

THE FRAMING OF THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION PORTRAYED THROUGH
THE *ALJAZEERA* AND *CNN* MEDIA OUTLETS AND HOW THEY COMPARE AND
CONTRAST

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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

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CONTRAST

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a candidate for the degree of Master of Journalism

and hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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I dedicate this thesis to...

...My dear family, and in particular, my parents.

and...

...The love of my life, Lamees Abdul-Kafi, my wife.

and...

...My other colleagues in my profession who sacrificed their life in an effort to share the truth with the world.

and...

...The Missouri School of Journalism.

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THE FRAMING OF THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION PORTRAYED THROUGH
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the coverage of the Egyptian revolution of 2011 in the Arabic-language *Aljazeera* and the *CNN* news releases. By analyzing the framing of their news stories, this study compares and contrasts the news coverage of *Aljazeera* and *CNN* on the topic of the protesters, democracy, the Egyptian government, and the International community's response to the events, and more specifically, the United States' response. The results showed each media organization had its own framing and audience that it focused its news coverage based on that.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the recent uprising and toppling of the Egyptian government, it is meaningful to compare how two different and very prominent media outlets presented the unfolding of events of the protest in Egypt from January 25th to February 15th, 2011. This research attempts to tackle these issues by analyzing and applying framing theory to examine how *Aljazeera* and *CNN* portrayed and presented their story to their audiences. *Aljazeera* has been a source of vexation to the traditionally autocratic governments in the Arab World. It was able to change the Arab media's traditional role from being compliant with governments to being critical. The research also examines how news reports differ from each other because of the different political and social views and interests of the producer of news. Also, this study seeks to evaluate the way *Aljazeera* has added a new dimension in world news, both as a source of news, and a new source of diversity. Considering the ongoing crisis in the Middle East, the complicated relations between the West and the Arab world and the threat of continuing terrorist attacks, evaluating the impact of an Arab news source that has international influence could help reveal the nature of the Arab world, facilitating a greater understanding between a divergent culture as a necessary step to solve the mistrust and conflict that permeates Middle Eastern relationships.

Aljazeera's coverage of world issues has been the source of much controversy in recent years. *Aljazeera* scholar Mohammed el-Nawawy contends that criticism from both the Arab and western world demonstrate that *Aljazeera* is a credible source of

information. "The common understanding in the news business is that if you anger both sides you must be doing something right" (el-Nawawy, 2003).

As an outlet broadcasting from the Middle East it has been accused by many critics, especially in the West, of an anti-western bias. But it is the leading news channel in the Middle East and its coverage of the recent and current unrests in the Arab world has only reinforced that. The Egyptian government banned the channel through the uprising for a few days on the grounds that it was deliberately inciting violence and unrest in the country.

One common element perhaps in all of what has been written about *Aljazeera* is that it attracted much attention and, for better or worse, achieved some good degree of success. "All this trouble is from a matchbox like this," the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, once exclaimed when he arrived to take a look at *Aljazeera's* headquarters in Qatar (Whitaker, 2003). Mubarak's comment is reflective of the controversial nature of *Aljazeera*.

The significance of this study

This study is significant for several reasons. First, there are limited studies about how *Aljazeera* and *CNN* coverage of the Egyptian revolution. Second, viewers of *Aljazeera* are interested in knowing the truth about the events inside Egypt. So, given the importance of the current events unfolding all over the Arab world, and especially in Egypt as a leading Arab country, it is worthwhile to compare and contrast the coverage of these historic events in Egypt by *Aljazeera* and *CNN*. The very fact that these events took place very recently, would give a precious element of timeliness and as such value to this

research project. Finally, the growing of *Aljazeera* market and its political power in the United States make a lively debate in U.S. society. Therefore, this study will pose the following research questions:

RQ1: How did *Aljazeera*'s framing of the Egyptian revolution compare to *CNN*'s framing?

RQ2a: How was the topic of democracy framed by *Aljazeera* and *CNN*?

RQ2b. How were the protestors framed in the news stories? More specifically, how was democracy addressed or aligned to the activities of protestors and government?

RQ3: How did *Aljazeera* and *CNN* frame the government of President Hosni Mubarak?

RQ4: How did *Aljazeera* and *CNN* frame the response from the international community, and in particular the U.S., to the unfolding unrest in Egypt?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Aljazeera has won a loyal following among its 50 million Arab-language viewers as the first Arab news source to offer Arab viewers an uncensored, 24-hour news service that has provided them with “a chance to voice their opinions through live phone-in shows, as well as to hear the perspectives of opposition leaders, dissidents and intellectuals” (el-Nawawy & Iskandar, 2002; Hanley, 2004; Zayani & Ayish, 2006).

The network has achieved credibility by adopting western-style journalistic techniques and values that has earned it the title of ‘the *CNN*’ of the Arab world. Most of the reporters “initially recruited by *Aljazeera* were from the *BBC*’s Arabic television service, and they brought with them the *BBC*’s editorial spirit and style” (el-Nawawy, 2003). They have employed *BBC* and *CNN* as models in developing news-gathering techniques, such as seeking out multiple perspectives on the news;

Relying heavily on video and slick graphics and emphasizing fast-paced, sleek delivery from reporters and anchors, as well as creating news shows such as *The Opposite Direction*, based on *Crossfire*. Indeed, *Aljazeera* has created affiliations with *CNN* and other American networks as well as with the *BBC* (Sharkey, 2003; Zednik, 2002).

Aljazeera had long been praised by the West for breaking new grounds in Middle Eastern media and reporting of what many Arab governments don't want to report. “Its exclusives and the criticism drawn are on a global scale” (Sullivan, 2003, p. 1).

U.S. officials and Arab governments criticize *Aljazeera* and brand it as, “an unreliable source at best, and an irresponsible and dangerous source at worst” (Dresner, 2006; Kim & Jang, 2004; Nisbet et al., 2004; Zayani & Ayish, 2006). Arab governments,

which are used to government-controlled media that parrot the official government stance, “criticize *Aljazeera* for negative coverage of Arab leaders and for covering taboo topics such as sex, polygamy and government corruption” (Dresner, 2006; Kim & Jang, 2004; Nisbet et al., 2004; Zayani & Ayish, 2006).

Aljazeera is labeled by some in the Middle East as, “supporting western governments and being an agent of the CIA because it presents the views of western leaders, and was the first Arab network to interview top Israeli officials” (Kim & Jang, 2004; Mekay, 2004; Zayani & Ayish, 2006). On the other hand, western governments and journalists have accused *Aljazeera* of, “presenting the news, particularly the news of the Iraq War, from a pro-Arab perspective” (Kim & Jang, 2004; Mekay, 2004; Zayani & Ayish, 2006).

Hugh Miles (2005) describes the phenomenon of the *Aljazeera* news channel and its major impact on world news broadcasting;

The *Aljazeera* logo has not only become well known by its regular viewers, it is seen regularly on such stations as *CNN* and *Fox News* whenever they report on an *Aljazeera* report. In viewing the station, it has a similar appearance to other global news shows, with anchors that look like they do in the West, a ticker tape that appears along the bottom of the screen and live images from current events. However, the language is Arabic, moving from right to left in Arabic fashion, along with high-tech graphics. In other words, *Aljazeera*'s news looks and feels like any Western news station (p. 1).

In a style similar to the *BBC*, *Aljazeera* reports from all over the world, twenty-four hours a day, all year round. One difference becomes evident early on, however, and that is the lack of advertisements. News is the central focus, but there are talk shows and educational programs aired, as well as sports news.

Aljazeera established an agreement in 2002 with *CNN*, where Mr. Jasim Al-Ali, managing director of *Aljazeera*, described the agreement as the following;

Three or four months ago we had a meeting with them [*CNN*] to agree on cooperation, so that in areas where they are strong we would join in, and in the places that we're strong they'd have our support. It became formal around two and a half months ago and more so after Sept. 11. It's a long-term agreement, not just for this crisis (Sullivan, 2003, p. 1).

Aljazeera's rise to prominence following its breakthrough broadcasting in Afghanistan and its broadcasts of the Bin Laden tapes helped to expand its reach far beyond the Arab-speaking world. According to managing director Jasim Al-Ali;

The network's list of nearly two hundred thousand weekly subscribers in the United States and Canada is growing by five hundred weekly. These subscribers pay \$22.99 per month to receive *Aljazeera* on the Echostar's DISH Network, the Colorado-based distributor of *Aljazeera* programming in the U.S. (El-Nawaway & Iskandar, 2002).

Aljazeera does not deny that it presents the news from an Arabic perspective. For instance, "its Iraq War reporting focuses on the suffering brought upon civilians by the war" (Hickey, 2002), and contains "more criticism of the U.S. conduct in the war and less of Iraqi officials than other news agencies" (Ayish, 2006; Kolmer & Semetko, 2004; Wicks & Wicks, 2004; Zayani & Ayish, 2006). However, *Aljazeera* officials argue that they embody their motto: the opinion and the other opinion. Their talk shows, such as *The Opposite Direction*, are popular because they take on controversial issues and allow viewers to call in freely and express their views without restrictions. The goal of these shows is, "to present the audience with all viewpoints and to let them decide" (Al-Kasim, 1999; el-Nawawy, 2003; Snow & Taylor, 2006; Zayani & Ayish, 2006).

Many studies have tested the credibility of *Aljazeera* (Al-Jaber, 2004; Auter et al., 2004b; Johnson & Fahmy, 2006) and not surprisingly, its viewers have considered it a

credible source. For instance, Auter et al. (2004b) surveyed *Aljazeera* viewers through the *Aljazeera* website, and found that;

Overall credibility was approximately 3.9 on a five-point scale. Scores were highest for ‘reporters are trained well’ (4.48) and ‘accurate’ (4.22). Scores were lowest for ‘news stories do not contain too much opinion’ (3.17), ‘watches out for your interests’ (3.55) and ‘unbiased’ (3.65). Thus, *Aljazeera* scores were highest on providing an accurate, complete account, but viewers seem aware that the news is presented from a particularly Arab perspective (Azran, 2006).

Some scholars may argue that before the 1980s Arab media enjoyed few freedoms. Arab governments had too much control over television, believing that broadcasting, “should serve as a government operation designed to promote national development goals” (Cherribi, 2006; Nisbet et al., 2004). Television stations, “operated within ministries of information and were funded by the government. Employees were viewed as part of the government bureaucracy and thus enjoyed few press freedoms” (Ayish, 2002; Boyd, 1993; Kalb & Socolovsky, 2004; Rugh, 1987, 2004).

Ayish (2002) argues that the traditional government-controlled television system has been challenged by, “a reformist government-controlled television pattern and a liberal commercial pattern represented by *Aljazeera*” (Ayish, 2002).

The number of *Aljazeera*’s viewers has increased because of its unique coverage and unfolding of events. For example, the network’s website traffic jumped after the Sept. 11th, 2001 terror attacks in the U.S. from, “about 700,000 page views a day to about 1.2 million page views” (Curie, 2001, p1). Then it jumped to about, “two million page views a day in the first week after the U.S. strike on Afghanistan, and it reached about three million page views a day in the second week” (Curie, 2001, p1). More than 40% of

Aljazeera visitors are from the US, where “the highest traffic comes first from the U.S., then from Europe as a whole and third from the Arabic countries” (Curie, 2001, p1).

Lynch and Zayani describe the accomplishments that the *Aljazeera* channel has made in the Arab region and for the rest of the world as a whole. They describe it as bringing in a new kind of journalism to the region that is mostly controlled by government-led news groups. They further explain the anomaly of the broadcasting of *Aljazeera* in the Arab region;

With its bold journalism, boisterous political debate programs, hard-hitting news coverage, and multiple perspectives, it has brought in an approach to news and current affairs that was unthinkable in the not-so-distant past. Gradually, *Aljazeera* made itself an integral part of the political fabric of the region with a potentially significant influence on public policy and public opinion during a critical juncture in the history of the Middle East (Lynch, 2003; Zayani, 2005).

During the Egyptian parliamentary elections in 2005, the state-run Egyptian channels did not report the violence that accompanied the voting. *Aljazeera* ran footage of voters with bloody faces and thugs waving machetes while police officers stood by. *Aljazeera* also carried a news conference at which judges charged that the vote had been rigged and that police has intimidated people who wanted to vote (Seib, 2008).

Mustafa el-Menshawry wrote that *Aljazeera*'s coverage, “stifled official attempts by the state run stations to deny—or disregard—the electoral violations” (el-Menshawry, 2005). Columnist Salama Ahmed Salama commented on this that, “*Aljazeera* has initiated a transformation in Egyptian society. We would not have known about these violations if it wasn't for *Aljazeera*” (el-Menshawry, 2005).

However, *Aljazeera*'s aggressive journalism has caused as much restlessness and weariness among official Arab circles as it has earned respect and generated enthusiasm among many Arab viewers, so much so that it came to be perceived as the "enfant terrible of Arab media" (Maluf, 2006). In the Arab world, *Aljazeera* has irritated several Arab governments who perceive it as a threat to the authority and ideology of their regimes whose, "survival instincts continue to pre-empt any liberalizing impulse of satellite TV" (Sakr, 2000).

The first Gulf War was the last stance of Western communications dominion. *CNN*'s slogan at the time was, "The world is watching *CNN*". That was true because most of the world did not have much choice. Beyond *CNN* and other American and European information providers was;

A near vacuum in terms of global media. The dominant news, entertainment, and other information products may have had global reach but not global outlook. Political and cultural dominance could be perpetuated by such a limited system; other voices were not heard (Seib, 2008).

Shortly after the Gulf War, two factors began to rattle the status quo: the growing number of satellite television channels based outside the West, such as *Aljazeera*, and the Internet's expanding role. More satellite television channels;

Gave news consumers a choice between 'us' and 'the other'—the option to turn away from outsiders and instead gravitate to information providers that might be more parochial but also more deserving of trust (Seib, 2008).

Once they began to build an audience, the satellite news channels affected politics. Reports about an event such as the 2000 intifada could reach Arab populations without being filtered through Western lenses or government censorships (Seib, 2008).

In the West, *Aljazeera* has also been regarded with great skepticism, gradually becoming a lightning rod for controversy. Often criticized for being, “inflammatory, sensationalist, vitriolic, irresponsible, and propagandistic, it often came to be known in the post-September, 11 era as ‘Jihad TV’” (Timmerman, 2002), “and often as ‘bin Laden TV’” (La Guardia, 2001).

Through Western eyes, *Aljazeera* appears to be an alternative because it is the only alternative. That is also the case in the Arab world where the station provides contrasts to;

Most authoritarian and totalitarian media stations run by domestic governments, with institutional barriers of monitoring and censorship restraining their practice and ministries of information serving as clearinghouses for news. However, *Aljazeera* has become in some respects the de facto alternative media source for the Arab world (ElNawawy & Iskandar, 2003; Zayani, 2005).

Similarly, for many Westerners, *Aljazeera* has become, “emblematic of not only an alternative voice, but also a ‘native’ voice from the Arab world” (Bashri, 2008). *Aljazeera* quickly became the go-to alternative for alternative press on US policy. “Institutional and political-economic characteristics of *Aljazeera* as a station have instilled in it the very attributes that identify corporate media in the West” (Bashri, 2008).

Aljazeera clearly challenges the, “monopoly on international news by *CNN* and other Western broadcasters, especially in the Middle East, Africa and other places where audiences and broadcasters seek alternative views of world events” (Cassara & Lengel, 2004). In South Africa, *Aljazeera* broadcasts, “fill the overnight hours when state television is off the air, a privilege that used to belong only to *CNN* and *BBC World*” (Cassara & Lengel, 2004).

