

Journalism

<http://jou.sagepub.com/>

'Annihilating framing': How Israeli television framed wounded soldiers during the Second Lebanon War (2006)

Dalia Gavriely-Nuri and Tiki Balas

Journalism 2010 11: 409

DOI: 10.1177/1464884910367591

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://jou.sagepub.com/content/11/4/409>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

Additional services and information for *Journalism* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://jou.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://jou.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

Citations: <http://jou.sagepub.com/content/11/4/409.refs.html>



'Annihilating' framing': How Israeli television framed wounded soldiers during the Second Lebanon War (2006)

Journalism
11(4) 409–423
© The Author(s) 2010
Reprints and permission: sagepub.
co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/1464884910367591
<http://jou.sagepub.com>



Dalia Gavriely-Nuri

Hadassah College Jerusalem and Bar Ilan University, Israel

Tiki Balas

Bar-Ilan University, Israel

Abstract

This article summarizes the findings of a case study conducted for the purpose of examining Israeli television coverage of wounded soldiers during the Second Lebanon War (2006). The findings indicate that this coverage dwelt on demonstrating the professionalism of the medical corps while blurring the injuries and personal suffering of the wounded soldiers. The theoretical claim made is that such coverage uses what we call annihilating framing. Annihilating framing aims to blur basic components of an object, phenomenon or event in order to exclude it from the public discourse and therefore from the public consciousness.

The article examines the various ways by which political challenges are translated into media challenges and exposes the contribution of political and cultural mechanisms in shaping news frames. It also contributes another level to the research probing the reciprocities maintained between journalism and politicians during wartime.

Keywords

cascading activation, culture, embedded journalism, index hypothesis, Israel, news framing, Second Lebanon War, soldiers, television coverage

Introduction

This article summarizes the findings of a case study conducted to examine news framing in Israeli television coverage of the more than 600 soldiers and more than 2000 citizens

Corresponding author:

Dalia Gavriely-Nuri, Political Studies, Bar-Ilan University, 52900 Ramat-Gan, Israel.
Email: gavriely1@gmail.com

wounded during the Second Lebanon War (2006). The study identified two frames typical to the news coverage of these two groups. The frame applied to news coverage of wounded soldiers was labeled the Hero Code, whereas the frame applied to coverage of wounded civilians was labeled the Victim Code.

The main finding of the research was that in comparison to the Victim Code, the Hero Code is a euphemized, esthetic code. This euphemization has two aspects: on the one hand, harsh pictures – that is, pictures exposing bleeding organs, the personal suffering of the injured, the mess and confusion surrounding care of the injured – are excluded; on the other hand, the coverage emphasizes the soldier's endurance in addition to the medical staff's flawless teamwork. The most popular scene in this type of coverage is the wounded soldier's transfer from the military helicopter to the hospital, surrounded by professional medical staff. Inspired by Tuchman et al. (1978) we call this framing 'annihilating framing'.

By annihilating framing we mean the tendency to blur media representations relating to the basic components of an object, phenomenon or event in order to exclude it from the public discourse and therefore from the public consciousness. We argue that, when employing annihilating framing, the coverage of wounded soldiers alters the basic features of the event and changes its significance. One of the aims of this article is, therefore, to understand the reasons for and results of this framing. We argue that this framing is not derived solely from the photographer's technical limitations, censorship, or privacy considerations. Instead, it reflects a wider political-cultural phenomenon, entitled (Gavriely-Nuri, 2008) the war-normalizing mechanism: a set of symbolic practices aimed at justifying, legitimating and purifying the use of military violence.

