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A FRAMING ANALYSIS OF AL-JAZEERA'S COVERAGE
OF THE PALESTINIAN FATAH-HAMAS CONFLICT

A Thesis

Presented to

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by

Mohammed Z. Abou Ramadan

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OF THE PALESTINIAN FATAH-HAMAS CONFLICT

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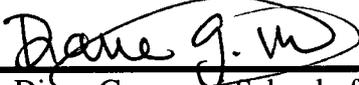
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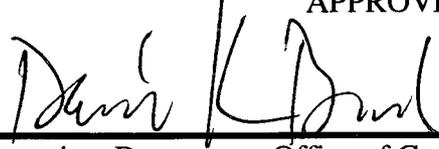
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ABSTRACT

A FRAMING ANALYSIS OF AL-JAZEERA'S COVERAGE
OF THE PALESTINIAN FATAH-HAMAS CONFLICT

by Mohammed Z. Abou Ramadan

By utilizing both framing and descriptive analysis, this study examined how an

Arab media outlet, Al-Jazeera, with an increasingly global reach framed the Palestinian-

Palestinian conflict. The 2006 Palestinian legislative elections and the 2007 fall-of-Gaza

under the control of Hamas were two critical Palestinian events that warranted an

examination of how coverage of these two periods was framed. Thirty frames were

found in Al-Jazeera's coverage of the two mentioned critical events. These frames were

categorized into seven major sets of frames. The civil war and the politics' sets of frames

dominated Al-Jazeera's coverage in the fall-of-Gaza period, and the elections and

politics' sets of frames dominated Al-Jazeera's coverage in the elections' period. The

study tested the tone of the coverage to determine whether there was favoritism shown to

Hamas. Overall, the channel's presentation of the news related to Palestinian coverage

was neutral with significant favoritism to Hamas especially in the fall-of-Gaza period.

Another finding of this study was that Al-Jazeera's coverage of both time periods was

heavily episodic. Two compositional elements, camera angle and proximity of subject to

viewer, were analyzed for this study, and Al-Jazeera conveyed a sense of credibility and

objectivity by using images that act as records of events. Therefore, visual elements were

not used as framing devices that would result in favoritism to Hamas.

To my parents, brother, and sisters for their love and undying support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis arose in part out of three years of research that has been done since I joined San Jose State University. During this period, I have worked with a great number of people whose contribution in assorted ways to the research and the making of the thesis deserve special mention. It is a pleasure to convey my gratitude to them all in my humble acknowledgment.

In the first place I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Diana Stover for her supervision, advice, and guidance from the very early stage of this research as well as giving me extraordinary experiences through-out the work. Above all and the most needed, she provided me unflinching encouragement and support in various ways. Her thought and contributions have exceptionally inspired and enriched my growth as a student and a researcher.

Special thanks are also due to my graduate advisors, Dr. Bill Tillinghast, Prof. Diane Guerrazzi, and Prof. Fayeq Oweis. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all those who made it possible for me to complete this thesis.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A region that has attracted the attention of the world over the years is the Middle

East. The focus of the attention has been on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. However,

less attention has been paid to the conflict between the two Palestinian factions, Fatah

and Hamas, over power in the occupied territories. Although there have been a number

of studies on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, there has been little research on the

Palestinian-Palestinian conflict. This research analyzed how the Palestinian legislative

elections in 2006 and the fall-of-Gaza in 2007 were framed by one of the most influential

news channels in the Arab world and increasingly the entire world, Al-Jazeera. These

two critical events were crucial in shaping modern Palestinian history that has resulted in

the division of the political society not only ideologically, but geographically as well.

Following Hamas's win in the elections, the movement took over the control of the Gaza

Strip in 2007, while Fatah tightened its grip over the West Bank.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the visual reporting of the Palestinian

legislative elections and the fall-of-Gaza to determine what frames were used by Al-

Jazeera to present these events to the Arab-Islamic public. The theoretical foundation of

framing was applied to this study of frames embedded in the broadcast coverage. The

study also examined two compositional elements of the photographic coverage – camera

angle and proximity of the subject to the viewer. In addition, the tone of the coverage was also measured to determine whether Al-Jazeera showed favoritism towards Hamas.

To determine what frames were predominant, a framing analysis was conducted of Palestinian-related minutes in the evening news show on Al-Jazeera called "Hasad Al-Yawm" or "Today's Harvest." Each Palestinian-related minute in the sample was examined for the existence of a pre-defined set of frames, tone, and compositional elements. In total, a sample of 800 minutes was analyzed, with 32% of the sample covering the Palestinian legislative elections and 58% covering the fall-of-Gaza.

A framing study of the two events is important for developing an enhanced understanding of the use of media messages as framing devices, particularly during times of elections and civil war. This study is also important because it will provide Western scholars with an in-depth examination of the ongoing domestic conflict in the Palestinian territories and how it is framed in a Middle Eastern and increasingly global media outlet.

In terms of how the thesis is organized, Chapter 2 provides a review of the historical context of the Palestinian territories that covered the dimensions of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict with emphasis on the domestic conflict between secularism represented by Fatah and Islamism represented by Hamas. Following this, background information on the Al-Jazeera channel, including its founding, profile, demographics, and policies, is provided. Relevant literature pertaining to framing theory is reviewed, with an emphasis on media frames' definitions, paradigms, and characteristics. In the next sections, literature that references the power of compositional elements as strong framing tools is examined. Chapter 2 also includes the literature overview, theoretical

framework, and research questions. Chapter 3 explains the method used for this framing study. Chapter 4 presents the results of the research, including both a descriptive analysis of the frames that emerged as well as a quantitative analysis. Finally, Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the conclusions, and implications of the study; it also includes directions for future research and how this framing study contributes to the existing literature.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Historical Background

Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

Palestine is viewed by the three major religions as the land of the prophets. It is

where the Prophet Mohammed performed his miracle, the night journey and the

ascension. It is where Christ was born and where Moses died and was buried. Maybe all

of these mixed religions and races contributed to the present ongoing conflict in the

Palestinian territories, either with the historically-defined Palestinian-Israeli conflict or

the more recent Palestinian-Palestinian one.

Sabbagh (2006) noted that historical evidence dating back to the Seventeenth

century suggests that it is likely that Arabs have been a substantial majority of the

population of Palestine for the past 1,000 years or more; it is also historically documented

that there were other groups who lived in the territory and that one of the largest of those

groups were Jews.

In the Eighteenth century, the Turks ruled the country as part of the Ottoman

Empire. Much of the knowledge of the state of the country during the Nineteenth

century, as Sabbagh (2006) noted, came from the writings of Christian travelers from the

West. The Palestinian claim to Palestine is based on the assertion that Muslim and

Christian Arabs have always formed the majority of the population, rather than Jews.

Sabbagh (2006) identified World War I as the beginning of the end of the history of

Palestine, when the British were persuaded by the Zionists to publish the Balfour

Declaration, which promised that Palestine would be the Jewish homeland.

In 1928, Palestine entered a period of increased conflict because of the rivalry

between the two religious groups, Jews and Muslims. And the violence between Arabs

and Jews became widespread as the Zionists continued to block any move to address

Arab grievances. Sabbagh (2006) stressed that 1947 was the major turning point in

defining the present conflict because, in that year, the United Nations approved a

recommendation for the partition of Palestine between Arabs and Jews. The State of

Israel was founded on May 15, 1948 after the British left.

Sabbagh (2006) explained that, after this declaration of independence, Zionist

armed groups defeated the invading Arab armies from Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and

Lebanon. In aftermath of this war, the Arab-Israeli conflict began its full-fledged

military phase. In 1956, Israel invaded Gaza and headed for the Suez Canal in agreement

with Britain and France, which opposed Egyptian President Abdel Nasser's

nationalization of the canal. The peak of this phase was the 1967 Six-Day War in which

Israel took control of Gaza in the south, the Golan Heights in the north, and the West

Bank of the Jordan River to the east.

These events from 1948 to the present have focused the world's attention on the

Arab-Israeli dispute in which the primary issue is who did what to whom in and around

the State of Israel (Sabbagh, 2006).

At present, 3 million Palestinians live under Israeli military rule. After WWI,

WWII, and the 1948, 1956, and 1967 wars, the two sides are still at odds despite some

high points along the way such as the Israel-Egypt peace treaty of 1979, the Israel-Jordan

peace agreement of 1994, and some attempts to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Several factors have played a major role in shaping Palestinian political life,

including war, occupation, uprising, and a slow peace process. The effect of these

massively destabilizing events have weakened once dominant forms of secular

nationalism and opened paths for new collective identities, especially resurgent Islamic

ones (Lybarger, 2007).

Hatina (1994) explored the change in Palestinian society in recent years, as religion

has become a driving factor in Palestinian nationalism. Since the end of the 1980s,

Palestinian society has witnessed religious movements claiming the right to represent the

Palestinian people and attempting to mobilize its energies for the struggle to achieve

liberation from Israeli occupation. To achieve this goal, following the establishment of

the Palestinian Authority, Hamas and Islamic Jihad began challenging national

movements, centering their political agendas on religious discourse.

Both movements became the main opposition to the dominant national

establishment led by the Fatah movement. As Jamal (2005) noted, the challenge to Fatah

came in several approaches. Hamas, which has never accepted the hegemony of Fatah in

Palestinian society, presents itself as an alternative movement to the Palestinian

Liberation Organization and challenges its views. In the same vein, Mishal and Sela

(2000) explained that both movements claim that the Palestine conflict is not solely a

national one, but is mainly a religious one.

Shemesh (2008) documented the founding of Fatah and the Palestinian Liberation

Organization as the idea of a Palestinian armed movement emerged after Israel's

occupation of the Gaza Strip in 1956. In 1958, the founders formed a unified group

calling itself Harakat Tahrir Filastin or the Palestine Liberation Movement. They closed

the acronym H.T.F. and reversed the letters to spell FaTaH, which literally means

"opening" and "liberation" connotatively in Arabic. Between 1958 and 1965, Fatah's

founders spread their ideas among the dispersed Palestinian masses, recruited followers,

trained them militarily, armed them, and prepared them for the revolution.

Jamal (2005) recognized that the involvement of Hamas in the activities of the first

intifada in the late 1980s and its military actions against the Israeli army and inside Israel

legitimated it as a national movement. The weakening position of the national leftist

factions turned Hamas into the central opposition movement and the only viable

alternative to Fatah.

Hamas's role as the major opposition force to the Fatah leadership was turned

around overnight when it won the Palestinian legislative elections in 2006 and became

the official party responsible for policymaking, both domestically and in regard to the

conflict with Israel. The situation after the Hamas victory was explosive and occasional

violence occurred, including dispersed fighting between the Palestinian Authority

security forces and Hamas militias. The most important and effective attempt to curb the

situation was the May 2006 National Conciliation Document of the Prisoners, which

particularly came out with an ultimatum to form a unity government (Shamir, 2007).

At the most general level, adherents of political Islam believe that Islam as a body

of faith has something important to say about how politics and society should be ordered

in the contemporary Muslim world. Ayoob (2008) expressed a more precise and analytically more useful definition of Islamism as he described it as a form of instrumentalization of Islam by individuals, groups, and organizations that pursue political objectives.

Abu-Amr (2007) explained how the rise of Hamas as an actor in the national struggle triggered rivalry and political competition for power between Hamas and factions within the Palestinian Liberation Organization, especially the Fatah movement. He further noted that this rivalry is because of a clear struggle over the leadership of the Palestinian people and the direction of Palestinian society.

Secular nationalists generally seek a non-religious democratic state even if this state has to make various concessions to the customary legal practice of the different religious communities. However, the objective of Islamists is some form of Islamic law state and society within the boundaries of what is now Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip in their entirely. In recent years, Islamism in the Palestinian case has become a type of religious-nationalism because of its goal of ending occupation and achieving a territorially bounded state (Lybarger, 2007).

