

FRAMING THE ISIL: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE NEWS COVERAGE BY CNN AND ALJAZEERA

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Abstract

This study examines the coverage of the Islamist militant group that established the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant ISIL by CNN and Aljazeera .After the attacks of September 11, 2001; the international media have launched the “war on terror” campaign out of concern for international security and global conflict from their perspectives. This study uses the theory of media framing that emphasizes on certain aspects at the expense of others; therefore this study examines the presence of particular narratives in the coverage of ISIL by CNN and Aljazeera. Framing news story is believed to have impact on audience perceptions through the salience of key issues and its interpretation. Content analysis of news stories written by the two most influential international media is the approach used to explore the frames on the

coverage of ISIL. The study investigates how the two media organisations present ISIL after the declaration of the claimed state; it also investigates the use of “generic frames” developed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) on the beheading incidents. The analysis reveals differences in the reports by the two broadcasters in both time frames. CNN devoted large number of articles on both periods of times. However, there are similarities between CNN and Aljazeera in the way they report the beheading incidents based on the selected three frames (conflict, human interests and morality frames). These similarities indicate that the coverage of these horror incidents represents the global standardization of terrorism coverage.

Key words: Aljazeera, CNN, ISIL, media framing, news coverage.

PEMBINGKAIAN ISIL: ANALISIS KANDUNGAN LIPUTAN BERITA OLEH CNN DAN ALJAZEERA

Abstrak

Kertas ini mengkaji liputan kumpulan militant Islam yang menubuhkan Negara Islam Irak dan Levant ISIL oleh stesen CNN dan Aljazeera. Selepas serangan 9/11, 2001, media antarabangsa telah melancarkan kempen “perangi terrorisme” demi keprihatinan terhadap suasana keselamatan antarabangsa serta konflik global daripada pandangan mereka. Kajian ini mengaplikasikan teori pembingkai yang menekankan beberapa aspek tertentu lebih daripada yang lain, maka kajian ini meneliti tentang naratif tertentu dalam liputan tentang ISIL oleh CNN dan Aljazeera. Proses membingkai liputan dipercayai memberi impak terhadap persepsi audiens melalui isu utama dan interpretasi. Analisis kandungan berita yang dihasilkan oleh dua saluran antarabangsa yang paling berpengaruh itu adalah pendekatan yang digunakan untuk mengkaji bingkai-bingkai berita tentang ISIL. Kajian melihat bagaimana dua organisasi media tersebut membuat pelaporan tentang ISIL selepas perisytiharan negara Islam itu; dan juga mengkaji penggunaan “bingkai generik”

yang diperkenalkan oleh Semetko dan Valkenberg (2000) tentang kejadian penyembelihan mangsa. Daripada analisis yang dijalankan, ternyata bahawa terdapat perbezaan dalam laporan berita oleh dua organisasi siaran tersebut. CNN menghasilkan banyak pelaporan untuk kedua-dua bingkai. Namun, terdapat persamaan di antara CNN dan Aljazeera dalam cara liputan tentang insiden penyembelihan berdasarkan tiga bingkai yang dipilih (bingkai konflik, isu kemanusiaan dan moraliti). Persamaan ini memperlihatkan bahawa liputan berita tentang insiden yang mengejutkan ini menunjukkan suatu persamaan dalam corak pemberitaan tentang keganasan.

Kata kunci: *Aljazeera, CNN, ISIL, pemingkaiian media, liputan berita.*

INTRODUCTION

The endless technological advancement in media and communication has removed distance in space and time, bringing people physically and symbolically together from around the globe at high speeds to debate issues that concern the international community (Harvey, 1989 cited in Tomlinson, 1997). Terrorist groups have received extensive media attention on TV, newspapers, radio, social media including online news. It has been found that sensationalist media coverage of act of terrorism results in more such acts being committed (Doward, 2015). The rise of the "Islamic State" ISIS or what is known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant ISIL and its expansion, become the most debatable topic in world media due to its link to "terrorism" and "war on terror". Surprisingly, there are continuous attempts to try and explain this phenomenon but these attempts were undertaken without careful consideration, and a deep understanding of the backgrounds and roots that have contributed to this phenomenon. It seems that after the announcement of the establishment of The "Islamic state in Iraq and the Levant", this newly created territory now dominates the political and military scene in Syria and Iraq, which now carries a clear threat to other countries too. The rise of ISIL and its fast expansion that stretches from northern Syria to the center of Iraq has struck fear and terror into the hearts of the world's leaders. (CNN, Everything you need to know about the rise of the militant group, September 25, 2014).

The brutal actions by ISIL continues making the headlines of the world's interconnected networks and the role and functions of the media in today's world allow individuals everywhere to watch events of global significance unfold and thus participate in the dramas of globalization. In this networked environment of information technology, it is now more critical than ever to understand exactly how the international media respond to atrocities, and how the global terrorist organizations are conveyed to audiences by the media which ironically help them gain more prominence, understanding and unity in the global sphere.