The contribution of the article is threefold. First, it examines the process of news framing from an unusual perspective, while arguing that what is excluded from the frame is not less important than what is included. By doing so it suggests that any kind of news framing contains the potential for becoming an exclusionary mechanism, meant to weaken some aspects of the respective event or phenomenon. Second, it sheds light on the relations between politicians and journalists during wartime and demonstrates how political challenges are translated into media challenges when applying the national cultural 'tool kit' (Swidler, 1986) in this process. More specifically, it demonstrates how, by using annihilating framing, news coverage of recurrent events of Israeli wounded soldiers did not challenge public support for the political decision to initiate a new war, the Second Lebanon War. It also shows how annihilating framing has been sustained by the existing Israeli cultural infrastructure captured in the idealized image of the Zionist male body. This leads us to the third contribution of this study: whereas most studies of news frames focus on American political communication (the major political and institutional players, news events, socio-cultural ethos, etc.) and to some extent on European political communication, this study opens a window to a dynamic arena that can be equated to a 'black box' for most non-Hebrew readers – Israeli political communication, especially during the Second Lebanon War.

The conceptual framework

News coverage is a sub-group of narrativizing or storytelling (White, 1980). Media coverage constructs, shapes and filters reality while ignoring alternative or contrasting

information, like any other narrativization (Paterson, 1998; Schudson, 1995). While theories of narrativization focus solely on the narrator, framing theory focuses on both sides of narrative production: the producer and the audience (Chong and Druckman, 2007; D'Angelo, 2002; De Vreese, 2004; Gamson and Herzog, 1999; Liebes and First, 2003; Reese, 2007; Vliegenthart and Roggeband, 2007).

A frame is an active mechanism that guides people toward 'seeing' and interpreting an event in a particular way (Entman, 1993, 2003, 2004). In the sphere of news production, editors and journalists play key roles when choosing a frame. Peri (2005: 117) enumerates three factors that influence journalists and editors in this process. He argues that these factors make the choice more effective and less costly. The three are: first, frames recommended by politicians, agents who are primary sources for information and interpretation; second, frames appropriate to the processual aspects of media production ('the logic of the media'); and third, frames based on the audience's cultural infrastructure. In this study, we focus on the first and last factors: the political and cultural motivations for choosing a specific frame.

News framing as political and cultural practice

Framing is a central process by means of which government officials and journalists exercise political influence over each other and the public (Bennett and Livingston, 2003; Bennett et al., 2006; Entman, 2003; Lakoff, 2004; McCombs and Ghanem, 2001; Reese, 2007; Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007).

The indexing hypothesis (Bennett, 1990) has been proposed for understanding the process by which journalists are influenced by government officials. The hypothesis focuses on the journalistic practice of tying – or indexing – story frames to their sources and to the viewpoints found within official decision circles, a technique that reflects levels of official conflict and consensus.

While the indexing hypothesis emphasizes the influence of politicians on the creation or choice of news framing, the concept of cascading activation, suggested by Robert Entman (2003, 2004) adds another key factor – national culture. The cascading activation theory explains how dominant narrative becomes 'activated' through networks of sources and cascading reinforcing news stories. This technique casts a veil of conventional wisdom over the event, culminating in the discouragement of shifts in an issue's frame among reporters and potential opponents:

Cultural congruence measures the ease with which – all else equal – a news frame can cascade through the different levels of the framing process and stimulate similar reactions at each step. The more congruent the frame with the schemas that dominate the political culture, the more success it will enjoy. (Entman, 2003: 422)

These two theories will help us to understand the research findings.

Annihilating framing as a mechanism of exclusion

Inspired by the term 'symbolic annihilation' as coined by Tuchman et al. (1978: 8), the two basic arguments dealt with in this study are, first, that what is excluded from a media

frame is not less important than what is included; and, second, that the way that framing excludes parts of the object represents a subtle and sophisticated mechanism that symbolically annihilates or at least significantly changes the object. When Tuchman coined this term, she was referring to the determined shortage and even absence of women as subjects in the media, and to the belittling attitude toward women observed in those cases where they appeared or were represented. Following this, we define annihilating framing as a framing meant primarily to exclude a subject, event or situation from the discourse by omitting or blurring its basic characteristics while also creating or stressing other characteristics. We argue that symbolic annihilation is a fundamental characteristic of all framing mechanisms and, as an indirect exclusionary mechanism, contributes to the special power and influence of news framing on public opinion.