Lybarger (2007) described the principle struggle within Palestinian society as being between the Islamist milieu at the center of which is the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, but also the much smaller Islamic Jihad movement and the secular-nationalist milieu anchored primarily by Fatah, the dominant faction in the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

The Islamist groups such as Hamas are seen by Palestinian society as risking their

lives at the barricades and defending their vision of a Muslim Palestine. Fatah provided

stateless Palestinians with a vital sense of national cohesion since its founding and its

subsequent takeover of the Palestinian Liberation Organization in 1968-69. Both groups

have very conflicting moral-political agendas. Therefore, a range of sub-tendencies

within the two competing cultural-political milieus has emerged. This tension originated

in the fracture between secular nationalists and Islamists, a fracture that crystallized

during the first Intifada that took the form of an intense Fatah-Hamas rivalry (Lybarger,

2007).

Lybarger (2007) argued that Fatah not only tended to secularize Islam but

Christianity as well by integrating them into a multi-confessional conception of a

territorially bounded nation-state. However, the Islamists draw on Islamic religious

discourse and symbols to reframe the national purpose as a religious effort and duty or

jihad.

The emergence of Islamism in Palestinian society represented a generational shift

in the political identities of activists who, in earlier eras, would have aligned with one of

the Palestinian Liberation Organization factions. Lybarger (2007) explained that Hamas

and Islamic Jihad drew support away from secular-nationalist groups because they finally

provided a religious-nationalist option that resonated with pro-Islamist orientations.

Jamal (2005) argued that the bigger dilemma was for Hamas, which could either

pursue its military activities, risking a clash with the Palestinian Authority represented by

the ruling party, Fatah, and a possible civil war or it could freeze such activities and

undermine its credibility in pursuing a resistance-based alternative to the peace talks.

The main argument made by Lybarger (2007) was that the competition between

Hamas and Fatah persists and has recently deepened. Two elections, one presidential,

and the other legislative, had contrasting outcomes with a Fatah win in the presidential

race and a Hamas win in the legislative elections. Lybarger (2007) noted that violent

clashes between the two parties broke out in the aftermath of the legislative elections.

Palestinian Legislative Elections in 2006

Prior to the elections in 2006, secular Fatah was in power in the period during

which the peace process with Israel did not produce any tangible results and, knowing

that they were given the democratic right to vote, Palestinians voted for and elected

Hamas, which was not advocating the peace process with Israel.

Although Hamas gained popularity during and following the first Intifada from

1987-1993, the Madrid Peace Conference of 1991 and the ensuing Oslo Accords of 1993

restored the popularity of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, which took charge of

the Palestinian Authority. Ayoob (2008) noted that because the Palestinian Liberation

Organization failed to liberate the Palestinian lands according to the timetable envisaged

under the Oslo Accords, Palestinian public opinion began to turn against the Oslo

process. This led to Hamas successfully combining nationalism and Islam and, therefore,

becoming the Palestinian manifestation of politicized Islam.

Pina (2007) provided an overview of the 2006 elections:

The 2006 legislative elections were the final and perhaps most critical test for
Palestinian democratic institutions. On the one hand, the Palestinian legislative
council elections may improve the day-to-day lives of Palestinians, renew public
confidence in the Palestinian Authority, and bolster the peace process. On the other
hand, the clear-cut legislative victory of Hamas, which does not recognize the state

of Israel and calls for an Islamized Palestinian state, may increase the possibility that Palestinians will find themselves isolated. (p. 111)

In the 2006 elections, 44.45% voted for Hamas and, 41.43% voted for Fatah; 74 of

the 132 seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council went to Hamas and 45 went to Fatah

(Chehab, 2007; Tamimi, 2007). In addition, Abu-Amr (2007) noted that the results of the

elctions prompted an open confrontation between armed Fatah fighters and supporters of

Hamas.

Fall-of-Gaza in 2007

This political conflict led to an escalating battle of rhetoric and armed skirmishes.

Tamimi (2007) noted that the Hamas victory in the elections was what started the conflict

between Hamas and the Fatah-Palestinian Authority. After the cut in international aid to

the new Hamas-led government, Palestinian Authority employees and members of the

various police forces, who were mainly Fatah supporters, started to protest against Hamas

for failure to pay their salaries. The new government was characterized as a government

led by an organization listed on the U.S. State Department's List of Foreign Terrorist

Organizations and later on the EU's list. Tamimi (2007) noted:

> Peaceful protests soon escalated into acts of sabotage directed against government buildings. It did not take long for the protests to develop into armed clashes. Thanks to the moderating influence of the traditional structures of Palestinian society, the potential for civil war between Palestinians has always been slight. However, the possibility of armed conflict between Fatah and Hamas could not be ruled out entirely. (p. 231)

In the months to come in early 2006, several rounds of political negotiations were

held to reach an agreement over the conflict points, as Tamimi (2007) noted:

> Polarization intensified, peaking in the first week of June 2006. On Saturday, June

3, Fatah deployed a new militia on the streets of the West Bank town of Jenin. Fatah's leadership said that the formation of the new unit, comprising 2,500 members, was their response to the 3,000-strong Hamas militia that the government had mobilized a month earlier in the Gaza Strip in defiance of President Abbas's objections. With another 3,000 Fatah activists training in Gaza in preparation for possible deployment there, the prospect of a bloody conflict between the two groups became more conceivable. (p. 238)

The conflict built momentum for more than a year. Ayoob (2008) described the warfare that erupted in Gaza between Hamas and Fatah in June 2007:

Although Hamas has won a military victory in Gaza by rooting out Fatah from the strip, Fatah continues to wield power in the West Bank where the Hamas military presence is much weaker. This has led to the de facto division of the Palestinian territories. (p. 128)

During the past six decades, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was always a major part of global news coverage, particularly in the Arab world. Matar (2007) noted that, from the outbreak of the second Palestinian intifada in September of 2000, to Yasser Arafat's death in November 2004, to the Palestinian legislative elections in January of 2006, and to the fall-of-Gaza in June of 2007, Palestinian-related events dominated broadcast news especially on Al-Jazeera.

Al-Jazeera

Qatar, a small state in the Persian Gulf, was founded in 1971. According to Peterson (2006), there are two factors that have shaped Qatar's integration and place in the international system. The first encompasses the constraints and problems of small states and the second is Qatar's response to these constraints with a strategy of branding the state for survival. This strategy has put the tiny state on the world map with the establishment of a global media outlet, Al-Jazeera – the satellite news channel, which

means "the island" or "the peninsula." The creation of Al-Jazeera needs to be understood in the context of Qatar's geopolitical constraints and its rivalry with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Zayani & Sahraoui, 2007).

El-Nawawy (2003) provided a historical background on the founding of Al-Jazeera, which was launched by Qatar's progressive emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, in November of 1996. El-Nawawy (2003) noted that the majority of the BBC's Arabic TV service editorial staff was recruited by Al-Jazeera.

From the beginning, Al-Jazeera offered news coverage that was not restricted by any government, either by laws or regulations. This intrinsic difference changed the media landscape in the Middle East. In so doing, Al-Jazeera, through its specialized programming and extensive news coverage of the latest developments, created debate and stirred controversy with its coverage of Middle Eastern affairs, including the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict.

In a few short years, Al-Jazeera became a significant media player in the Arab world. At present, the news channel is arguably the most important non-state actor in the Middle East (Miles, 2005).

Ayish (2002) noted that the concept of television journalism, as a set of distinctive professional values and practices, was virtually nonexistent in the Arab world of television. He also emphasized that the nature of developments in the Middle East during the past 50 years has placed political news at the top of media agendas to the exclusion of cultural and human-interest news.

Abdelhai (2006) noted that most of Al-Jazeera's news programming is devoted to

war coverage. This focus could be interpreted as normal given the proximity of Al-Jazeera in location, history, and ideology to one of the most eventful regions in the world including, the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and the recent Palestinian-Palestinian conflict.

Bahry (2001) explained that, before Al-Jazeera, Arabs were not accustomed to TV discussions of sensitive political, social, economic, and even religious subjects. Al-Jazeera's talk shows have hosted guests ranging from Arab heads of state and university professors to political opposition figures from different nationalities and ideologies, including communists and Islamic fundamentalists. Bahry noted that, within two years of its establishment, Al-Jazeera was recognized as the most influential Arab TV channel. He concluded that Al-Jazeera is not simply a satellite TV channel; it has become the news itself in the Arab world.

Al-Jazeera's audience has grown to an estimated 35 to 45 million viewers within the Muslim world, with another estimated 4.5 million in Europe and the United States (El-Nawawy & Iskandar, 2002). Zayani and Sahraoui (2007) argued that Al-Jazeera gives a platform to the Islamists, the secularists, and the nationalists among other groups. However, the channel is also often criticized for its Islamist affinity. Some critics of Al-Jazeera complain that Al-Jazeera's broadcasts are favorable to Islamist causes and have a religious agenda.

Supporting the above observation, Rinnawi (2006) noted that the language used by Al-Jazeera's anchors and reports to describe events or report them is reflected in superlatives and different sets of terms used in describing events. In terms of language,

Rinnawi found that Al-Jazeera's newscasts are usually anti-Israeli, anti-American, and mostly pro-Arab and Islamic.

Al-Jazeera: Profile and Demographics

The channel offers news coverage 24 hours a day from around the world, with a focus on the hottest regions of conflict. It was launched in November of 1996 and generates news from more than 40 bureaus and dozens of correspondents covering the four corners of the globe. Al-Jazeera's ultimate goal is to set up a proactive relationship with its audience in which the audience is not simply a television viewer or Internet user, but an integral part of the news reporting and news-making process. In March of 2006, Al-Jazeera broke the language barrier by launching the English language Al-Jazeera. The channel assembled a team of TV pros from BBC, APTN, ITV, CNN, and CNBC among others. The network's combined Arabic and English services has 2,500 staff members, and it broadcasts from four centers – Doha, Kuala Lumpur, London, and Washington, DC. According to Al-Jazeera, its English-language service reaches 100 million homes, and its Arabic service has an audience of 40 to 50 million.

Based on data from a viewer survey conducted for Al-Jazeera by the U. S. -based Allied Media Corporation, typical viewers range in age from 15 to more than 40. Although most viewers report watching an average of three to four hours a day of Al-Jazeera, viewers age 15 to 29 spend more time watching, averaging an additional hour daily. Furthermore, male viewers outnumber female viewers in every age group. The majority of viewers of Al-Jazeera live in populated urban cities, and a very small percentage live in rural areas. Seventy percent of Al-Jazeera's viewers report being

married and 30% are single. As for Al-Jazeera's audience profile by religion, 96% report

being Muslim, 2% are Christian, and 2% are other. The survey also provided data on Al-

Jazeera's penetration in the Arab world, Iran, Turkey, Israel, and Cyprus. The

penetration of percentage was calculated as the total number of potential audience

members, divided by the total number of Arabic-speaking adults. The average

penetration in the Arab world was 48% with the highest percentage in the Palestinian

territories (99%) and the lowest percentage in Egypt (10%). Qatar, the host country for

Al-Jazeera, and Kuwait were the only two countries with more than 60% penetration;

Oman, Libya, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Iran were all above the mark of 50%.

Penetration in Israel was 47%, Cyprus was 25%, and Turkey was 10%. The extremely

high penetration in the Palestinian territories can be attributed to the high need by the

Palestinian public for news about the day-to-day incidents related to their conflict with

Israel, and more recently, the fall-of-Gaza that is now under the control of Hamas. As for

the low penetration in Egypt, the probable reason is that 25% of the country's population

of 70 million is below the poverty line and cannot afford a satellite connection.

Theoretical Background

Framing Origins

Pan and Kosicki (1993) noted that framing is often traced back to roots in both

psychology and sociology. In relation to mass communications study, the sociological

foundations for framing theory were developed by Goffman (1974) and others who

assumed that individuals cannot understand the world fully and constantly struggle to

interpret their life experiences and to make sense of the world around them.