THE RISE OF THE ISLAMIC STATE IN IRAQ AND LEVANT (ISIL)

The name or rather the well-known acronym for the world's most committed fanatical radical group is still debatable among politicians and media organizations, especially whether to refer to it as ISIS, ISIL, IS or Daesh. ISIS is the earliest name given to this group since its emergence which stands for the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. Later it was changed to ISIL which stands for The Islamic State in Iraq and Levant, and Daesh is the acronymic name in Arabic (*al-Dawla al-Islamiya fil Iraq wa'al Sham*). The two names ISIL and Daesh denote a far larger region and territory than just Iraq and Syria. Levant is the translated Arabic word "Al-Sham", referring to the territory that includes Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan (Wilstein, 2014). The name ISIL is the most commonly used reference recently among media organizations. According to Fuller (2015) they prefer to call it ISIL because for them using ISIL with L for "Levant" and not S as the last alphabet which refers to the region is most accurate although it has never been used before. The name Isis in its earliest form belonged to the famed Egyptian goddess and the name is fancied and taken by thousands of women all over the world before the terrorist group claimed it, which in the process contributed to the confusion of the name ISIS for the public (Fuller, 2015).

Some sources believe that this militant group started in 2004 as the local al-Qaida in Iraq, known as Jama'at Al Tawhid wa Al jihad (translated as group of doctrine of the oneness of God and the struggle) which devoted to establish an independent anti-western Islamic State in the region. According to some political and military analysts that were interviewed in the Frontline program on the rise of ISIL, the misguided policies of Nouri al-Maliki, the Prime Minister of the Iraqi government against the Sunni minority was the big stumbling block in post-invasion Iraq and became one of the major reasons for the ISIL to rise. The story began in 2011 when the American troops left Iraq after eight years of war when everyone thinks the war was over. The

Iraqi leaders assured that they can go alone (Self-governing) without the help of U.S administration, but it turned worse. According to the speakers during Maliki's visit to the White House, there was a terrorist plot implicating his vice president Tariq AlHashemi, the most senior Sunni politician in the Shiah government. AlHashemi's bodyguards were accused of planning attacks on Shiah targets. After Maliki returned to Baghdad, he ordered AlHashemi to be arrested. That incident was a shock to everyone since it implied that Maliki is independent from the Americans and he can do what he wants with the Sunni, and that incident was the starting point. After the U.S army left Iraq thousands of Sunnis suspected of subversion were arrested without being charged, some others were brutally killed in the streets (Frontline, 2014).

Maliki enraged the Sunni tribesmen, initiating Sunni awakening that helped U.S to defeat Al-Qaida years earlier. The other key is that the Sunni leaders in the army and police were replaced with people with strong Shiah and sectarian bent (David Kilcullen, 2014 personal communication). There was a massive feeling of being excluded amongst the Sunni community. (Kilcullen, 2014). Meanwhile, the al-Qaida group in Iraq which would later emerge as ISIL set up camps in the Iraqi western desert. It did not have much of a force because the Sunni awakening reduced it, and when the Americans left Iraq the Sunni insurgency was nearly decimated and was in its last throes of life. What remain though of Al-Qaida were the most battle harden militants, few tribesmen, and some remnants of Saddam's Baaithi militants who hope to regain power (Frontline, 2014). These were described as a group of hardened killers, and some men that the U.S did not manage to kill during the war (Dexter Filkins, 2014, personal communication). Some of them were in Iraqi and American prisons, such as Al Bagdadi the leader of ISIL When he was released from Bucca, the American run prison; he became the head of al-Qaida in Iraq and started directing ambushes and suicide bombings in the Iraqi forces. AlBagdadi had greater ambitions, in summer 2011 he sent a few men to Syria to fight with rebels against Shiah government of BasharAl-Asaad, and that was a gift for Bagdad. The chaos in Syria had left open space between the two countries and the militant group finds life.

Ali Soufan, an FBI special agent says "ISIL did not become the group that is today, until they went to Syria, Syria is what made ISIL now" (Ali Soufan, 2014, personal communication). An unknown number of al-Qaida militants moved from Iraq to Syria in 2011-2012 and was be able to operate and recruit members once again; their message got the attention of the Sunnis of Syria who are looking to wage civil war against the Shiah government. The al-Qaida joined

alongside dozens of Syrian Sunni groups, but quickly became a major force. After AlBagdadi sent his men to Syria, it goes from nothing to being a powerful, active group that runs the operation in the whole country within only 12 months. Back in Iraq Maliki's purge of the Sunni continued. What aggravated the Sunni in Iraq and a real blow to Sunni community in 2012 was when Iraqi police arrested the bodyguards of the Finance minister, a well-known and respected Sunni leader in the government (Rafi Al-Issawi, 2014, personal communication).

After this incident hundreds of thousands of Sunni people became angry because for them it was an issue of dignity and they realized that the incident could happen to any Sunni in the country. On their part, the officials in the U.S started to observe closely the escalated situation in Iraq since al-Qaida is a major player in the incidence. Statements from the White House warned that al-Maliki needs to be contained because he was a real problem in Iraq. The demonstrations of the Sunni in Iraq, especially in Al-Ramadi situated between Baghdad and Jordan and other Sunni cities began to escalate. The protests were funded by wealthy businessmen in other Sunni countries. Pro-Sunni TV stations also were established in Baghdad, Al-Rafideen, and Al-Falujah to defend Sunnis against al-Maliki.

OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study initiates research into the nature of news coverage of ISIL located in the Middle East. The aim of this study is to identify the coverage and the primary frames that are used to cover the ISIL by CNN and Aljazeera. Through the analysis of their content this study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What is the frequency of coverage of ISIL by CNN and Aljazeera English online news?
2. How do CNN and Aljazeera online news frame ISIL?
3. Do CNN and Aljazeera differ in their news coverage on ISIL?

This study will investigate the use of two types of frames. The major frames are the episodic and thematic frames. The second type of frames is the generic frames by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). This study uses comparative analysis of news stories by the two media outlets based on the time frame selected for this study which is the first month after the announcement of ISIL, the establishment of what is called the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant. The researchers also believe that examining the coverage of the events that have made the news headlines around the

world such as beheadings the hostages from time to time will provide more understating on the way the two media broadcasters define ISIL.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The media coverage of international news gains a great deal of attention by media researchers. It is believed that there are some factors that determine the way international media report issues especially with the level of public concern towards international problems such as terrorism or international conflict (Mohammadi, 1997).

Theories in communication and social sciences differ in regard to whether and to what extent the coverage of media outlets in different countries might be similar or different. Some scholars assume that media coverage is influenced by national contexts; therefore the coverage would be expected to vary from country to another.

Shoemaker and Reese (1995) highlight the domestic factors that influence media reporting. According to them the media coverage goes through layers of influence. The outer layer consists of a country's historical and cultural characteristics which may differ according to national traditions of journalism, geographical or linguistic particularities, religious differences, or the different value systems of political elites. The next layers of influence consist of country specific, structural, institutional and organizational characteristics such as economic factors, technological influences or typical working processes in newsrooms. In the inner layer, it is the sociodemographic characteristics, attitudes, self-perceptions and motivations of journalists. Scholars assumed that the characteristics and relevance of these factors vary from country to country, and that coverage on external or transnational issues, such as international terrorism, is shaped by them into a specific, domestic view (Shoemaker and Reese 1995; Gerhards and Schafer, 2014). Some other scholars think that the difference in media reporting across nations might be subjected to regional and global factors. In this regard, the researchers build upon these two assumptions to guide the interpretation of this study.

Regional Standards in Media Coverage

In respect to regional patterns in media reporting scholars assume differences based on two variances. (1) The structural pattern of contemporary terrorism, which is often carried out by Arab Islamic groups against 'Western' victims. In this respect, some scholars expect the strongest differences between the coverage in Western and Arab media. Mostly, these

assumptions are rooted due to cultural differences or, the so-called clash of civilization (Gerhards and Schafer, 2014). The world is classified by opposing “cultures,” and the conflict between the Christian-dominated “West” with the U.S as its “core” state, and “Islam” residing primarily in the Arab world.

According to (Huntington, 1998 cited in Gerhards and Schafer, 2014) this conflict finds its expression, among other aspects, in the public rejection or degrading of the other side (Huntington, 1998); and according to that, differences between Western and Arab media reporting might be expected (Gerhards and Schafer, 2014). Research on the role of cultural proximity in media reporting leads to similar assumption although it comes from entirely different theoretical background. It has been argued that cultural proximity functions as a news value, meaning that culturally proximate issues and aspects are more likely to be taken up and highlighted by journalists (Gerhards and Schafer, 2014), and that similar preferences can be found among culturally similar audience members (Ksiazek and Webster, 2008).

These theories, similar to Huntington in this respect, lead to assumed differences in terrorism coverage between Western and Arab media. Comparative studies have indeed found such differences and mutual stereotyping, for instance in media coverage on the September 11 attacks, the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, the “image of Islam” in Western media, or inversely in the presentation of the “West” in Arab media (Aday et al., 2005; Hafez and Richter, 2007 cited in Gerhards and Schafer, 2014; Jaspersen and El-Kikhia, 2002). While some scholars explain differences between Western and Arab media with cultural factors, others suggest that similar differences can be attributed to differences in the media system. Comparative media systems’ analyses show clear differences between Western and Arab countries. While western media systems are classified as liberal like the U.S or socially responsible and public service-oriented like the UK or Germany (Gerhards and Schafer, 2014; Siebert et al., 1963), Arab media systems are seen as more authoritarian (Rugh, 2007; Selber and Ghanem, 2004) even if they are currently undergoing rapid change and differ from each other internally (Iskandar, 2007; Rugh, 2007).