Annihilating news framing is used under two conditions: first, with respect to phenomena carrying a problematic ideological or political cargo. In this case, the event is a new war and its results. Second, annihilating news framing is activated whenever straightforward exclusion (such as simply ignoring the phenomenon at stake) is impossible; for example, when the issue is 'hard news'.

Fountaine and McGregor (2002) studied the news media framing of women politicians in New Zealand's national and local elections. They found that although the representation of women in media has increased since the 1990s, women remained 'symbolically annihilated' by the use of trivial descriptions and condemnatory content. As they concluded: 'Journalism educators need to re-theorize gender in the news ... less in terms of visibility/invisibility and more in terms of the quality of media representation.' Since a direct exclusion of women active in politics is impossible, annihilating framing provides an indirect, alternative mechanism for achieving the same results.

Frames are developed, generated and elaborated by what Benford and Snow (2000) call 'strategic process'. 'Frame amplification', another of their terms, is therefore a 'frame that involves the idealization, embellishment, clarification, or invigoration of existing values or beliefs' (2000: 624). Following this argument, we propose that framing involves negotiation between two contradictory processes: on the one hand, it seeks to amplify certain parts of the picture or event, particularly those that promote the frame's desired aims; on the other hand, framing annihilates other parts of the same picture or event – those that do not fit the aims that the frame attempts to promote.

Methodology

This article summarizes the findings of a case study conducted to examine Israeli television coverage of wounded soldiers during the Second Lebanon War. In 33 days of fighting, more than 600 soldiers were injured in the field while more than 2000 civilians were injured at home as 3970 Katyusha rockets fell within the area proximate to Israel's northern border. The research focused on a qualitative analysis of 47 video clips of wounded soldiers and civilians televised during the news programs broadcast by Israeli television's three main channels: 1, 2 and 10. In order to characterize the coverage of soldiers' injuries incurred during the war, this coverage was compared to coverage of civilians wounded during the same war. These two sets of video clips were compared to the coverage of the

wounded soldiers and civilians televised in Israeli television coverage 10 years earlier, during the years 1996–7.² In the first stage of the study, two groups of items were defined:

- 1 Coverage of wounded soldiers in combat (24 video clips). This group included clips that were photographed during the Second Lebanon War, with a sub-group of clips was collected from those televised during 1996–7, 10 years earlier.
- 2 Coverage of citizens wounded during the war and during terror acts (23 video clips). This category contains short items, also broadcast in the parallel periods (2006, 1996–7).

In the second stage of the research we identified two diametric frames: the Hero Code, containing characteristics assumed to be typical of wounded soldiers, and the Victim Code, a menu of characteristics associated with wounded civilians.

Analysis of the two frames was guided by the Matthes and Kohring (2008) cluster analysis of frame elements. We therefore searched for distinctive, dominant elements repeated in the television coverage of wounded soldiers versus wounded civilians. We also applied the idea of thematic structure suggested by Pan and Kosicki (1993). We focused on components that formed the audio-visual thematic structure of the frames, as well as basic components like ‘plot’ and ‘heroes’ (Griffin, 2004; Griffin and Lee, 1995; Howe, 2002; King and Lester, 2005).

Using these analytical principles, each item (clip) from groups 1 and 2 was rated separately to ascertain the degree of compliance/non-compliance with the two news frames (codes). These items were then reviewed in their entirety to rate each item’s compliance with its respective code, as a separate corpus. Each code includes seven elements:

- a The event’s time and place
- b The hero or main character – Israeli soldier or civilian
- c Other characters
- d The plot
- e Atmosphere and sound
- f Photographic technique
- g Typical accessories.

The main limitation of this methodology is derived from the impossibility of viewing all the relevant items from 1996–7 due to problems with their preservation.³ However, we believe that this limitation did not greatly affect our findings because, as we show, the differences within each group were marginal.