The sociological perspective on framing derives from the work by Bateson (1972) and Goffman (1974), which tends to focus on the use of story lines, symbols, and stereotypes in media presentations. This literature typically defines news frames in terms of ideological or value perspectives.

Framing Analysis Theories

Goffman (1974) used the term frame to refer to a specific set of expectations that are used to make sense of a social situation at a given point in time. He argued that, when individuals move from one set of frames to another, they downshift or upshift. In addition, according to Goffman (1974), frames are definitions of a situation that include organizational and subjective elements. In other words, frames are cognitive structures that guide both the perception and representation of reality.

A further major contributor to research on framing, particularly ideologically-driven frames, was Gitlin (1980), who defined frames as principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters. The following definition of framing theory is considered to be the most recognized and used. Entman (1993) argued that a frame is a perspective infused into a message that promotes the salience of selected pieces of information over others. When adopted by receivers, frames may influence individuals' views of problems and their necessary solutions. He defined the process as follows:

> 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. (p. 51)

In addition, framing not only involves salience, it goes beyond that:

> Frames define problems—determine what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of common cultural values; diagnose causes—identify the forces creating the problem; make moral judgments—evaluate causal agents and their effects; and suggest remedies—offer and justify treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects. (Entman, 1993, p. 51)

Bryant and Miron (2004) argued that the general assumption of framing theory is that context informs action, behavior, and understanding. They also argued that it has become commonplace to treat the choice of frames as a more or less deliberate process. Moreover, the two scholars categorized frame analysis as a research methodology, which examines the selection of certain aspects of an issue, images, stereotypes, messengers, metaphors, and so on, used to cue specific audience responses.

Gamson and Modigiliani (1989) argued that a frame in communication or in media refers to the words, images, phrases, and presentation styles that a speaker uses when relaying information about an issue or event to an audience. They conceptually defined a media frame as a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events.

Pan & Kosicki (1993) argued that framing refers to selecting and emphasizing certain aspects of experience or ideas over others. Giddens (1979) looked at frames as the static sense of meanings imposed by journalists who are subject to the multiplicity of ideological meanings in their work. Iyengar (1991) provided a slightly different definition for frames; he argued that the concept of framing refers to subtle alterations in the statement or presentation of problems.

As for Durham (1998), he argued that contemporary theories of framing presume a

social continuity within and as a result of the framing process as they do not consider

events that defy framing. He defined a frame as a dominant modernist construction of

reality, which offers audience members a way to know the same things at the same time.

Worth mentioning is Scheufele's (1999) argument, that research on framing is

characterized by theoretical and empirical vagueness, which may partially be because of

the lack of a commonly shared theoretical model underlying framing research. This is

clear from the number of definitions for framing theory from different scholars. The

various definitions enhance the end result of framing research literature. However,

because scholars do not agree on a universal definition of the framing theory, this may in

turn hinder the development of a cohesive body of theory.

Frame/Framing Definitions

As Entman (1991) noted, frames in the media emerge as the presence or absence of

certain key words, sources of information, and sentences that form thematic clusters. In

addition, Entman (1993) posited that the frame in the news is really the imprint of power;

it registers the identity of actors or interests that compete to dominate the text. He made

the case that frames may be advanced in words, such as by specific descriptions of

groups, or visually, through the presentation of photographs or maps:

> If we were to map political communication, media frames would be situated
> between the collective action frames advanced by social movements and the
> mentally stored clusters of ideas that guide individuals' processing of information.
> (Entman, 1993, p. 53)

Similarly, another definition of frames is noted below:

> A frame is a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and
> suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and

elaboration. (Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss, & Ghanem, 1991, p. 11)

In the same manner, McCombs and Ghanem (2001) posited that frames that present

"compelling arguments" about an object are especially likely to influence the object's

salience. As for Reese (2001), he noted that frames serve as organizing principles that

are socially shared and persistent over time and that work symbolically to meaningfully

structure the social world.

According to Ryan, Carragee, and Meinhofer (2001), frames organize discourse,

including news stories, by their patterns of selection, emphasis, and exclusion. The

authors wrote that, by framing political issues, social actors define what is and what is not

relevant to the issue. Edelman (1993) argued that frames exert their power especially in

how observations are classified and categorized. Furthermore, Gitlin (1980) explained:

> Frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection emphasis and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse. (p. 7)

Reese (2001) argued that frames are active, information generating, as well as

screening devices. In addition, framing is concerned with the way interests,

communicators, sources, and culture combine to yield coherent ways of understanding

the world, which are developed using all of the available verbal and visual symbolic

resources.

Framing Paradigms/Types

There are three paradigms related to the study of framing. Reese and Buckalew

(1995) compared the first two. The critical paradigm is used to explain how news

organizations select some information and intentionally omit other information such that

frames of a topic will either not exist or will present a single viewpoint. It regards frames as controlling, hegemonic, and tied to larger elite structures.

The cognitive paradigm discussed by Reese and Buckalew (1995) is the second on the list. According to this paradigm, journalists routinely create meaningfully different frames with different meanings about an issue or even within a single news item.

The constructionist paradigm provides yet a third perspective on the study of framing; for example, Gamson and Mogdiliani (1989) viewed journalists as information processors who create interpretive packages of the positions of politically-invested sponsors to both reflect and add to the issue culture of the topic.

Iyengar (1991) provided evidence on how the form of presentation in news reporting affects attributions of responsibility. He contrasted two forms, episodic and thematic. The episodic presentation, by far the most common one, takes the form of a case study or event-oriented report and depicts public issues in terms of concrete instances. In contrast, the much rarer thamatic form provides a context for an event or issue and emphasizes general outcomes, conditions, and statistical evidence.

Iyengar and Simon (1993) differentiated the above two types of frames as follows:

> The episodic frame depicts public issues of concrete instances or specific events. Visually episodic reports make for good pictures. Episodic framing is visually appealing and consists of on-the-scene, live coverage, while television news coverage of political issues is heavily episodic. The thematic news frame, in contrast, places public issues in some general or abstract context. It typically takes the form of a "takeout" or "backgrounder" report directed at general outcomes or conditions and frequently features talking heads. Thematic coverage, which requires interpretive analyses, would simply crowd out other news items. (p. 369)

Frame Characteristics

De Vreese, Jochen, and Semetko (2001) argued that the central dimension of a frame appears to be the selection, organization, and emphasis of certain aspects of reality to the exclusion of others.

Scheufele (1999) synthesized a quarter-century of framing research by identifying four processes of frame building, which focus on the dynamics of how, for example, media outlets choose specific frames in communication; frame setting, which concerns the influence of frames in communication on frames in thought and the precise psychological processes at work; individual-level effects of frames, which refers to the impact of frames in thought on subsequent behaviors or attitudes; and journalists as audiences, which looks at how citizens' actions affect the initial frame-building process.

In regard to frame building, it is connected to several players. Althaus (2003) noted that the literature on media independence shows that public statements of government officials can simultaneously stimulate news coverage and regulate the discursive parameters of that coverage. In addition, Carragee and Roefs (2004) argued that the interaction between movements and the news media raises central concerns, including the news media's relationship to political authority and the character of news coverage of challengers demanding change.

De Vreese (2005) suggested that news frames fall under two types, issue-specific frames, which is pertinent only to specific topics or events, and generic frames, which cover thematic limitations and can be identified in relation to different topics and different cultural contexts.

According to Capella & Jamieson (1997), a frame must meet four criteria. First, a news frame must have identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics. Second, it should be commonly observed in journalistic practice. Third, it must be possible to distinguish the frame reliably from other frames. Fourth, a frame must have representational validity and not be merely a figment of a researcher's imagination.

Framing and News

Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, and Sasson (1992) identified the lens through which the public receives media-generated images as not being neutral since they support the power and point of view of political and economic elites who operate and focus them. The authors further noted that facts, as much as images, take on their meaning by being embedded in some larger system of meaning or frame. The term images is essential to the visual and other models conveying broader frames. However, when related to decoding media imagery, an active context, social location, and/or prior experience can lead to different interpretations.

Chong and Druckman (2007) argued that, when it comes to framing political news, politics is typically competitive, fought between parties or ideological factions, and issues that are debated are framed in opposing terms. In addition, Entman (1993) noted there are four conjectures including the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture. Framing bias is a term that takes on three major meanings, clearly represented as follows:

> It is applied to news that purportedly distorts or falsifies reality (distortion bias), sometimes to news that favors one side rather than providing equivalent treatment to both sides in a political conflict (content bias), and sometimes to the motivations and mindsets of journalists who allegedly produce the biased content (decision-making bias). (Entman, 2007, p. 163)

Entman (2007) also distinguished bias from news slant by defining slant as something that characterizes individual news reports and editorials in which the framing favors one side over the other in a current or potential dispute. Furthermore, he argued that, if the patterns of slant persist across time, message dimensions, and media outlets, it means that the media may be systematically assisting certain entities to induce their preferred behavior in others. That is to say, the media may be helping to distribute political power to particular groups, causes, or individuals.

Liebes (2000) raised the issue of newsworthiness and argued how it is often a function of framing. A story may be chosen for its intuitive newsworthiness, but it is likely that the reporter or editor has a frame in mind. It may be that the same story evokes several frames, even competing ones.

News frames represent persistent patterns of selection, emphasis, and exclusion that furnish a coherent interpretation and evaluation of events (Gitlin, 1980). Furthermore, news frames bundle key concepts, stock phrases, and iconic images to reinforce certain common ways of interpreting developments. The essence of framing is selection to prioritize some facts, images, or developments over others, thereby unconsciously promoting one particular interpretation of events (Cohen & Wolfsfeld, 1993).

Entman (1991) argued that frames reside in the specific properties of the news narrative that encourage those perceiving and thinking about events to develop particular understandings, and that news frames are embodied in the keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images emphasized in a news narrative.

Framing Analysis Model: Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000

One of the main approaches to identifying framing devices in the news was offered by Tankard (2001). His list of frames included 11 framing mechanism or focal points for identifying and measuring news frames, including: headlines, subheads, photos, photo captions, leads, source selection, quotes selection, pull quotes, logos, statistics and charts, as well as concluding statements and paragraphs. The frame manifests itself in media content through various framing devices, such as word choice, metaphors, exemplars, descriptions, arguments, and visual images (Gamson & Lasch, 1983; Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

Research approaches that analyze message content to determine how the media represent a certain topic are regularly referred to as frame analyses, although sometimes they distinguish no frame at all (Van Gorp, 2007). Frame analysis has become central to the study of political communication (Scheufele, 1999).

Reese (2001), relying on Goffman (1974), noted that framing refers to the way events and issues are organized and made sense of, especially by media, media professionals, and their audiences. In addition, he argued that the framing approach guards against unduly compartmentalizing components of communication (sender, content, audience).

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) investigated the prevalence of five generic news frames identified in earlier studies on framing and framing effects: conflict, human interest, attribution of responsibility, morality, and economic consequences. Definitions of these frames are included in the method section of this study. In their research, the use

of news frames depended on both the type of outlet and the topic. It also depended on a deductive approach in content analysis of the news frames, which involves predefining certain frames as content analytic variables to verify the extent to which these frames occur in the news.

Visual Elements

Messaris and Abraham (2001) noted that visual framing might have less effect on viewers rather than in words. However, these visual elements easily convey messages compared to the expected resistance for words' framing. Therefore, visual elements were taken into consideration.

Kazmierczak (2001) explained that visual elements are a language that produce and communicate thoughts and images about reality and that this language is made up of symbols in which meaning is derived from their context. Visuals are a system of representation and signification that allow people to produce and communicate thoughts and images about reality. In addition, visual communication was defined as a process of sending and receiving messages using images. Visual literacy can be defined as the "ability to construct meaning from visual images" (Giorgis, Johnson, Bonomo, Colbert, 1999, p. 146). Furthermore, visual images are becoming the predominant form of communication across a range of learning and teaching resources, delivered across a range of media and formats (Fitzgerald, 1995).