Time's James Poniewozik briefly observed that there is little difference between *CNN* and *Aljazeera*. "Western and Arab media are driven by the same imperative—to feed the hunger for human interest. Their interests are simply in different humans" (Poniewozik, 2003). The different audience seems to bring validity to *Aljazeera's* response to criticism from the West;

The interviews it airs would be carried by *CNN* or other Western networks if they had gotten the footage first. On the very day that American politicians and journalists were criticizing *Aljazeera* for the use of footage of captured British soldiers, the *New York Times* ran a large, color photograph of a dead Iraqi soldier at the top of its front-page—a picture so detailed that a family member or acquaintance would certainly have recognized the unnamed soldier (Kifner, 2001).

It is understandable that Arabs claim Western critiques of *Aljazeera* as hypocritical, and should be read as American discomfort with others exercising the very freedom and democracy the U.S. holds up to the world as a model. Placing criticism aside, observers note that *Aljazeera* "has produced another effect—it has given the 'Arab street' its first regional, if not global-media presence" (Kifner, 2001).

Cable News Network (CNN) is a U.S. cable news channel "founded in 1980 by Ted Turner" (Reese, 2001). Upon its launch, *CNN* was the "first channel to provide 24-hour television news coverage and the first all-news television channel in the United States" (Kiesewetter, 2008).

CNN is considered the "inventor and leader of the global market for commercial news programming" (Volkmer, 1999). *CNN* has been a major competitor and at times the dominant leader in world news. In 1980, Ted Turner introduced the world to his *Cable News Network (CNN)*. In one generation, the station became a "powerhouse that would soon overshadow the big three networks" (Goddard, 2005, p. 1). *CNN* came to

prominence due to its coverage of the first Gulf War. Fuchs (2005) describes that “the images of the war were dominated by *CNN* because of its live coverage in Baghdad” (Fuchs, 2005). Fuchs argues that this was the first "hyperreal" war, and the images were a “simulated virtual reality” (p.1). He also argues that this coverage “changed the image of war from one of fear to one of entertainment” (Fuchs, 2005).

Although *CNN* was the top-rated news show in the late 1990s, the ratings have slipped in recent years. According to Nielsen Media Research numbers, “more than twice as many viewers are currently watching *Fox News Channel* as to *CNN*”. On average, “in a 24-hour period 1.4 million people tuned into *Fox* while 610,000 watched *CNN*” (NMR). The reasons given are that *Fox News* has “more popular news talks shows, such as the *O’Reilly Factor*” (NMR). However, FNC said it "continued its dominance" over *CNN*, its chief rival, and said its numbers were “up 11 percent compared to May 2004” (NMR). Nevertheless, Time Warner, the owner of *CNN*, reported “revenues at just over \$1 billion in 2004 and its earnings at close to \$220 million, making *CNN* a continuing ‘powerhouse’” (Warner, p.1) in the news world.

CNN took other steps to try and counteract the growing competitive threat made by *Aljazeera*. For example, in 2002, when *Aljazeera* decided to begin broadcasting with English subtitles 12 hours a day in the U.S., *CNN* announced that it was entering into the Arab market by launching its Arabic-language website, based in Dubai. Tiare Rath (2002) argues that “the strategies of the news organizations reflect the realities of modern-day media, which with the internet and satellite television are fast making single-language content—unless it is in English—a thing of the past” (Rath, 2002, p.1). Other news outlets have “recognized the importance of multiple-language reports in the Middle

East, such as the *BBC*, which has radio broadcasts in Arabic and Hebrew” (Rath, 2002, p. 1).

Mahmoud Tarabay, a journalism professor at the Lebanese University and the Lebanese American University, said, “The actions taken by *CNN* and *Aljazeera* show that they are considering the ‘other’” (Tarabay). *CNN* already has websites in Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch. Its Arabic online operation would no doubt compete with *Aljazeera's* site and other online Arabic news services. A spokeswoman for *CNN* denied that competition with *Aljazeera* was the motivating factor in its decision to air in Arabic. Instead, it was described that the Arab market was a great one for *CNN*. This was coming at the same time *Aljazeera* was announcing its English website. According to media analyst, Ali Abunimah, “the Internet is a more appropriate step for *Aljazeera's* operations, while *CNN* focus is on getting its information out in Arabic through television” (Rath, 2002, p. 1). This is because,

In the Arab world the Internet remains for the most part the preserve of the middle and upper classes, while broadcast by TV, satellite and radio reaches even very poor households. This is an important difference. On the other hand, in the US, probably very few non-Arab-Americans will receive *Aljazeera* by satellite (Rath, 2002, p. 1).

Abunimah, a critic of anti-Arab bias in the US news media, said “even if *Aljazeera* does only reach a few Americans through satellite television, the perspective offered will be significant” (Rath, 2002, p. 1).

While *CNN* and *Fox News* are battling for ratings, *Aljazeera* has captured a giant international audience. Exact rating numbers on a daily basis are not available from the Arab world regarding *Aljazeera*, but *Aljazeera's* website is listed as “one of the 50 most popular in the world, with 161 million visits in 2004. *Aljazeera's* American audience is

increasing—it is listed as the fastest growing satellite network in America” (*Aljazeera*, 2005). According to Imad Musa, a news producer for *Aljazeera*, “around 45 million Arabic speakers watch it every day” (*Aljazeera*, 2005). However, although audience ratings are not entirely accurate, *Aljazeera* is able to measure numbers in North America, where *Aljazeera* has about “half a million viewers who subscribe to the station through Dish Network” (*Aljazeera*, 2005).

Philip Seib (2008) stated that “the news executives worldwide share the task of deciding what the audience needs and wants.” But nowhere else in the world do a handful of television channels have so much influence on “the content tenor of political discourse.” It is easy to use the *CNN-Fox* analogy for *Al Arabia* and *Aljazeera*, but *CNN* and *Fox* “moved easily into the stable continuum of American news media” (Seib, 2008).

Dimitri Litvinovich (2001) describes the impact that *Aljazeera* has had in the world of news broadcasting. He describes the recent developments as the “information war” (Litvinovich, 2001). *Aljazeera* rose up to challenge “monsters” like *CNN* and *BBC*, the companies that *Aljazeera* itself listed as its major competitors. *Aljazeera* replaced *CNN* in the Arab world as the most watched channel. Litvinovich states;

Aljazeera is like a window for the vast majority of the planet’s population to watch the events happening in Afghanistan. *Aljazeera* is gaining a lot of profit from the conflict in Afghanistan, just like *CNN* did during the war in the Persian Gulf War (Litvinovich, 2001, p. 1).

Awad explains that after September 11th, *Aljazeera* had the same type of monopoly on images that *CNN* had during the First and Second Gulf Wars. The channel had the sole rights to communication from AlQaeda. To compete with the West and its major competitors, “Its executives put forward the information market rules—taking a

high added value product, selling it to other networks and promoting it to advertisers through the ever-climbing audience share" (Awad, 2005, p. 83). Litvinovich further elaborated on the product value of information.

Aljazeera received \$20 thousand per minute for Bin Laden's speech. *CNN*, which had sole footage on the bombing of Baghdad in 1991, was forced to enter a contract with its competitor in order to be able to show what was happening in the region (Litvinovich, 2001, p. 1).

Pew Research Center conducted a survey in 2006 where it found some cause for optimism as Muslims and non-Muslims appraised the chances for democracy to work in Muslim countries;

Pluralities or majorities in every Muslim country surveyed say that democracy is not just for the West and can work in their countries. But Western publics are divided—majorities in Germany and Spain say democracy is a Western way of doing things that would not work in most Muslim countries. Most of the French and British, and about half of Americans, say democracy can work in Muslim countries (Pew Research Center, 2006).

Among other findings in the survey, "Concerns over Islamic extremism are widely shared in Western publics and Muslim publics alike. But an exception is China, where 59 percent express little or no concern over Islamic extremism" (Pew Research Center, 2006). Also, "Muslims differ over whether there is a struggle in their country between Islamic fundamentalists and groups wanting to modernize society. But solid majorities of those who perceived such a struggle sided with the modernizers" (Pew Research Center, 2006).

The Pew survey and others clearly indicate that attitudes among Muslims and non-Muslims remain highly changeable. All are using the increased flows of information provided by new communications technologies and news organizations. The most visible

of these suppliers is *Aljazeera*, which is both a prototype for the new breed of news organizations appearing around the world and a player in global politics.

Wadah Khanfar, *Aljazeera*'s director general, said in 2005;

Everyone is talking about change, reform, political transformation, and democracy in the Arab world. The realities are changing and so is what dominates the news. The whole discussion taking place in the region has found itself on our screen (*Aljazeera*, 2005).

That has impact. According to a report by the U.S. Institute of Peace, *Aljazeera* and other satellite channels “offer a locus for the Arab street to vent, formulate, and discuss public affairs. They bring Arabs closer together, breaking taboos and generally competing with each other and their respective governments for the news agenda” (Wright, 2005).

3. METHODOLOGY

Framing Theory

Framing is a process that develops frames in a story to communicate a narrative and drive meaning. Frames help interpret cues, define problems, prescribe solutions, and bring meaning (Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 2004) to help audiences make sense of the world they live in (Reese, 2001). Dominant frames, also known as frequent attributes, offer added salience since they emphasize only a certain number of frames with supportive cues that highlight a primary theme. Audiences interpret events and issues in accordance to the way they are framed by their sources for information (Lyombe, 1999; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Reese, 2001; Gitlin, 1980).

In the field of mass communication and journalism, media producers serve as main sources of information. The framing of messages by media producers influences how audiences understand and assess an issue. Those who provide such information identify certain aspects of an issue and make them more salient, such that the message is refined in a way so audiences will subscribe to a set of generated frames (Goffman, 1974).

The major premise of framing theory is that an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and be construed as having implications for multiple values or considerations. Framing refers to the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue. A more precise

explanation of framing starts with a conventional expectancy value model of an individual's attitude (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, Nelson, 1997b).

A frame in a communication “organizes everyday reality” (Tuchman 1978, p. 193) by providing “meaning to an unfolding strip of events” (Gamson & Modigliani 1987, p.143) and promoting “particular definitions and interpretations of political issues” (Shah et al. 2002, p. 343).

Entman gives an explanation of selecting and emphasizing particular aspects for the news media agenda. It is the fact of cutting and trimming news stories in order to filter and present it as the sender wishes. In turn, people who use framing to present their views concentrate on the attributes of persons, public issues or other objects when mentioning them (Entman, 1993).

There are four major functions of framing concepts described in media groups. These functions help news media highlight and characterize and emphasize certain issues or ignore them. These four functions are as follows:

- 1) *Defining problems*—determining what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits and is usually measured in terms of common cultural values.
- 2) *Diagnosing causes*—identifying the forces creating the problem.
- 3) *Making moral judgments*—evaluate causal agents and their effects.
- 4) *Suggesting remedies*—offering and justifying treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects (Entman, 1993)

Gamson and Modigliani (1987) conceptually defined a media frame 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”. Entman, offered a

more detailed explanation of how media provide audiences with schemas for interpreting events. For him, essential factors are 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. (Entman, 1993)

An initial set of frames for an issue is identified inductively to create a coding scheme. For example, the book, *Framing the Social Security Debate* (Arnold, 1998), would be an obvious source for gathering contemporary social security frames. Gamson & Modigliani (1987, p. 144; 1989, p. 7) suggest going further by examining the frames produced by various elite actors and organizations on both sides of the issue in court opinions and briefs, editorial writings, and the publications of interest groups or social movements (Brewer, 2003). This provides the set of “culturally available frames” in elite discourse (Gamson & Modigliani 1987, p. 144). These elite sources can be complemented by asking samples of individuals to record the considerations that come to mind on a given issue, using open-ended questions (Chong & Druckman, 2007).

The American culture is heavily emphasized through the American media outlets. It is composed of individuals whose priority is to care for themselves and rely on themselves to improve rather than go down to the level of those in need. American media is portrayed in a somewhat similar fashion. The American cultural ideal emphasizes self-contained individualism and tends to look unfavorable on those who rely too heavily on others and on society. It is clear through the media topics and ideas that this kind of individualism is conformed throughout the American culture. Conformity of such ideas

results in a wide-spread acceptance of a certain religion, political party, and even moral behavior.

Barkho (2006), as an example of the second thread of research mentioned above, compared the Middle East-related stories from the Arabic version of *Aljazeera* website to the Arabic versions of the websites of the *BBC* and the *CNN*. An attempt was also made to see how the two channels, the *BBC* and the *CNN*, tried to render into English and interpret the culture specific language used by *Aljazeera* broadcasters. Leon concludes by attributing the success of *Aljazeera* to the way it shows ‘respect’ for religion, culture, tradition and the aspirations of its audience. Leon adds that *Aljazeera*’s competitors, like the *CNN* and the *BBC*, ‘sorely’ fail to show similar ‘respect’ to these.

The theory of media framing informs and is applied through the research question concerning the recent events in Egypt and how *Aljazeera* and *CNN* compare and contrast in their ways of framing the revolution. By applying the theory of media framing on the current events of Egypt, it will be possible to find comparisons and contrasts between certain stories and articles. This research will utilize the theory of framing to analyze the way the two media organizations portrayed and framed the revolution. This will be possible through a textual analysis of certain words and adjectives that the two media outlets have used to describe the events in Egypt.

Al Jazeera and *CNN* were selected for analysis because of their large outreach, continued investments into international journalism, expansive network, and market growth. Both *Al Jazeera* and *CNN* reach dominate their respective markets with millions of viewers and readers.

Articles in both the online sites for *Aljazeera* and *CNN* were searched for January 25th through February 15th, 2011 on the subject of the Egyptian revolution and were collected for research findings. Research focused on how the two media groups framed their stories and portrayed their views to their respective audiences. Each article was analyzed and only specific relevant information was taken to show how they compared and contrasted in their points of view. Specific examples of framing of the Egyptian government, the protesters, democracy, and the international reaction were of importance to this study.

An initial sample size of 110 news stories was pooled from the *CNN* through Lexis-Nexis. Keywords such as “Egyptian revolution,” “protesters,” “democracy,” “Egyptian government,” “international response,” “uprising,” “demonstration,” and several related others were searched for the time period of January 25th to February 15th, 2011. After a thorough reading of all stories, a final sample size of 36 news stories was chosen for analysis. An initial sample size of 225 news stories was pooled from the *Aljazeera* news media through its online site. Similar keywords were searched except in Arabic to compare and contrast the findings. After a thorough reading of all stories, a final sample size of 48 news stories was chosen for analysis. These were all relevant to the topic of the Egyptian revolution during the specific duration of this research study. Obviously, *Aljazeera* had more coverage of the events that were relevant to this paper than the *CNN*.

Content Analysis

Content analysis allows researchers to describe the nature of the content of communication in a systematic and rigorous fashion. According to Sparks (2010), content analysis is applied to any type of communication, but is specifically appropriate for mass media messages because it allows the description of a wide diversity of messages that might otherwise prove elusive. Content analysis is a logical beginning point for the investigation of media effects because it discovers what content is present that might be bringing about various effects (Spark, 2010, p.21).

Content analysis is used to study a broad range of ‘texts’ from transcripts of interviews and discussions in clinical and social research to the narrative and form of films, television programs and the editorial and advertising content of newspapers and magazines. Lasswell, Lerner and Pool (1952) described content analysis as an operation that views verbal behavior in a form of human behavior that the flow of symbols is a part of the flow of events, and that the communication process is an aspect of the historical process. They also describe content analysis as “a technique that aims at describing, with optimum objectivity, precision, and generality, what is said on a given subject in a given place at a given time” (Lasswell, Lerner, & Pool, 1952, p. 34).

Content analysis is any research technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics within text (Stone, Dunphy, Smith & Ogilvie, 1996, with credit given to Holsti, p. 5). In more contemporary times, Weber (1990) says, “Content analysis is a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text” (Weber, 1990, p. 9).