The extent of involvement of countries and regions in conflicts also assume regional differences in coverage. It has been argued that a part of a journalists’ profession is to provide a “national outlook” (Nossek, 2004), so that nationally significant events tend to be discussed in more detail. News value theory provides a simple explanation for this phenomenon, and empirical studies show that terrorist events are interpreted by journalists as more or less

‘newsworthy’ and covered accordingly (Kelly and Mitchell, 1981; Weimann and Brosius, 1991). Nossek’s thesis found that the interpretation of a terrorist event as “ours” or “theirs” influences its media representation and fits well into this theory (Nossek, 2004). Accordingly, it can be assumed that differences between groups of countries need not (only) be culturally determined, but that the participation of countries in specific conflicts will also be reflected in media coverage. Since contemporary terrorism is fueled by the conflicts in Palestine, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and because countries like the US, UK, and Germany are involved to different degrees in these conflicts, this can be expected to affect their coverage (Gerhards and Schafer, 2014).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Media Framing Theory

Media framing has been understood as a concept of selecting and packaging on-going issues (Entman, 1993). As schemata of interpretation, Goffman (1974) highlights how the media reports an event allows consumers to understand the event. The concept of framing involves both inclusion (emphasizing) and exclusion (de-emphasizing) and media news outputs can prioritize some aspects over others, therefore intentionally or unconsciously promoting one particular interpretation of events (Zeng Li, & Tahat Khalaf,2012).

People rely on media to break down the world into smaller; more manageable units because they have a limited attention and motivation to understand and evaluate complex issues (Lippmann, 1922). Therefore, under certain circumstances, news media can have a significant on issue salience and public opinion (Iyengar and Simon 1993; Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Gamson and Modigliani 1989). The frames, metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases and visual images employed by journalists to communicate the news have the potential to change the way people feel about a political issue. The attribution patterns, ideological themes and affective elements of a story provide readers with a narrative framework for interpreting complex issues. What the so-called “pseudo- environment” that is created by journalists works at the same time with personal history, predispositions and existing cognitive associations, many of which have been influenced by the media to formulate opinions and attitudes (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989; Lippmann, 1992, Pande,2010).

The framing theory suggests that the ways in which journalists organize and communicate the news creates a particular understanding of issues (Pande,2010). In the media context framing refers to the tendency of media to focus on certain idea of news and to develop that idea as a prominent feature of issue or event (Severin and Tankard, 2001; Cherkaoui, 2010). According to Entman (1993) to frame is “To select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to prompt a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and or treatment recommendation for the item described” (1993). Through frames, the ultimate goal would be defining the public opinion and determining people’s actions and perceptions, more specifically under certain circumstances when the public highly depends on media sources (Weaver, 2007; Galander, 2008). As a “second-level” agenda setting mechanism, framing not only impacts news perception but also influences public discourse about an issue (Tuchman, 1978 cited in Pande ,2010).

Framing Terrorism

According to Matteo Stocchetti (2007) the dominant views on terrorism in the American media are “international order” and “clash of civilizations.” These views “reflect political ideologies and serve as interpretive and prescriptive conceptual frameworks” (Stocchetti, 2007). The international order frame characterizes terrorism as organized crime against a global society and places a secondary emphasis on religious, political or ethnic motivations for violence. The prescribed response to such criminal actions is legitimate violence authorized by an international legal body. The clash of civilizations frame explains terrorism as the hostility of “different civilizations” towards distinctively Western values of individual freedom and democracy (Stocchetti, 2007). Based on research into U.S television news, Iyengar (1991) identified two different news frames –episodic and thematic. Episodic stories focus on specific, often immediate, events without reference to historical context, temporal sequence or greater consequence. Thematic stories, on the other hand, are analytical and provide a greater amount of context and background of an issue. Iyengar argues that episodic framing reduces “complex issues to the level of anecdotal evidence” (Iyengar,1991) and cause errors by media audiences in proper attribution of responsibility for problems. In their content analysis of network television news coverage following 9/11, Mahan and Griset (2007) operationalized episodic news segments as those which

focused on specific events, lacked greater context, ignored historical sequence and causes and did not identify larger consequences of the events. Conversely, segments were identified as thematic if they possessed at least one of the criteria (excluding the first). Their findings corroborated Iyengar's (1991) similar research on television news coverage of foreign terrorism which discovered that the majority of news stories were purely episodic.

Research by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) identified the four most common frames in news coverage as: conflict, human interest, responsibility, and economic consequences. Many previous studies of news coverage have similarly operationalized news frames in order to measure the nature of coverage from an empirical standpoint. Studying Arab-Israeli relations, Gamson (1992) identified four news frames including Arab intransigence, feuding neighbors, Israeli expansionism, and strategic interests. Li, Lindsay, and Mogensen (2002) analyzed U.S. television coverage of the 9/11 attacks through eight frames: crime, disaster, economy, environment, human interest, politics, religious, and safety.

For the purposes of this study, the researchers aim to investigate the frames that are used in the coverage of ISIL in the two time frames. For the month coverage following the declaration of the Islamic State, this study adapts the dimensions highlighted in Entman's definition; by identifying how CNN and Aljazeera define ISIL, their casual interpretation, as well as the respective treatment recommendation. In the beheading incidents, the researchers identified and modified three main related frames that they expect to be presented in the media coverage on ISIL: conflict, morality, and human interest frames.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

To answer the research questions, a content analysis was performed on the coverage of ISIL by CNN and Aljazeera online news. Content analysis is empirical research used to make valid inferences from data to the contexts of their use (Krippendorff, 2004). According to him there are four primary advantages of content analysis: it is unobtrusive, it accepts unstructured material, it is context sensitive and thereby able to process symbolic forms, and it can deal with large volumes of data. These advantages seem to apply equally to the Web as to media such as newspapers and television (Lina Hashim, et al. 2007). Therefore, McMillan (2000) identified five primary steps that are involved in the process of conducting analysis research for application to the Web. These steps are: formulate the research question and/or hypothesis, select a sample,

define categories, well train the coder to determine reliability, and, finally, analyze and interpret the data. However, web content analysis is criticized due to the number of available websites growing explosively, and available directories always incomplete and overlapping, selecting a true random sample may be closer to impossible” (Bates and Lu, 1997). Ha and James (1998) also claim that coding a website can be extremely time-consuming and introduce biases based on website size. Nevertheless, the study will try to follow the steps mentioned to ensure a smooth process of conducting content analysis research of the Web.