Messaris (1994) defined visual literacy as the gaining of knowledge and experience about the workings of the visual media coupled with heightened conscious awareness of these workings. Visual literacy includes but is not limited to the graphic composition of

images. It also includes elements such as camera angle and proximity of subject to viewer (Kazmierczak, 2001). Meyrowitz (1986) noted that the effectiveness of these two visual elements stem from the fact that their conventional uses are typically modeled on people's real-world experiences.

Camera Angle

Meyrowitz (1998) explained that camera angle tends to be used in particular ways in visual analysis. Low-angle shots are often used to suggest power and authority. Level shots are used to suggest someone is a peer, which is why this is a technique typically used by journalists on other journalists. High-angle shots are used to suggest that someone is smaller or weaker.

Proximity of Subject to Viewer

This element was described by Meyrowitz (1986) as the selective use of close-ups/intimate shots, medium shots, and long shots, which can reshape the perceptions of both fictional and nonfictional sequences. Intimate shots encourage viewers to feel a personal connection to the pictured person. However, persons seen at a greater distance are more likely to be perceived in terms of their social roles (Meyrowitz, 1998).

Literature Overview and Theoretical Framework

The overview of the literature demonstrated that framing played an important part in the news building process. By examining the content of visual coverage of the Fatah-Hamas conflict, both in terms of subject matter and compositional tools, this study utilized Entman's (1993) definition of framing. The framing function of the mass media serves to emphasize certain information that intuitively directs attention away from other

aspects; the information that is subsequently omitted is also of great importance (Entman,

1993). Framing theory asserts that media professionals use different approaches to

organize and make sense of the news; thereby, affecting how audiences perceive that

news.

The most relevant literature for this study includes work by (Entman, 1993) as

discussed above. In addition, a major contributor to framing analysis was Gitlin (1980),

who defined frames as principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of

little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters. Also, Scheufele

(1999) identified four processes of framing research including frame building, frame

setting, individual-level effects of frames, and journalists as audience. Finally, it is

important to understand the visual messages presented in the news media. The inherent

nature of the photojournalistic process of creating visual content offers a distinct

perspective to the discussion of news production and framing (Schwartz, 1992).

Two major reasons led to the investigation of whether Al-Jazeera showed

favoritism towards Hamas. First, the politics of the Middle East, in which countries are

divided, in general, into two camps, one supports Hamas and the other supports Fatah.

The first camp is represented by Syria, Iran, and Qatar – Al-Jazeera's host country – and

the second is represented by Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. The head-to-head

competition among those states for power within the region has been shifted to the

Palestinian theatre. Second, the ideologies of many decision makers at Al-Jazeera, which

has been described by researchers as being pro-Islamic.

The theoretical work of Messaris and Abraham (2001), Kazmierczak (2001), and

Meyrowitz (1986, 1998) on the framing of visual images also guided this examination of

visual news content in the context of framing. Their work on the graphic composition of

image includes elements such as camera angle, and proximity of subject to viewer

(Kazmierczak, 2001). Meyrowitz (1986) noted that the effectiveness of these two visual

elements stem from the fact that their conventional uses are typically modeled on

people's real-world experiences.

Iyengar (1991) provided evidence on how the form of presentation in news

reporting affects attributions of responsibility. He contrasted two forms, the episodic and

the thematic. The episodic form, by far the most common one, takes the form of a case

study or event-oriented report and depicts public issues in terms of concrete instances. In

contrast, the much rarer thamatic form emphasizes general outcomes, conditions, and

statistical evidence.

De Vreese (2005) suggested that news frames fall under two types, the first is

pertinent only to specific topics or events and labeled as issue-specific-frames, while the

second type covers thematic limitations and can be identified in relation to different

topics and different cultural contexts and called generic frames.

This framing analysis of the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict covering the

Palestinian legislative elections 2006 and the fall-of-Gaza 2007 examined what frames

were used in Al-Jazeera's coverage as well as their prominence and frequency, and

whether they were episodic or thematic. It analyzed the coverage to determine whether

its tone favored Hamas. Also, the visual elements of camera angle and proximity of

subject to viewer were examined.

Research Questions

RQ1: What frames did Al-Jazeera use in its coverage of the Palestinian legislative elections and the fall-of-Gaza events?

RQ2: For each of the seven major sets of frames, what differences, if any, are there between the Palestinian legislative elections and the fall-of-Gaza periods?

RQ3: Was the tone of Al-Jazeera's coverage favorable to Hamas?

RQ4: Were the frame(s) in Al-Jazeera's coverage primarily episodic or thematic?

RQ5: How did the following visual elements used by Al-Jazeera contribute to framing of the Palestinian legislative elections and the fall-of-Gaza periods:

(a)camera angle and (b) proximity of subject to viewer

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This study shows how Al-Jazeera's coverage framed the Palestinian legislative

elections in January of 2006 and the fall-of-Gaza in June of 2007. Framing analysis was

used to analyze a sample of 800 minutes pertaining to Palestinian-focused news on Al-

Jazeera. The Palestinian-related minutes were analyzed to determine the major sets of

frames, the amount of episodic and thematic coverage, and the tone of the coverage –

whether Al-Jazeera's coverage was favorable to Hamas.

Sample of "Hasad Al-Yawm" or "Today's Harvest"

Given that in the last decade Al-Jazeera was recognized as the number one news

outlet in the Arab world in terms of comprehensive news coverage and credibility, the

major evening newscast in the channel called "Hasad Al-Yawm" or literally "Today's

Harvest" was analyzed for the months of January, 2006 and June, 2007 to coincide with

the two critical events – the Palestinian legislative elections on January 25, 2006 and the

fall-of-Gaza under Hamas's authority on June 14, 2007. The sample included 44

programs of the newscast, with a minimum of 60 minutes running time for each.

The elections sample of newscasts was limited to the first 12 and last 7 days of

January excluding the day of the election for a total of 19 newscasts. The newscast dates

included January 4-12, January 24, and January 26-31, 2006. The fall-of-Gaza sample

had 25 newscasts. The newscast dates included June 4-6, June 8-12, and June 14-30,

2007. Although the original request for coverage from Al-Jazeera was for two full

months of January 2006, and June 2007, after repeated inquiries, the channel was only

able to provide 44 of the 61 programs requested. These Arabic programs were not

available from any other source. The other pre-elections Palestinian coverage that was

not in the sample was primarily on the campaign by the various candidates. Although the

newscast broadcast on the day of the Palestinian elections was not available, the day

before and after the elections was included in the sample. It is important to note that the

sample does include the post-election coverage of the reactions and developments

concerning the unexpected victory of Hamas at the polls. In terms of the broadcasts

attained from Al-Jazeera, it should also be noted that the second critical event was more

eventful because of the violence during the Fatah-Hamas conflict.

Footage of the newscasts for the selected dates was obtained on DVD discs from

Al-Jazeera specifically for the purpose of this study. The footage included the names of

the persons involved, the names of the anchors and reporters, and a summation of all the

news stories in each episode of the evening newscast regional and international news, as

well as Palestinian-related stories. Each story was coded to determine what frames were

coded during the two critical events' timeline to determine the type and frequency of

frame used. In addition, a framing analysis was conducted on the Palestinian-related

minutes. For example, a 60-minute newscast included an average of 20 minutes devoted

to Palestinian-related news. Each minute of those 20 was analyzed for all pre-defined

categories. Definitions and coding instructions for all categories are provided in the

codebook in Appendix A.

Variables and Measures

The variables and measures for this study are as follows:

- Story date: the month and day the story aired.

- Critical event: the Palestinian legislative elections in 2006 or the fall-of-Gaza in 2007.

- Geographical origin of each minute: (Gaza Strip, West Bank, Israel, Arab-Islamic country excluding Palestinian, and International).

- Focus of each minute: (International, Arab-Islamic excluding Palestinian, Arab-Islamic including Palestinian, economic excluding Palestinian economic, sports excluding Palestinian sports, Arab-Israeli, Palestinian-Israeli, Palestinian-Palestinian excluding Fatah-Hamas, Fatah-Hamas, and Palestinian economic).

- Prominence of each minute: determined where the minute appeared in a consequence of stories as part of the newscast, which included (lead story, non-lead story, and story of the program).

- Time distribution: this variable measured the minutes allocated to (reporter, anchor, Fatah spokesperson, Hamas spokesperson, Palestinian Authority official, other Palestinian factions spokespersons, Israeli official, Arab official, International official, and independent).

- Tone: defined as how Al-Jazeera portrayed Hamas' role in the elections and the militant conflict with Fatah. Each minute was classified as (unfavorable to Hamas, neither favorable nor unfavorable to Hamas, favorable to Hamas).

- Type of frame for each minute: the episodic type was related to coverage of specific events that was generally conducted on the spot. The thematic type focused on political debates, possible consequences of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and/or the historical background of the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict.

- Frames: this variable was concerned with the frames that emerged from the framing analysis, which included 30 frames categorized into seven major sets of frames including Politics (Negotiation, Peace, Reconciliation, Mortification, Responsibility, Anti-violence protest), Civil war (Conflict with the ruling party, Blame, Law and Order, Control, Guerilla), Elections (Democracy, Change/Alternative, Underdog, Shock, One-and-only), Conflict (Violence of war, Military Conflict, Security, Victory, Jihad), Nepotism (Corruption, Credibility, Legitimacy), Boycott (Siege, International Rejection), and Humanization (Human interest, Economic Consequence, Morality, Injustice). The frames developed for this study included frames found in previous research as well as frames found by the author in preliminary research. In addition, an inductive approach was used to define additional frames that emerged during the analysis. (See Appendix A for complete definitions of frames).

- Camera angle: this compositional element was coded as low angle, equal angle, or high angle.

- Proximity of subject to viewer: this compositional element was coded as long shot, medium shot, or intimate shot.

Analysis

The researcher coded all of the newscasts. A trained second coder coded 80

minutes or 10% of the content to determine intercoder reliability. Scott's pi formula is as

follows:

$$\text{pi} = \frac{\% \text{ observed agreement} - \% \text{ expected agreement}}{1 - \% \text{ expected agreement}}$$

The overall reliability was .95 across all categories; the intercoder reliability

coefficients for each variable are listed in the codebook in Appendix A. Independent

sample t-tests were used to test for statistical differences. The statistical program SPSS

was used in the analysis.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study investigated what frames Al-Jazeera used in its news coverage of two

critical events in the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict – the Palestinian legislative elections

held on January 25, 2006 and the fall-of-Gaza on June 14, 2007. A total of 800 minutes

from 92 Palestinian-related stories were analyzed. Of these, 340 minutes were from the

elections period and 460 were from the fall-of-Gaza period. The 30 frames found in the

broadcast coverage of the two critical events were categorized into seven major frames,

which were further analyzed. The sample was taken from Al-Jazeera's main evening

news program "Hasad Al-Yawm," which is literally translated as "Today's Harvest". All

the percentages used in the text in Chapter 4 have been rounded to their nearest whole

numbers; the exact percentages are used in the tables.

"Hasad Al Yawm" or "Today's Harvest" was chosen for this analysis because it is

a 1-hour news program that offers news coverage, including the headline news of the day

in an expansive format, along with in-depth analysis and interviews. In addition to

politics, the program also features highlights of economic and sports news. In this study,

24% of the sample analyzed was Palestinian-related stories as compared with all other

stories in Al-Jazeera's broadcasts. In addition, 34% of the total number of minutes

analyzed was Palestinian-related minutes. Of all of the lead stories in the news programs,

49% were Palestinian-related lead stories. In other words, Palestinian-related stories led

the program 21 times out of the total 44 editions analyzed. A major feature of Al-

Al-Jazeera's expansive format of news is a story that airs in the second half of the program called "Qadiyyat Al-Hasad" or Story of the program. It focuses on one issue with in-depth thematic coverage that adds historical context as well as longer interview sessions with individuals who are knowledgeable about the issue being discussed. The duration of this story ranges between 5 and 10 minutes. During the two study periods, 11% of the "Hasad Al Yawm" program lead stories were Palestinian-related.