Berger (1991) says, “Content analysis is a research technique that is based on measuring the amount of something (violence, negative portrayals of women, or whatever) in a representative sampling of some mass-mediated popular form of art” (Berger, 1991, p. 25)

Neuman (1997) lists content analysis as a key non-reactive research methodology (i.e. non-intrusive) and describes it as;

A technique for gathering and analyzing the content of text. The ‘content’ refers to words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes, or any message that can be communicated. The ‘text’ is anything written, visual, or spoken that serves as a medium for communication (Neuman, 1997, p. 272-273).

Kimberley Neuendorf (2002) is one of the most prominent contemporary researchers using, teaching at Cleveland State University and writing about media content analysis. She provides this definition,

Content analysis is a summarizing, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method and is not limited as to the types of variables that may be measured or the context in which the messages are created or presented (Neuendorf, 2002).

Noteworthy about Neuendorf’s definition is that she argues that media content analysis is quantitative research, not qualitative, and she strongly advocates use of scientific methods “including attention to objectivity inter subjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability, and hypothesis testing” (p. 10). Neuendorf argues that qualitative analysis of texts is more appropriately described and categorized as rhetorical analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, structuralist or semiotic analysis, interpretative analysis or critical analysis (pp. 5-7). However, she

acknowledges that “with only minor adjustment, many are appropriate for use in content analysis as well”. In *The Content Analysis Guidebook*, Neuendorf discusses an, “integrative” model of content analysis and notes that a range of methodologies can be used for text analysis, even though she maintains a narrow definition of content analysis (Neuendorf 2002, p. 41).

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

RQ1: How did *Aljazeera*'s framing of the Egyptian revolution compare to *CNN*'s framing?

Aljazeera has always been prompt at releasing warnings about the spread of the Tunisian revolution to Egypt. This came throughout the news story entitled *Freedoms conference in Egypt*, which was held on January 20, 2011, when a group of Egyptian political and law consulates warned of the dangers of a spark revolution to spread from Tunisia to Egypt. During this time, the Egyptian government continued to block the peaceful channels for change. Participants at the conference called for an end to the martial law, permit multi-party systems, freedom, and to implement judicial decisions issued on the invalidity of the election and address the corruption (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Egyptian opposition leader and Kifaya's leader Abdel-Halim Qandil said in an interview with *Aljazeera* reporters that, "The Tunisian uprising revealed the disability of security systems to withstand the anger of the people" (*Aljazeera*, 2011). He added that this uprising has sent clear messages to the regime and the people in Egypt, while they pass a critical year to obtaining freedom and democracy.

Also, Mohammed Abdul Quddus, the decision maker for the Freedoms Committee of the Egyptian Association of Journalists said that change must come from within the country. He elaborated about what happened in Iraq was a change from an outside country rather than from within and therefore the results were disastrous. He further explained that, "The most important lesson from Tunisia was not to wait for

change from outside or even from the organized opposite government groups, but to rely only on the citizen's uprising to end the dictatorships" (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

The First Day of the Revolution

Aljazeera's coverage of the demonstrations in Egypt started from the first announcement launched by Egyptian political activists named "April 6th Youth Movement" on Facebook's page dated January 23, 2011. This group was determined to run a demonstration called the "Anger Demonstration" and planned for it to begin on Tuesday in front of the Interior Ministry during which that day was a festival for the police department. They were sure that the government would be cruel in their reaction toward the protesters. That is why their main statement for their movement stated the following; "Get ready for martyrdom by the gunshots of security forces." They held the Egyptian government responsible for, "the explosion of the overwhelming social anger" similar to the revolution in Tunisia. Earlier, they had called on political parties and movements for mass demonstration to,

Condemn the torturing in police stations, but the interaction of the call through the media and Internet sites raised the ceiling of its demands to state political and economic reforms, particularly the abolition of the martial law, the resignation of the interior minister and the adoption of minimum salaries (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Civil and Political Rights of the Revolution

Aljazeera's coverage of the demonstrations in Egypt on the first day, January 25th, is quite different from the *CNN* and other media outlets. Since the first day of the revolution, *Aljazeera* shed light on the legitimate demands of the demonstrators, namely, groups of demonstrators on the streets of Cairo being described as thousands and sometimes even millions. In addition, *Aljazeera* gave legitimacy to the protests by

framing that the all aspects of the Egyptian people participating in their call for civil and political rights. It describes the demonstrations in detail and explains that they are demanding the ouster of the current regime;

For the first time in more than three decades, hundreds of Egyptian demonstrators moved from different places in Cairo and joined with thousands of others in dozens of demonstrations in different cities of Egypt. While the other demonstrations moved from several areas toward Tahrir Square in the heart of Cairo, Sunday afternoon, the total number of protesters reached to about 20 thousand. Demonstrators chanted for the step down of President Hosni Mubarak, in front of the High Court in Cairo. They also called on his son Jamal by saying, 'Oh Jamal, tell your father all the people hate him!' (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Marches in the millions of people all over Egypt is a popular revolution inclusive of all shades of the Egyptian people: Muslims and Copts, Seculars and Islamists, youth and the elderly, artists, clergy men, men and women and even children all calling for freedom, dignity and to put an end to despotism and the injustice of the existing regime (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Aljazeera reports that the demonstrations that swept through the largest Egyptian cities are not created by a call from a political party. They do not have a real leadership that represented it or that would state its specific demands, but are more empowered by the wrath of the Egyptian people. Protesters demand more attention to the living conditions, the economic and social developments. However, it evolves into a political slogan just as the revolution in Tunisia did. *Aljazeera* even went further by giving examples from the history of revolutions in Egypt against colonialism and occupation.

The successive events of January 25 are not the first of its kind in the history of Egypt. This large Arab country has witnessed a series of revolutions and blasts where hundreds of thousands of people went out to the streets in all cities, either to demand the demise of colonialism, the termination of the occupation, in search of bread and dignity, or to end corruption. The following are the most prominent of these stations:

The Egyptian Revolution of 1919

The starting spark was from the University of Cairo on the 8th of March in 1919 and moved to Al-Azhar, then spread to cover all over Egypt within two days. The direct reason of the revolution was the arrest of the leader, Saad Zaghloul, by the British colonial authority. But the real reason behind the revolution where all classes of people was involved in order to end the oppression and the exploitation by colonialism during the four years of World War 1. At that time, Britain confiscated crops and forced farmers and young people to join the fighting on the battlefields of Palestine, Iraq, Belgium and France (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Demonstrations on June 9 and 10 of 1967

When Israel defeated armies of three Arab countries, Jordan, Syria, and Egypt, Israel had captured the entire Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the West Bank from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria by June 1967; as a result the President Gamal Abdel Nasser announced his resignation on June 9th (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

The Bread Uprising in 1977

On January 18 and 19 of 1977, Egypt witnessed a popular uprising against the regime of the President Anwar Sadat in almost all the major cities from Alexandria to Aswan via Cairo because of the doubling of prices for basic foods, including bread (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Aljazeera mentioned on the second day of the revolution, January 26th that the demonstrators' use of the Internet and more specifically social networking in order to communicate with the rest of the protesters and to urge the people to continue their protest. The Internet is also used by the protesters to learn about the most up-to-date movements of security forces in the region and to advise the protesters of the easiest way to get to the places where the demonstrations take place.

Through the social networking site of Facebook emerged three main groups used by thousands of people urging a continuation of demonstrations and used it as a news platform. Mohamed El Baradei's group had joined these groups, involving three hundred thousand people under the slogan: "Together we will change."

Another group called the "Latest News" group with a slogan of: "I'll get my country's right back" and "We are all ready for EGYPT" called on young people to raise slogans of national unity in the daily demonstrations to gain sympathy and lobbied the army and police. Among those slogans for the groups where people are incredibly increasing every minute and reached 22 thousand: "Muslims, Christians, we all ask for change" (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Another Facebook group emerged called "And Egypt's Revolution Continues" posted on the January 25th Revolution Day was about torture, poverty, corruption, and unemployment. This group contains around 21 thousand activists and supplies the protesters with daily slogans such as "Bread-freedom-human dignity-and in the honor of you my country, it is only a cloud and it will pass" (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Abdul Hussein Shaaban said;

From the semantic uprisings of Tunisia and Egypt is the great role that was played by the media and the communications technology. One could no longer find any means of oppression able to shut down the modern technology, which was able to overcome the time and place and to transport the whole picture with voice and the actions to the rest of the world within just a few moments of any ongoing events. This is possible through the use of Facebook, Twitter, the Internet, and the mobile phone. Tunisians and Egyptians succeeded with excellence in achieving a peaceful revolution. By this kind of an effective approach of non-violence indicates that the Tunisians and the Egyptians have a high level of awareness of national culture to protect the homeland from the combustion and the preservation of the national blood (Shaaban, 2011).

On the 27th of January, *Aljazeera* frames that the all independent Egyptian newspapers collectively agree that the demonstrations are a popular Egyptian revolution. This revolution not rises because of any party or political side; it is a revolution against the corrupted government regime.

Most of the independent newspapers in Egypt wrote about that the January 25 demonstrations and stated that they carried strong implicit messages to the regime. They also claimed that the Egyptian people cannot stand any lower standard of living or the corrupted political system. These newspapers were unanimous at rejecting the allegations of government officials claiming that a particular group or party was standing behind these events (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Egyptian author, Mohammed El-Desoki, wrote an article in *The Independent Day* newspaper entitled “Egypt has transformed on January 25”;

The allegations that official media groups claimed on whoever was behind the revolution and the effort to reduce the size and the risk of further events as well as the silence of the government officials about what is going on, shows a clear confusion from the regime about this unusual scene on the Egyptian street since many decades ago (El-Desoki, 2011).

Protesters and Friday

Friday is often used in Egypt as the revolution day, where marches of millions start after Friday prayers in several cities all over Egypt. Protesters demand Hosni Mubarak and his corrupted regime to leave. As Sheikh Mazhar Shahin stated, in his preaching on Friday at Tahrir Square that, “the Egyptian revolution is a revolution of pride and dignity.” He also called on demonstrators to be patient and persist on the arena until they achieve their demands of changing the head of the regime, ending of the martial law, amending the constitution, abolition of parliament, and release of the detainees immediately, describing the martial law as a black spot in the history of Egypt. This law is the cause of the torture of millions of people. Shahin also emphasizes that this movement is popular and peaceful. There are no ideologies, referring to the cohesion of Muslims and Christians, the ethics of Islam or Christianity in the field. He emphasizes the legitimate demands of the revolution transformed the face of Egypt from the "black face"

into a face filled with pride, dignity, and liberty. He added, that everyone came to take back his denied right, emphasizing on refusing abuse and being patient on the abuses. The protesters stress in their chanting that the revolution is a popular and youth-based revolution, by saying, "our revolution is a popular revolution, our revolution is a Youth revolution, we are young, we'll free Egypt, the change is coming, and we will get our country back by our hands" (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Victory or Martyrdom

On February 4th, *Aljazeera* mentioned that Muslim and Christian religious leaders have a prominent role as they participate with protesters on Tahrir Square side by side with young and old from different parties and movements. Their role increases day after day in motivating the protesters to persist and continue until victory or martyrdom. *Aljazeera* frames the brotherhood spirit between Muslims and fellow Christians: "Since the first day of the uprising, a female Christian physicist moved to a nearby mosque to help in treating injured people" (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

As Friday is a special day in the revolution as well as Sunday where marches of millions started with a mass where millions of Christians in the heart of the field united with their fellow Muslims as they were questing to change the regime. Christians put an emphasis in being present among the protesters, by some raising banners that say: "The Copts want to overthrow the regime." These young men and girls walked with their crosses on their chests, raising the flag of Egypt. A Christian says, "This is a revolution of the Egyptian people, not only a revolution of Muslims" (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

A jurist and former Deputy Chairman of the Federation of Muslim Scholars, Dr. Muhammad Salim, participated every day in Tahrir Square among the demonstrators and asked them for affinity, unity and to renounce violence, he also said:

Do not dispute, otherwise you will lose your revolution, and do not listen to those who spread rumors. This revolution calls for ousting the ruler whom we don't trust anymore. It is a revolution looking for the application of the principles not only changing individuals (Salim, 2011).

The Egyptian Revolution in every Arab home

On February 10th, *Aljazeera* published an article written by Yasser Al-zaatrh, a researcher and a specialist in Arab affair. He mentioned that the common factors such as , culture, history, and religion in the region the Egypt's Revolution as a revolution of all the peoples in Middle East.

Any revolution—during the time of the satellite TV and communications era—have become less costly than the past days when the ruler would have killed thousands of people without any warning from news outlets. The entire Arab world bows down in respect for the great people of Egypt, and stand in solidarity with the blessed revolution. Not only because Arabs loves Egypt and its people, but for their commonalities with Egypt. First and foremost is the similarity of the culture, religion, language and the current and future issues in the region. Also, the Arabs realize that the Egyptians today are making the nation's history, not their own history only. When the regime changes in Egypt, one comes to reflect the desires of people, then not only of the Egyptians, but also the desires of the nation. After the honorable Egyptian revolution, the nation will not accept an aggressive ruler. It realized the secret of its own strength; and it will never ever give up until destroying the aggression (Al-zaatrh, 2011).

Also, on February 12th Brhan Gilon, a prominent Syrian opposition leader and a director of the Center for the Study of Contemporary Middle, and is currently the president of the Transitional Council of Syria, said about the Egyptian revolution;

What is happening in Egypt is a massive popular revolution that will determine the fate of the Arabs and the Middle East for decades to come. Because of the magnitude of the stakes of domestic, regional, and international interests, it was not necessarily a pitched battle (Gilon, 2011).

In regards of the Islamic Movements, *Aljazeera* shed some lights on Muslim Brotherhood from the beginning days of the revolution. On January 30th, Dr. Essam El-Erian, spokesman of the Muslims Brotherhood spoke to *Aljazeera* emphasizing that the Brotherhood has clear statement of participating in the demonstrations, as an integral part of the people, and that "the demands of our people are our demands for reform." Also they believe that Egypt is the door to change the Arab world (El-Erian, 2011).

In an interview with Chancellor Tarek El-Bishry, he said that with Mubarak's departure, it is the end of stage personifying the Egyptian state. El-Bishry answers a question of whether the Muslim Brotherhood in general is behind the uprising in Tahrir Square on January 25, by stating the following;

I do not think so, although they have contributed effectively, the Muslim Brotherhood as I know were involved in the movement as part of it, and as we can notice that they have participated without the use of their traditional logos such as "Islam is the solution," or God is great, and etc. However, they raised purely national and political slogans asking for democracy. They did not show Brotherhood traditional character's demonstrations. The youth were not wearing impermeable of Brotherhood, and did not claim that it was a Muslim Brotherhood demonstration. For this I would like to emphasize that the Muslim Brotherhood movement actually existed as a national movement in general not only as the Muslim Brotherhood (El-Bishry, 2011).

At the same time, the Muslim Brotherhood confirms that they share the same aspirations with the Egyptian people without looking for private goals:

They are not looking for private achievements, therefore they have declared repeatedly that they are not seeking a position of power and will not nominate one of them for the presidency. They also do not seek to obtain a majority in parliament, and consider themselves as servants for the decent people (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Muslim Brotherhood recommends and appreciates the proper orientation of the Armed Forces Council in seeking a peaceful transfer of power, citing the

establishment of a civilian government in accordance with the will of people (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Achievements of Egyptian revolution

Wahid Mofdel, an Egyptian writer, finds that breaking the barrier of fear among the Egyptian people is one of the most important achievements of the revolution. There is no doubt that the future of Egypt will be much better in the next phase with the most notable achievements:

The world and the Egyptians themselves are so excited to know that there are so much potential and huge human resources within the Egyptians people. In the past, Egyptians have often been marginalized and accused with a lack of vision. The youth groups, users of Facebook, Internet and social networking are the groups that brought this vision back to the Egyptian people and to the rest of the world. The world was shocked as well as the existing regimes of well-organized young revolutionary groups at the high level of culture and awareness of what is happening around them. The idea of freedom of expression was fully absorbed among the Egyptians, shown clearly in their diversity of citizens and different groups of people expressing their opinion freely, with the utmost courage and without a limitation of criticism or fear of the security men's stick (Mofdel, 2011).