CNN Online News

According to McPahil (2010), The Cable News Network CNN was launched on June 1, 1980 after an introduction by Ted Turner. The channel started with 200 employees since its operation, it has expanded its reach to a number of cable and satellite television providers, several websites, and specialized closed-circuit channels. The company has 36 bureaus (10 domestic, 26 international), more than 900 affiliated local stations (which also receive news and features content via the video newswire service CNN News source), and several regional and foreign-language networks around the world. CNN launched its website, CNN.com (initially an experiment known as CNN Interactive), on August 30, 1995. The site attracted growing interest over its first decade and is now one of the most popular news websites in the world. The widespread growth of blogs, social media and user generated content have influenced the site, and blogs in particular have focused CNN's previously scattershot online offerings, most noticeably in the development and launch of CNN Pipeline in late 2005. CNN.com was ranked in August 2015 at the fourth place among 15 top popular online global news sites in 95,000,000 estimated unique monthly visitors (“eBizmba Ratings”, August 2015).

Aljazeera online English News

Aljazeera is the Arabic translation of the English word ‘The Peninsula’. Aljazeera English was set up in 2006 by the Arabic broadcaster of the same name (Aljazeera) and both are owned by the Qatari state. Aljazeera was established in 1996, expanded into network with several outlets including internet in multiple languages. The network gained credibility with audiences in the region for its seemingly independent coverage in the post 9/11 period. Its English channel was launched to offer an alternative, non-western-centric worldview (Sabbagh, 2012).

Aljazeera English was selected as the source of this research because it is a non-U.S. or European and non-Asian organization, globally recognized as the fifth most influential news

brand in the world and was voted fifth best global brand. Hillary Clinton stated that “the US was losing the information war as Aljazeera has been the leader in that they are literally changing people’s minds and attitude, and like it or hate it, it is really effective” (Radia, *ABC News*, March 2, 2011).

This study relied on content analysis to examine a particular context of CNN and Aljazeera online news relating to ISIL within a specific time-frame of 30 days from June 29, 2014(the day of announcing the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant) until July 29, 2014. The study also examines the coverage of particular incidents throughout 2014-2015. 2014 marked the establishment of the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant and witnessed the unprecedented brutality of this group. Sample materials from online news examined list of incidents as timeline from 2014-2015 for example on June 29, 2014 ISIL announced the creation of a caliphate or the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant.

ANALYSIS

An analysis of up to 30 days of coverage was undertaken following the declaration of the Islamic caliphate besides the beheading incidents committed by ISIL members that have made the news headline throughout 2014-2015. In general, this study noticed that CNN keeps its online archives on the subject in hand since the rise of ISIL in 2004. Once the researchers keyed-in the short name “ISIL” in the search icon of CNN website, it displays results of 6583 articles for ISIL. When the same procedure was done in Aljazeera English online website, it was found that the website keeps online articles for only two years and there was a total of 1000 online news stories relevant to ISIL throughout 2014-2015.

It was mentioned before that the study used the dimensions highlighted in Entman’s definition to identifying how CNN and Aljazeera define ISIL, their casual interpretation, and treatment recommendation provided for the issue in hand. In the beheading incidents, the researchers modified three main related frames adapted from Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) as follows:

1. Conflict: The conflict frame emphasizes on the conflict between two or more groups, organizations, or countries; news in this category emphasize on labels, report clashes, attacks, threats, warnings or retaliation by either of the groups involved.

2. Human interests: news that brings out the human face, an emotional angle to the presentation of an event; refers to an effort to personalize the news, dramatize or emotionalize the news in order to capture and retain audience interest; employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy-caring, sympathy or compassion; emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the incident; news items go into the private or personal lives of the actors.

3. Morality: puts the incident under moral evaluation frames; condemnation, describing the act of terror and perpetrators from religious perspective; the emphasis on collaboration to face terror groups; news that brings the element of care/harm, which is the feeling and attempt at protecting the helpless, relieving suffering, sympathy toward victims and anger toward actors responsible for harm (Graham et al., 2013).

RESULTS

A total of 59 articles -from June 29 to July 29 2014- on ISIL after the declaration of the establishment of the Islamic caliphate in Iraq and Levant were collected from both CNN and Aljazeera online sites. In respect to the beheading incidents by ISIL from different nationalities which have made global news headlines, a total of 207 news stories published by CNN and Aljazeera.

