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- **Multiplicity of Media Frames in Covering the War on Gaza and the Fluidity of Arab Public Opinion**

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**Multiplicity of Media Frames in
Covering the War on Gaza and
the Fluidity of Arab Public
Opinion**

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Abstract

Numerous studies have examined the effects of media framing on public opinion in general. A few have explored those effects during wartimes in particular. No previous study has addressed the effects of exposure to multiple and contradictory frames' setting. This paper examines the effects of Arab media frames to the Israeli war on Gaza on the Arab public opinion's attitudes toward using the armed struggle. The armed struggle "Al- Jihad" , in the Muslims' collective mind , has been considered as one of best options Muslims have to defend their souls, homelands , properties and religion. In the Arabic context, the armed struggle has also been seen as one of the available options to put a fair and comprehensive solution to the prolonged Arab – Israeli conflict. Employing a snowball sampling technique, a total sample of 352 Qatar University students, represented almost all Arab countries, were interviewed. The results clearly showed that the multiplicity of Arab media frames to the war on Gaza led to a fluidity of Arab public opinion toward using the armed struggle issue.

Keywords Framing effect, war on Gaza, Arab – Israeli conflict, armed struggle, Arab public opinion

Research on media framing effect has received a growing interest among media scholars during the last decades . Numerous studies have investigated the influence of media frames on individual's opinion . Although there has been several definitions put forward to the concept of "frame", the concept ,yet , can be described as " a scattered conceptualization" (Entman ,1993,p.51). Furthermore research on framing , as Scheufele (1999) noticed "is characterized by theoretical and empirical vagueness" (p.103). However , the most widely cited definition for the concept came from Entman (1993) , who argued that "to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text"(p.52).

Four main functions were specified for frames according to Entman (1993): define problems , diagnose causes , make moral judgments and suggest remedies.(p.52). He also suggested that frames have at least four locations in the communication process : the communicators who "make conscious or unconscious framing judgments in deciding what to say" , the text "that contains frames ...words , stock phrases , stereotyped images , sources of information and sentences" , the receiver who "may or may not reflect the frames in the text

and the framing intention of the communicator” , , and the culture that “might be defined as the empirically demonstrable set of common frames exhibited in the discourse and thinking of most people in a social grouping” (Entman, 1993, pp.52-53).

In order to explore how media framing works , Scheufele (1999) developed a process model of framing which consists of four main processes : frame building (which refers to the processes that influence the creation or changes of frames applied by journalists) , frame setting (concerns with the salience of issue attributes) , individual-level effects of framing (refers to another similar sort of frames that are used by the audiences themselves which affects their attitudes and behaviors) and journalists as audiences (which refers to the link between individual-level variables and media frames). (p.117).

According to Entman (1993) frames work through two main process: the selection of some bits of information about an issue and the process of making them more salient , noticeable , meaningful or memorable to audiences(p.53).

In a meta – analysis study of framing studies , Scheufele (1999) classified previous framing studies along two dimensions : the type of frame examined (media frames versus audience frames)

and the way frames are operationalized (as an independent variable or dependent variable). (pp. 106-108).

Reviewing framing literature referred , repeatedly , to the importance of framing process in constructing social and political reality in the public's minds . It helps them to understand and deal with numerous details in order to create a full picture for all events, issues , problems and news around them. On the other hand it serves as a bridge between decision makers' vision about an issue and public opinion's understanding to that issue. In other words , it can be described as a mean by which elites can affect public opinion.

The importance of framing increases during wartimes, when audiences are in a real need for information. News media, as Johanesn and Joslyn (2008) posited "act as a filter, sifting and sorting information in a manner that ensures a reliable and accurate source from which citizens can base judgments about war"(p.591). Since audiences become more sensitive and curious about any news during wartimes, they could be easily conceived by the process in which journalists (or any one of the fighting parties) are deliberately selecting certain aspects of an issue and making them more salient. Media Frames and media bias, then, are likely to increase during wartimes. Entman (2007,p163) specified three major meaning to the term

“bias”: the first is a “distortion bias”, which applies to “news that purportedly distorts or falsifies reality”. The second is a “content bias”, which refers to “news that favors one side rather than providing equivalent treatment to both sides in a political conflict”. The final meaning is a “decision – making bias”, which applies to “the motivations and mindsets of journalists who allegedly produce the biases content”.