Egyptian events are not free of violence and blood since the early days of the demonstrations. *Aljazeera* confirms that there are many dead and injured among the protesters and police;

The total number of people killed has not been confirmed till now during the continued four days' protests across Egypt. There are no official figures of the clashes. However, through medical sources, the number of injuries throughout Egypt reached over two thousand and continues to escalate. (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

RQ1: How did CNN's framing of the Egyptian revolution compare to *Aljazeera's* framing?

Is Egypt like Tunisia?

The *CNN* news stories and coverage of the Egyptian revolution are different than *Aljazeera*. *CNN* news reporters analyzed the viewpoints of several analysts in Cairo and the United States such as Juan Cole, a Middle Eastern historian at the University of Michigan and blogger, and Abigail Hauslohner, a writer for Time.com in Cairo. Both analysts agreed that Egypt will not follow Tunisia because the situation is much different for Egypt.

On January 25, 2011, the start of the Egyptian Revolution, *CNN* published an article entitled “Will Egypt follow Tunisia’s lead?” Mamoun Fandy was interviewed and he shared his opinion about the future for Egypt as he saw it. He stated that he was not “seeing a turning point or tipping point yet” (*CNN*, 2011).

Antigovernment demonstration

On the second day of the revolution in Egypt, the 26th of January, news stories in *CNN* described the protesters as a few thousand antigovernment individuals.

The Interior Ministry put the size of the Tuesday demonstration in Cairo's Tahrir Square at 10,000 at its peak, falling to 5,000. *CNN* estimated that demonstration peaked at 15,000 to 20,000 (*CNN*, 2011).

CNN news stories also described why the Egyptian protesters took to the streets which caused a wrath among the security forces because of the rising cost of living, failed economic policies, corruption, and finally the ouster of President Hosni Mubarak was the most important of their demands. These complaints were not new to Egyptian authorities, as reported by *CNN*, and protesters believe they were given the simple lip service to their grievances.

Chaos on the streets of Cairo

On the 30th of January, five days after the revolution, *CNN* shared the fear and chaos evident on the streets of Cairo during the night. Many streets in the capital were left without security forces and were left with community leaders to protect themselves. Kareem Amer told the *CNN* that houses were being robbed and looted. Gunshots were heard throughout the nights disturbing the sleep. As with most revolts and rivalries, looting and robberies were present in Egypt. *CNN* released stories from the Egyptian-State-run Nile TV on January 30th of individuals confessing of their acts of crime. It aired images of men confessing to involvement in looting. "A school teacher said he had been involved in looting at a Cairo museum. Three others said they had stolen items from a supermarket in a suburb of the city" (*CNN*, 2011).

Fears of the aftermath of the revolution

The skepticism of the future relations of the United States and Israel with Egypt is high in the news coverage of the *CNN*. The United States has less leverage in the region of the Middle East, especially after Iran expressed its defiance on its nuclear program in the face of tough sanctions. As a result of the unfolding of events in Egypt, *CNN* reporters were skeptical of who will replace the current regime. One group that could rise to power in Egypt after Mubarak is the Muslim Brotherhood. On February 2nd, *CNN* exposes United States officials' fear from such a scenario;

U.S. officials feel that the Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt's main Islamic political organization, has been very sophisticated in its handling of the people's revolt. The group deliberately stayed out of the fray in the early days of the protests,

allowing other Egyptians to lead the charge for fear Mubarak would cite fears of extremist activity in cracking down on the demonstrators (Labott & Levs, 2011).

In mentioning the consequences of the revolution in Egypt, *CNN* frames its fears of what that will cost not only the United States, but also Israel. On February 7th, *CNN* warned of an Islamic fundamental state that will close its doors for Egypt's long loyal allies with the United States and Israel as what happened in Iran in 1979;

If Mubarak stifles the revolution, or fundamentalism takes hold, realists will, for a long time, point to Egypt as the prime example of why we cannot hope for much better than the status quo when it comes to the Middle East (*CNN*, Zelizer, 2011).

CNN sheds some light on the fears that the United States and Israel are facing if there was a possibility of an Islamic overthrow of the government. On February 15, 2011, after Mubarak resigned, *CNN* predicted that the fall of a very strong ally in the Middle East would bring the Islamic movements to power and the United States would be the bigger loser. With that it brings some key historical examples that show just what a revolt similar to this resulted in the past. The example that comes up most often is the Iranian Revolution in 1979;

On November 4, 1979, students and workers stormed the U.S. embassy in Tehran and took 52 diplomats hostage. Although Americans had seen a series of major terrorist incidents in the 1970s, none had hit so close to home and none demanded attention like the hostage crisis. The television networks devoted unprecedented attention to it. ABC launched "The Iran Crisis: America Held Hostage," a show every weeknight after the local news devoted exclusively to the crisis and which later became "Nightline" (Zelizer, 2011)

In another passage, the example of the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan was given;

Another unfolded on December 27, 1979, when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. The Soviets had close ties to the Marxist government of Afghanistan, but Islamic fundamentalists had allied with various tribal leaders to fight against the government. The rebellion caused tremendous difficulty for the Soviets, who invaded to re-establish control in this troublesome country on its border (Zelizer, 2011)

CNN's Arab reporters have different views

Interestingly, several Arab journalists wrote their news stories for *CNN* during the Egyptian revolution. Clearly, their opinions have a different way of describing the events and the Muslim Brotherhood. This could be due to their proximity and relationship to the region in terms of cultural awareness and the recent uprisings in the region during the last decade. One of them is Khaled Fahmy who wrote an article entitled “Muslim Brotherhood should get seat at table.” In that he mentioned how President Hosni Mubarak painted the picture of the Muslim Brotherhood to his Western allies. Fahmy stated that Mubarak claimed the Muslim Brotherhood’s “social and welfare activities were only a façade hiding more sinister intentions. [Egyptian Islamic Jihad and Gama’s Islamiya] split from the Brotherhood because they were impatient that it renounced violence and has given up on armed struggle” (Fahmy, 2011). This shows that President Mubarak was instilling fear in the United States from the Islamic groups in Egypt for three decades. Comparing *CNN* reporters’ points of view, Khaled Fahmy shares his views in the following passage;

Since the eruption of the Egyptian revolution last month, I have been on Tahrir Square with millions of other Egyptians calling for freedom and dignity. Over these weeks the square has been filled with people from all walks of life: young and old, Muslim and Copt, rural and urban, rich and poor, secularists and observant Muslims. As a secularist, I am not in favor of the Muslim Brotherhood

coming to power in Egypt, and I remain deeply skeptical of its political program, believing that much of it is vague and impractical. But as an Egyptian hoping for freedom and justice for my country, I am deeply convinced that the Muslim Brotherhood has a place within a free and democratic Egypt (Fahmy, 2011).

RQ2a: How was the topic of democracy framed by *Aljazeera*?

Since the events of Tunisia, *Aljazeera* connects the idea of the end of dictatorships and the beginning of promoting democracy in the Arab countries. The barrier of fear has gone among Arab people. There is a hope for the Arabs to get rid of repressive authoritarian regimes. On January 15, 2011, *Aljazeera* published an article entitled, "Is Tunisia the beginning of the fall of the dominoes?" It stated;

Democracy in the past few decades took place of tyranny in regions of the world where there were suffering dictatorships, however, the Arab governments were almost united on tyranny and having a tight security grip (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Wahid Mofdel notices that one of the reasons for public outrage against Mubarak and his regime that he does not fulfilling his promises that he claimed during 30 years ago. Some of these promises claimed prosperity, improving citizen incomes, establishment of a sound democratic regime, and presidential elections. The promise to end the martial law during his time kept reoccurring but he never able to achieve or fulfill them (Mofdel, 2011).

On the 31st of January, *Aljazeera* released an article by Omar Kush, an Egyptian writer, he said that the demonstrations of the Egyptian people have proved the aspiration of the Arab people and their longing for democracy, freedom, social justice with other values, and the basic human rights. He accused all cultural categories, terms such as "exception" and "intractability" of the Arabs to practice the democracy. He also criticized those who said that Arab people are satisfied with tyranny and injustice (Kush, 2011).

Hence, what is needed is the political and human rights recognition of the reality in the Arab countries, namely building a democracy and giving everyone their full rights

of citizenship at all levels; political, social, economic, and cultural. Also, the case of making democratic transitions in a peaceful way is a matter of urgency too, not only for Egypt, but for all Arab countries to ensure they have a real way out of their crisis and to secure the overall structural. The issue of democratic change has become a main title of the change required in all other Arab countries (Kush, 2011).

On the 1st of February, the famous Egyptian journalist and intellectual activist Fahmi Howeidi wrote to *Aljazeera* an article entitled: *Egypt from Paranoiac to Democracy*, he described what happened in Egypt as the stolen dream from a long time ago;

What happened in Egypt is that we have restored the dream that was stolen from us for several decades. We may then wish to proclaim with desire to move from the Paranoiac era to democracy. Also, we express our hope that Egypt passed from the rule of one individual to the rule of the whole people, and from loyalty to the president to the loyalty to the nation, and from shortness of emergency to freedom and vast horizons (Howeidi, 2011).

The second half of the revolution is the democracy.

All that happened in Egypt of mass protests is only half the battle where people have succeeded to achieve a peaceful revolution. This indicates that the Egyptians have achieved a high level of awareness and national culture to protect their homeland from falling down. Now, time comes to move forward to complete the other half of the battle by reconstruction, redevelopment, democracy, and welfare (Shabn, 2011).

The National Association for Change emphasizes on the only way to save Egypt is to make a peaceful democratic transition and to respond to people demands;

The only way to save Egypt from a dangerous future is to listen immediately to the people's desire for a repeal of the martial law. Also, to resolve the fraudulent parliament and to hold free and fair elections based on international standards, with the formation of a transitional government that runs the country until the Constitution is amended (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Aljazeera released its interview on the 6th of February with one of the most prominent figures among the protesters on Tahrir Square is Abraheem Abdul Majeed. He said that Egypt has now transformed into a free and democratic society by a generation of Egyptians who have suffered from aggression. He further elaborated stating that, The Egyptian people are achieving great victories on the path towards democracy and freedom. He described Mubarak's regime as, corrupted regime, bankrupt, plundered the wealth and killed its people with a police state that allows the police to torture people and imposes the martial law (Majeed, 2011).

In another example, Nabil Shabib, an Egyptian author, he argues that the involvements of Western policies with the Arab revolutions are disappointing as it is based on unrealistic expectations. He said:

When some Western politicians support their stand by mentioning democracy, human rights, and freedoms, it is often for the sake of propaganda, it is not real politics. They consist on the form of the words and how it is stated rather than what is stated in context. The actual strategies provided by western politicians, whether individually or collectively, are to install the visions that would help the western governments by having more control and influence in the Middle East, regardless of giving interests of the Arab and Muslim world (Shabib, 2011).

Shabib says that the official Western attitudes regarding events of Egypt are issued based on out-of-control situations and have no idea how to influence them in a way to keep insured deals with the consequences, including preserving constants with Western policy goals. It is widely expressed between the Western political elite. As an

example, the former German chancellor Helmut Schmidt said in his book, *Out of Service*, that Arab and Muslim peoples cannot be ruled by democracy, rather they require a totalitarian regime. Indeed, what is meant by this phrase and others in the West, and which politicians use as an excuse to explain their support of tyranny and are able to market this to the public, simply that the practice of democracy in the Arab and Muslim countries do not bring regimes of Western favor or style in a way as the current one guaranteed, a method based on dominance of politics, security, economic exploitation and finances (Shabib, 2011).

RQ2a: How was the topic of democracy framed by CNN?

Unlike *Aljazeera*, *CNN* news stories differed in their perception of the idea of democracy in Egypt. It framed its stories based on the ideology that the United States believes that stability in the region is the top immediate priority. On January 30, 2011, *CNN* interviewed United States Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, about her views of the whole situation. She stated that the situation is very ‘complex’ and ‘difficult.’ It would require careful considerations and progress towards a peaceful transition towards democracy. She further stated that;

Protesters seeking better opportunity and a stronger political voice might end up facing further repression from new leaders instead of the democratic reforms they seek. There's no easy answer, and, clearly, increasing chaos or even violence in the streets, prison breaks, is not the way to go (Clinton, 2011).

Democracy is skeptical

Democracy in the Middle East and elsewhere is an everlasting concern for western interests. In the case of the Egyptian Revolution, *CNN* analyzes the effect of this revolution on the topic of democracy in that region and whether it would be evident in the future. In an interview with *CNN* with Eli Shaked, Israel's ambassador to Egypt from 2003 to 2005, on February 2nd, Shaked predicted that democracy will not be possible after the fall of President Hosni Mubarak. He is also fearful of the breakage of the bonds between Egypt and Israel after a possible rise of an Islamic regime in Egypt;

If Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's regime falls, a new Islamist regime, hostile to Israel and western nations, will replace it. There will be no democracy in Egypt. If there will be democratic elections in Egypt in the summer or in the very near future, (they) will be the first and last democratic elections in Egypt (Shaked, 2011).

As for the continuous fear of Egypt's future, *CNN* attempts to put the real picture for the people. It poses the idea that President Hosni Mubarak has left his power and the effect that result not only for the Middle East, but also for the United States.

Now, this leader, who for decades has been not just the symbol of Egypt but a dominant voice in the Middle East, will be leaving, and nobody is sure what will emerge in his wake. The effects will be felt not just in the Middle East but back in the United States. Today, the U.S. has less leverage in the region than ever before (Labott & Levs, 2011).

Elaborating on the fears of the future of the Middle East, *CNN* published an article entitled "Should top US goal be democracy?" by Julian Zelizer on February 7th to further explain the reasoning behind these fears. He talked about the reality dealing on the international level, especially when it comes to working with rulers that do not fully abide by democratic ideals. He mentioned that, "In American diplomatic circles, the

‘realists’ have long argued that the US must be primarily focused on national self-interest, rather than concentrating on trying to promote democracy and human rights in other countries” (Zelizer, 2011).

Zelizer gave further details from Jeane Kirkpatrick’s 1979 article entitled “Dictatorships and Double Standards” where she disputed the stance of the US in cooperating with international rulers who are not democratic. She argued that “often the US could not be on the side of democracy if it meant supporting governments that would be hostile to US interests” (Zelizer, 2011). Other realists claimed that “it is impossible for democracy to take root in the Middle East given the history of the region. To protect strategic interests such as access to oil, it is essential to make peace with bad rulers” (Zelizer, 2011).

CNN further describes the possibility of having democracy in the Middle East as very little in an article on February 9th, 2011. This news story sheds some light on the American idea of how the Arab world may deal with a true democracy and how it was not compatible with the strong ties to their religion.

We often think of Muslims as extraordinarily religious and eager to combine religious and political authority. According to late-night favorite Bill Maher; ‘Muslims still take their religion too seriously. Whereas, we have the good sense to blow it off.’ Maher may be joking, or he may really believe as and many others do that Muslims' religiosity inclines them to theocracy and jihad rather than democracy and reason (Fish, 2011).

Still others are very skeptical of the presence of democracy in Egypt and in the Middle East in general. On the 11th of February, after the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak, Johns Hopkins' Muravchik cautioned that, "One election does not make a

democracy." He goes on to state that, "there are a wealth of problems in Egypt and democracy is not a silver bullet that will cure them all" (Muravchik, 2011).

Again, with regards of democracy in the Middle East, *CNN* news reporters who are of Arab descent have totally different views of democracy in the Middle East and more specifically in Egypt. Dean Obeidallah stated in his article entitled "Yes, Arabs Can!" on February 11, 2011 what democracy in the Middle East means to him and other Arabs across the region.