1. The amount of coverage by CNN and Aljazeera in a month

Table (1a) indicates that CNN devoted large number of articles on ISIL following the declaration of the Islamic State within one month of breaking news, a total of 49 (83.05%) , and only 10articles (16.95%) reported on ISIL by Aljazeera.

Table 1a: month news coverage after the declaration of the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant ISIL

Date	Article by CNN	Article by Aljazeera
June 29,2014	3	2
June 30,2014	5	1
July 1,2014	3	2
July 2,2014	3	0

July 3,2014	6	0
July 4,2014	2	0
July 5,2014	1	2
July 6,2014	1	0
July 7,2014	4	0
July 8,2014	2	0
July 9,2014	3	0
July 10,2014	5	0
July 11,2014	1	0
July 16, 2014	1	0
July 17,2014	2	0
July 18,2014	2	0
July 19,2014	0	1
July 20,2014	1	0
July 23,2014	1	1
July 25,2014	3	1
Total	49	10

Table 1b: Number of articles reported by CNN and Aljazeera within a month of coverage on ISIL

	Frequency	Valid percentage	Timeframe
CNN	49	83.05%	June 29- July29, 2014
Aljazeera	10	16.95%	June 29-July 29-, 2014
Total	59	100.0%	

2. The amount of coverage by CNN and Aljazeera on beheadings of hostages incidents

Table 2a shows that CNN also devoted large number of news stories on the beheading incidents by ISIL throughout 2014-2015, a total of 149 (71.98%) , and 58articles (28.02%) reported by Aljazeera.

Table 2a: The coverage of beheading incidents by ISIL throughout 2014-2015

Date	Victim	Method of killing	Number of articles	
			CNN	Aljazeera
August 19,2014	James Foley: American journalist	Beheading	18	4
September 2,2014	Steven Sotloff: American journalist	Beheading	6	5
September 13,2014	David Haines: British aid worker	Beheading	7	4
October 3,2014	Alan Henning: British aid worker	Beheading	7	4
November 3,2014	322 members of Albu Minr tribe	Some of people were women and children taken from their homes and executed in the desert.	6	1
November 16,2014	Peter Kassing: American aid worker, former soldier	Beheading	14	4

January 24,2015	Haruna Yukawa: Japanese hostage	Beheading	6	2
January 31,2015	Kenji Goto: Japanese journalist	Beheading	16	6
February 3,2015	Muath Al- Kasasbah: Jordanian pilot	Burned alive in a cage.	25	18
February 6,2015	Kayla Jean Mueller : an American human rights activist and humanitarian aid worker	Captured by ISIL and killed by Jordanian airstrike	17	3
February 15,2015	21 Egyptian Christians	Beheading on Libya beach	16	3
March 4,2015	Syrian gay men	Thrown off building and stoned to death	6	0
April 19,2015	Two groups of prisoners including 30 Ethiopians citizen	Beheading	5	4
Total			149	58

Table 2b: Number of articles on beheading incidents by ISIL throughout 2014-2015

	Frequency	Valid percentage
CNN	149	71.98%
Aljazeera	58	28.02%
Total	207	100.0%

The first main finding of this study is that there is noticeable difference in the amount of coverage between CNN and Aljazeera on ISIL in the two selected time frames. It was found that CNN devoted large number of articles on ISIL in both time frames. In time frame one which is a month of news coverage after the declaration of the Islamic State the difference is 39 articles between CNN and Aljazeera. In the second time frame which is the incidents of beheading hostages, the difference is 91 news stories. That means a total difference in the coverage of ISIL between CNN and Aljazeera is 130 articles in both time frames.

News Frame following the announcement of Islamic State

The nature of ISIL frame

The definition of framing by Entman (1993) is the most cited in news framing studies. By adapting the dimensions highlighted by Entman, this study found that there was the nature of ISIL frame on the coverage following the announcement of Islamic caliphate, which the two media attempted to describe or define who actually this militant group ISIL. CNN and Aljazeera differ in the presentation and interpretation of ISIL on the days of reporting right after the declaration of the new state and its caliph "Al-Bagdadi". CNN devoted articles to introduce the meaning or the nature of caliphate and caliph from the Islamic perspective, and the development of caliphate throughout the Islamic history. Moving on to define what ISIL and how it developed from al-Qaida branch in Iraq to what it is now, however they are different terror groups (CNN, will al-Qaida fight ISIS Islamic state, 2 July 2014). In Aljazeera, an article also highlighted Bagdadi's vision of the new caliphate as the caliph. The announcement of the caliphate came after groups such as ISIL and al-Qaida believe that the lack of caliphate has contributed to the humiliation that Muslims have faced in the last century. The articles also mentioned that ISIL uses "romantic tone" steeped in reference to the Quranic verses, oral traditions attributed, and quotes from classical scholars to appeal to people who have been shunned by society and create a "rallying point", but due to their brutality the fighters will fail in attracting other Muslim groups to their cause (Aljazeera, Bagdadi's vision of new caliphate, 1 July 2014).