Findings

Comparing the two groups of clips exposed a binary encoding of wounded soldiers as opposed to wounded citizens. While television coverage of wounded soldiers (in 2006 and in 1996–7) correlated with the Hero Code, the items covering wounded civilians during the same periods complied with the Victim Code and were basically the same

whether the clips were taken from the commercial channels (Channel 2 and 10) or from the state-owned Israel Broadcasting channel (IBA Channel 1).

The Hero Code

The Hero Code is a short clip, usually less than one minute long. Its main features are:

- a Time and place – a landing strip, usually at Rambam Hospital in Haifa, northern Israel's main hospital, which treats all wounded soldiers from the northern front.
- b Hero/main character – a wounded soldier. The hero usually lies on a stretcher, appears calm or even sleep, his eyes closed. He is covered with a blanket that conceals his injuries and is usually connected to a mobile infusion apparatus.
- c Other characters – a medical crew and soldiers, carrying or transporting the stretcher. A large label reading 'paramedic' appears on the backs of the uniforms of some medical crew members. What we see is very skilled staff, displaying a clearly visible high level of teamwork.
- d The plot – a rescue or, more precisely, an evacuation scene. It usually starts when a rescue helicopter is landing on the hospital landing strip. The wounded soldier is taken out of the helicopter to the entrance of the trauma unit of the hospital.
- e Atmosphere and sound – overt calm, an atmosphere contradicting the actions observed in the scene: medical staff in a hurry. Yet no one is crying or shouting. The wounded soldier is also very quiet. A pastoral atmosphere is strengthened by focusing on natural elements such as the sea and the sky. No voices are heard, nor are there any sounds coming from the urban environment in which the hospital is located. Sounds of helicopter propellers may puncture the silence.
- f Photographic technique – the long shot. The last picture is usually a fade out of a helicopter flying against the background of a blue sky.
- g Typical accessories – a helicopter, the Israeli flag, uniforms, rank insignia, weapons, helmets. Minimal medical equipment. Also captured in the camera frame are natural objects like the sea, the sky, rocks or a hillside and vegetation.

To complete the analysis, we should mention another scene that essentially completes the plot of the Hero Code. The audience learns about the Hero Code through the broadcast of the evacuation scene. However, this scene is sometimes followed by another scene, televised on the next day's TV news: the happy-ending scene. This scene, a sequel to the previous day's coverage, is meant to prove that the soldier's rapid evacuation succeeded, that the professional medical staff was able to save his life. In the sequel, the wounded soldier sits or lies comfortably in his hospital bed, dressed in civilian hospital pyjamas (Israel does not maintain any exclusively military hospitals). In contrast to the evacuation scene, we now see the soldier's face (zoom in); he also talks and smiles. Sometime we see a fresh bandage (e.g. a head bandage or a cast on his broken leg) but the general atmosphere transmits a message of an improved condition. Another repetitive element in the happy-end scene is the visit of a high-ranking officer (sometimes the Chief of Staff), a senior politician (such as the Minister of Defense) or even Israel's

President. A short conversation is held before the camera. The visitors ask the soldier how he feels and request some details about the circumstances of the injury. The soldier readily and easily cooperates. Despite his painful wounds, he does not complain; he is a true hero. Finally, the soldier shakes hands with his visitor as the camera cuts to another site, often the television studio.