The Egyptian revolution, which kicked off on January 25 and culminated in less than three weeks with Mubarak's departure, is a groundbreaking moment for the country: An end to a 30-year repressive regime, a demand by Egyptians for democracy and freedoms, etc. But to me, as an Arab-American, and to many, many young Arabs across the region, it's bigger than Egypt. It's about Arab self-empowerment. It's about believing that you can control your own destiny. It's about allowing yourself to dream of a better life and actually believing that it could happen (Obaidallah, 2011).

RQ2b. How were the protestors framed in the news stories by *Aljazeera*? More specifically, how was democracy addressed or aligned to the activities of protestors and government?

Since the announcement for a specific day to protest, *Aljazeera* shed light on the Muslim Brotherhood activists and some other politicians who were arrested by Egyptian authorities. Before the demonstrations of the 25th of January by two days, the Interior Minister stated that security will deal harshly with the protest and issued a security warning to arrest everyone involved, because the demonstration was not approved by a permit. On the opposite side, a number of politicians and Egyptian government officials warn of risking along with the spark of Tunisia's revolution into Egypt in case the Egyptian government continuing to close the channels of peaceful change, also they pointed out that Egypt is witnessing a turmoil that threatens to a serious level and may lead citizens to move towards change by force. The activities demand to dissolve the people's assembly, hold a re-election, to abolish the martial law, and launch the freedom to establish political parties, implement judicial decisions issued on invalidity of the election, and tackle corruption in the country (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Egypt's security and the April 6th Movement exchange warnings

Aljazeera mentioned on the 25th of January, The April 6th Youth Movement warns the Egyptian Interior Ministry of dealing violently with activists and demonstrators who will come down on the streets on the day of the police festival. At the same time the, Egyptian government warns the protesters that they will face arrests if they go ahead with organizing the protests (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

The Movement described the statement of Egyptian Interior Ministry which stated that it will firmly confront any demonstration as an arrogant and not new. The government refuses to give the necessary permits, and then deals with repression with the masses under pretext of lack of access to permit of demonstration (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

The Movement warns the Interior Ministry of trying to hire thugs and insert them within the demonstrators to make fights and attacks on public property, then take this as an excuse to crush the demonstrators and labeled them as vandals and outlaws (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Witnesses describe Tahrir Square's clashes

On the 2nd of February, *Aljazeera* shared news stories were told by many activists and protesters in Tahrir Square which showed that the Egyptian security forces were behind the acts of looting, attacks on protesters, the intimidation of demonstrators, and to give an excuse to the government to deal harshly with the revolution on the pretext to impose security in the country.

A number of journalists and activists in Cairo's Tahrir Square gave a live testimony to *Aljazeera* during violent confrontations that began between protesters who were calling for the President Hosni Mubarak and his supporters to leave. They called most of them as "thugs." A unanimous testimony said the attack on protesters in Tahrir Square was organized, run in favor of the Mubarak regime authorities. The main objective was to terrify the people who became angrier after the president's speech which made them even more determined insisting on the ousting of the whole regime today before tomorrow (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Gunmen terrorize the Egyptian protesters

Aljazeera sources indicated that a large group of armed men or "thugs", as the Egyptians call them, were attacking protesters in Talaat Harb Square, near Tahrir Square.

The sources added that "thugs" were carrying weapons and sticks, wearing military uniform, walk in Giza and Cairo hostile Cornish. Also, there were people in civilian clothing carrying white weapons and attacked demonstrators in Port Said. The witnesses confirmed that most of those attackers were arrested. Later on, these arrested were policemen (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

One of the most frequently repeated vocabulary words in *Aljazeera* news stories was the word "thugs." Protesters call attackers and supporters of the President, who used violence against the peaceful protesters and were heavily populate on the field.

Aljazeera's source indicated that the attackers began heavy firing in Tahrir Square. The source added that the "thugs" were roaming around Tahrir Square and the streets leading to it, along with patrols of security. Protesters in Tahrir Square were attacked by "thugs" in favor of Mubarak. They were armed with petrol bombs and knives, which led to more than 1500 wounded, amid criticism to army men for not intervening to prevent the insurgents from the attack on the unarmed demonstrators (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Thugs behind the attacks on journalists

Within the same context, one of *Aljazeera's* sources indicated that the so-called "thugs" broke into Ramses Hilton in Cairo looking for journalists.

The sources added that cameras of reporters were banned from getting in Tahrir Square and the surrounding areas. They also attacked a number of international correspondents. Those who were described as thugs took the cameras mounted on tall buildings surrounding the square. Two of *Aljazeera* English's journalists were attacked and beaten by the "thugs" near Tahrir Square. Another three of *Aljazeera's* journalists were arrested in Cairo (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Marches in favor of Mubarak

Interestingly, *Aljazeera* released a story on the 2nd of February about a group of participants in rallies supporting of President Mubarak. They described their opponents gathered in Tahrir Square as "traitors", emphasizing that keeping Mubarak in power is a

guarantee for stability and security of the country. However, French news agency quoted witnesses as saying that the organizers of these marches paid participants 100 Egyptian Dinar. Local sources for *Aljazeera* found that some got money and a meal for participating in the march. While other sources of *Aljazeera* mentioned that participants in these rallies are the security officers or employees of National radio and television who were forced by the Minister of Information Anas El Faqi to participate (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Aljazeera's correspondent mentioned on the 3rd of February, that one of the most known broadcasters of *CNN*, Anderson Cooper, was beaten as well as his colleagues by forces loyal to President Mubarak. The German news agency quoted that witnesses said that some of the demonstrators holding banners in support of the ruling National Democratic Party and signs in support of President Mubarak attacked the foreign press in Tahrir Square. Some residents of the area managed to save her from their hands and moved her to one of the side streets (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Demonstrators and *Aljazeera*

Egyptian demonstrators in Tahrir Square in central Cairo install two large screens broadcasting *Aljazeera* and *Aljazeera* live, challenging the Egyptian Ministry of Information who closed the office of *Aljazeera* in Cairo and pulled the adoption of its own reporters. Egyptian authorities have also banned broadcast on *Aljazeera* satellite Nile-sat, where broadcasting in the Middle East was totally dropped. Egyptian authorities have detained six reporters from *Aljazeera* English before being released at the request of the U.S. State Department (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

The first statements of the Masses of Egypt's Revolution

On the 12th of February, after Mubarak's step down, *Aljazeera* shed light on the first statement of the Masses of Egypt's Revolution. The statement has many articles and points in regard of the democracy and freedom. It demanded the establishment of a transitional presidential rule comprising of five members: a military figure and four civil symbols recognized for their patriotism. However, no one will be entitled to run for the first upcoming presidential elections. Formation of a transitional government includes competencies and a national independent, which does not include streams of political or partisan affairs. The transitional government will manage to run the country and prepare for general free and fair elections at the end of this transitional period, which should not exceed nine months. No member of this transitional government has right to run for the first presidential or parliamentary elections. The most important paragraph in the statement is;

The formation of a Constituent Assembly to write an original new democratic constitution refers to the oldest democratic constitutions and international covenants of human rights. Calls for a referendum came by the people within three months of the declaration of the formation of the Assembly. Also, the freedom to form political parties on the basis of a civil, democracy and peace without limitations or conditions upon notification were made (*Aljazeera*, 2001).

RQ2b. How were the protestors framed in the news stories by CNN? More specifically, how was democracy addressed or aligned to the activities of protestors and government?

CNN described the way of the Egyptian Revolution by telling how the protesters filled the streets of Cairo rallying and protesting Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's brutal regime. *CNN* framed the protesters and how they were expressing anger over many problems they have been facing throughout the three decades he was in power including the rising cost of living, the failed economic policies and corruption. Even though

Egyptian authority figures were well aware of the difficulties that the Egyptian people were living through, they did not take action and simply brushed things away for too long. On January 29th, *CNN* reporters shed some light on the reasoning behind the protesters' claims and anger. It mentioned that the most important action the Egyptian people wanted to happen right now was for President Mubarak to leave power. *CNN* portrayed the protesters on the streets of Cairo as having “a sense of community and a desire for protection by taking the matters into their own hands” (*CNN*, 2011). Witnesses reveal their anger and frustration to the *CNN*;

‘What's happened to our president?’ said one woman in Cairo, wearing a black veil. ‘We don't want him (because) he's responsible for all this.’ But her anger was tempered by satisfaction that people had turned out, in such large numbers, to express their views after decades of silence and suppression. ‘I am happy,’ she said. ‘I feel, yes, we can change’ (*CNN*, 2011).

In another story on January 30th, the atmosphere of the revolution was described as a, “music festival, people cheering, chatting, and posing for pictures with members of the military in their tanks.” In some cases, “some residents picked up the slack for police in areas surrounding the protests--offering to clean up trash, for example. Medical personnel worked their way through the crowd, seeing if anyone needed help” (*CNN*, 2011).

Protesters: U.S. is losing its credibility

One protester who was leading the rally was Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's leading opposition figure, Mohammed Elbaradei. Elbaradei was the former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency and returned to Egypt at the start of the revolution as a leading opposition voice for the protesters. On January 30th, *CNN* reporters captured

the moment when Elbaradei reached the podium and started painting the light at the end for the tunnel for the hopes and aspirations of the protesters. In his speech, Elbaradei said;

I came today to participate in the lives of Egyptians. Today I look into the eyes of each one of you and everyone is different. Today you are an Egyptian demanding your rights and freedom, and what we started can never be pushed back. As we said, we have one main demand: the end of the regime and to start a new phase. Egypt needs to catch up with the rest of the world. We need to be free, democratic, and a society where people have the right to live in freedom and dignity (*CNN*, 2011).

Elbaradei was interviewed by *CNN*'s Fareed Zakaria on February 4th about his views on the United States position towards the Egyptian Revolution. He criticized the United States policy and said that it is slowly losing its credibility among the Egyptian people. He pushed the idea that America needs to do what it claims to do rather than just talk and act like it knows what its doing. Elbaradei stated;

Your policy right now is a failed policy, is a policy that is lagging behind, is a policy that is having the effect here in Egypt that you are losing whatever (is) left of credibility. People need to see that you not only talk the talk, but walk the walk, and people need to understand and believe that you really seriously take democracy, rule of law, freedoms seriously. And to say we have a tight rope—and between the people and the dictator, to say that we are asking a dictator who's been in power for 30 years to implement democracy is an oxymoron, frankly (*CNN*, 2011).

Peaceful protesters

In general, *CNN* reporters described the protesters as peaceful and united on one message, for President Hosni Mubarak to leave office and give the chance for democracy and improvement for the people. On February 4th, *CNN* reported that the protesters were;

Undeterred by deadly clashes and government crackdowns, tens of thousands rally in Tahrir Square for a largely peaceful mass rally. Their message to Mubarak: "Leave." The opposition Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist group officially banned by the government, says one of its offices was stormed by a "gang of thugs." The satellite news network *Aljazeera* reported a similar attack on its Cairo office (*CNN*, 2011).

Egyptian ambassador to the United States, Sameh Shoukry, talked about how the Egyptian people were united and were all looking for one common outcome from this revolution. He shared his belief that if the Egyptian people insist and continue on their mission, they will finally get what they are asking for;

People in Egypt have shown during this time a great deal of solidarity, a great deal of desire to see their country develop and prosper. And I believe that every loyal Egyptian will continue to undertake his responsibilities and contribute towards the improvement of his homeland (Shoukry, 2011).

Police and the protesters

Heba Fatma Morayef, a Human Rights Watch researcher in Tahrir Square, was interviewed by a *CNN* reporter in light of what she saw from the protesters. She mentioned that the Egyptian police have been violently harming the protesters while when the Egyptian army was deployed, it only stayed to protect the people and remained in control of the protesters' grounds;

The army had been deployed to replace police forces that had clashed brutally with demonstrators. However, the Interior Ministry ordered police back onto some streets, a move that angered protesters. The army remained in control of the square. The square has emptied out, but it's still a great atmosphere, a sense of solidarity and very well-behaved-people are sitting around bonfires, or walking around picking up rubbish. Crowds who find occasional looters drag them over to the soldiers and hand them over (*CNN*, 2011).

On the other hand, The Egyptian government, and more specifically, Vice President Omar Suleiman, denied involvement in the violence and blamed other countries for encouraging such acts on the streets of Cairo. Suleiman said in a TV address with *CNN*;

I actually blame certain friendly nations who have television channels, they're not friendly at all, and they have intensified the youth against the nation and the state (*CNN*, 2011).

President Mubarak and U.S. demands

The confidence of President Mubarak portrayed on January 29th through *CNN* showed how he viewed democracy and how he feels about the revolution when he reassured the Saudi King about the situation in Egypt;

The situation is stable, the protests are merely attempts of groups who do not want stability and security for the people of Egypt, but rather they seek to achieve strange and suspicious objectives. Egypt will deter anyone who tries to exploit the freedom of (the) Egyptian people and will not allow anyone to lure those groups or use them to achieve suspicious and strange agendas (*CNN*, 2011).

On February 3rd, President Mubarak criticized United States President Barak Obama for not realizing the true situation of the people of Egypt and what is happening on the streets of Cairo, thus giving him the trust in himself that he should stay in power simply to keep his country in order. He said;

U.S. President Barack Obama is a very good man but bristled at the notion of an ally's interference in internal problems. You (President Obama) don't understand the Egyptian culture and what would happen if I step down now (*CNN*, 2011).

President Mubarak finally agreed that he would not run for re-election the following year. In an interview on February 4th, he mentioned that "he would like to step

down right away, but cannot because he does not want to risk plunging his nation into chaos" (*CNN*, 2011). Albeit the demonstrators neither believed in his statements nor considered them as solutions for their problems. Elaborating on that, *CNN* reporters claim that in his diplomacy with western powers, and in an attempt to stay in power, Mubarak claims that if he enacts much-needed reforms of democracy and free speech, other more-radical elements of society will fill the void and plunge the country into chaos. The group he loves to target the most is the Muslim Brotherhood;

A group with some hundreds of thousands of members and one that controlled some 20% of the 2005 parliament cannot be excised from the Egyptian political equation. Doing so would only lead to its increased radicalization and militancy. Propping up the defunct Mubarak regime in an attempt to contain the Brotherhood would be a grave mistake. The U.S. must realize that Mubarak has cynically used the Brotherhood card only to postpone implementing deeply needed reforms. The result was not only 30 years of U.S.-backed tyrannical rule, but the exporting of terrorism to other countries. It has to be remembered that Ayman al-Zawahiri, al Qaeda's second in command, is very much a product of Egypt's dungeons and torture chambers (*CNN*, 2011).

RQ3: How did *Aljazeera* frame the government of President Hosni Mubarak?

Aljazeera framed the Egyptian government throughout its news stories since the first day of the revolution as a dictatorial government. By covering views of demonstrators from politicians, religious scholars, poets, artists and citizens all agreed that the government is fascist repressive regime, and authoritarian regimes that offer loyalty to the West and Israel on the basis of humiliation and starvation of its own people, working on the absence of Egypt and minimizing its central region. The Egyptian government is just few individuals that are accounted for power and wealth which led to the spread of corruption. That's why, Egypt lost its position in the region (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

The Egyptian government and some Arab governments are a family of mafia groups. In addition to these families there are large sectors of businessmen who associated its interests to the interests of the authoritarian and corrupt regime. In addition to that, there are the monopolists whose benefits are associated with the government (Gylon, 2011).

