government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) thinks that this kind of expansion can provide the tools for spreading its messages around the globe. In July 2009, the most important television network in the country, China Central Television (CCTV), launched an Arabic channel that was followed in September by a Russian one. Furthermore, other Chinese media were trying to create new bureaus in abroad to gather more international news stories and inform better even their foreign audience. Another example of this process is the China Radio International (CRI), which founded in 1941. CRI's programme is available in 49 foreign languages. Its broadcasts are also available online and can be heard in all those languages, including six more languages (Ukrainian, Belarusian, Greek, Dutch, Icelandic, and Norwegian) that were added in 2009 and are exclusively provided via the Internet (Kenichi, 2011).

Online news organizations decided to frame according to their agenda the Egyptian Arab Spring and the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak. Based on the above, this study focuses on the English-language Al Jazeera, BBC, and China Daily websites searching for useful input in relation to the ways the web media outlets can shape public opinion.

Literature Review

During the Arab Spring, the English service of Al Jazeera achieved to 'mimic' CNN via creating its own 'effect'. Al Jazeera English (AJE) paved the way for the internalization of the movement. It brought harsh criticism to the Arab regimes and achieved to reform the movement. Moreover, its coverage attracted the interest of the American public, in spite of the fact that in the past the Americans had strongly opposed the news network. Tony Burman, Al Jazeera English's chief strategic adviser noted that the effect and the value of the Arab network are obvious, even to the eyes of the US government (Youmans, 2012, p. 63). Lastly, Howard and Hussain (2013, p. 99) contribute to this notion by saying that "it is Al Jazeera English that played a significant role in amplifying the distributed and diverse voices of the Arab Spring. Over the past several years, Al Jazeera English has grown rapidly in importance for mediating both transregional and international politics".

BBC also played an important role in the coverage of the Arab Spring. Specifically, in the case of Egypt, new technologies and social media networking contributed to the immediate and successful spread of the uprisings. Those that possessed mobile phones, which could be connected to the web and to immortalize the events, could report through Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. It was observed that less than 15% of the demonstrators had a smartphone (Duffy, 2011). However, they used their smartphones with great wisdom. Protesters had occupied Tahrir Square for 18 days until President Hosni Mubarak decided to resign. During all these days, there was a plethora of photo material and videos from the Square. This material was often being shared by well-known news organizations, including Al Jazeera and BBC, due to the limitations that had been applied by the Egyptian regime. There was no other way for keeping updated the public. For this reason, accounts of citizens in social media, who uploaded material of the demonstrations, gained many followers. Amongst their new followers were even professional journalists (Duffy, 2011).

As far as Arab Spring is concerned, China approached the uprisings in a rational way. It was involved to secure the life of its citizens and its interests in North Africa. In Libya there were 38,000 Chinese citizens along with a network of financial agreements that costs around $18.8 billion. In Egypt, there were living 1,800 Chinese and 300 Taiwanese that needed to be saved. Parello-Plesner and Pantucci (2011) argue that the coverage of the Chinese media organizations was focused almost exclusively on the attempts of helping the PRC's citizens, but there were also some liberal media organizations like Caixin that published articles about democracy and social change.

As it is known, agencies such as Agence France-Presse (AFP), Associated Press (AP), and Reuters are providing news stories not only on a daily basis, but also all day long. Media companies tend to rely on their content. In 2016, Sharadga proved that news outlets could form the dialogue about politics. In the case of the Arab Spring, according to Galal & Spielhaus (2012), media companies played the role of news providers and participated in the uprisings by sharing information and explanations with their point of view.

In 2014 Bruce examined the Arab Spring and proved the arguments of Benson & Hallin in 2007, which state that in times of turmoil the western media outlets tend to rely more on the political authorities (western-type).

Methodology

This study examines the frames of a sample of 92 articles (the content of the videos of the examined articles was omitted) about the Egyptian Arab Spring and the resignation of the President Hosni Mubarak in the English-language websites of Al Jazeera English, British Broadcasting Corporation, and China Daily from 9 to 13 February 2011. For the extraction of the frames of each article, this study uses the free online version of Open Calais (http://www.opencalais.com). Gangemi (2013) states that Knowledge Extraction (KE) tool, Open Calais, can detect the frames of a story and extract named entities with sense tags, facts, and events.

