

Analysis of visual and story frames for news channels coverage during the 2011 Egyptian revolution

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Abstract

When images are repeatedly seen, they become hallmarks of a historical scene, which evokes a specific frame and mental image. Governments deliberately create this image, especially in times of conflicts and wars, every war involves a certain type of propaganda.

News channels belong to different cultural and political perspectives; they frame influential political events differently. Accordingly, **the problem under study is the question: What are the similarities and differences in the visual frames used by each of CNN Fox News AJE channels to depict the participants in the Egyptian revolution.?**

The aim of the research: to identify the mental image that CNN Fox News AJE channels created and affected the audience by understanding the used visual and narrative frames.

The importance of the research: is that images should not be analyzed in isolation from the conditions of its production and institutional practices in its distribution and selection because governments control the production and transmission of images to guide the audience and create a world based on images as a historical record.

The results revealed that Al Jazeera used a coverage tone that adopted the viewpoint of protesters and political opponents, and employed frameworks around human interest, political strategies, and economic influence. Fox News and CNN's coverage did not differ from their usual view of the Middle East according to American ideology.

Keywords:

Visual frames, coverage tone, mental images, impact theories, objective frames

1- Introduction:

The idea of the emotional impact of images of war and conflict arises from the premise that images do not lie, can observe world events and provide perspectives and thus be able to convey to the viewer a direct sense of connection with real events.

Television news requires visual impact and dramatic storyline, and based on this metric, wars and natural disasters score higher than peacetime events. Thus, wars and civil strife are good news for 24/7 networks and audiences turn to news channels when there is a natural crisis or war, hence the circulating news networks must be driven by conflict or else they will stop operating as successful companies.

Images of war, published or broadcast, are always the product of a complex set of political pressures, negotiations with governments over media policy, negotiations with military censors, negotiations between photographers and editors, and the implications of various production emergencies from constraints of time and place, to limitations of page design and packaging, video, image cropping and scaling.

2- Framing and its role in telling the story and guiding viewers

The cognitive features of frameworks influence how the public perceives an issue and its consequences. People make their decisions on an issue by what is discussed on the media.

Framing refers to the cognitive process by which news producers understand a topic and present it to their audience and the way consumers in turn understand these reports "TV messages direct our attention to specific parts of a message allowing us to make sense of a complex message without fully processing a myriad of details contained therein".

The use of video in the news increases excitement, causing messages to be processed in a way that overcomes verbal content and this emotional effect of cementing images in memory.

Types of framing

- **Episodic frames** treat stories as case studies, and event-oriented cases

Thematic frames put the issue in a more general context and provide basic information, and the use of accidental or substantive framing refers to assigning responsibility to an entity or a person, so episodic stories lead to assigning responsibility to individuals or to other individuals, and thematic frameworks refer to social responsibility.

- **The main story of the war** is one of the frameworks used in times of conflict. This framework is the position that the United States uses in the war because it has to "play the role of the hero, pounce on the enemy and destroy it." This framing is what was used in the narrative of Iraq war.

٣- Frames used to cover the Egyptian revolution

Television gives viewers a "sense of presence" through live images using technological features (as seen in zoom, slow motion, and sound) that television transmits (7-p. 321). Emotional storytelling in television (including covering tone, emotional cues, and verbal expression) is necessary and has an emotional impact on the audience, the visual elements have a significant impact on the viewer's participation and feelings towards an event or issue and the increase in the cognitive load, caused by the negative arousal provoked by intense and lively images on television, actually makes viewers forget the verbal and visual information presented before the image and stimulates their memory to obtain visual and factual information forcibly presented. People remember images more than words, so it is important to consider the visual component. Studies of the visual content of reports and images of conflicts and disputes indicate that the non-conflict framework fails to convey visual images of the conflicting parties while the (conflict - not violent) framework indicates that the conflict was resolved peacefully and without violence.

But the (conflict - latent violence) frame indicates the potential for violence, for example, if the video depicts police or military personnel running after protesters or lining up against protesters without signs of gunfire, and the (conflict - explicit violence) frame depicts a direct and deliberate representation of force physical effects.

٤- Analyzing the visual content of news channels during the revolution

In the current research, an analytical approach is used to explore how news organizations CNN, Fox News, and AJE frame revolution participants in online news content, analyzing visual

frames independently of the story in order to determine whether AJE's footage of the Egyptian revolution is visually different. About Fox News and CNN, and do the three channels differ in the use of visual frames when telling the story of the Egyptian conflict? The researcher examined differences in the tone of the coverage, and the depiction of the relationship between the military and the protesters. The research focuses on the question: Do media with different cultural and political perspectives frame things differently?

In this research, we find that there are differences in the story and the visual frames in the depiction of the demonstrators or the depiction of the Egyptian army and the Muslim Brotherhood among the channels under study, especially with the development of the events of the revolution.

The tone of Al Jazeera's coverage adopted the viewpoint of the demonstrators, senior opposition leaders, and protesters sympathizers.

For example, Al-Jazeera, at the beginning of the revolution, reported the close relationship between the army and the people, and that the conflict was not directed at the army in the first place.

Fox News and CNN's coverage did not differ from the usual coverage of events in the Middle East, portraying the people of the region as either friends or enemies of the United States.

Results:

This research aimed to determine whether AJE, CNN, and FOX News framed the 2011 Egyptian revolution differently in stories and visuals. They analyzed snapshots of news reports and the analysis revealed that:

1. There are differences in the story and the visual frames in the depiction of the demonstrators or the depiction of the Egyptian army and the Muslim Brotherhood among the channels under study, especially with the development of the events of the revolution.
2. The difference in frames for displaying images leads to a difference of opinion and this effect is exactly what news producers aim for because images should make an impression.
3. CNN and Fox News used rhetoric that frames the participants in the revolution according to the American ideology that favors people seeking democracy.
4. The AJE has repeatedly used frameworks on political strategies, public participation, and the Egyptian economy, while at the same time striving for cultural connection with the Arab world by adopting the framework of human interest.
5. CNN is promoting more of the "victory" framework because the protesters won, or so it seemed after President Mubarak stepped down.
6. CNN and FOX News frames may appear more objective in nature, discuss the protests in a larger context and from the perspectives of politicians, opponents, and the military, and provide more background information, but this coverage reflects the interest of the United States in its own interest as well as reflects that its audience is not familiar with Egypt's history, politics, or what led to protests.
7. The tone of Al Jazeera's coverage adopted the point of view of the demonstrators, senior opposition leaders and protest sympathizers. Fox News and CNN's coverage did not differ from the usual coverage of Middle East events, portraying the people of the region as either friends or enemies of the United States and how the actions of the demonstrators affect the United States.

8. FOX News took a direct opposing stance by presenting the Muslim Brotherhood insurgency negatively and presenting the movement as dangerous to Egyptian democracy due to its terrorist nature.
9. FOX News' initial framing of anti-government protesters as a reckless class is similar to the US media's portrayal of Middle Eastern residents and some Egyptians after 9/11.
10. The volume of coverage devoted to the Egyptian revolution decreased in coverage by Fox News and CNN after Mubarak stepped down.

Recommendations

The study recommends conducting further experiments to find out how watching AJE or CNN affects viewers in terms of immersion and presence and the effect of this on changing thoughts. Also, future research should compare how content differences affect viewers' attitudes, participation, and knowledge about international topics. The research also suggests intensifying studies looking at the media environment in which American news consumers develop their opinions about participants in Middle Eastern events because of its impact on the economy.

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