The Egyptian government is based on corruption and theft of people's money. The government could not provide the most basic necessities of life to its people. It can be seen that government corruption is clearer in the cities bordering such as, Suez Canal, a major source of Egyptian national income sources. The people of Suez know very well that the channel to Egypt generates billions of dollars annually. However, many people complain that the money does not translate into better schools or opportunities for more jobs (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

The Egyptian government's actions during the start of the protests

Aljazeera went further in describing the Egyptian government during the first few days of the revolution. Wahid Mofdel described some scenes of the Egyptian government as trying to terminate the revolution. The first step is the use of excessive violence against demonstrators which led to a number of dead and wounded since the first day of demonstrations in Cairo and Suez. Then, by provocation and mobilization of all security agencies to suppress more demonstrators and then disabling the Internet, cut communications networks, and mobile devices. In such a provocative and outrageous retroactive manner that is never done by any civil state that claims to use democracy and allow the freedom of opinion (Mofdel, 2011).

The second scene appears on “Angry Friday” on January 28th vociferously, when all the means of police violence and oppression gathered in Egypt in attempting to abort the demonstration and to disperse the crowd’s density. Even if this required stepping on the crowds with police cars, shooting the neighborhood, flooding the demonstrators with tear bomb and water cannons, sniper shots, and killing dozens of them in cold blood and without mercy (Mofdel, 2011).

A statement of Kefaya, an Egyptian Movement for Change, states that the Egyptian government has put Egypt into a political blockage, social congestion, corruption, eroding the wealth of the country, tyranny running over public freedoms, and poverty, unemployment, and disease (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Whereas the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt says that the Egyptian government practices state terrorism. The statement also point out that after the announcement of the Muslim Brotherhood that there is a need to achieve political reforms in Egypt after starting the revolution of Tunisia. They were surprised by the reaction of hasty devoid of

wisdom, courtesy, and expecting to insist on the survival of the regime in the same location that supports tyranny, corruption and state terrorism by calling the Muslim Brotherhood officials in governorates and cracked down severely and threatened arrests and violent confrontation, perhaps bloody in case of taking the popular demands to street (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, a journalist and intellectual, said the President Hosni Mubarak, "betrayed the democratic spirit and was trying to move forward to inherit his son, Gamal Mubarak," Heikal said that Egypt's Revolution proved to the people that it is possible to confront state terrorism. He further expressed his belief that what is happening now is revolutionize the Arab world (Heikal, 2011).

Fatima Naaot said that the role of the police in civilized countries should be to maintain security and establish rules of justice and equality. But in Egypt, Naaot believes that police is a tool for repression and intimidations in the hands of authoritarian regimes which terrorize innocent people and fabricate charges to the opposition (Naaot, 2011).

Mohammed Fahim, a 29-year old, described those who work in a glass factory while he is standing next to a structure of burned cars in the protests;

Our government is a dictatorship, an absolute dictatorship. It is our right to choose our government by ourselves. I have lived for 29 years and Egypt has the same president. I have the right to choose the president. I am bald now and Mubarak is still Mubarak (Fahim, 2011).

Emad Gad, a researcher at Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, said the attempts to make *Aljazeera* silent is the last attempt of a dying authoritarian regime to control events in a traditional thorough way (Gad, 2011).

Among many banners carried by the demonstrators, there are signs accusing Mubarak of killing people and looting their wealth. Also, some signs call on a, “trial of the President and the members of his corrupt regime,” and to investigate the massacres committed against unarmed demonstrators in Tahrir Square. On the other side, photos aired on *Aljazeera* after it was circulated through the Internet showed security vehicles belonging to the internal security forces running over a group of demonstrators near Sphinx Square, in Cairo and in preventing the arrival of drugs to rescue the injured and sick among the protesters (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

RQ3: How did CNN frame the government of President Hosni Mubarak?

Throughout the news coverage of the Egyptian Revolution, *CNN* portrayed different angles of the whole situation. One angle is how *CNN* framed the government of President Hosni Mubarak at the start of the Revolution on the 25th and the 26th of January, starting with the lack of granting permission to the protesters to have a demonstration on the streets of Egypt. Reports showed that the Egyptian security forces claimed to be able to “stop any attempt to attend the demonstrations and called the efforts of the youth staging street protests ineffective” (Wedeman & Ahmed, 2011).

A strong-willed Hosni Mubarak

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak wants to hold on to his power until the next elections. *CNN*'s Nic Robertson explicitly shows how this is true with Mubarak for the past 3 decades and how he wants to continue that today;

Hosni Mubarak, the 82-year-old Egyptian president, fears their populist power. He allows them and other opponents of his regime a very limited political voice,

enough he hopes to defuse anger at the monopoly of power he has exercised over 30 years in power (Robertson, 2011).

A different angle is how the United States described the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak as their strong and reliable ally through interviews with top U.S. government officials. When White House spokesman Robert Gibbs was asked about whether the United States would continue to back President Mubarak, he said that, “Egypt is a strong ally” (Gibbs, 2011).

In another example, *CNN*'s reporter asked Secretary of State Hilary Clinton about her opinions on the Egyptian events, she stated the same concerns about Egypt being a strong ally to the United States for a very long time and that is the reason why there is peace between Egypt and Israel. She said;

The situation was complex and very difficult because of United States ties with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, the main target of protesters. Egypt has been a partner of the United States over the last 30 years, has been instrumental in keeping the peace in the Middle East between Egypt and Israel, which is a critical accomplishment that has meant so much to so many people (Clinton, 2011).

In describing the government system of President Hosni Mubarak and how he is running his business, *CNN* attempts to put the responsibility on the military government and not only on Mubarak;

Egypt's government is not just Hosni Mubarak's government, it is a military government. Generals and former generals control much of the government, and many are influential in business. Since the military overthrew Egypt's monarchy in 1952, senior military officers have constituted Egypt's new aristocracy, holding on to positions of privilege from the socialist 1950s and 1960s to the capitalist present (*CNN*, 2011).

In light of the revolution, the reaction of the Egyptian government was very clear and vivid in several *CNN* news coverage stories showing that neither the police nor the protesters were willing to pull back at the beginning. The police retained order in Cairo and later fired tear gas at protesters. In retaliation, the protesters threw the canisters back at the police officers. Police forces took revenge and fired back in the early hours of some days where protesters demonstrated on the streets of Cairo in an effort;

To try to break up anti-government demonstrations as the Interior Ministry warned it ‘will not allow any provocative movement or a protest or rallies or demonstrations.’ In the heart of Cairo, people were being beaten with sticks and fists and demonstrators were being dragged away amid tear gas. Witnesses saw security forces harassing journalists and photographers. Demonstrations continued into the nighttime hours. The regime of President Hosni Mubarak tried everything. It took the unprecedented step of blocking internet and cell phone service, stripping Egyptians of the ability to communicate with each other in the most basic ways. But, remarkably, the protests only seemed to grow (*CNN*, 2011).

In several stories about the Egyptian President, *CNN*’s reporters mentioned him as loyal and reliable to United States interests in the region, even after seven days since the start of the revolution. On the 2nd of February, reports on the Egyptian president were that of stability and security for the region;

Mubarak was an anchor of U.S. policy and of stability in the region. The twin pillars of that—support for pro-American regimes that share U.S. security interests and the pursuit of Israeli-Arab peace—are now on shaky ground. Israel will probably conclude that if such entrenched Arab regimes can fall, making peace with a deeply divided Palestinian movement is anything but a sure bet (*CNN*, 2011).

The protesters complain about the massive corruption among upper-level civil servants and those with access to the ruling family, as Eric Trager reports that;

The citizens of Egypt regularly complain of a neglectful regime that knows more about torture than it does about public service, and they're furious with a regime that seems to swallow any domestic profits before they can reach the lower classes (Trager, 2011).

During a taped speech by Mubarak, he mentioned that he was aware of the lack of job opportunities and the high costs of goods and mentioned that he was working on making the situation better. However, as *CNN* reports recognized, President Hosni Mubarak gave no indication of any plans to step aside as he appointed Omar Suleiman, a former head of intelligence, as vice president.

Reports on the 3rd of February were received that the Egyptian Interior Ministry was involved in cracking down journalists and diplomats which led top U.S. diplomats to change their views on the Egyptian government's stance in the revolution. They called such attacks;

A violation of international norms that guarantee freedom of the press, and it is unacceptable in any circumstances. Vice President Joe Biden told Suleiman that Egypt's government is responsible for ensuring that peaceful demonstrators aren't attacked. Increasingly concerned about the potential for further violence, Clinton called on the government, political parties and others to immediately begin talks on a peaceful and orderly transition (*CNN*, 2011).

CNN reported that attacks on reporters included "30 detentions, 26 assaults, and eight instances of equipment seized, and plainclothes and uniformed agents reportedly entered at least two hotels where international journalists were staying to confiscate media equipment" (*CNN*, 2011). These attacks on protesters and journalists send a strong message to the American people about its acceptance of democracy as reported on the 4th of February by *CNN*;

It clearly conveys that the government is not in favor of democratic reforms because journalists represent free speech, and free speech is crucial to democracy. The point of silencing a journalist is to pull the curtain over what's happening. The other reason is to create fear to intimidate other reporters. Mubarak forces have attacked the very breadth of global journalism: Their targets have included Egyptians and other Arab journalists, Russian and U.S. reporters, Europeans and South Americans (McBride, 2011).

When President Obama attempted to stop the attacks on journalists on February 3rd, President Mubarak rejected the orders and blamed the Muslim Brotherhood for the chaos;

As the United States and other countries condemned increasing attacks on journalists and diplomats, Mubarak rejected the notion that government instigated the violence in the country, instead blaming the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist umbrella group that is banned in Egypt. 'I don't care what people say about me, right now I care about my country, I care about Egypt' (CNN, 2011).

Furthermore, Vice President Suleiman accused the neighboring countries for reporting in their television channels allegations that were against the Egyptian government. He said that they have "filled in the minds of the youth with wrongdoings, with allegations and this is unacceptable. They should have never done that. They should have never sent this enemy spirit" (CNN, 2011).

CNN mentioned that during the very few hours before the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak, "diplomatic channels between the United States and Egypt were blocked. Reaching members of the Egyptian government was impossible, presumably because the government was preoccupied with its internal deliberations" (CNN, 2011). CNN revealed that even President Obama learned of the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak when he was passed a note with the news during a regularly scheduled meeting

in the Oval Office (*CNN*, 2011). At the ousting of President Mubarak, *CNN* stated that the power was handed over to the military that went past the point of no return and took the center stage in the Egyptian revolution. However, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Egyptian analyst Michele Dunne, said that, “the state was beginning to disintegrate. The military had to wonder if they were going to lose control if they didn’t act” (Dunne, 2011).

RQ4: How did *Aljazeera* frame the response from the international community, and in particular the U.S., to the unfolding unrest in Egypt?

Arab and international solidarity with the Egyptian Revolution

Aljazeera framed that there are many Arab countries as well as the international community, such as Jordan, Tunisia, Syria, Palestine, Yemen, Iraq and Malaysia showed solidarity with the Egyptian Revolution. Hundreds of Egyptian residents in the West with a lot of Muslim communities supported the revolution in Egypt and condemned Egyptian government and the way of dealing with the protesters. In London, dozens of Egyptians and British activists supported the demonstrations in Egypt. In Canada, Egyptians, Tunisians, Algerians, and leaders from the civil society participated in demonstrations demanding the resignation of Egyptian President Mubarak and the establishment of a democracy in the Arab world (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Hundreds of Italian Egyptians and Arabs demonstrated in La Repubblica square in the center of the Italian capital of Rome to express their solidarity with the Egyptian Revolution to overthrow the regime of President Hosni Mubarak, raising slogans saying, “Game Over, Mubarak! Democracy now!”

Egyptian flags flapped in the sky of Rome and raised slogans condemning the regime of Hosni Mubarak in Arabic, English, French, and Italian, such as "Go, Mubarak, Ben Ali is waiting for you", "a killer of the people has been put down", "they are betting on time and we bet on the people," and "the president lacks legitimacy, he got the police involved and wants to involve the army (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Thousands of Malaysians protested on Friday in Kuala Lumpur against the U.S. policy toward the events in Egypt. The Malaysian security forces prevented them from

reaching the Egyptian Embassy in solidarity with the crowds in Tahrir Square in central Cairo, and to demand the departure of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Although the Sudanese official media ignored the Egyptian Revolution, Sudanese opposition groups supported the revolution. Mahdi, an opposition leader in Sudan, he said: “the present of Sudan and Egypt faces crisis with a no-exit strategy except under a new renaissance project.” He also said in front of a number of his supporters,

A new renaissance project is important to gain adult governance based on transparency, accountability and rule of law and development, and social justice and external relations organization with no dependence on the parity and enmity (Mahdi, 2011).

Also, in the Iraqi newspapers published many articles that focused on the ongoing developments in Egypt as it set aside daily occurrences to follow the events. It mentioned that what was happening in Egypt resonated strongly in the Iraqi streets, and began to become a daily topic for the public as Iraqis compare their situation to the Tunisians and Egyptians (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

On the contrary, *Aljazeera* mentioned that there was a sense of limited and narrow solidarity with the Egyptian Revolution in the news of Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, and Palestinians in West Bank. The United Arab Emirates’ security forces arrested activists for supporting the revolution. Syrian security forces arrested five young protesters, and in Palestinian territories the Palestinian authority police used violence against peaceful demonstrators during a rally in Ramallah in 2011 to support the

demonstrators in Egypt. In Saudi Arabia, security forces arrested 30 to 50 protesters gathered in Jeddah city for a brief period on January 28th (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

International Condemnation

Aljazeera's news coverage of the international community focused on the convictions against the Egyptian government because it used violence on the protesters.

On the 26th of January, *Aljazeera* mentioned that the International Federation of Journalists asserted that a number of Egyptian and foreign journalists were attacked by supporters of President Hosni Mubarak during their coverage of the current events in Tahrir Square in Cairo.

The organization "Reporters without Borders" has issued a statement late Wednesday condemning the "horrific attacks" on a number of journalists who cover demonstrations in Tahrir Square (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Criticism and International Calls to Egypt for Freedom of Expression

Aljazeera went further on describing how Germany urged Egyptian authorities to respect the rights and freedoms of its citizens, where Foreign Minister, Guido Westerwelle, is deeply concerned about the events in Egypt, and calls for more democracy, social dialogue, and freedom of the press (Westerwelle, 2011).

Another example mentioned by *Aljazeera* was the French Foreign Minister, Michele Alliot-Marie condemned the death of protesters in Egypt and calls for a greater democracy (Alliot-Marie, 2011). William Hague, the foreign secretary of Britain, called on the Egyptian government to respect the right of assembly, expression, and to listen to the concerns of the demonstrators (Hague, 2011). Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, said

that the United Nations stands ready to help achieve change through peaceful reform in the Arab world, and he urged all parties to exercise restraint during the current crisis in Egypt. Ki-Moon expressed his deeply concerned about the unacceptable violence that broke out there. He added that the United Nations confirms since the last ten years its idea for the need of change in the Arab world, and offered the help of international organizations to pave the way for peaceful reforms (Ki-Moon, 2011). Maja Kocijancic, spokeswoman of Foreign Relations in the European Union, said, the Union is monitoring the situation in Egypt closely, believing the events signal to aspirations of many Egyptians after the events of Tunisia, which led to the ousting of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (Kocijancic, 2011).

Israel and Egyptian revolution

On the other side, *Aljazeera* framed that there is an Israeli incitement against the Egyptian revolution. Some editorial reporters, political analysts, and academics focused on the abuse of the revolution and underestimated it, calling back attempts of the Mubarak regime to link the Revolution with the Muslim Brotherhood to intimidate the West. They described the revolution as a “fantasy” that got inflated by social networking, communication and some satellite channels, more specifically, *Aljazeera*. An article published in the Ma’ariv newspaper stated;

To who is waiting for democracy, he/she is not aware of the reality. Egypt does not see any political and social revolution, and there is no curve towards democracy and freedom, but rather on the contrary. The military regime prevailed in Egypt in civilian clothes, and today Egypt lives under direct military rule, which violates the very few freedoms that were present. The media conveyed an

imaginary and fictitious image of what happened. This is not a revolution papyrus, but the revolution of *Aljazeera* (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

America and Egypt's Revolution

Aljazeera frames that Egyptian and United States are close allies. This grabs much attention to how American reaction was in the beginning of the revolution in Egypt. The Obama administration's attitude and remarks to emphasize the stability in Egypt to the statement of Secretary of State in January 30 called for an orderly transition of power. It is clear that Washington has benefited from previous experiences, and moved quickly to support the direction of democratization in Egypt. The main reason behind the rapid development of the United States' attitude is of the fear of Washington's worsening situation in Egypt to a great collapse of the Egyptian state.