The sample was from 9 to 13 February 2011. The date February 9, 2011 was chosen because it resembles the peaking time of the uprisings that would lead to the Mubarak's fall. The date February 13, 2011 was chosen as the ending date because it was the second day after the resignation of the President of Egypt. Articles for this study were taken from the Google search engine for BBC and Al Jazeera website. As far as for China Daily the search was conducted from its own website search form. The articles were located by using separately the keywords "Egypt" and "Hosni Mubarak". All the English-language articles were read and included in the research as long as there was content, which was linked with the Egyptian Arab Spring. Open Calais located the dominant frames of the articles of the study in order to find if there is a western-type news media framing on the coverage of China Daily.
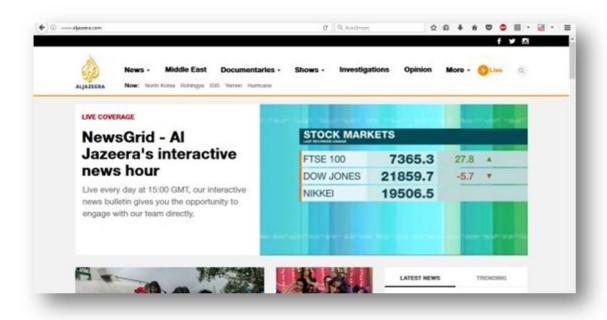

Figure 1: aljazeera.com website.

Table 1. The examined articles of Al Jazeera English

Al Jazeera English		
Title of the article	**Date**	**URL**
Q&A: Syrian activist Suhair Atassi	9 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2lROGsD
Who's afraid of the Muslim Brothers	9 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2uhThZE
Syria: 'A kingdom of silence'	9 February 2011	http://bit.ly/1op4leB

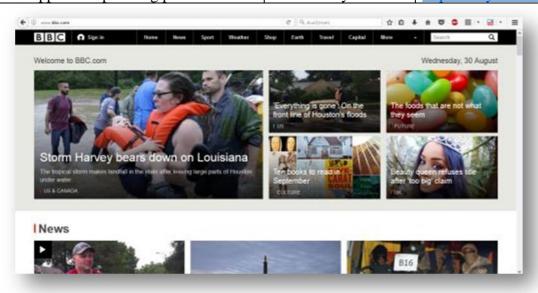|		
Egypt: Seeds of change	9 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2uZQotP
Egyptian army 'torturing' prisoners	10 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2uhA5uJ
The youth of Tahrir Square	10 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2v0qDtw
The tool for revolution?	10 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2tnCxvb
The poverty of dictatorship	10 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2tnDGmI
Algeria moves to stave off unrest	11 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2sYYzW3
Hosni Mubarak resigns as president	11 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2sYB2Ev
The resurrection of pan-Arabism	11 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2sYWPM9
Mubarak's failed last stand	11 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2ureZKT
Egypt: An idea whose time has come	11 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2umUkH2
Profile: Hosni Mubarak	11 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2ui3Agc
Watch: Mubarak's speech	11 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2sYzlHm
Statement of Egyptian armed forces	11 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2tRhxk3
Bahrain doles out money to families	12 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2fZvDcW
Triumph as Mubarak quits	12 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2tU6Pri
Egypt's military leadership	12 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2vl0chu
The rise and fall of Hosni Mubarak	12 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2tnebBX
To Mohammad El-Sayed Said	12 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2tTMbYF
Egypt through Iran's 1979 lens	13 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2tn6KL8
Algeria protesters push for change	13 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2urhFsi
Iran opposition planning protests	13 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2vlcTJ3

Figure 2: bbc.com website.