Numerous studies have examined the effects of media framing on public opinion in general. A few of them examined those effects during wartimes. The explicit aim of this study is to examine the effects of Arab media frames to the Israeli war on Gaza on Arab public opinion’s attitudes toward the armed struggle as one of the best options available in dealing with the Arab – Israeli conflict. The latest Israeli war on Gaza has raised reasonable questions about the power of media in general and its power in the Arab context in particular. Two main reasons could be mentioned to interpret why the war on Gaza was chosen to examine framing effect. Firstly , it does provide a natural setting to examine framing hypotheses.

Secondly, there was unprecedented amount of media frames came from extremely divergent perspectives; Hamas , Israeli government, international society , Arab governments , Palestinian authority, Arab public opinion , etc. Each group has

manipulated different aspects of the war (its causes , results , winners , losers and the future face of the Arab – Israeli conflict) from his own perspective. But the most remarkable divergence was among Arab regimes' stances on the war. The dramatic opposing visions for how to manage the conflict divided Arab regimes, along the lines of American foreign policy discourse, into two main separate categories; moderate versus non- moderate regimes. As a result, Arabic media , which are almost owned by the state, took drastically opposing frames in their coverage of the war.

The question thus is to what extent this multiplicity of media frames has affected Arab public opinion toward the armed struggle in dealing with Israel. It's worthy to note here that no previous study on media framing has investigated the effects of multiplicity and contradictory frames on audiences' attitudes. Therefore , the war on Gaza provides us with such unprecedented context.

Review of literature

It seems that there is a widespread agreement among communication researchers that news media frames affect its audience. To what extent and in which cases those effects occur, several studies have been conducted to investigate the relationship between media framing of a certain issue and the way public opinion perceive , understand , evaluate and deal with the same issue.

Nelson & Oxley (1999) conducted two laboratory experiments in order to examine the influence of issue framing on belief importance and opinion. The results showed that "in both experiments, framing significantly affected issue opinion. Causal analysis showed that framing independently affected belief content and belief importance, and that each contributed to issue opinion"(p. 1040).

Constantinescu and Tedesco (2007) examined the impact of online media frames on the audience frames. A systematic content analysis was performed on 225 news stories and 2951 subsequent online reader discussion posts, about the kidnapping of three Romanian journalists in Iraq, from two of the most popular Romanian daily newspapers with online versions. The data showed that there was a very high

correlations and dependable relationships between the dominant news frames and the reader posts frames.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Markel, Delehanty, and Beverlin (2007) employed framing theory to examine the role of race in shaping attitudes following Katrina. The results indicated that “news media frames of storm victims as predominately Black likely invoked more empathy among Blacks with the victims and produced more negative responses concerning federal government’s efforts to help victims”(p.595).

Using data from the 1992 CPS National Election Study, Jacoby(2000) investigated the impact of issue framing (government spending) on the American public opinion. According to Jacoby“ framing effect was powerful enough to induce individual-level opinion change. And, framing effects arose because varying presentations of the government – spending issue active different sets of influences on citizens’ issue attitudes”(p.750).

In order to explore the effects of issue news framing on Turkish public opinion about Turkish membership of the EU, Claes, Hajo and Holli(2004) conducted three studies. The first was a content analysis of national newspapers and television news. To examine the effects of issue news framing on public

opinion, another two experiments were conducted. The results showed “ a significant differences in the level of support between who had received a positive news frames and respondents who had received a negative news frames” (p.19).

Hasin (2009) focused on the process of how framing effect works , the variable that has not been examined in previous framing studies. The author provided an alternative mechanism , which is resonance , to interpret how media frames (a macro level) affects individual’s interpretations and judgments (a micro level) . According to Hasin , resonance mechanism is “a harmonious state of mind which occurs -when there is a match between the concepts and propositions in the input and those that are stored in receiver’s knowledge base. Consequently, the magnitude of such a “match” should correlate with that of resonance”(p.21). As expected, an experimental study showed a significant positive correlation between match and resonance. According to the results “resonance is the “mechanism” for connecting external stimuli with information storedinside individuals’ heads is the “strategy” on which communicators can rely when constructing persuasive messages”(p.24).