Aljazeera mentioned through its news stories that the United States declared in many occasions that Egypt is still a close and an important ally. However, it calls on the Egyptian government to deal peacefully with demonstrators during the protests. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton urged the Egyptian government to allow peaceful protests and do not block social websites. At the same times, she said that the government has a chance to implement political, economic, and social reforms (Clinton, 2011).

Robert Gibbs said that the United States is concerned about the violence that takes place in Egypt. And even more on the idea that the Government might be standing behind this violence. Gibbs adds, "If the government is behind the violence then it must stop" (Gibbs, 2011). He praised the Egyptian demonstrators, describing them as representing an inspiration, and expressed their view properly. Gibbs stressed that the Egyptian protesters

do not want speeches at the present time, but really they want the government to play a significant role (Gibbs, 2011).

On the 6th of February, after Mubarak's speech, Aljazeera framed its coverage that United States clearly refused the Egyptian President's statement to stay in power until his term ends in September in exchange for not running a second time. The White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said the United States want change now, not in September. Gibbs said, in response to the reporters' questions, "When we say that change should happen now, we meant yesterday, and not in September" (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Obama welcomes Egypt's Commitment to its Obligations

After Mubarak's ouster, *Aljazeera* mentioned on 13th of February the United States President Barack Obama welcomed the declaration of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces who is ruling Egypt in its commitment to all international treaties and to hand over power eventually to elected civilians. In phone calls Obama made with leaders of three countries in the world, he reiterated his admiration for the Egyptian people, who forced President Hosni Mubarak to step down from power after mass protests in lasted several weeks (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Popular Arab celebrations for the fall of Mubarak

Aljazeera described the moments when Mubarak was ousted as a victory finally achieved by the protesters. Arab people go to the streets from the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf on Friday to celebrate the fall of President Hosni Mubarak after an 18 day popular revolution. The joy pervaded the streets of Gaza Strip, Amman, Beirut, Tunis, Qatar, and

others. Some Lebanese people distributed sweets in the vicinity of the headquarters of Egyptian embassy in Beirut to celebrate the event. Participants rose in celebrations the Egyptian and Tunisian flags. The joy spread throughout Syrian cities after the announcement of Mubarak's step down from power and turned into the Council of Armed Forces to run the country. Also, there was a wedding party in Syrian villages turned to celebrate Mubarak's stepping down from power (*Aljazeera*, 2011).

Nicaragua Festival greets the Egyptian Revolution

The World Poetry Festival in the city of Granada in Nicaragua opens by praising the Egyptian revolution by all poets who participated in the festival. The speech by the President of the festival, Francisco de Asis Fernandez, he showed how happy the Nicaraguan people for the end of a larger dictator in the Arab world by Egypt's youth. Fernandez says in his welcoming speech to more than 140 poets from all continents of the world;

I welcome you to a world less unfair, a world closer to justice of mankind. I welcome you to the world of revolutionary poetry fighters for freedom. Two days ago we saw the rebirth of the great Egypt on the hands of their free people, so I welcome you to your second country, Nicaragua. Let's celebrate the poetry of our time and our festival of intoxication (Fernandez, 2011).

RQ4: How did *CNN* frame the response from the international community, and in particular the U.S., to the unfolding unrest in Egypt?

CNN mentioned how the United States is one of the many countries that will be affected by the Egyptian Revolution and the overthrow of President Hosni Mubarak due to the many ties it has with Egypt. The United States had shifting views since the start of the revolution. *CNN* coverage portrays how the United States reacted and responded to

the unfolding unrest in Egypt several times. Nic Robertson of *CNN* reported on the 25th of January, the first day of the revolution, that the United States "may be the big loser. Many of the regimes on the defensive, like Mubarak's, are long-standing US allies" (*CNN*, 2011). The United States is fearful of each development of the revolution and is closely watching it unfold.

On the 27th of January, top U.S. officials said that the United States backed the fundamental rights of the people of Egypt and yet the Egyptian government is stable enough to find a solution for more stability and order in Egypt. They called on the Egyptian government to respond to the needs of the Egyptian people and to implement political, economic, and social reforms to respond to those needs and interests of the Egyptian people (*CNN*, 2011).

Saudi Arabian King Abdullah criticized the Egyptian protesters as being "infiltrators who seek to destabilize their country." On the other side, however, a top Palestinian official affirmed "solidarity with Egypt" (*CNN*, 2011). On the 29th of January, Saudi King Abdullah called President Hosni Mubarak to reassure him that nothing serious will result from this protest. He said;

Egypt is a country of Arabism and Islam. No Arab and Muslim human being can bear that some infiltrators, in the name of freedom of expression, have infiltrated into the brotherly people of Egypt, to destabilize its security and stability and they have been exploited to spew out their hatred in destruction, intimidation, burning, looting and inciting a malicious sedition (Abdullah, 2011).

However, on the other side of the world, British Prime Minister David Cameron, French President Nicolas Sarkozy, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel joined together

with the United States to urge President Hosni Mubarak to submit to his people's needs and aspirations. On the 29th of January, they issued a joint statement insisting that;

It is essential that the further political, economic and social reforms President Mubarak has promised are implemented fully and quickly, and meet the aspirations of the Egyptian people (*CNN*, 2011).

British, German, and French leaders have all agreed to side with those who intend to demonstrate peacefully and criticized the government if it tried to terminate using force and violence. British Foreign Secretary William Hague warned of the future and danger of Egypt if it falls in the hands of extremists. On the 30th of January, he suggested that the best way out of this kind of danger is a peaceful reform;

That requires the government of Egypt now to allow the right to peaceful protest. It also requires the Egyptian people to express their aspirations in a peaceful way and it requires (a) more broadly based government, the inclusion of opposition figures in the government (Hague, 2011).

Mubarak's resignation changed European leaders' view

Later on, on the 11th of February, *CNN* gave examples of European leaders as they heard the news of the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak. British Prime Minister David Cameron mentioned that the resignation was “an important first step for a nation yearning for democracy. It is an important day for those who have spoken out so bravely and so peacefully for change in their country” (*CNN*, 2011). French President Nicolas Sarkozy praised Mubarak's decision to resign and hailed Egypt's “historic moment” (*CNN*, 2011).

On the other side of the globe, *CNN* framed the reaction of Islamic movements and states in the region as they celebrated the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak. “They set off fireworks and fired guns in the air” (*CNN*, 2011). In Iran, *CNN* portrayed their reaction based on their Islamic ideology. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast said in an interview that “a new Middle East is taking shape, not the Mideast the West had planned for but one which has been created based on Islamic awakening” (*CNN*, 2011). *CNN* covered the statements of Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri who called the ouster of President Mubarak “a victory for the Palestinian people.” He further elaborated by calling on the new Egyptian leadership “to lift the siege of Gaza and to open the Rafah crossing and assure the free movement between Egypt and Palestine and to start the development construction process of Gaza” (Abu Zuhri, 2011).

Israel is watching with concern

Egypt is Israel's neighbor and most important Arab nation to make peace with a Jewish state. With such events erupting and building up, Israel is fearful of the future. It simply wants stability and security in its nation. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu acknowledged that Israel was anxiously monitoring what is happening in Egypt as it is very important for his country's stability. He stated that his country "must show maximum responsibility, restraint and sagacity and, to this end, has instructed his fellow ministers to refrain from commenting on this issue" (Netanyahu, 2011). He also expressed further concern over the makeup of the new regime. On the 31st of January, he told the Knesset;

I am convinced that that the forces that want to bring change and democratization in Egypt will also enhance peace between Israel and the Arab world, but we are not there yet. The struggle has not been decided. We need to do everything to make sure that peace endures (Netanyahu, 2011).

On the other hand, Israeli ambassadors in Egypt and Qatar accused the United States government of “taking the crucial developments in Egypt in a naïve way” (*CNN*, 2011) and of not understanding the culture of the Middle East. They claimed that the Obama administration “put a lot of pressure on the regimes in the Middle East and showed a lot of disrespect for Mubarak” (*CNN*, 2011).

Turning-point in U.S. policy toward Mubarak

The decision has finally come from the Obama administration, after Mubarak’s speech that gave no promises for change. The decision was to break the ties with Mubarak. This breakage will bring out, "a warning to Arab allies that they are expandable and their reactions to U.S. calls for reform in the future must be met more seriously" (*CNN*, 2011). One of the U.S. Senate's most influential foreign policy voices called on the Egyptian President to step down. Moreover, Massachusetts Senator John Kerry, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the 2004 Democratic presidential nominee, also urged President Mubarak to step down and more specifically, his sons should not take the power after him. After President Mubarak pledged for a ‘fair’ elections, Kerry argued about the role of the United States and what it should be doing. On the 1st of February, he stated that;

The U.S. government needs to start paying closer attention to the ‘genuine political, legal and economic needs’ of people in the Middle East, as opposed to consistently supporting friendly governments regardless of their domestic politics.

The most important step that Mubarak can take is to address his nation and declare that neither he nor the son he has been positioning as his successor will run in the presidential election this year. For three decades, the United States pursued a Mubarak policy, now we must look beyond the Mubarak era and devise an Egyptian policy (Kerry, 2011).

As the unfolding of events first in Tunisia then in Egypt, U.S. officials were taken off-guard and brought out many debates to the critical masses. On the 2nd of February, *CNN* reports on these changes with U.S. policy makers;

For the first time in history, the U.S. has broken with authoritarian Arab allies. The events in Egypt have leaders of other pro-U.S. countries in the region rightly concerned about what will happen if demonstrations take place in their countries and whether they can count on America's loyalty. The Obama administration is trying to send the message to these countries—but not necessarily their leaders—that they can count on American loyalty (*CNN*, 2011).

The constant attacks and threats on the Egyptian people by the government angered and feared the United States. U.S. State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley denounced these attacks and called them, "a direct threat to the aspirations of the Egyptian people. The use of violence to intimidate the Egyptian people must stop. We strongly call for restraint" (*CNN*, 2011). U. S. presidential spokesman Robert Gibbs declared that the time for a political transition in Egypt "is now." On the 2nd of February, he said the Egyptian people;

Need to see change, and a meaningful transition must include opposition voices and parties being involved in this process as we move toward free and fair elections (*CNN*, 2011).

Yet again, *CNN* stories warn and try to raise a flag to the United States that America needs to act fast and act right for both parties. After the ousting of President

Mubarak, *CNN* coverage declared that this was the moment of truth for Egypt's military.

On the 11th of February, *CNN* described what the United States should do after this move;

America needs to radically rethink its Egypt strategy. No matter whom the civilian leader of Egypt is its military—America's putative ally and client—is still the most powerful institution behind the scenes. Even so, this is the time for the U.S. to reach out and establish working relationships across the spectrum of Egyptian politics. Only by playing all sides—even working with the Muslim Brotherhood—can the U.S. be assured that it is not caught off-guard without any connections or leverage with whoever prevails in future Egyptian elections (*CNN*, 2011).

President Obama praised the Egyptian revolution

As the events led up to the stepping down of President Mubarak, *CNN* described how top U.S. officials welcomed the decision of Mubarak. They “urged all sides in Egypt's rapidly unfolding political drama to ensure a peaceful transition to democracy” (*CNN*, 2011). The Obama administration signaled to the Egyptian protesters his support and reassurance that they should still consider the United States and their friend and supporters. On the 11th of February, Obama addressed his talk to the American people about their renewed role in the Egyptian Revolution and what he anticipated the Egyptian people would do next;

In these difficult times, I know that the Egyptian people will persevere, and they must know that they will continue to have a friend in the United States of America. The Egyptian people have been told that there was a transition of authority, but it is not yet clear that this transition is immediate, meaningful or sufficient. The Egyptian government must put forward a credible, concrete and unequivocal path toward genuine democracy, and they have not yet seized that opportunity (*CNN*, 2011).

Further reassuring the Egyptians for their full right to choose the next successor, a senior State Department official said that the United States will be able to build relationships with whoever the next head of government is. On the 12th of February, he stated, "The Egyptians will have to clarify who is now the head of the government, and whomever the Egyptians chose, we can have a relationship and deal with that person" (*CNN*, 2011).

On the international level, protesters and demonstrations have sprung out throughout the Middle East after the turmoil in Tunisia and Egypt has succeeded. On the 12th of February, *CNN* news coverage shed light on some of those countries with raging protests in the Middle East;

In nearby Libya, Facebook pages announce peaceful demonstrations scheduled for Monday in the shadow of leader Moammar Gadhafi, who has ruled the country for almost 40 years and just a few days ago reiterated his support for Mubarak. Across the Red Sea, thousands have protested Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who has ruled Yemen for 32 years--and has pledged not to stand for re-election when his current term--began in 2006--ends in 2013. And in Jordan, King Abdullah II shook up his cabinet last week, this week adding several opposition and media figures to the mix, headed by a former general (*CNN*, 2011).

Former Cuban President Fidel Castro hailed the "defeat of the United States' principal ally in the bosom of Arab countries" (Castro, 2011). On the 14th of February, he accused Washington for looking the other way and ignoring the brutality of President Hosni Mubarak against his own people (*CNN*, 2011).

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton insisted that the United States has been consistent in its efforts to spread democratic reforms in the Middle East and elsewhere

around the globe. In an interview on the 15th of February with AlHurra TV, the Virginia-based Arab-language satellite TV station, Clinton stated that;

For many years, both privately and publicly, Democrats and Republican presidents and administrations have delivered the same message to the Egyptian Government: there must be reform, there must be change. We were not successful, and neither was the Egyptian opposition or civil society. And the pressure just built up, and then we saw the results over the last three weeks (*CNN*, 2011).

5. DISCUSSION

This study brings to light the differences in news coverage between two media sources: *Aljazeera* and *CNN*. As shown in this paper, *Aljazeera* framed the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 differently than *CNN* in some ways and similarly in others. *Aljazeera* framed the Egyptian revolution through its news coverage from the point of view of the protesters, top opposition leaders, and sympathizers with the protesters. Since the beginning, *Aljazeera* legitimized the revolution in Egypt by constantly referring to the revolution in peaceful terms and the need for a better future. *Aljazeera* referred to the protesters as nonviolent and very diverse. The topic of the Muslim Brotherhood was addressed to show that they were passive in their presence with the demonstrators. Unlike *CNN*, *Aljazeera* brought in examples of the history of revolutions in Egypt rather than the history of the Middle East as a whole as what *CNN* did through its coverage. *Aljazeera* encouraged the protesters by showing them what happened in the past when oppressive regimes were overthrown by the Egyptian people.

On the contrary, *CNN* framed the Egyptian revolution through its news coverage from the point of view of United States government officials, allied governments, *CNN* reporters, and how it might affect its own future. The chaos that occurred on the streets of Cairo worried them and made them urge for a peaceful reform. The possibilities of Mubarak shedding more blood of his regime continues despite the revolutions or of an Islamic fundamental take over in Egypt or even a true democracy are all on the minds of government officials as they try to comprehend the unfolding of events. This is due to

the strong ties with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak for three decades. He has helped the United States bring peace with Israel in a region where the citizens are not in favor of that connection. United States officials remember what happened in Iran in 1979 as the Islamic revolution took over the country and halted all ties with the United States. Losing a strong ally to the United States would put them and Israel in great jeopardy in a time that the United States did not speculate that to happen anytime in the near future.