The Victim Code

The Victim Code is a short clip, usually shown in staccato-like fragments, each continuing for not more than a couple of seconds:

- a Time and place – wounded civilians photographed at the site of their injury: a city's main street or a quiet neighborhood, next to a bombed house, or in a hospital corridor after evacuation.
- b Hero/main character – an ordinary Israeli person: an old woman, a student, a middle-aged man or woman. The victim's clothes are torn, with blood clotted on parts of his body and sometimes on his face. The victim is frightened, confused, often panicked and shouting for help.
- c Other characters – mainly civilians standing or thronging about the victim; some are wounded, most are passive onlookers. A policeman sometimes attempts to impose order. Hospital orderlies or rescue personnel occasionally appear at the camera frame's edges.
- d Plot – a string of events that brutally interrupt the routine life of an innocent person. The perfectly functioning medical crew, if shown, represents a subplot, an interior drama. The main story is that of the injured person and how he faces this sudden, harsh and externally imposed reality.
- e Atmosphere and sound – pictures taken from the bombed location show confused, helpless people seeking aid amidst rubble and chaos. The sounds heard are those of people often hysterically crying and shouting. Fear and insecurity is pervasive. Sometimes we can see or hear the siren of an arriving ambulance.
- f Photographic technique – close-ups of faces and the victim's injured body; the devastated site.
- g Typical accessories – blood, damaged personal belongings, torn clothing, urban elements such as buildings, cars and pavements.

Discussion: reasons for annihilating framing

Why should two different codes be used in the news coverage of soldiers and civilians? We focus on the Hero Code and delve into the reasons for the annihilating framing of coverage of the wounded soldier. Of the four proposed explanations, two are embedded in the characteristics of the media process – the technical aspect and the ethical dimension – whereas the other two are embedded in Israel's political culture. The last two explanations were inspired by the two theories previously discussed: the index hypothesis that stresses the political aspects of news framing, and cascading activation that emphasizes, among other things, the role of culture in news framing.

The technical explanation

Israeli soldiers' injuries are usually incurred in the military arena, a special sphere closed to civilians, including journalists. In order to cover war's battles and related events, reporters and photographers need to obtain special permission from the military. Moreover, although battlefield injuries are certainly not unexpected, the exact location where the injuries take place cannot be predicted. Yet the Israeli hospitals that treat the military wounded are officially civilian hospitals, treating everyone; they are not closed military zones. As a result, the first place where reporters and photographers meet wounded soldiers is generally the hospital landing strip. Only from that moment can broadcasting begin. Naturally, the first picture received by news editors is the moment of the rescue helicopter's landing, a significant component of the Hero Code.

Yet this technical explanation of the Hero Code relates only to the time and place of the coverage. It does not explain other components of the Hero Code, such as the systematic representation of order and control, elements that we have referred to as creating the broadcast scene's 'atmosphere' (element e).

An interesting demonstration of the limits of this explanation was found in a rare, unedited video clip of wounded soldiers.⁴ The event was a suicide bomb attack against soldiers waiting to hitchhike at a major intersection near Ashkelon on the morning of 25 February 1996. Ashkelon is a sizeable city in central Israel. Because the event occurred in a civil space rather than a closed military zone, the television crew could begin filming the soldiers a very few minutes after the injuries were incurred, exactly as in cases of civilian wounded. The unedited clip reveals elements strongly contradicting the Hero Code guiding military coverage: we could see the face of a wounded soldier with blood showing on his bandaged hand; blood dripping from the leg of another soldier; the frustration from waiting for the helicopter; the confusion until a medical corpsman succeeded in connecting an infusion bag to the stretcher; and the slow, chaotic evacuation. In sharp contrast, the footage shown on the special 'breaking news' program broadcast at noon the same day, a couple of hours after the event, indicated massive editing or, in our terms, activation of the familiar Hero Code.⁵

The legal and ethical explanation

The publication of photographs in the Israeli press is strictly regulated by the following laws: the Prohibition of Defamation Law, the Basic Law on Human Dignity and Freedom, and the Military Censorship regulations. No written agreement has been negotiated between military journalists and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), unlike the agreements that regulate the work of embedded journalists covering the activities of the US Armed Forces.⁶ However, in order to enter a military sector or interview soldiers as well as photograph them, permission must be issued by the Military Censor and by the IDF Spokesperson.⁷ 'There is considerable competition over what little the IDF permits; hence, military journalists generally avoid confrontations with the IDF Spokesperson.'⁸ In addition, the Ethical Code of the Israel Association of Journalists states that:

A photograph or other items identifying a person killed or seriously injured during war, in an automobile accident or other disaster prior to notification of that person's immediate family regarding the death or injury by an authorized person is strictly prohibited.⁹

In the same vein, the report of the Israel Press Council Committee (Dorner Committee, 2007), mandated to devise an ethical code to be followed by journalists during war, which was written after the conclusion of the Second Lebanon War, includes the following recommendation: 'Respecting human rights and the right of privacy demands a prohibition against close-up photographs of wounded people' (2007: 29).

The last two ethical restrictions do not differentiate between civilians and soldiers. Instead, our examination of the respective television coverage indicates the discriminatory application of those restrictions. In order to explain this behavior, we turn to the other two explanations.

The cultural explanation

The cultural construction of the Israeli male body has accompanied the Zionist ethos since its formulation at the beginning of the 20th century (Gluzman, 2007; Lubin, 2001; Yosef, 2001). While the Diaspora Jew was stereotypically depicted as weak, passive and submissive, the new Israeli Jew, the Sabra (Tzabar) depicted in Zionist ideology, more closely resembled ancient Roman and Greek physical ideals – a slender, flexible body, tall and tanned, healthy, happy and attuned to nature (Almog, 2000). The Sabra is ideologically motivated: his main goal is to protect Israel's existential presence, for the sake of which he is ready to sacrifice his life. Yitzchak Rabin, the late prime minister, was considered to be one of the first in a line of ultimate Sabras.

The Israeli soldier came to represent the perfect incarnation of the Sabra and the Zionist. In this context, the wounded bodies of Israeli soldiers symbolized more than injured individual soldiers. The wounded soldiers came to symbolize injuries to the success of the Zionist project and a critique of the Zionist state that had failed to protect its citizens. Israeli television, by applying annihilating framing, attempts to preserve this myth of the perfect Israeli male body and, in effect, endeavors to preserve its associated cultural and historic ethos.

Alternatively, emphasis on civilian victims and their suffering sustains the ideological motivation for the existence of the State of Israel (protection of its citizens) but at the same time legitimizes the use of military power (such as initiation of the Second Lebanon War) in achieving this objective. Stated simply, the Hero Code, together with the Victim Code, are two complementary parts of one equation that sustain and justify the basic Israeli ethos, its objectives and its efforts to achieve them.

The political explanation

From a political perspective, annihilating framing derives from a broader phenomenon, what has been termed the war-normalizing mechanism (Gavriely-Nuri, 2008). This mechanism embraces a set of symbolic practices aimed at legitimating and purifying the

use of military violence. War-normalizing mechanisms transform war and warfare into an event perceived as a 'natural' or 'normal' part of human nature and ordinary life (Gramsci, 1971; Hall, 1982). In this context, we have analyzed the metaphorical annihilation of the Second Lebanon War (2006) from the Israeli political discourse in another article (Gavriely-Nuri, 2008). We demonstrated how metaphors were used to justify the initiation of a new war in Lebanon, accomplished in part by erasing the negative connotations of the Lebanese mud – that is the drawn-out First Lebanon War (1982–2000) from the Israeli public's consciousness.

In a related way, the annihilating framing of wounded soldiers in televised news further normalizes war in the sense that it conceals the 'dark side' of war in general and the injuries caused by war to the Israeli male body in particular. Rather than exposing the suffering of the wounded (usually young men), including the various personal costs to be paid, the annihilating framing prevents discussion of the difficult socio-political and military questions: How did the injury occur? Could it have been prevented? Were the battle and the entire war itself unavoidable? Above all: How responsible for the events are the political and military leadership? Are they doing their best to prevent such events in particular and wars in general? These questions are crucial when they refer to the wars initiated by Israel itself.