Dangerous threat frame

ISIL is Serious National Security Threat to US and Europe

“ISIL is the most dangerous terror group that anyone can imagine” was another frame found on the coverage of ISIL repeated in many articles by CNN based on interviews with some of the U.S intelligence officials. For example, Phil Mudd a former CIA counterterrorism official said to CNN that ISIL is the most dangerous terror group in general and serious national security threat to U.S and Europe in particular due to three reasons; according to him 1) ISIL has the most operatives personnel, 2) sympathizers who have direct access to U.S and Western Europe by their passports or stamped documents “cleanskins”, and 3) ISIL has safe havens in the vast territory that was seized in Iraq and Syria unlike al-Qaida in Yemen, Somali and Afghanistan (CNN, Is ISIS the most dangerous threat, 30 June 2014).

In an opinion article by CNN, the author Aaron Miller (2014) stressed on the reason of the creation of ISIL blaming Obama’s administration for melting down U.S interests in the Middle East. The article highlights that U.S overturned minority Sunni and enable Shiah majority rule which deprived Sunnis from political and economic power. The Sunnis became angry and susceptible to jihad persuasion. Furthermore other minorities such as the Kurds start to rise up and began to protect their own interests. That creates a separate governing authority, a nation of battling sectarian groups, each seeking advantage at the expense of the Iraqi state (Miller, 2014). The author recommended what the U.S administration should and should not do to combat ISIL. Miller said that Obama should not think that there is an easy way out of the situation, but it is stuck in a region that cannot be fixed or leave. There will be no outcomes or happy ending and Iraq may never be a unified state again, but does not necessarily be a failed one. He suggested that U.S needs at least three different but related approaches; 1) coordinate with regional partners, 2) the diplomacy first, then military force, and 3) the U.S will need to do what it can to buck up the Iraqi military (Milir,2014).

Looking at how Aljazeera reported on the early days following the declaration of ISIL comparing with CNN, the small number of articles only reported on the situation in Bagdad after the announcement, besides that the Sunni groups formed allies with ISIL to fight against Maliki’s government. The articles emphasize more on the everyday back and forth clashes between the Iraqi governments and ISIL and its allies (Aljazeera, Sunni rebels form uneasy alliance with ISIL, 29 June, 2014).

News Frame on Beheading Incidents

Conflict Frame

By putting the beheading incidents committed by ISIL members within the conflict frame, CNN in most of the articles labeled the ISIL act as “brutality” “true evil” “monstrous” “barbarians” “savage” “disgusting and despicable”. CNN attacked the act of beheading innocent American journalists and according to analysts “the terrorists have used beheading previously because of its horrifying effect on the public. The series act of beheading have fueled debate about the significance of beheading in Islamic history and theology which remains part of the criminal legal codes in Saudi which continues the practice, Yemen, Iraq and Qatar. For example, in the first case of beheading the American journalist Foley at the hands of ISIL, that did not come after a trial by law, but he was abducted and beheaded (CNN, 20 August 2014). CNN also highlighted that the publicizing of this video indicates the growing threat from this terrorist group to the U.S. The articles by CNN stated that the beheading cases were a message linked to the airstrikes that Obama ordered to target ISIL. The articles also mentioned what were the messages that Foley and Sotloff read before they were beheaded. For instance, in the message of the first American journalist Foley the text was that the “real killer is America” (CNN, 20 August 2014); the second victim Sotloff read that he is “paying the price” for U.S military intervention (CNN, 13 September 2014). These messages according to CNN were scripted by his captors who then warned that the life of others depend on what Obama does next in Iraq. In addition, with challenging words from the U.S side, CNN reported that the threat of ISIL do little to stop U.S military operations against ISIL. Obama said according to CNN that “ISIL is a cancer and must be eradicated, and the U.S will continue to confront this hateful terrorism and replace it with a sense of hope and civility” (CNN, 21 August 2014).

Aljazeera on the other hand, seemed to put the conflict frame into the form of taking “revenge” or “retribution” by ISIL against U.S intervention and attacking its fighters. Aljazeera reported that beheading America hostages is “message to America” and ISIL acted in revenge for U.S strikes against it and threatens to kill more (Aljazeera, 20 August 2014). According to David Rohde the journalists who are captives by the armed groups are "human bargaining chips" because they are held indefinitely rather than for ransom or for prisoner exchanges and that is what happened in the case of Muath Al-Kasasbah and the other two Japanese hostages (Aljazeera, 20 August 2014). Aljazeera also reported statements from politicians and leaders that describe the act of beheading journalists by ISIL as a “sickening act” and “crimes against humanity” (Aljazeera, 3 September 2014).

Among all the online videotaped murder incidents committed by ISIL, it was found that both CNN and Aljazeera devoted large number of articles on the incident of burning death of the Jordanian pilot Muath Al-Kasasbah. His execution was described as a shift in ISIL's strategy of communicating brutality that has struck people around the world. According to Al Marashi's article, this time the immolation sent a particularly nasty and brutal message of revenge against a Muslim head of state, the King of Jordan who cooperates with U.S against ISIL (Al Marashi, Aljazeera, 4th February 2015).