Data Sets

The results are based on two separate data sets. The first includes all of the stories in the 44 news programs. The second set includes only the Palestinian-related minutes. Both stories and minutes were analyzed in relation to parameters including geographic origin, focus, and prominence within the program. The first set of data was analyzed to put Al-Jazeera's overall coverage in context before further analyzing Palestinian-related minutes in detail. Table 1 shows that during the two time periods, Palestinian coverage originating from the Palestinian territories and Israel averaged 20% of Al-Jazeera's coverage. When covering the 2006 elections, Al-Jazeera's coverage from the West Bank (8%) was more than that from Gaza (4%) given that the Palestinian government's official hub was the city of Ramallah in the West Bank. As for the 7% of the news originating from Israel, this was because of Israel's prohibiting the voters of reaching the voting polls. A year later, when covering the fall-of-Gaza, the coverage originated from the Gaza Strip reached 10% where the militant confrontations between Fatah and Hamas took place as compared to 4% of the coverage originating from the West Bank.

Table 1

Geographical Origin of Al-Jazeera's Stories during the Palestinian Legislative Elections and the Fall-of-Gaza Periods

Geographical origin Of stories	Palestinian Legislative Elections (*n* = 180) Percent	Fall of Gaza (*n* = 211) Percent	Elections & Fall of Gaza Combined (*N* = 390) Percent
Palestinian-related Stories	**19.5%**	**20.9%**	**20.2%**
Gaza Strip	4.4	10.4	7.7
West Bank	7.9	4.3	5.9
Israel	7.2	6.1	6.6
Other Stories	**80.5%**	**79.2%**	**79.8%**
Arab-Islamic country	38.3	36.5	37.3
International	42.2	42.7	42.5

Note. The n's are for the number of stories. There were 79 Palestinian-related stories and 312 other stories in the 44 news programs.

When covering news, Al-Jazeera's mainly focused on Arab and Islamic affairs. Table 2 clearly illustrates this since 40% of the news stories during the two periods focused on Arab-Islamic news. In comparison, during the two time periods, 25% of the stories focused on Palestinian-related news. The two groups leading this coverage were Fatah-Hamas with 10%, and Palestinian-Israeli with 8%, while the first mainly originating from the fall-of-Gaza period, and the second mainly originating from the elections period.

Table 2

Focus of Al-Jazeera's Stories during the Palestinian Legislative Elections and the Fall-of-Gaza Period

Focus of story	*Palestinian Legislative Elections* (*n* = 180) Percent	*Fall of Gaza* (*n* = 211) Percent	*Elections & Fall of Gaza Combined* (*N*= 390) Percent
Palestinian-related Stories	**21.6%**	**26.9%**	**24.5%**
Arab-Islamic including Palestinian	2.2	4.7	3.6
Palestinian-Israeli	12.2	5.2	8.4
Arab-Palestinian excluding Fatah-Hamas	1.1	0.0	0.5
Fatah-Hamas	5.0	14.2	10.0
Palestinian economic	1.1	2.8	2.0
Palestinian sports	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Sties	**78.4%**	**73.1%**	**75.5%**
International	18.9	18.5	18.7
Arab-Palestinian excluding Palestinian	45.0	35.1	39.6
Economic excluding Palestinian economic	7.2	8.1	7.7
Sports excluding Palestinian sports	6.7	7.1	6.9
Arab-Israeli	0.6	4.3	2.6

Note. The n's are for the number of stories. There were 79 Palestinian-related stories and 312 other stories in the 44 news programs.

In terms of prominence, Table 3 shows that 22% of the Palestinian stories were either lead stories or the in-depth story of the program.

Table 3

Prominence of Al-Jazeera's Stories during the Palestinian Legislative Elections and the Fall of Gaza Periods

	Palestinian Legislative Elections (n = 180)	Fall of Gaza (n = 211)	Elections & Fall of Gaza Combined (N = 390)
Prominence of story	Percent	Percent	Percent
Lead Story	10.0%	11.8%	11.0%
Non-lead Story	78.3	76.3	77.2
Story of the Program	11.7	11.8	11.2

Note. The n's are for the number of stories. There were 79 Palestinian-related stories and 312 other stories in the 44 news programs.

The same variables of origin, focus, and prominence of the minute was calculated for the Palestinian-related minutes, in addition to one more variable, which was the distribution of minutes among the anchor, reporter, and spokespeople. Table 4 included the minute origins, and showed that 38% of the minutes originated from the Gaza Strip, 27% from the West bank, and 17% from Israel.

Worth noticing here was that 51% of the Gaza Strip minutes were during the fall-of-Gaza period, and that 41% of the West Bank minutes were during the elections period. This was the case as coverage during the fall-of-Gaza was Palestinian-Palestinian,

therefore, the minutes related to the elections counted for most of the minutes originating

from West Bank.

Table 4

Geographical Origin of Al-Jazeera's Palestinian-related Minutes during the Palestinian Legislative Elections and the Fall-of-Gaza Periods

Geographic origin of Palestinian-related minutes	*Palestinian Legislative Elections* (n = 340) Percent	*Fall of Gaza* (n = 460) Percent	*Elections & Fall of Gaza Combined* (N = 800) Percent
Palestinian-related Minutes	**93.0%**	**73.6%**	**81.8%**
Gaza Strip	22.1	50.7	38.5
West Bank	40.9	15.9	26.5
Israel	30.0	7.0	16.8
Other Minutes	**7.0%**	**26.5%**	**18.2%**
Arab-Islamic country	0.0	13.8	8.0
International	7.0	12.6	10.2

Note. n's are for the number of Palestinian-related minutes. There were 654 Palestinian-related minutes and 146 other minutes.

The focus of minutes in Al-Jazeera's coverage as displayed in Table 5 was mainly

for Fatah-Hamas with 61% and the Palestinian-Israeli with 33% minutes came in second.

Table 5

Focus of Al-Jazeera's Palestinian-related Minutes during the Palestinian Legislative Elections and the Fall-of-Gaza Periods

Focus of Palestinian-related minutes	Palestinian Legislative Elections (*n* = 340) Percent	Fall of Gaza (*n* = 460) Percent	Elections & Fall of Gaza Combined (*N* = 800) Percent
Palestinian-related Minutes	**100.0%**	**93.9%**	**96.5%**
Arab-Islamic including Palestinian	0.0	0.0	0.0
Palestinian-Israeli	58.8	13.3	32.6
Palestinian-Palestinian excluding Fatah-Hamas	3.5	0.0	1.5
Fatah-Hamas	36.8	78.9	61.0
Palestinian economic	0.9	1.7	1.4
Palestinian sports	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other minutes	**0.0%**	**6.1%**	**3.5%**
International	0.0	0.7	0.4
Arab-Islamic excluding Palestinian	0.0	0.0	0.0
Economic excluding Palestinian Economic	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sports excluding Palestinian Sports	0.0	0.0	0.0
Arab-Israeli	0.0	5.4	3.1

Note. n's are for the number of Palestinian-related minutes. There were 772 Palestinian-related minutes and 28 other minutes.

Most of the Fatah-Hamas minutes (79%) originated from the fall-of-Gaza period, while the Palestinian-Israeli minutes originated with a ruling 59% from the elections period.

Table 6 showed how important the Palestinian-related minutes were in Al-Jazeera's coverage as 40% of the Palestinian minutes were lead ones. Al-Jazeera also discussed Palestinian minutes within the story of the program with a percentage of 6%.

Table 6

Prominence of Al-Jazeera's Palestinian-related minutes during the Palestinian Legislative Elections and the Fall-of-Gaza Periods

	Palestinian Legislative Elections ($n = 340$)	*Fall of Gaza* ($n = 460$)	*Elections & Fall of Gaza Combined* ($N = 800$)
Prominence of Palestinian-related minutes	Percent	Percent	Percent
Lead Story	35.6%	42.4%	39.5%
Non-lead Story	57.1	53.3	54.9
Story of the Program	7.4	4.3	5.6

Note. n's are for the number of Palestinian-related minutes.

The distribution of Palestinian-related minutes was illustrated in Table 7 as anchors and reporters shared the highest percentages of 25% and 23% respectively. Fatah spokespeople (12%) were given more time as compared with Hamas spokespeople (9%). Hamas' minutes mainly came from the fall-of-Gaza period with 12%, as compared

with 4% from the elections period. In comparison, Fatah's minutes were distributed as

9% for the elections period and 15% for the fall-of-Gaza period. Independent

spokespeople were allocated 15% of the on-air minutes and Israeli officials were given

2%.

Table 7

Distribution of Al-Jazeera's Palestinian-related Minutes by Anchors, Reporters, and News Sources in the Palestinian Legislative Elections and the Fall-of-Gaza Periods

Distribution of Palestinian-related minutes	Palestinian Legislative Elections (n = 340) Percent	Fall of Gaza (n = 460) Percent	Elections & Fall of Gaza Combined (N = 800) Percent
Anchor	23.5%	25.9%	24.9%
Reporter	26.2	20.0	22.7
Independent	17.4	13.9	15.3
Fatah Spokesperson	9.1	14.6	12.3
Hamas Spokesperson	3.8	12.3	8.6
International Official	5.6	4.1	4.8
Palestinian Authority Official	6.8	2.6	4.4
Other Palestinian faction Spokespersons	4.7	2.6	3.5
Israeli Official	2.9	2.0	2.4
Arab Official	0.0	2.0	1.1

Note. The n's are for the number of Palestinian-related minutes.

Research Questions

Summary of Results

Al-Jazeera's coverage of the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict emphasized the political aspects in its coverage of the legislative elections and the militant stances taken by both Fatah and Hamas during the fall-of-Gaza period. During these two periods, Al-Jazeera did not focus on the historical Palestinian-Israeli dispute. Seven sets of major frames emerged from the study—politics, civil war, elections, conflict, nepotism, boycott, and humanization—with the politics set being the most predominant. There were significant differences between the two critical events in three out of the seven major sets of frames over the two periods – politics, civil war, and elections.

In addition to determining what frames were used in the coverage, the study also examined whether Al-Jazeera's coverage was favorable to Hamas. In terms of the tone of coverage, the study showed that, for the most part, the coverage was neutral. However, during the fall-of-Gaza period, the t-test showed that the coverage favored Hamas.

Al-Jazeera's coverage was primarily episodic or event-based; 94% of all episodic as compared with the 6% that was thematic or more issue oriented.

The study also examined two compositional elements used by Al-Jazeera to cover the two critical events. The results showed that the majority of minutes had a level-with-the-viewer camera angle and a medium proximity of subject to viewer; hence, Al-Jazeera was objective to a great extent in its coverage of these two time periods.

Research Question 1

What frames did Al-Jazeera use in its coverage of the Palestinian legislative elections and the fall-of-Gaza events?

Thirty different frames were found in both the Palestinian legislative elections and the fall-of-Gaza periods. However, because many of the frames were too small to analyze separately, the frames were combined into seven major sets of frames — politics, civil war, elections, conflict, nepotism, boycott, and humanization.

Table 8 shows the 30 frames divided into the sets of frames that dominated Al-Jazeera's news coverage of the two critical events as well as combined data on the Palestinian legislative elections and the fall-of-Gaza. For obvious reasons, the elections frame dominated the elections coverage and the civil war frame dominated the fall-of-Gaza coverage. Table 8 also shows that, for both critical events, the politics frame was the second most dominant frame.