In the context of China , Qingjiang (2007) sought to examine the first three processes of the framing model developed by

Scheufele (1999). The results, firstly, showed that the political environment in China affected the way in which religion issues were framed in the media. Secondly, there was a significant correlation between news media frames and individual frames. Thirdly, individual framing will lead to consistent individual behavioral intention.

Nelson & Oxley and Clawson (1997) focused on the psychological mechanisms by which framing affects political attitudes. They argued that "framing effects result not because the framed message presents new information about the issue, but rather because the frame emphasizes a certain aspect of the issue" (p.233). As expected, an experimental study indicated that "frames appear to activate existing beliefs and cognitions, rather than adding something new to the individual's beliefs about the issue" (p.236). Framing as a concept and process, according to the study, distinct from traditional persuasion via belief change.

Another set of studies investigated the impact of framing effects during wartime. Attempting to create and test a substantive theory of war framing, Borrelli and Lockerbie (2008) reanalyzed database consisted of two collections of aggregate poll results drawn from the prewar and major combat phases of the Gulf War (1990 – 1991) and the Second War

with Iraq (2002 2003). As expected , the results showed that audiences used the same frames that were used by media during the U.S wars with Iraq in order to express their opinion toward the war.

An experimental study (n= 485) was conducted by Rill & Davis (2008) to explore the effects of news frames on reader – assigned attributes of Hezbollah and Israel in the 2006 war in Lebanon. The study indicated that “research participants attributed qualities , ideas, and actions to Hezbollah and Israel consistent with the qualities, ideas, and actions attributed to Hezbollah and Israel in the news stories they read”(p.620). The authors demonstrated that “the media do, indeed, tell the public what to think and not just what to think about”(p.621).

Allen , O'Loughlin , Jasperson and Sullivan(1994) developed a model consisting of framing , priming and the spiral of silence In order to explain changes and endurances that happened among American public opinion during the Gulf War. Content analysis study of a small sample of the American media(CNN,NBC) coverage of the Gulf War revealed that “In this war, media provided the public with ubiquitous, redundant, repetitious messages of support. More than serving simply as conduits for military information, media also framed and primed views of dissent, patriotism, technology, and elite

consensus to construct a reality that stifled dissent and influenced citizens' evaluations of military actions".(p.283).

Callahan, Dubnick & Olshfski (2006) investigated how war frames, put forth by the Bush administration and reported immediately following the September 11 attacks, shaped the Americans' understanding of the War on Terror. The results indicated that none of the four narratives identified from top political figures in the Bush administration "captured the hearts and minds of the public officials in this study Participants crafted narratives based on their own values and experiences. They chose statements about war that seemed to reflect their own interpretation of the role of government in society and the appropriate governmental reaction to a specific external threat"(p.563).

In order to know how Bush Administration's rhetoric shaped American public opinion toward the 2003 American war on Iraq, Gershkoff & Kushner (2005) ,first , analyzed presidential speeches dealing with terrorism and/or Iraq given from September 11,2001 to May 1,2003- the declared end of hostilities in Iraq. Then , they analyzed polling data that had been conducted by different sources. The data revealed that the high levels of American support to the war in Iraq attributed to the Bush administration's frames that "successfully connected

the conflict as an extension of the war on terror , which was a response to the September 11,2001”(p.525).

Although there has been some sort of consensus among researchers on successful framing effects, few researchers referred to some factors that undermine those effects.

Two separate experiments were conducted by Lee, Mcleod and Shah (2008) in order to examine the impact of news frames used by journalists on shaping the reasoning processes through which audiences form their opinion. The results suggested that “the framed news stories failed to change issue opinions directly but did alter the importance of the considerations used to make judgments on relevant issues”(p.695). In addition , The data “provided evidence that journalistic frames may provide cues about how policy conflict is understood without necessarily changing opinions on the issue”(p.714).

Parmelee , Perkins and Sayre (2006) focused on two locations in framing theory’s framing processes ; frames within texts and frames within receivers. They tried to investigate why the political ads of the 2004 presidential candidates failed to engage young adults . The results attributed this failure to the way in which political ads were presented. According to the findings “political advertising failed to connect with young voters because the issues that spoke to participants -- include

Iraq, health insurance, tuition assistance, jobs, and taxes -- were not discussed from the perspective of young voters political ads are framed in a way that limits the salience of young adults in the political process”(p.23)

Druckman (2001) shed a light on the credibility of the frames' source as one of the limits constrain framing effects. Two experiments demonstrated “a clear and systematic limit to framing”. According to the results “Perceived source credibility appears to be a prerequisite for successful framing. Framing effects may occur, not because elites seek to manipulate citizens, but rather because citizens delegate to credible elites for guidance”.(p.1061).