Table 2. The examined articles of BBC

BBC		
Title of the article	**Date**	**URL**
Internet role in Egypt's protests	9 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2tRd0OG
Profile: Egypt's Wael Ghonim	9 February 2011	http://bbc.in/1FdivZx
Lone tourists make most of empty Egypt resort	9 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2umGSTR
In pictures: Egypt restores damaged	10 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2urgn0g

treasures		
In pictures: Egypt protests	10 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2tnakER
Egypt's Muslims and Christians join hands in protest	10 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2sYJvHE
In pictures: Hopes dashed in Egypt	10 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2uqUZrZ
Egypt unrest: Full text of Hosni Mubarak's speech	10 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2sYtEsV
Iran jamming BBC Persian Television	11 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2tTvPiA
Egypt crisis: Premature celebrations on Mubarak speech	11 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2v03Cqu
Egypt unrest	11 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2uhFRwA
Q&A: Egyptian protests against Hosni Mubarak	11 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2uhC3LV
Egypt's revolution: Interactive map	11 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2taZs1C
Eighteen days that shook the world	11 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2tQVtGb
Did social media create Egypt's revolution?	11 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2tTsqk0
Moez Masoud: 'Pharaoh has let his people go'	11 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2uhB1zg
Syria opens up to social networks	11 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2sYVZis
In pictures: Mubarak's presidency	11 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2uhCl5t
In pictures: Tahrir Square clean-up begins	12 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2sYPJHv
Egypt crisis: President Hosni Mubarak resigns as leader	12 February 2011	http://bbc.in/1SYaZov
In pictures: Victory for Egypt's protesters	12 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2uhUqjP
Hosni Mubarak resigns: World reaction	12 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2uZY1QV
Egypt after Mubarak: A clean start	12 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2vkDMwD
Demonstrators clean-up Egypt's streets	12 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2tn6605
Egyptian Museum: Cairo's looted treasure	13 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2tb4yee
Hugh Sykes with his camera in Tahrir Square	13 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2tReCrI
Ahdaf Soueif: Protesters reclaim the spirit of Egypt	13 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2tn8J1K
Egypt's economy gets back on track	13 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2vlcExs
Egypt elections: Ambassador's assessment	13 February 2011	http://bbc.in/2vl95HG

Figure 3: chinadaily.com.cn website.

Table 3. The examined articles of China Daily

China Daily		
Title of the article	**Date**	**URL**
Egypt 'has power transfer plan'	9 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2ui8SIp
Egyptian govt to move forward with reforms	9 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2tnrmTx
US demands immediate end to Egypt's emergency law	9 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2uhDcTE
Al-Qaida in Iraq urges people to wage Jihad in Egypt	9 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2v0krSb
UN chief calls for 'order' in Egypt	9 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2vlnR13
IN BRIEF (Page 22)	9 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2urvVRx
Al-Qaida in Iraq urges Egyptian holy war	10 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2un7Drj
China supports Egypt's efforts to keep stability	10 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2tnBhIQ
Obama urges 'immediate, orderly' transition in Egypt	10 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2tbawM9
King warned Obama Saudi could fund Egypt	10 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2tRyU4v
Egypt unrest reminds investors of geopolitical risks	11 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2sYYPEu
Mubarak hands over power to VP	11 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2v0uBCi
PM says Mubarak may step down soon: BBC	11 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2tRH4d0
Mubarak transfers power to VP	11 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2tS1GBX
Minister: Israel must move ahead toward peace	11 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2vlDmpW

Chinese FM: Leave internal affairs to Egyptians	11 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2sYMCjb
EU presses Mubarak to open way to faster, deeper reforms	11 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2v0lWzN
Obama calls for credible path in Egypt toward democracy	11 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2uiawtR
Egypt's military to announce important statement	11 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2tTV8Rt
Sarkozy woos popular support for reforms at home	11 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2uhV2WI
Uncertainty clouds jubilation in Egypt	12 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2tbuK8O
Protests end Mubarak's reign	12 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2uiaz8J
Arab League chief hails Egyptian revolution	12 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2sZtmls
Egypt to respect international treaties - army	12 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2tRp16S
Behind Mubarak's exit: a military Coup	12 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2uioV9k
Iran's leader to Egypt: Beware of US	12 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2urOm8G
Mubarak steps down, military in charge	12 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2vlpWtT
China expects Egypt's stability restored at early date	12 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2to3Dm1
Ex-Envoy: Israel in trouble	12 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2tbs0YM
Thousands of Tunisian immigrants land in Italy	12 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2uipbVQ
Restore stability in Egypt	12 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2tTP9MQ
Newsstand Roundup	13 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2urMYTI
Egypt cabinet to stay for transition period	13 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2unk0mY
Egypt's military council dissolves parliament	13 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2vlpcVX
Israeli cabinet approves new army chief	13 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2tntIlk
Protestors to form council to talk with military in Egypt	13 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2umRoKI
Egypt's future concerns world countries	13 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2vlJIpl
Obama welcomes Egyptian military's commitment	13 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2tUi82S
Egypt prepares for a new era after Mubarak	13 February 2011	http://bit.ly/2v0eNj1

The limitations of this paper were the number of the articles, which were collected from a five-day period of time (9-13 February 2011) and the use of Open Calais for their classification.