Politics frames. This set was comprised of the negotiation frame, the peace frame, the reconciliation frame, the mortification frame, the responsibility frame, and the anti-violence protest frame. As shown in Table 8, the politics set of frames accounted for 22% of the combined coverage, with 19% in the elections period and 24% in the fall-of-Gaza period. Most of the politics coverage depicted the political negotiations between Fatah, Hamas, and other factions, 12% of the overall coverage, and was almost the same in both time periods.

Table 8

Seven Major Sets of Frames in Al-Jazeera's Coverage of the Palestinian Legislative Elections and the Fall-of-Gaza Periods

Frames	Palestinian Legislative Elections (n = 340) Percent	Fall of Gaza (n = 460) Percent	Elections and fall-of-Gaza combined (N = 800) Percent
Politics	**19.3%**	**24.3%**	**22.1%**
Negotiation	13.2	12.0	12.7
Peace	3.1	2.7	2.8
Reconciliation	0.1	4.9	2.8
Mortification	0.05	2.3	1.3
Responsibility	2.8	0.2	1.3
Anti-violence protest	0.05	2.2	1.2
Civil War	**12.4**	**28.5**	**21.5**
Conflict with the ruling party	3.5	7.8	6.0
Blame	0.9	7.8	4.8
Law and order	3.9	5.5	4.8
Control	3.8	5.2	4.6
Guerilla	0.3	2.1	1.3
Elections	**23.1**	**5.9**	**13.3**
Democracy	11.9	3.6	7.2
Change/Alternative	4.0	0.9	2.3
Underdog	3.7	0.9	2.2
Shock	2.7	0.1	1.2
One-and-only	0.8	0.4	0.6

Table 8 (continued)

Seven Major Sets of Frames in Al-Jazeera's Coverage of the Palestinian Legislative Elections and the Fall-of-Gaza Periods

Frames	Palestinian Legislative Elections (n = 340) Percent	Fall of Gaza (n = 460) Percent	Elections and fall-of-Gaza combined (N = 800) Percent
Conflict	**13.6**	**12.5**	**13.0**
Violence of war	4.3	6.1	5.3
Military conflict	3.2	3.3	3.3
Security	3.1	1.4	2.2
Victory	2.3	0.9	1.5
Jihad	0.7	0.8	0.7
Nepotism	**10.8**	**11.3**	**11.1**
Corruption	3.8	4.0	3.9
Credibility	5.5	2.1	3.6
Legitimacy	1.5	5.2	3.6
Boycott	**11.1**	**9.7**	**10.3**
Siege	6.4	4.3	5.2
International rejection	4.7	5.3	5.1
Humanization	**9.7**	**7.8**	**8.7**
Human interest	3.7	3.1	3.4
Economic consequence	3.0	2.1	2.5
Morality	2.6	1.4	1.9
Injustice	0.4	1.3	0.9

Note. The n's in the columns are for the number of Palestinian-related minutes, which total 800 for the entire sample. The total number of frames found for the study was 4,511.

As shown in Table 8, in the peace frame – only 3% of the total coverage in both time periods – peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority was given more airtime than the peace negotiations between the two Palestinian parties.

The reconciliation frame was also part of the politics set of frames, with almost all of this frame appearing in the fall-of-Gaza period with 5% compared to 0.1% in the elections period, post the start of the militant confrontations, and how the volatile situation could be contained.

The mortification frame which showed the public's and the official sides' sadness about the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict, was barely discernable in the fall-of-Gaza period with 2%. Also, barely discernable in the fall-of-Gaza period was the anti-violence protest frame, which depicted coverage of the Palestinian and Arab public as presented in peaceful demonstrations against the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict. The responsibility frame was the final frame that emerged as part of the politics set of frames; this frame, which was barely discernable in the elections period with only 3% of the coverage, focused on Hamas attributing responsibility for the deterioration in the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict to both Israel and the Palestinian Authority represented by Fatah as the ruling party. This frame was depicted in the elections period because Israel was not supportive of Hamas's participation in the elections since the movement was considered a terrorist organization and not a political party as per Israel's stand on the issue.

Civil war frames. The second set of major frames that emerged was the civil war frames, which included conflict with the ruling party frame, the blame frame, the law and order frame, the control frame, and the guerilla frame. The conflict with the ruling party

frame was the most dominant frame in the fall-of-Gaza with 8% and the third most

frequent frame in the elections period with 4%. This frame mainly consisted of coverage

related to the militant confrontations in the fall-of-Gaza period, and the different political

points of view of the main two competing parties in the elections period, Fatah and

Hamas. Al-Jazeera's coverage in this frame showed the different ideologies between the

two parties in approaching the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and that Hamas's ideology was

different from the ruling party, Fatah, as well as how Hamas chose the resistance as the

solution for the conflict, while Fatah chose peace negotiations. The majority of the total

minutes depicted the militant confrontations in the fall-of-Gaza period with 8%, with

only 4% of the minutes focused on the political disagreements in the elections period.

The second most prevalent frame in this set was the blame frame, which was mainly

apparent in the fall-of-Gaza period with 8%. This frame focused on how both parties,

Fatah and Hamas blamed each other for the militant confrontations, therefore, it had only

1% of the broadcast minutes in the elections period. The coverage included images of

how political assassinations generated this blame frame for a total of 5% in the combined

time periods. The law and order frame was the third most apparent frame in this set with

a total of 5%. It was more frequent in the fall-of-Gaza period (6%) than during the

elections period (4%) because in the second period, the Palestinian Authority forces lost

control and militant confrontations erupted. The same also applied to the control frame,

which was more apparent in the fall-of-Gaza period with 5% as compared with the

elections period with 4%, because the coverage depicted how each party was seizing

control over a certain geographic entity represented by the West Bank for Fatah and the

Gaza Strip for Hamas. The least frequent frame in this set was the guerilla frame, which showed images of militant confrontations and use of weapons in the streets. Surprisingly, this frame was less apparent than expected based on the nature of the conflict. Nevertheless, it was more apparent in the fall-of-Gaza period, which included all the confrontations with 2%, compared with 0.3% in the elections period, which was depicted as a peaceful confrontation. Overall, the civil war frame, which was apparent in 22% of the analyzed sample was the second most prevalent frame because of the nature of the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict, which started with a political confrontation in the elections period with 12%, then jumped to 29% in the fall-of-Gaza period. Al-Jazeera's coverage focused on the different ideologies, talking head confrontations, and militant images between the parties in conflict.

Elections frames. The third set of major frames that emerged was the elections frames. This set contributed 13% of the total frames, with 23% in the elections period and 6% in the fall-of-Gaza period. A major frame in this set was the democracy frame, which emphasized the existence of democracy in Palestinian political life, while highlighting the credibility of the Palestinian legislative elections' results. The democracy frame accounted for 12% of the coverage in the legislative elections period. Four frames that emerged with minimal coverage in the elections set of frames were the change-alternative frame, the underdog frame, the shock frame, and the one-and-only frame. The one-and-only frame barely appeared in the sample because it depicted the control of one party Fatah, which was fast disappearing.

Conflict frames. The forth set of major frames that emerged was the conflict set

of frames. This set consisted of the violence-of-war frame, the military conflict frame,

the security frame, the victory frame, and the jihad frame. The conflict frames dealt with

the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, including the rockets fired on Israel by the Palestinian

militant groups, as well as the Israeli military operations and air-strike assassinations of

leaders of these groups. Most of the coverage in this frame was on the Palestinian-Israeli

confrontation; 13% in the elections period and 14% in the fall-of-Gaza. The first frame

in this set was the violence-of-war frame, which depicted the aftermath of Israeli

bombings against Palestinian militant targets. The coverage of this frame increased from

the first time period to the second, from 4% to 6% indicating that Israel intensified

military operations against the militant groups, even when these groups were engaged in

domestic fighting. The second frame in the conflict set of frames was the military

conflict frame, which showcased the superiority of the Israeli war machine on a number

of occasions when Israel invaded certain parts of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

These invasions were equally evident in the coverage of both periods with 3%. The third

frame was the security frame, which highlighted Israel's need for security against

Palestinian attacks. This frame was more frequent in the elections period (3%) than in

the fall-of-Gaza period (1%) as the intensity of security breaches decreased because the

militant groups were engaged in the domestic conflict. The last two frames in the conflict

frame set were the victory and jihad frames. The victory frame focused on Hamas' win

of the elections, while the jihad frame focused on the confrontation with Israel. Because

the coverage in both time periods was heavily focusing on the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict, the jihad frame presence was minimal.

Nepotism frames. The fifth set of frames is the nepotism frame, which depicted the legitimacy of the Palestinian legislative elections along with the ruling party's corruption. This set of frames included the corruption frame, the credibility frame, and the legitimacy frame. Al-Jazeera showed consistency in using these frames with 11% in both periods. The first frame in this set, the corruption frame, was depicted in the both periods with 4%. In the second period, the frame was related to Hamas's claims that the major reason for the riots was the corruption of the security forces. The second frame in this set is the credibility frame, which was frequent in the elections period with 6% based on the expected presence of European observers during the elections and how that guaranteed the credibility of this democratic process. The final frame in this set was the legitimacy frame, which focused primarily on the legitimacy of either Fatah as the ruling party or Hamas as the alternative to be the legitimate rulers of the Palestinians. This frame appeared more in the fall-of-Gaza period with 5% as compared with the elections period with 2%. Al-Jazeera presented Hamas' point of view as a valid counterpart to Fatah in claiming legitimacy to rule the Palestinian people.

Boycott frames. The boycott frames came in sixth among the sets, which included the siege frame, and the international rejection frame. This set appeared in 9% of the coverage and dealt with how Al-Jazeera covered the Israeli siege over the Palestinian territories. The international rejection frame with 5% of the coverage depicted the aftermath of Hamas winning the Palestinian legislative elections. An interesting

observation to this frame is that the percentage increased in the fall-of-Gaza period from (4.7%) to (5.3%), this may suggest that the international community as well as the Arab world was more in favor of Fatah in the militant confrontation against Hamas.

Humanization frames. The final set of frames was the humanization set of frames with 9%. This set presented Al-Jazeera's coverage on the suffering of the Palestinian people as a result of the Israeli occupation and siege. The focus of this frame was more evident in the elections period with 10%, as compared with the fall-of-Gaza period with 8%. A frame that strongly exhibited the humanization set of frames was the frame categorized as the human-interest frame with 3%, which depicted images of Palestinian mothers grieving over their sons killed by the Israeli army. The second group in this frame was the economic consequence frame with 3%. Immediately after Hamas took control over Gaza; Al-Jazeera covered Israeli threats and how this affected the Palestinian people and their day-to-day lives. The morality frame is next with 2% of the coverage; it focused on how the Palestinian militants killed fighting the Israeli army were depicted as martyrs for their cause of liberating Palestine. This frame was more apparent in the elections period with 3%, as compared with 1% in the fall-of-Gaza period when Al-Jazeera depicted those killed by Israelis as martyrs and those killed by Palestinians in the fall-of-Gaza period as casualties of a civil war, therefore, the context of religious tenets was more frequent in the elections period. The fourth part of the humanization set of frames was the injustice frame, which emphasized the unjust actions of Israel against the Palestinian people, and was barely discernable in the coverage.

Research Question 2

For each of the seven major sets of frames, what differences, if any, are there between the Palestinian legislative elections and the fall-of-Gaza periods?

Independent sample t-test. The t-tests were calculated for each of the major sets of frames to determine whether there were statistical differences between the two critical events. Table 9 includes the means and Table 10 provides the t-test results. The politics, civil war, and elections set of frames were found to be statistically significant at $p < .001$. In addition, the boycott set was also statistically significant at $p = .018$. The fall-of-Gaza period had significantly more civil war and politics coverage, but significantly less elections coverage.