Using data from an experimental study that exposed respondents(1.199 adults in the state of Kansas) to opposing issue frames on two important issues—reforming Social Security and physician-assisted suicide , Joslyn and Markel (2002) explored the relationship between issue framing, personal opinion, and perceptions of public opinion. They found that available information from issue frames influenced personal-level opinion but in general did not affect perceptions of public opinion.

Druckman & Nelson (2003) described framing effects as “a short – lived phenomena”. They developed a new variable, called “need to evaluate”(NE). According to the authors, NE variable refers to citizens’ conversations that include conflicting perspectives to the media frames and elites frames. They hypothesized that NE expected to undermine framing effects. An experimental study was conducted to examine the effect of this moderator variable. As they expected , the data showed that “need to evaluate variable played a substantial role in moderation framing effectsnew information contained in elite messages will not have as large an effect on their opinions – relative to low- NE individuals who will be more reliant on the message in construction their opinions”(p.740).

Hypotheses

Based on the main hypotheses of Framing theory, in addition to the results of previous studies, 6 hypotheses have been formulated :

H1: Perceptions of Arab media frames (positive/negative) towards Hamas' acts preceding and during the war will be associated with attitudes(positive/negative) toward the armed struggle in dealing with the Palestinian – Israeli conflict.

H2: High levels of attention to updated news about the war will be positively associated with positive attitudes toward the armed struggle in dealing with the Palestinian- Israeli conflict.

H3: There is a significant difference between Palestinians and non Palestinians in terms of their attitudes toward the armed struggle in dealing with the Arab – Israeli conflict.

(Palestinians will score significantly higher than other Arab nationalities in having a positive attitudes toward the armed struggle in dealing with the Arab – Israeli conflict.)

H4: There is a significant difference between Palestinians and non Palestinians in terms of their perceptions of Arab media frames toward Hamas' acts preceding and during the war.

H5: There is a significant difference between dependents on the old media , the Internet or interpersonal communication, as the main information sources during the war, in terms of their

attitudes toward the armed struggle in dealing with the Palestinian – Israeli conflict.

H6: There is a significant difference between dependents on the old media , the Internet or interpersonal communication, in terms of their perceptions of Arab media frames towards Hamas' acts preceding and during the war.

Methodology

Sample .The main objective of this study was to explore the effects of media coverage of the war on Gaza on Arabian youth's attitudes towards the armed struggle as one of the best alternatives available in the hands of Palestinians for putting an end to the Arab – Israeli conflict and for regaining their occupied territories. Therefore the study deliberately targeted Arabian youth. In order to overcome the difficulty of reaching out the target population , a group of 30 Students (representing almost all Arab countries) at Qatar University was fully trained on how to fill out the study's questioner. Depending on a snowball sampling technique , a total of 352 Qatar University students were interviewed . All of students participated on a voluntary basis. The survey was conducted in February, 2009 , shortly after military battles between Hamas and Israeli forces had ended and after both sides had accepted a cease fire agreement (January, 23rd, 2009). As shown in table 1 the sample represented , almost , all Arab countries.

Table 1
Characteristic of the sample

Demographics of the sample %	Frequency	
Gender		
Male	138	39.2
Female	214	60.8
- Total	352	100%
Nationality		
Algeria	15	4.3
Bahrain	16	4.5
Comoros	3	.9
Djibouti	3	.9
Egypt	35	9.9
Iraq	10	2.8
Jordan	17	4.8
Kuwait	-	-
Lebanon	7	2
Libya	-	-

Mauritania	6	1.7
Morocco	1	.3
Oman	21	6
Palestine	80	22.7
Qatar	62	17.6
Saudi Arabia	6	1.7
Somalia	6	1.7
Sudan	19	5.4
Syria	22	6.3
Tunisia	5	1.4
United Arab Emirates	2	.2
Yemen	16	4.5
Total	352	100%