Via the research question, this paper tries to find if the framing of China Daily media website can be characterized as western-type.

Results

The results show that the three news organizations did not focus on all frames equally. As shown in Table 4, Al Jazeera English, BBC, and China Daily emphasized the 'Public affairs' (42.39%), the 'Civil unrest' (41.3%), and the 'Human Interest' (13.04%) frame. The data show that 'Public affairs' and 'Civil unrest' were represented far more frequently than any of the other frames.

Table 4. The dominant frames

Dominant Frames	Percentage
Public affairs	42.39%
Civil unrest	41.3%
Human interest	13.04%
Conflict	1.08%
Economic	1.08%
Sports	1.08%
Number of articles: 92	

For Al Jazeera English, the most common frames were the following ones (Table 5): 'Civil unrest' (66.6%) and 'Public affairs' (25%). For the British Broadcasting Corporation the dominant frames were: 'Public affairs' (41.37%), 'Civil Unrest' (34.48%), and 'Human interest' (24.13%). Finally, in the Open Calais's analysis of the articles of China Daily's website there were amongst the most prominent frame stories, an article that could not be categorised, as its context is related to sports. Apart from this fact, the other frames are 'Public affairs' (53.84%), 'Civil unrest' 30.76%, and 'Human interest' (10.25%).

Table 5. The dominant frames for each news organization

Al Jazeera English	
Dominant Frames	**Percentage**
Civil unrest	66.66%
Public affairs	25%
Conflict	4.16%
Human interest	4.16%
Number of articles: 24	
BBC	
Public affairs	41.37%
Civil unrest	34.48%
Human interest	24.13%
Number of articles: 29	
China Daily	
Public affairs	53.84%
Civil unrest	30.76%
Human interest	10.25%
Economic	2.56%
Sports	2.56%
Number of articles: 39	

There were 92 articles included in the sample. The data reveal that 'Public affairs' (42.39%) and 'Civil unrest' (41.3%) were represented far more frequently than any of the other frames.

Conclusion

China Daily website issued online the most news stories (39/92) of the examined media organizations revealing that its coverage shed light to many different opinions. Its dominant frame, 'Public affairs', shows that it is acting like a western-type news outlet (Benson & Hallin 2007). Furthermore, it is believed that KE tools like Open Calais may have the capability of improving journalistic objectivity via displaying the frames of the news stories. Moreover, the citizens can use this kind of tools in order to detect some key elements of the news outlets' narratives that they want. In addition, the professionals of the field through these technological breakthroughs would be able to find a way even to restore journalistic credibility in the near future.

Overall, this study focused only on proving the different perspective of China Daily website. Additional researches for the Chinese or Asian news outlets may provide further results for the coverage that was conducted during the Arab Spring. Lastly, a quantitative research on the same sample of articles may display an even more useful insight for the understanding of the Egyptian Arab Spring.

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Contact email: minosathkar@yahoo.gr

MediAsia2017

The Asian Conference on Media, Communication & Film

The Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, Japan
Friday, October 27, 2017

The Art Center Kobe, Kobe, Japan
Saturday, October 28-Sunday, October 29, 2017

Final Draft Schedule

Please Check & Confirm
Please check that all information pertaining to you is correct
and notify us at mediasia@iafor.org if there is any error.
Please notify us of any corrections by **Thursday, October 5** 09:00 (Japan Time).

Final Schedule
After minor changes have been made to the schedule we will send you a link to the full programme.

The full programme will contain session information and a detailed day-to-day presentation schedule (including room allocations and session chairs).

This will be available on **Monday, October 16.**
Abstracts will also be available online at this time.