In the Palestinian legislative elections period, the focus of the content was on the elections in the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict, and the general Palestinian-Israeli conflict, with a secondary emphasis on the humanization frames. Therefore, the politics, and elections set of frames were predominant.

Table 9

Means of Seven Major Sets of Frames in Al-Jazeera's Coverage of the Palestinian Legislative Elections and the Fall-of-Gaza Periods

Frames	Palestinian Legislative Elections			Fall-of-Gaza		
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N
Politics	**1.10**	**.623**	**375**	**1.35**	**1.053**	**621**
Negotiation	.76	.430	257	.67	.469	310
Peace	.18	.382	60	.15	.355	68
Reconciliation	.01	.077	2	.27	.445	125
Mortification	.00	.054	1	.13	.332	58
Responsibility	.16	.366	54	.01	.104	5
Anti-violence protest	.00	.054	1	.12	.325	55
Civil War	**.72**	**1.116**	**242**	**1.58**	**1.595**	**730**
Conflict with the ruling party	.20	.403	69	.44	.497	202
Blame	.05	.224	18	.43	.496	200
Law and order	.22	.417	76	.31	.462	142
Control	.21	.411	73	.29	.454	133
Guerilla	.02	.132	6	.12	.320	53
Election	**1.33**	**1.216**	**450**	**.32**	**.617**	**151**
Democracy	.68	.467	231	.20	.402	93
Change/Alternative	.23	.421	78	.05	.218	23
Underdog	.21	.409	72	.05	.218	23
Shock	.16	.363	53	.00	.066	2
One-and-only	.05	.212	16	.02	.146	10

Table 9 (continued)

Means of Seven Major Sets of Frames in Al-Jazeera's Coverage of the Palestinian Legislative Elections and the Fall-of-Gaza Periods

Frames	Palestinian Legislative Elections			Fall-of-Gaza		
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N
Conflict	**.76**	**.901**	**264**	**.71**	**.870**	**321**
Violence of war	.24	.430	83	.34	.475	157
Military conflict	.18	.387	62	.18	.389	85
Security	.18	.384	61	.08	.269	36
Victory	.13	.339	345	.05	.214	22
Jihad	.04	.192	13	.05	.209	21
Nepotism	**.63**	**.801**	**211**	**.63**	**.752**	**290**
Corruption	.22	.413	74	.22	.417	103
Credibility	.32	.466	108	.12	.320	53
Legitimacy	.09	.280	29	.29	.455	134
Boycott	**.63**	**.747**	**217**	**.55**	**.686**	**249**
Siege	.37	.483	125	.24	.428	111
International rejection	.27	.445	92	.30	.459	138
Humanization	**.55**	**.757**	**189**	**.44**	**.719**	**201**
Human interest	.21	.409	72	.17	.378	79
Economic consequence	.17	.379	59	.12	.325	55
Morality	.15	.355	50	.08	.265	35
Injustice	.02	.152	8	.07	.255	32

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In the fall-of-Gaza period, the coverage emphasized the civil war, politics,

nepotism, and boycott set of frames that showed the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict either

politically or militarily—an emphasis that came at the expense of frames that humanized

the conflict or focused on the Palestinian-Israeli one.

Table 10

Independent Sample t-test for Al-Jazeera's Major Frames during the Palestinian Legislative Elections and the Fall-of-Gaza Periods

Frames	*t*	*p*
Civil War	71.674	< .001*
Politics	14.878	< .001*
Conflict	0.848	.682
Nepotism	0.000	.151
Boycott	2.895	.018
Humanization	4.101	.093
Elections	233.382	< .001*

Note. Civil war, politics, conflict, nepotism, boycott, humanization, and elections were the seven major sets of frames found in the sample.

Research Question 3

Was the tone of Al-Jazeera's coverage favorable to Hamas?

The tone of the coverage was defined as how Al-Jazeera portrayed the political

setting in the Palestinian territories, in regards to Hamas, and how their spokespeople

views were given time or minutes in the coverage, as well as how the anchor approached

these spokespeople in the type and tone of questions. In addition, tone was how the

reporters covered both points of view, and whether there was any favoritism towards

Hamas. As for the political setting, it refers to the elections and militant conflict between

both parties. For the combined coverage of the two time periods, the tone of coverage

was as follows: Unfavorable to Hamas, 3%; neither favorable nor unfavorable to Hamas

81%; and favorable to Hamas, 19%.

Independent sample t-test. The means for the tone of the coverage between the

two time periods are shown in Table 11, and the t-test for the tone is shown in Table 12.

The results were statistically significant at $p < .001$. Although Al-Jazeera's coverage

during both periods tended toward being neutral, it was more favorable to Hamas during

the fall-of-Gaza period.

Table 11

Means for the Al-Jazeera's Tone during the Palestinian Legislative Elections and the Fall-of-Gaza Periods

Time Periods	*M*	*SD*	*N*
Palestinian Legislative Elections	2.232	.423	340
Fall-of-Gaza	2.121	.441	460

Table 12

Independent Sample Test for Al-Jazeera's Tone during the Palestinian Legislative Elections and the Fall-of-Gaza Periods

	df	t	p
Tone of Coverage	798	3.569	<.001*

Note. The tone scale measured unfavorable to Hamas (1), neither favorable nor unfavorable (2), and favorable to Hamas (3).

In the Palestinian legislative elections period, 79 minutes or 23% of the total minutes for this period were rated as favorable to Hamas. During this period, none of the coverage was rated as being unfavorable to Hamas, while 77% was rated neither favorable nor unfavorable to Hamas. One of the observations for this period was that the unfavorable to Hamas minutes did not exist. Stories analyzed in this period included evident favoritism of Al-Jazeera anchors to Hamas, one interview had the anchor express to a Hamas spokesperson, that Fatah is rejecting Hamas's offer to form a unity government, insinuating that Fatah's rejection is the main obstacle against this government formation. Another interview with the former American ambassador in Israel included a question, which inquired if Hamas won the elections in a democratic process, why would not the international community and the United States of America recognize Hamas as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and therefore, has the right to form the Palestinian government.

In the Fall-of-Gaza period, the coverage for this period also focused on the neither favorable nor unfavorable to Hamas case with a slightly larger percentage of minutes

compared to the elections period with 79%. The unfavorable to Hamas case was

apparent in 20 minutes or 3% of the analyzed coverage, witnessing an increase in this

category. Examples within the minutes of coverage favoring Hamas included coverage

of funerals of Hamas dead militants, Hamas locations being burnt down in the West

Bank, the Palestinian Prime Minister at the time who is from Hamas waving in victory

images to the public, and images of Hamas militants in military parades. In addition to

these stories, Al-Jazeera's coverage heavily depended on live political debates between

Fatah and Hamas on satellite, the anchors played a major role in building this favoritism

in their coverage towards Hamas of the stories, while asking questions to Fatah and

Hamas spokespeople. Examples of favoritism to Hamas included an anchor defending

Hamas's position against the international community's rejection to the movement,

defending the movement's legitimacy based on the win of the elections, stopping Fatah's

spokespeople to give the microphone to Hamas's spokespeople to comment, and an

anchor in one instance allowed a continuous three minute interval of comments for the

Hamas spokesperson without interruption or any questions, which was usually the case to

ask questions in a maximum interval of one minute.

Research Question 4

Were the frame(s) in Al-Jazeera's coverage primarily episodic or thematic?

As Table 13 shows, almost all of Al-Jazeera's coverage was event-oriented

episodic coverage. Overall, 94% was episodic and 6% was thematic. However, the

thematic coverage that was done did provide important historical context such as the 6-

day war in 1967 and possible consequences of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and

Palestinian-Palestinian conflict, which was generally reliant on extensive levels of

analysis. The thematic minutes were clearly evident in the story of the program section

that included 6% of all minutes analyzed, but clearly minimal compared to episodic. A

chi-square analysis showed that there was no significant difference in the coverage during

the two time periods.

Table 13

Type of Frame for Al-Jazeera's Palestinian-related Coverage during the Palestinian
Legislative Elections and the Fall-of-Gaza Periods

	Palestinian Legislative Elections ($n = 340$)	Fall of Gaza ($n = 460$)	Elections & Fall of Gaza Combined ($N = 800$)
Type of frame	Percent	Percent	Percent
Episodic	92.4%	95.9%	94.4%
Thematic	7.6	4.1	5.6

Note. The n's are for the number of Palestinian-related minutes.

Unlike Western news organizations, Al-Jazeera's viewers receive more news

because the commercials are minimal, given that the channel is heavily dependent on

government funding. For example, in the news program studied "Hasad Al-Yawm," only

2-4 minutes out of a total of 60 minutes average total duration was devoted to

commercials. Therefore, although the results of the framing analysis conducted for this

study showed that the coverage of the Palestinian-related minutes was heavily episodic, Al-Jazeera's viewers did receive in-depth thematic stories.

Research Question 5

How did the following visual elements used by Al-Jazeera contribute to framing of the Palestinian legislative elections and the fall-of-Gaza periods: (a) camera angle, (b) proximity of subject to viewer?

Kazmierczak (2001) described how visual literacy includes, but should not be limited to the graphic composition of images. It can include elements such as camera angle and proximity of subject to viewer. The majority of minutes was level-with-the-viewer, and had a medium proximity of subject to viewer.

Camera angle. Table 14 shows that 92% of the overall coverage provided a level-with-viewer camera angle. Therefore, coverage was constructed in a way that made it appear as records of reality, and made it appear as if the viewer were actually observing the scene. Although the angle of view is one of the compositional elements most commonly used as a means of making someone look powerful or powerless (Zettl, 1973), the minutes in this study did not really utilize this element. Fewer than 10% of the total images used a camera angle different from what a viewer would expect to experience.

Although a level-with-viewer camera angle was used in both time periods, the fall-of-Gaza period (96%) used more of these shots as compared with the elections period (87%). It was evident that Al-Jazeera's coverage more closely reflected a real life experience for the viewer in that period because of the nature of the militant confrontations in it.

Table 14

Camera Angles in Al-Jazeera's Palestinian-related Minutes during the Palestinian Legislative Elections and the Fall-of-Gaza Periods

Camera angle	Palestinian Legislative Elections (*n* = 340) Percent	Fall of Gaza (*n* = 460) Percent	Elections & Fall of Gaza Combined (*N* = 800) Percent
Low Angle	5.3%	2.0%	3.4%
Level-with-Viewer	86.8	96.3	92.2
High Angle	7.9	1.7	4.4

Note. The n's are for the number of Palestinian-related minutes.

Proximity of subject to viewer. With the majority of minutes falling into the medium shot category (94%), as shown in Table 15, Al-Jazeera's coverage emphasized the creation of an environment that felt like a natural record. The intimate shot category (3%) developed an intimacy between the subject and the viewer, and the long shot category (3%) described a sense of isolation or generalization (Schwartz, 1992).

Al-Jazeera's coverage in both periods primarily used medium-shot photographs with 98% in the fall-of-Gaza period as compared with 88% in the Palestinian legislative elections. In addition, the fall-of-Gaza period coverage did not provide many intimate shots, but rather focused on long shots that generalized the subject matter and showed more of a scene.

Table 15

Proximity of Subject to Viewer in Al-Jazeera's Palestinian-related Minutes during the Palestinian Legislative Elections and the Fall-of-Gaza Periods

	Palestinian Legislative Elections (n = 340)	Fall of Gaza (n = 460)	Elections & Fall of Gaza Combined (N = 800)
Proximity of subject to viewer	Percent	Percent	Percent
Long Shot	5.3%	1.7%	3.2%
Medium Shot	87.9	97.8	93.6
Intimate Shot	6.8	0.4	3.1

Note. The n's are for the number of Palestinian-related minutes.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

A major rationale behind this study was the fact that previous research primarily

focused on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This study on how an Arab media outlet, with

an increasingly global reach framed the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict, will help to fill

the research gap. The 2006 Palestinian legislative elections and the 2007 fall-of-Gaza

under the control of Hamas were two critical Palestinian events that warranted an

examination of how coverage of these two periods was framed by Al-Jazeera. It must be

noted here that the findings cannot be generalized beyond the two time periods studied.