Measurement

Attitudes toward the armed struggle

Attitudes toward the armed struggle in dealing with the Palestinian – Israeli conflict was the main dependent variable in this study. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they were opposed, neutral towards, or supported the armed struggle as one of the best options available at the Palestinians' hands to regain their occupied lands and to put an end to the historical conflict with Israel. Ten items on 5-point Likert type scales (1= strongly disagree , 5 = strongly agree) were adapted in this study to measure this variable . To ensure that the scale represented the same continuum, negative items were reverse – coded. Reliability analyses indicated that all items formed a reliable scale (Alfa =

Attention (Interest) to News about the war on Gaza

To measure attention to news about the war on Gaza , respondents were asked “How much attention did you pay to updated news about the war on Gaza”. Responses were provided on a 3- point scale ranged from 1 (a bit amount of attention) to 3 (close attention).

Perceived Arab media frames in covering the war on Gaza

In order to measure the perceived Arab media frames in covering the war on Gaza , participants were asked “ In terms of Arab media covering to the war on Gaza , what do you think about the main stream that has been delivered about who bear the responsibility of starting this war?”. Responses were given on a 3 – point scale ranged from 3(positive attitudes towards Hamas’ right to depend on the armed struggle) to 1 (negative attitudes towards Hamas , cause it was the main reason for stating this war).

Perceived Arab public opinion

Perceptions of the intensity of Arab majority public opinion on who baring the responsibility of starting this war were gauged by asking respondents “How strongly do you think Arab public opinion favored Hamas’ choice during the war?”. Responses were given on a 3 – point scale ranged from 3(positive attitudes towards Hamas’ right to depend on the armed struggle) to 1 (negative attitudes towards Hamas cause it was the main reason for starting this war).

Perceived Arab political regimes' stands during the war

To evaluate Arab political regimes' stands during the war , respondents were asked "To what extent did you see Arab political regimes' stands during this war , were they homogenous or heterogonous?". Responses were given on a 3-point scale ranged from 3(so homogenous) to 1 (so heterogonous).

Besides the variable shown earlier , respondents were asked to indicate the main information source they always depended on to get updated news about the war on Gaza. They were also asked "Who did win this war?". A set of 4 options (Israel , Hamas , both of Israel and Hamas , the people of Gaza themselves) were presented and they had to choose only one of them. Demographic data about gender and nationalities were collected. Gender (60.8% female) was dummy coded , with males as 1 and females as 2.

Results

Before discussing the results of testing hypotheses , it is noteworthy to present some general results about the study's main variables.

Unsurprisingly , respondents reported high levels of attention ($M=2.5$, $SD= .58$) to any updated news about the war on Gaza. More than half of the sample (58%) said that they paid very close attention to any updated news about the war on Gaza versus only 4.8% who reported that they just paid a bit amount of attention . To find out whether this amount of paying attention significantly differs between males and females , a t-test was run. The result showed that there was not a significant differences between males and females ($t = -.276$, $d.f = 350$, $p > 0.05$).

The result showed that 79.8% of the sample reported that they relied on the old media (Satellite TV , Radio, Printed) as the first source from which they basically got the news about the war on Gaza. The Internet came as the second source (10.5%), while interpersonal communication got the last rank (9.7%).

Among a set of local and international TV channels were given to the respondents they were asked to choose the most channels were being watched during the war on Gaza , Aljazeera Arabic

channel came in the first. More than half of the participants (50.9%) reported that they had always been watching Al-Jazeera Channel to be informed with updated news about the war . Al aqsa, Al-Arbiya and Al-Manar TV channels came in the next , 13% , 12.8%, 7% respectively.

It was found that the vast majority of the respondents (83%) believed that there was a huge differences among Arab formal regimes on who should take responsibility of this war and how it could be stopped. On the other hand there was only 4.3% who believed that there was some kind of agreement among Arab formal regimes in this regard.

Concerning the perceived Arab regimes' stands on Hamas' actions preceding and during the war, more than half of the sample (52.6%) said that they thought Arab regimes' stands were neutral, while 27.8% thought these stands were negative versus only 19.6% who thought Arab regimes stands' were in favor of Hamas' actions.