Clearly, one can make a comparison of how much *CNN* and *Aljazeera* differed on how they addressed the topic of democracy. *Aljazeera* framed the topic of democracy through its news stories since the beginning of the revolution on the idea that the road to democracy for Egypt and the Middle East in general is by removing the corrupted governments. Through the stories of *Aljazeera* many analysts mentioned that the Arab people are yearning for freedom and democracy because it is the only way to solve the many crises in the region. *Aljazeera* went further to describe the protesters as young youth who were connected to the outside world by the Internet and social media and who started their demonstrations based on non-violence for the sake of democracy and a better life. Other examples from *Aljazeera's* coverage showed how some western governments disappointed the Egyptian people in their support for corrupted rulers on the account of the citizens. Those western governments were more concerned with their own interests in the region.

On the other hand, the *CNN* framed its news stories on the topic of democracy based on the statements of top U.S. officials and analysts on the topic of democracy in the Middle East in general and in Egypt in particular. *CNN* started by speculating that

democracy in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East was skeptical, especially when the topic of foreign relations arises. It is obvious through the coverage of *CNN* stories that the United States is more concerned with stability in the region rather than establishing democracy in the Middle East. Losing a close ally to the West and a possibility of an Islamic movement would reduce America's influence in the region and would affect the treaties between Israel and Egypt. In digging deeper into the United States' foreign policies, especially in the Middle East, *CNN* stories revealed that the United States has always worked with international leaders that would fulfill their own desires of gaining stability in the Middle East rather than also fulfilling their own citizens' needs and aspirations, as is the case in Egypt. In the end, *CNN* reports are still skeptical of the formation of democracy in Egypt especially due to the fact that Egypt has very many issues and that it had several groups that might not cooperate with the United States as it liked. On the other hand, Arab writers for *CNN* have a more optimistic view of the formation of democracy in Egypt.

Aljazeera framed its coverage of how democracy was aligned with the protesters by reporting that they were young youth calling for change and a better life in Egypt. They protested peacefully and in solidarity among themselves. On the other hand, *Aljazeera* framed how democracy and the government were aligned based on their brutal reaction to the demonstrators by not issuing a permit for protest and threatening to stop all protesters. *CNN* and *Aljazeera* agreed on the fact that the Egyptian government was very brutal against its people. *Aljazeera* went deeper in its coverage on the protesters as it described them as forming a committee comprised of youth and wise men that would represent and negotiate on behalf of the protesters. Moreover, *Aljazeera* shared that the

protesters launched two large television screens in Tahrir Square challenging the Egyptian government and in support of *Aljazeera*'s coverage of the demonstrations. *Aljazeera* also shed some light on the first statements given by the masses of the Egyptian protesters after the ousting of President Mubarak which included the call for a transitional government that would prepare for general, free, and fair elections. Also, the statements included that freedom to form political parties on the basis of a civil democracy and peace without limitations or conditions upon notification.

CNN framed the stories on the Egyptian protesters and how democracy was aligned to the activities of the government based on what the people wanted from the demonstrations and what the leaders said about the future of their country. *CNN* stories start by stating that the Egyptian people wanted the current regime to leave power now. They also described some aspirations of witnesses on the streets of Cairo as they called for an end to the president's brutal regime. *CNN* also interviewed key Egyptian leaders as they instilled hope in the hearts of the Egyptian people for the future of Egypt. The United States' policies in the region was criticized and challenged as they realized that the United States needed not only to talk, but also to act upon what it promised. The protesters in general were portrayed as peaceful and united on one common goal. The Egyptian police were framed by *CNN* news stories as being very brutal and violent in their dealing with the protesters. Moreover, the Egyptian president criticized the United States president Barak Obama for not truly knowing the full picture of Egypt if he stepped down. When President Mubarak stated that he wanted to stay in power in order

to keep the country intact, *CNN* revealed that his statements were neither believed by the protesters nor were they a solution for the current issues of the country.

It is important to investigate how one group of people in our global society may perceive an important issue differently from another group. Since the United States considered itself a close ally to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, it was necessary to consider how the *CNN* news agency covered one shared important topic. *Aljazeera* framed the government of President Hosni Mubarak as a government based on corruption, robbery of the people's wealth, and unable to fulfill the basic needs of life for its people. Since the beginning of the revolution, *Aljazeera* took this one stance on the government. Unlike the *CNN*, *Aljazeera* described the president of Egypt as a fascist allegiance to the West and Israel. Interestingly, *Aljazeera* and *CNN* agreed on the brutality of the police force against the protesters and how they cut off all communications. However, *Aljazeera* went further by accusing the government for the chaos in order to retaliate against the protesters.

In contrast, *CNN* framed the government of President Hosni Mubarak through shifting views as the events unfolded. It started by showing how President Mubarak was strong-willed and was trying to hold on to his power as long as possible. *CNN* also brought in several speeches and statements from the president on his fear if he stepped down. He warned the United States of an Islamic overthrow of his government and how they would rule. *CNN* continued to label the Egyptian president as a strong and reliable ally to the United States through several interviews with top U.S. government officials. *CNN* mentioned several times through vivid coverage about the brutality of the police

force against the protesters. When the Egyptian president gave his speech that he would neither run for re-election nor would his son run but appointed his former head of intelligence as his vice president, *CNN* revealed that the president did not truly give a plan for future reform. Since then, *CNN* labeled the attacks on the protesters as a violation of international norms that went against the freedom of expression. Again, when American officials alluded to the Egyptian government to stop the attacks on the protesters and specifically on the journalists, President Mubarak rejected those orders and blamed the Muslim Brotherhood for spreading the chaos. His vice president blamed some television channels for encouraging the protesters and increasing the chaos.

The International community and the United States responded in several ways and were all portrayed through news coverage of *CNN* and *Aljazeera*. *Aljazeera* framed the response from the international community and the United States to the unfolding unrest in Egypt through the reaction from several surrounding countries and the rest of the world at large. It focused its attention on celebrations and feelings of joy among the people. On the reaction from the United States, *Aljazeera* portrayed only the responses of top officials that condemned the Egyptian government for using violence against the protesters. Later, when Mubarak's regime was 'ousted', rather than 'resigned' as mentioned by *CNN*, *Aljazeera* mentioned that Obama welcomed the Egyptian declaration of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces in its commitment with international treaties that would eventually hand over power to elected civilians. On the topic of Israel, *Aljazeera* reported that Israeli incitement was present and that Israel called the revolution an '*Aljazeera* revolution' rather than an 'Egyptian revolution.' On the other hand, *CNN* mentioned that Israel was indeed fearful; however, it showed the Israeli

officials condemning how naïve the reaction of the United States was. Unlike *CNN*, *Aljazeera* did not mention anything about Iran's current stance or past history with revolutions. Since the beginning of the revolution, *Aljazeera* framed its news coverage on the ideology that the demonstrators would not back away until President Mubarak was ousted. On the other hand, *CNN* continuously shifted its views as the events unfolded. *Aljazeera* was preparing for the ousting of President Mubarak and when it finally happened it portrayed several celebrations throughout the Arab and Muslim communities around the globe. It described millions of protesters in celebration with the Egyptian people for the success of the Egyptian revolution. Both *Aljazeera* and *CNN* agreed in their coverage that protesters in solidarity with the demonstrators in Syria, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates, were arrested by government officials.

CNN news coverage framed the response from the international community and the United States to the unfolding unrest in Egypt through several countries yet focused more on top U.S. government officials. Throughout the coverage, *CNN* portrayed the shifting views of the United States starting with the fear that the United States would be in big loss if the Egyptian regime was taken over. The United States, as reported by *CNN*, urged the Egyptian government officials several times and through several different diplomats to have a peaceful transition and for the Egyptian government to look into the needs of the people. Another key topic for *CNN* was the relationship ties that would be at jeopardy with Israel if an Islamic overthrow developed. *CNN* also put pressure on the United States because it believed that they were naïve in their way of dealing with the revolution. Interestingly, as soon as the Egyptian president gave his speech that he would

not run for re-election but stay in power until the next elections, *CNN* showed how the attitude and language used among top US diplomats changed as they placed the responsibility on the Egyptian government for such chaos. The chaos included attacks on the Egyptian people which angered the American officials who called for immediate restraint. At the ousting of the president, *CNN* described the United States' change in foreign policy and their willingness to deal with whomever the Egyptian people chose to be their next leader. Similarly, the big European leaders also called on the Egyptian president to submit to his people's needs and aspirations and urged a peaceful reform. *CNN* also shared some examples of protesters in Libya, Yemen, Jordan, Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah, and across the region. *CNN* reports clearly showed those leaders who were sympathizing and backing up the Egyptian protesters.

One of the reasons for this contrast between the two media groups may be due to *Aljazeera's* interests and involvement in the region. During that time period, the Egyptian revolution had an agenda which was to replace the brutal Hosni Mubarak with a more just and democratic ruler. Egyptians wanted more freedoms, a better standard of living and to abolish the vast corruption in the country. Although differences in coverage may be attributed to proximity, one cannot deny that the events in Egypt were of great relevance to the countries of both *Aljazeera* and *CNN*. *Aljazeera* may have had more access to sources due to its proximity and familiarity of the region, and also due to the fact that *Aljazeera's* reputation has always been with the people rather than with the governments. Clearly, one can see that *Aljazeera* is the most visible news organization in Arab events. It is changing the relationship between those who govern and those who are governed in that region. On the other hand, *CNN* was more concerned with how the

United States and Israel would be affected by the revolution in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East. It is interesting how *CNN* framed its news coverage based on the interests of the American government and foreign policy interests rather than based on the interests of the protesters, as in *Aljazeera*. It can be said that *CNN* portrays international news with American eyes. It portrayed how America urged the Egyptian government to resolve the issues peacefully to avoid any turmoil that would affect the region.

Readers should consider the differences between Middle Eastern and Western news outlets in their coverage of the Egyptian revolution for a variety of reasons. First, the primary reason for the revolution was to voice their opinions, discomfort level, lifestyle the Egyptian government granted its people. While many *Aljazeera* news stories seemed to support this agenda, the American news media, such as *CNN*, often tried to minimize any further chaos and anger in the region. Second, this study included the original *Aljazeera* Arabic version, which is read by a majority of news consumers in the Arab region. In order to understand *Aljazeera*'s coverage, it is necessary to look at the channel not from the perspective of Western policymakers who might consider it to be malignant nuisance, but rather from the standpoint of its Arab audience, which sees it as a magnifier of shared frustrations and aspirations and one of the only truth-telling news outlets in an otherwise government-controlled news arena. Generally, *Aljazeera* is free from the control of governments and it is trusted as a chronicler of Arab people's interest. In the surge of journalistic-political freedom that *Aljazeera*'s freewheeling style exemplifies, restraint is often merely an afterthought. One of *Aljazeera*'s strengths has

been its introduction of energetic and sometimes contentious debate into an Arab business that was previously known for its drab docility. The high production value of the channel's newscasts and the lively exchanges in its talk shows have expanded the news audience and changed the nature of political discourse within the Arab public sphere. Getting more people to pay attention to and talk about news is an important facet of larger issues related to democratization. *Aljazeera* frames its stories to establish a common core in the Arab narrative which in the past had existed only in a more abstract sense. *Aljazeera's* coverage of events in individual Arab countries is usually set within a broader Arab context, making connection that news organizations focused on just single countries often overlook. This regional approach can shape how members of the *Aljazeera* audience see their region in relation to the larger world. Last, Western media are strongly in favor of a peaceful Middle East but only on their own terms.

Finally, the Egyptian revolution is not only relevant to the Middle East but also to the Western world at large. Governments outside the Arab world would be unwise to ignore what is being said on the Arab channels, such as *Aljazeera*. The tone and specific content of news and talk programs on the new Arab media provide daily snapshots and, overtime, a more substantive portrait of Arab political opinion.

Analysis of the Research Finding

Unlike *CNN*, *Aljazeera* focused a lot of its news stories on the use of social media and the Internet by the protesters. This helped make the demonstrations peaceful and to the point. This is due to the very recent developments in knowledge and usage of these

technologies in the Middle East. Before the revolution, the use of the Internet and social media was a very controversial topic where the youth were labeled to be wasting their time and having fun. While at the start of the revolution, this use of the Internet and social media was important in the exchange of information between the protesters. They were also able to show the rest of the world what was happening on the streets of Egypt. On the other hand, the use of social media and the Internet is very widely used in the United States, which is probably a reason why *CNN* did not focus too much on this topic.

Furthermore, *Aljazeera* was different than *CNN* in its news topics about the role that religious leaders played in the revolution. *Aljazeera* was framing the religious leaders from different sects and religions in a respectful manner and their important roles in their societies. This is due to the fact that the region of the Middle East and the audience of *Aljazeera* in particular are moderately religious. The religious leaders who were calling for reform and justice and even believing in democracy were very popular and respected through *Aljazeera's* coverage. Religious leaders played an important role in uniting the people in the revolution by urging them not to differentiate between sects and faiths because the common theme that truly united them was thousands of years of shared languages, culture, traditions, and the land. That is why several reporters from Arab descent who wrote for *CNN* shared the same ideas with this regard.

With regards to the Muslim Brotherhood, *Aljazeera* and *CNN* differed greatly in their coverage and how each perceived their role in the Egyptian revolution. *Aljazeera* always showed the Muslim Brotherhood as very cooperative and eager for democratic change for the people of Egypt. On the other hand, *CNN* portrayed the Muslim

Brotherhood through fear and compared the possibility of the Muslim Brotherhood in power to the Islamic overthrow in Iran in 1979. *Aljazeera* never shared that view or even alluded to that comparison due to the fact that the ideology and practices of the Muslim Brotherhood for the past two decades have dramatically changed through their literature, television broadcasts, and their understanding of democracy. In several instances, the Muslim Brotherhood repeatedly announced that they believed in a civil state based on freedom, human rights and the peaceful transition to the power. They further claimed that they do not want to establish a religious state because the religion of Islam is based on a civil state. It is a big mistake to compare the Muslim Brotherhood with the Islamic revolution in Iran because there are huge differences in their ideologies, practices, and their understanding of Islam.

CNN news stories had a majority of the interviews and stories based on responses and analysis from top U.S. government officials and top Egyptian officials, while *Aljazeera* focused its stories based on responses from protesters and leaders of the revolution. This is partly due to the fact that *CNN* had more access to top officials. Since before the revolution, *Aljazeera* was accused by the Arab governments, including the Egyptian government that it was always siding against the governments. At the start of the revolution, *Aljazeera's* office in Egypt was shut down by government officials. This action angered the protesters and made them become reporters for *Aljazeera* as they supplied the video clips and recordings for *Aljazeera*. This actually gave more credibility for *Aljazeera* among its audience because it was able to achieve its number one goal of being on the side of the people against the corrupted governments. It was obvious that

Aljazeera's framing of the government was very harsh due to the fact that many protesters, leaders of the movements in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood, and others were oppressed, imprisoned, or exiled during the presidency of Hosni Mubarak. They lived the oppression of the government and therefore they talked with passion against the Egyptian government.

On the topic of America and Israel's fear from the future of Egypt's regime, *CNN* revealed that the fear was due to the fact that America had strong ties with Mubarak for the past three decades which allowed for Israel to live in peace in an area where it was unwanted. The rise of the Muslim Brotherhood, or any democratically elected government officials would mean the peace treaties would be affected. Furthermore, Israel and Gaza share borders with Egypt. Mubarak's regime helped Israel by keeping an eye on the borders and preventing aid to Gaza. On the other hand, the Egyptian people and the Arabs in general have always sympathized with the Palestinian people because they believe they have a relationship of language, culture, religion, and a deep history. The rise of a democratically elected government that reflects on the aspirations of its people would truly bring to an end the siege on Gaza. This would make Israel less stable economically, diplomatically, and security in the region. For a long time, Israel was able to maintain its stability by its relationship with dictatorial regimes that oppressed its own people.

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