Summary of Findings

The Arab-Israeli conflict in general and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in particular

occupied the center of attention for the Arab and Islamic public. The emergence of the

Palestinian-Palestinian conflict coincided with the rise of satellite news coverage in that

part the world. Leading the way for this increase in the information flow has been the Al-

Jazeera channel, which is viewed by an estimated 99% of the Palestinian public in the

West Bank and the Gaza Strip and 48% of the Arab world – viewers who would depend

on Al-Jazeera to inform them about these conflicts. The manner in which Al-Jazeera

framed the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict is therefore critical to how the conflict was

subsequently interpreted by the public. By examining what frames dominated the

coverage of the Palestinian legislative elections, and the fall-of-Gaza, it was determined

how Al-Jazeera framed the conflict, and established whether the channel was favorable in

its coverage towards one of the Palestinian parties in conflict with the other, Fatah and

Hamas.

Thirty frames were found in Al-Jazeera's coverage of the two mentioned critical

events. These frames were categorized into seven major sets of frames. The civil war

and the politics sets of frames dominated Al-Jazeera's coverage in the fall-of-Gaza

period, and the elections and politics sets of frames dominated Al-Jazeera's coverage in

the elections period. The politics set of frames focused on the negotiation frame either

between the Palestinian and Israelis or the Palestinians themselves. The civil war set

focused on the militant confrontations between Fatah and Hamas; the main frame in this

was being the conflict with ruling party frame. The elections set of frames focused on the

democracy being experienced in the Palestinian society.

Al-Jazeera's coverage also included four other major sets of frames—conflict,

nepotism, boycott, and humanization. The conflict frames primarily focused on the

Palestinian-Israeli conflict, including the military conflict images. The conflict frames

were especially prominent during the elections period as compared with the fall-of-Gaza

period as the Palestinians were more engaged in the domestic conflict in the latter. The

nepotism frames dealt with the legitimacy of the Palestinian legislative elections, as well

as the corruption of the ruling party. The boycott frames depicted how Al-Jazeera

covered the Israeli siege over the Palestinian territories, and how that affected the

Palestinian legislative elections. The humanization frames dealt with putting the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict into a perspective that emphasized the personal side of war, which

previous research has shown could encourage emotional responses from viewers as they

identify with the victims. This type of coverage could be considered critical to leaving lasting impressions on viewers regarding the Palestinian people suffering as a result of the Israeli occupation and siege.

The politics, and civil war set of frames dominated the coverage, but it was at the expense of frames that provided a context for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which had a direct influence on the Palestinian-Palestinian one. For instance, the violence-of-war frame did not appear as a major frame in Al-Jazeera's coverage. The same case was evident with the elections set of frames, where the one-and-only party frame was almost absent from the coverage.

The framing analysis provided evidence that the coverage in the Palestinian elections period focused on the elections' political conflict and the general conflict in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, with a secondary emphasis on the humanization frames.

The study tested the tone of the coverage to determine whether there was favoritism shown to Hamas. Overall, the channel's presentation of the news related to Palestinian coverage was heavily neutral. Interestingly, during the elections period, none of the coverage was rated as being unfavorable to Hamas. Given that the examined sample covered the elections period, in which two parties were vying for power, balanced coverage would be expected. As for the fall-of-Gaza period, about 4% of the coverage was unfavorable to Hamas. However, despite the neutrality of three-fourths of the coverage, 19% of the coverage was rated as favorable to Hamas. In addition, a t-test found significant differences in the favoritism rating for Hamas during the two time periods, with tone of the fall-of-Gaza period showing the most favoritism towards

Hamas. Overall, the channel has showcased objectivity and neutrality in its coverage with 81% of the combined coverage for the two periods rated as neither favorable nor unfavorable to Hamas.

Another finding of this study was that Al-Jazeera's coverage of both the Palestinian legislative elections and the fall-of-Gaza periods was heavily episodic. Part of the reason for this may be because of the rapid developments in both the Palestinian-Israeli and the Palestinian-Palestinian conflicts on the ground. However, Al-Jazeera included thematic news in its newscasts that provided its viewers with background and perspective on the issues. Since the manner in which the coverage is constructed can greatly affect how the visuals are interpreted, two compositional elements, camera angle, and proximity of subject to viewer were analyzed for this study. The results showed that Al-Jazeera used images that created analogies with real life interactions. Rather than extensively using these compositional elements to quickly convey specific visual messages, Al-Jazeera primarily used images that portrayed what a viewer might expect to experience. This appears to support the ongoing attempts of Al-Jazeera to convey a sense of credibility and objectivity by using images that act as records of events. Therefore, it could be concluded that the visual elements were not used as framing devices that would result in favoritism to Hamas.

Contributions to the Literature

This framing study on the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict helps to fill a gap in the literature since most of the literature has focused on the historical Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Framing analysis was used to study the visual coverage of the selected sample.

The study showed that Al-Jazeera's coverage of the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict provides their viewers with the knowledge that this conflict is part of a bigger picture of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in specific and the Arab-Israeli conflict in general. Al-Jazeera provided its viewers with coverage of the rising Islamic views in the Palestinian territories as part of a wider regional spread. In turn, as studied on the effects of framing suggest that this may direct the public opinion towards accepting these views as an alternative for the previously dominant secular ones.

This study also found partial support for previous research that Al-Jazeera's focus is on war coverage (Zayani and Sahraoui, 2007; Rinnawi, 2006; Abdelhai, 2006). In this study, in addition to war frames, politics was a dominant frame in the two time periods. This study also found that humanization frames were present in both time periods.

The study emphasized how visual compositional elements; including camera angle and proximity of subject to viewer were used as effective visual elements, and that their conventional uses were typically modeled on people's real-world experiences (Meyrowitz, 1986). These experiences were showcased in this study by the heavily episodic coverage for both time periods.

Directions for Future Research

This research has introduced a framing analysis of the frames used by Al-Jazeera in covering a topic, which was rarely addressed, the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict over two periods of time. After being geographically divided by the Israeli occupation in 1967, a political division also took place in 2007, with Hamas taking control in the Gaza Strip and Fatah in the West Bank. A follow-up study on new elections, or on President

Barack Obama's emerging policy toward the Middle East in general and the Palestinian

dispute in particular, would make a valuable contribution to the literature.

An exploration of the coverage of Al-Jazeera's website, either textually, or the

recently introduced online live coverage on the channel, would also be an important

research topic.

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APPENDIX A

CODEBOOK

- Story Date (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)

- Critical Event (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)

Category	Code
Elections	1
Militant	2

- Number of each story was sequentially numbered per program (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)

- Number of each minute was sequentially numbered per story (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)

- Origin of each minute (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)

Category	Code
Gaza Strip	1
West Bank	2
Israel	3
Arab-Islamic excluding Palestinian	4
International	5

- Focus of each minute (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 95%)

Category	Code
International	1
Arab-Islamic excluding Palestinian	2
Arab-Islamic including Palestinian	3
Economic excluding Palestinian Economic	4
Sports excluding Palestinian Sports	5
Arab-Israeli	6
Palestinian-Israeli	7
Palestinian-Palestinian excluding Fatah-Hamas	8
Fatah-Hamas	9
Palestinian Economic	10

- Prominence of each minute (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)

Category	Code
Lead Story	1
Non-Lead Story	2
Story of the Program	3

- Time Distribution for Palestinian-related minutes (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 95%)

Category	Code
Reporter	1
Anchor	2
Fatah Spokesperson	3
Hamas Spokesperson	4
Palestinian Authority Official	5
Other Palestinian Factions Spokespeople	6
Israeli Official	7
Arab Official	8
International Official	9
Independent	10

- Tone of each minute (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 88%)

Category	Code
Unfavorable to Hamas	1
Neither Favorable Nor Unfavorable to Hamas	2
Favorable to Hamas	3

- Type of Frame (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 100%)

Category	Code
Episodic Frame	1
Thematic Frame	2

- Frames (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 90%)

Code	Definition

Civil War Frame

Conflict with the Ruling Party Frame	This frame highlights the differences in ideologies between opposition parties, mainly Hamas and the ruling party, Fatah.
Blame Frame	This frame depicts how both parties; Fatah and Hamas blame each other for the conflict.
Law and Order Frame	This frame shows both parties agendas to keep law and order in the West Bank and Gaza respectively.
Control Frame	This frame presents either party in control of geographic territories with Fatah in control in the West Bank, Hamas in control in Gaza.
Guerilla Frame	This frame shows the images of the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict specifically focusing on Fatah-Hamas militant confrontations.

Politics Frame

Negotiation Frame	This frame puts emphasis on the political portion of the conflict, rather than the combat.
Reconciliation Frame	This frame focuses on the reconciliations efforts among Palestinians domestically, regionally or internationally.

Peace Frame	This frame focuses on peace talks, efforts, initiatives, and meetings of parties in conflict seeking to achieve an agreement.
Mortification Frame	This frame supports the feeling of sadness and disappointment over the Palestinian-Palestinian conflict and depicts that this struggle should be aimed at the occupier.
Anti-violence Protest Frame	This frame presents the views of campaigns against Palestinian-Palestinian conflict.
Responsibility Frame	This frame presents an issue or problem in such a way as to attribute responsibility for causing or solving to either the government or to an individual or group

Conflict Frame

Violence-of-war Frame	This frame emphasizes the destruction cause by war, including destroyed buildings, injuries, casualties, and the aftermath of bombings.
Military Conflict Frame	This frame focuses on the strength and technological superiority of an army at war.
Security Frame	This frame focuses on Israel's need to assure security against Palestinian attacks.
Victory Frame	This frame is marked repetitive overplaying and exaggeration of celebratory images, and a narrative explicitly asserting the war is over.
Jihad Frame	This frame attaches importance that fight for independence of Palestine is part of a religious agenda.

Nepotism Frame

Legitimacy Frame	This frame focuses on the Palestinians legitimate right in their struggle for independence from Israel.
Corruption Frame	This frame rises to the surface charges of corruption to the Palestinian Authority either domestically or internationally.
Credibility Frame	This frame stresses the true results of the Palestinian legislative elections in 2006

Boycott Frame

Siege Frame	This frame describes the daily conditions of Palestinian under siege by Israel.
International Rejection Frame	This frame illustrates the international reaction and majority of rejection to dealing with the Hamas elect government.

Humanization Frame

Human Interest Frame	This frame brings a human face, an individual's story, or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue or problem.
Morality Frame	This frame interprets an event or issue in the context of religious tenets or moral prescriptions.
Economic Consequence Frame	This frame presents an event, problem or issue in the terms of the economic consequences it has on an individual, group, institution, region or country.
Injustice Frame	This frame stresses the acts by Israel depicted as injustice ones against the Palestinians.

Elections Frame

Democracy Frame	This frame asserts on the well of the majority with emphasizing credibility of the Palestinian legislative elections in 2006
Underdog Frame	This frame presents Hamas as the underdog during the buildup for the Palestinian legislative elections.
Change-alternative Frame	This frame portrays the agenda of Hamas and other Islamic groups as the alternative for a failed peace process and the corrupt ruling party, Fatah.
One-and-only Frame	This frame portrays the Palestinian Liberation Organization as the one-and-only legitimate representative of Palestinians.
Shock Frame	This frame depicts the aftermath of Hamas's win in the Palestinian legislative elections.

- Camera Angle (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 85%)

Category	Code
Low Angle	1
Equal Angle	2
High Angle	3

- Proximity of Subject to Viewer (Scott's pi reliability coefficient = 88%)

Category	Code
Long Shot	1
Medium Shot	2
Intimate Shot	3