The result pointed out that 75% of the participants thought that Arab public opinion were extremely supporting Hamas' performance preceding and during the war versus only 8.2% who thought that Arab public opinion were against Hamas' actions.

The result revealed that the participants thought that there three main frames had been adopted and delivered by Arab media toward using the armed struggle in dealing with the Palestinian – Israeli conflict (Hamas' choice preceding and during the war on Gaza) in general. Specifically, while 52.3% of the sample thought that there were positives frames toward Hamas' actions preceding and during the war, versus 11.4% who thought that Arab media sought to deliver negatives frames toward Hamas generally, where 36.4% thought that media frames were neutral.

It was found that 69.3% of the respondents said that Israel who should bear the responsibility of this war , while only 8.2% thought Hamas should bear this responsibility

Regarding respondent's opinion on who won the war , 45.2% said that Gaza's people who won this war, while 25% thought Hamas won the war versus 11.4% who thought Israel who won the war.

The results also showed that 27.6% of the sample thought that media coverage to the war were mainly representing Arab regimes' visions rather than representing Arab public opinion , while 40.3% thought that media coverage to the war could be described as objective to much extent. Finally, 32.1 % thought

that there was a bit of confusion in media coverage to the war on Gaza.

Hypotheses

H1 posited that perceived Arab media frames towards Hamas' acts preceding and during the war will be positively associated with attitudes towards the armed struggle in dealing with the Palestinian – Israeli conflict. In order to examine this hypothesis a bivariate correlation was employed. The data pointed out that perceived media frames on Hamas' acts preceding and during the war was found to be unrelated to attitudes towards the armed struggle in dealing with the Palestinian – Israeli conflict ($r = .096$, $p > .05$). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 wasn't supported.

H2 predicted that attention to updated news about the war on Gaza will be positively associated to attitudes towards the armed struggle in dealing with the Palestinian- Israeli conflict. As expected, the results showed a significantly positive correlation between attention to news about the war and attitudes towards the armed struggle ($r = .222^{**}$, $P = .000$) The more one pays attention to news about the war, the more he/she adopts positive attitudes towards the armed struggle as

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed)

one of the best choices available in dealing with the Palestinian – Israeli conflict. The data showed acceptance for H2.

H3 posited that there was a significant difference between Palestinians and other nationalities in terms of their attitudes towards armed struggle in dealing with the Arab – Israeli conflict. To measure this hypothesis , nationality variable firstly were recoded into only two categories that were dummy coded , with Palestinian as 1 and other nationality as 2. Then an Independent t-test was run to test if the mean differences between two groups were significant or not. As predicted, the data pointed out that there was a significant difference between Palestinians and non – Palestinians in terms of the intensity of their attitudes towards the armed struggle in dealing with the Palestinian – Israeli conflict ($t = - 3.52$, $d.f = 350$, $p = 000$). The data also revealed that Palestinians showed more in favor of using armed struggle in dealing with Palestinian – Israeli conflict ($M = 35.71$) compared with non – Palestinian ($M = 33.79$). Therefore , the data showed acceptance for H3.

H4 predicted that there was a significant difference between Palestinians and other nationalities in terms of their perceived Arab media frames towards Hamas' acts preceding and during the war. An Independent t-test was run to test if the mean differences between two groups were significant or not. Unlike

prediction , the result showed that there wasn't a significant differences between the two groups ($t = - 1.350$, $df = 350$, $p > .05$).

Table 2

One – Way ANOVA between media dependents groups for perception of Arab media frames towards Hamas' actions preceding and during the war

	M	sd	F
sig			
Old Media	34.48	4.3	2.51
n.s			
Internet	33.51	3.8	
Interpersonal communication	32.94	4.1	

H5 posited that there was a significant differences between who those depended on old media , the internet or interpersonal communication as a main information source during the war in terms of their attitudes towards the armed struggle in dealing with the Palestinian – Israeli conflict. To test this hypothesis a one – way ANOVA was used to look at the differences between groups . As shown in table (2) the results indicated

that there was not a significant difference between the three groups in terms of their attitudes ($F = 2.51, p >.05$).