The International Academic Forum

Friday, October 27
The Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art

Plenary Day Outline

10:00-11:00: Conference Registration

11:00-12:15: Morning Session

Announcements & Welcome Address
Joseph Haldane, The International Academic Forum (IAFOR), Japan
Yutaka Mino, The Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, Japan

Keynote Address
Bradley J. Hamm, Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications, Northwestern University, USA

12:15-13:30: Lunch Break

13:30-17:30: Afternoon Session

Keynote Presentation: The Great Wall Story – The Way I Have Discovered It
William Lindesay OBE

Featured Presentation: The Disappearance of Silent Film and the Toy Movie Project
Yoneo Ota, Osaka University of Arts, Japan

Keynote Presentation: Fake News and the Attack on America's Freedom of the Press
Gary E. Swanson, University of Northern Colorado, USA (fmr.)

17:30-19:00: Welcome Reception

17:30-18:30: Conference Welcome Reception

The International Academic Forum

Saturday, October 28
The Art Center Kobe

Saturday Outline

09:00-09:30: Morning Coffee

09:30-11:30: Saturday Session I

11:30-12:45: Lunch Break

12:45-14:15: Saturday Session II

14:15-14:30: Break

14:30-16:30: Saturday Session III

16:30-16:45: Break

16:45-18:15: Saturday Session IV

18:30-21:00: Conference Dinner (optional)

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The Power of Facebook Over the State-Controlled Journalism: Recapture the Position of Vietnamese
Journalism
Le Thu Mach, Monash University, Australia

Within the frame of press classification theories developed from Siebert et al. in 1963 to Cain in 2014, this paper is important since it helps to navigate the current position of Vietnamese journalism in its transition from the Soviet Communist to the soft authoritarian style. The paper recognizes the challenges of the Facebook emerged public sphere over the state-controlled journalism in Vietnam through two case studies: Hydro-power Plant Song Tranh number 2 from 2006 to 2012 and the measles outbreak in 2014. The case Hydro-power Plant Song Tranh number 2 occurred before the prevalence of Facebook in Vietnam. For this case study, the author interviewed state-accredited reporters working in three management levels of Vietnamese journalism to understand the eight aspects of state-controlled in journalism, including: media licensing, patrolling, staffing, training, material supplies, access to information, distribution of media products, and TV and radio frequency control. The case measles outbreak in 2014 marked the begin of using Facebook to make influence on political realm, records a no-return point in the Vietnamese media landscape. For this case study, the author compared the contents of Facebook posts and newspapers coverage about the measles outbreak and interviewed the reporters and Facebook users generating the contents. The research finding highlights the changes in Vietnamese media governance, the shift to a greater sphere of controversy in journalism contents, and the entry of lay-people Facebook users in the realm of agenda setting, which challenges the ground ideology of the ruling party in this one-party country.

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China Daily's Western Type Framing of the Egyptian Arab Spring
Minos-Athanasios Karyotakis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece
Nikos Panagiotou, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece
Nikos Antonopoulos, Technological Educational Institute of Ionian Islands, Greece

Existing research has mainly focused on the role of the media in the uprisings against the regimes of the countries that were affected by the Arab Spring. However, we do not have a lot of information about the way of coverage that was conducted by well-known media organizations, especially for the online English news of Chinese news companies, which are believed to play a more vital role in the global agenda setting due to the extraordinary economic growth and active diplomacy of China that has transformed East Asia. This study examines the frames of a sample of 92 articles (the content of the videos of the examined articles was omitted) about the Egyptian Arab Spring and the resignation of the President Hosni Mubarak in the English-language websites of Al Jazeera English, British Broadcasting Corporation, and China Daily from 9 to 13 February 2011. For the extraction of the frames of each article this study uses the free online version of Open Calais. The main finding is that China Daily's coverage differs from the previous researches on news coverage, as it is acting like a western-type news outlet.

38611

The Importance of Practicing Social Media in Journalism
Yumi Wilson, SF State, United States

In the early years of social networking, users sent personal messages to one another, or a small group of family and friends based on the concept of "six degrees of separation" of connecting with friends, family and people you knew. This one-to-one communication method was a chief reason why social media was considered different from print or broadcast media, which had the power to broadcast a message to a mass audience. In July 2006, Twitter launched, introducing a newsfeed that could be seen by anyone and everyone. Twitter also allowed members to choose who to follow based on their content – somewhat like the