Human interest frame

Through placing the beheading incidents committed by ISIL within human interest frame, CNN reported the beheading incidents in much more emotional details by eliciting a human story about the victims, the way they were killed which incites public sympathy and outrage; besides the victims' personal lives. It reported how the family and friends of victims were affected and overwhelmed with grief when they saw their sons and friends beheaded in front of them with no mercy even after they plead to ISIL to spare their lives. CNN quoted statements from the families of the victims, for instance Goto's mother- the Japanese hostage- who ISIL demanded for his release a ransom or exchange with the convicted terrorist woman, Sajidah al Rishawi in Jordan. The mother said "I'm shedding tears of sorrow, I just can't think of any words to say. But I don't want this sorrow to create a chain of hatred" (CNN, 3 February 2015).

In addition, CNN provided much more personal detail about the victims while Aljazeera did not go into more details about the personal lives of the victims. For example, an article on Muath Al-Kasasbah the Jordanian pilot who was burned alive by ISIL titled "A son, husband, national hero; slain united Jordan" emotionally reported the feeling of outrage by the Jordanians who united and pledge to revenge. King Abdallah II of Jordan showed his sympathy and condolences for this tragic event when he visited the family promising to retaliate for slain pilot (CNN, 6 February 2015). Another article reported emotionally on the way that Muath was described by his father, mother and wife as a humble Muslim, very religious person who memorized the Quran and was never harmful to anyone (CNN, 4 February 2015). Aljazeera on the other hand placed the human interest frame through reporting on the official condolences from the Jordanian government and U.S administration.

King Abdullah in his statement said "Today we stand together with the family of MuathAl-Kasasbah," and "This will only make us more united and powerful" (Aljazeera, 3

February 2015). In other article Aljazeera reported how the wife of Goto the Japanese journalist made a desperate plea for her husband's life. Using the humane angle, Aljazeera also reported emotional statements from the family of the victims. For example Goto's mother said "I am too upset to find the words to express myself. My son's last act was to go to Syria to help fellow Japanese. So I want people to understand my son's kindness and courage." His brother said "I had hoped to give thanks for his return alive. But, as his brother, this outcome is very regrettable" (Aljazeera, 1 February 2015).

Morality frame

Under the morality frame, CNN and Aljazeera mostly focused on what should be done to fight ISIL as the most dangerous enemy facing the world. They reported on the need for more coalition and cooperation between US and its partners in the Middle East and western countries. That is because nations especially Americans recognize that the anti-ISIL campaign is going badly and they support Obama's request for war powers, even to the point of deploying ground troops (Aljazeera, 23 February 2015). Aljazeera emphasized on ISIL act from the religious perspective in some of its articles. In an article it was highlighted that regardless of ISIL attempts to explain its actions under the umbrella of religion, killing people by immolation is forbidden in the Islamic norms and the prophetic injunction that "only God punishes by fire". Therefore by doing their acts on innocents such as burning Al-Kasasbah to death, ISIL presumed rights reserved for God which is not acceptable and would not play well among Muslims (Aljazeera, 23 February 2015). In this respect, Aljazeera also reported a statement from Al-Azhar as the prestigious Cairo-based seat of Islamic learning in regard to beheading 21 Christian Egyptian which stresses that the ISIL action is so barbaric and has nothing to do with any religion or human values (Aljazeera, 16 February 2015). Most if not all the articles from both CNN and Aljazeera reported the official and public condemnation by Muslims and non-Muslim of ISIL's brutality. Kedir Hussein a Muslim who attended the joint prayers on 30 Ethiopians Christians killed by ISIL said, "If ISIL were religious, they would never have killed human beings...the death of these young people is like someone was killed in my family (Aljazeera, 21 April 2015).

Summary

This study aimed to investigate the amount of coverage devoted on ISIL by CNN and Aljazeera, how both frame the beheading incidents by ISIL, and whether they differ in their coverage of ISIL. The tables above summarize the difference between CNN and Aljazeera on the coverage of

ISIL. CNN devoted a large number of articles on ISIL in both time frames. In the way they describe ISIL and its acts they are very similar regardless of the amount of coverage. The evaluation of ISIL's acts of beheading incidents, the researchers believe that reporting by CNN and Aljazeera were also similar. CNN and Aljazeera reported on the brutality acts toward victims regardless of their different nationalities and religions; formally and informally condemned. The victims were presented as innocents and deserve sympathy for the way they were killed. In this respect, CNN and Aljazeera underline the barbarity, disgust and inhuman action by ISIL that shift from beheading hostages to burning death. On the one hand, it is obvious that the coverage of CNN and Aljazeera on terrorism indicated that the two media broadcasters adhere to the global standardization of coverage (Gerhard and Schafer, 2013). On the other hand, the researchers found a difference in the coverage. This difference was noted mainly after the declaration of the Islamic State. Aljazeera in its coverage seemed to expect the public to know ISIL. Defining ISIL and the interpretation of the so-called caliphate were not adequate or in other words Aljazeera did not provide more information about who or what is ISIL. In the contrary, CNN provided much more information that helps the public to know who this well-organized and well-financed group and its ideology; it even provided the historical background of the Islamic caliphate to the period it began to be referred to as the caliphate ISIL (CNN, 12 June and 8 August 2014). In other words, the researchers think that CNN pays attention to every single detail when it comes to the coverage of the terrorist group ISIL that is because it is believed that ISIL's first target is U.S due to its policies in the region.

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