Table 3
One – Way ANOVA between media dependents groups and
Attitudes towards the armed struggle

	M	sd	F
sig			
Old Media	2.44	.65	3.37
			.03
Internet	2.13	.85	
Interpersonal communication	2.41	.70	

H6 predicted that there was significant differences between those who depended on old media , the Internet or interpersonal communication as the main information sources during the war in terms of their perception of Arab media frames towards Hamas' acts preceding and during the war. To test this hypothesis a one – way ANOVA was conducted. As shown in table 3 , the results supported the hypothesis, indicating a significant difference between groups, ($F = 3.37$, $p = .03$). Additionally, the LSD post hoc analysis revealed that

Arab media frames towards Hamas' actions were perceived as more positive for those who depended on the old media ($M=2.44$, $SD = .65$) than those who depended on the Internet ($M=2.13$, $SD=.85$). There was no significant difference between any other groups.

Discussion

Exploring news media framing effects on public opinion during wartimes hasn't received that much amount of interest, especially in the Arab world. The latest Israeli war on Gaza marked an unprecedented atmosphere to investigate framing effect in the Arab context. Simply because it was the first time, during the prolonged Arab – Israeli conflict, to experience such fierce division among Arab political regimes on their attitudes toward this war; its causes, who will be taking its responsibility and how to potentially resolve it. As Arab media are almost owned by the state, Arab audiences were exposed to diametrically opposing frames to the same war. The present study sought to investigate the effects of exposure to multiple and contradictory frames of the war on Gaza on the Arab public opinion toward using the armed struggle as one of the options still available at the Arab hand in dealing with Arab – Israeli conflict.

This study is important because it is (a) the first to examine the effects of exposure to multiple and contradictory media frames condition, (b) one of the few studies explored framing effects during wartime, and (c) its sample (352 students studying at Qatar University) represented almost all Arab countries (20 countries)

The results revealed that Arab media frames for using armed struggle (Hamas choice preceding and during the war) were rather diverse and contradictory. There wasn't a single frame dominated the Arab media coverage. Framing theory posits that audiences are likely to interpret and understand (or frame) a certain aspect of an issue (positive/negative) as in the same as they were framed by the news media. In other words , it posits a significant relationship between news media frames and the audiences' frames . It was predicted the same significant relationship to be existed in a setting where there were multiple and contradictory media frames (the main hypothesis of the present study). A bivariate correlation revealed that perceived Arab media frames (positive/negative) on the armed struggle issue in dealing with the Palestinian – Israeli conflict was found to be unrelated to participants' attitudes toward it . It means that the multiplicity of media frames led to a fluidity of public opinion.

The data also showed that Arab youth were strongly paying high levels of attention to any news about the war on Gaza. They were mainly depending on the old media (79.8%) as satellite TV , Radio and printed media to be updated about the diaries of the war. Al – Jazeera TV channel camee as the most

frequented channel (50.9%) was being watched during the war among a set of local and international TV channels were given to the respondents to choose from. Unsurprisingly, Palestinians showed more positive attitudes toward using the armed struggle in order put an end to the Palestinian – Israeli conflict than non – Palestinian.

The vast majority of the participants (83%) thought that there was a fierce political split among Arab formal regimes on how to stop the war. Moreover, It seems that the amount of support for Hamas in the Arab street is much higher than among Arab formal regimes. While 19.6% of the sample thought that the Arab regimes toward Hamas' acts preceding and during the war, 75% of them thought that the Arab public opinion was strongly supporting Hamas' in general. Although this amount of support that Hamas had received, 45.2% of the participants thought that Gaza's ordinary people (children, women, older people), not Hamas or Israel who won this war at the end. only 25% of the participants thought that Hamas won the war. This result could be attributed to the fact that most of casualties and atrocities had been taken in the side of ordinary people.

Arabic media performance during the war was seen as being a bit confused based on the level of professionalism. Specifically

, only 40.3% of the participants thought that the Arabic media outlets were objective during the war, meanwhile 27.6% of them reported that Arabic media outlets were mainly representing Arab regimes' visions rather than representing the reality in the field. The rest of the participants (32.1%) thought that Arabic media coverage to the war was confused in this regard.

Although the present study's sample consists of college students and they, actually, represented almost all Arab countries , future studies should depend on a sample that represents the broader Arab public opinion. The present study , also , examined the effects of media frames as they were perceived by the audience , future studies should first employ the content analysis method to specify the most salient frames , then to examine the effects of those frames on the public opinion.

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