Journalistic coverage of war and warfare embodies a subtle interaction: journalists need to balance between patriotism and professionalism, between loyalty and ethics. Due to the special power of visual coverage (photographs, video clips) (Anden-Papadopoulos, 2008; Hariman and Lucaites, 2003; Howe, 2002; Keith et al., 2006; Sylvester and Huffman, 2005), such a balance is especially difficult to achieve. And so, the outcomes of that balance frequently evoke public criticism. In a recent discussion on the effect of such pictures during war, Anden-Papadopoulos (2008) argues that the Abu Ghraib photographs 'have themselves come to function as a critical prism through which elite and popular views on US foreign policy are refracted'.

The framing of wounded soldiers in the Israeli case complied with the dominant 'desired' hegemonic framing, and supported the initiation of the Second Lebanon War. This attitude is so deeply implanted in Israel's media culture that the public is now 'blind' to the manipulation to which it was exposed by such war-normalizing mechanisms (Elliott and Elliott, 2003; Van Dijk, 2006). While the US public's criticism of the journalistic coverage of the Iraqi War (Elliott and Elliott, 2003; Sylvester and Huffman, 2005) was targeted at its overly patriotic and uncritical stance, the Israeli public's main criticism against the coverage of the Second Lebanon War had nothing to do with excessive patriotism; it was quite the opposite. According to the report of the Israel Press Council Committee (Dorner Committee, 2007), military journalists, but television reporters in particular, were blamed for being inadequately patriotic. Public censure was directed primarily at reports giving the exact locations of where Hezbollah missiles fell, which was thought to provide the enemy with needed intelligence. It can be argued that this kind of criticism proves the existence of public sensitivity to the superficiality of journalistic conduct. More sophisticated media attempts to influence public opinion by making use of annihilating framing of the Hero Code, an undoubtedly 'over-patriotic' type of coverage, were totally missed by the public and by scholars alike. This gap in perception marks the contribution of this study: an addition to the understanding of the latent, implicit power of annihilating framing, especially during wartime.

We conclude this discussion on the motivations for annihilating framing of wounded soldiers by referring to two examples, both of which demonstrate that the Hero Code is part of the Israeli cultural cycle of bloodletting. The first is taken from an interview with Colonel Ofer Kol, Media Head of the IDF Spokesperson's Unit. This interview was conducted with the authors two years after the war (2 September 2008), and Kol stated:

I assume that newspaper files contain photographs of wounded soldiers that have never been televised nor published. Why does this happen? Because they are everyone's boys. And if they are everyone's boys, we behave toward them as if they were our boys. Perhaps the media don't publish them in order to protect morale. I think the public would be greatly irritated if they saw wounded soldiers in any condition other than bandaged. These are acts of self-censorship committed by the reporters themselves ... The media understand that soldiers are special.

The final example is an exceptional item, taken from the television coverage of wounded soldiers. On 11 August 2006, during the course of the Second Lebanon War, Tomer Bohadana, a company commander in the paratroopers, was seriously injured. Pictures of his transfer to the rescue helicopter were televised on all the channels and, on the following day, in all the daily newspapers. What was unusual about the scene was that he was photographed up close, with his injuries clearly visible to the cameras. At the same time, Bohadana was shown with his hand held up, making a 'V' for victory sign despite his serious injuries as the field surgeon clamps his hand on Bohadana's hemorrhaging vein, an act that saved his life (after the scene was shot, Bohadana lost consciousness for 36 hours). Yet it appears that even in these unusual circumstances, the television networks continued to apply the Hero Code: the bleeding soldier is shown before the cameras as resourceful and the carrier of rare human spirit. The field surgeon does the same as he continues to do his job, just as the Hero Code predicts. At that moment, Tomer Bohadana became a national hero, with his picture immediately entering the national album as one of the purest symbols of the IDF's fighting spirit while embroiled in the Second Lebanon War (Hariman and Lucaites, 2003).

Concluding remarks

The main finding of the article is that Israeli television coverage of wounded soldiers uses an annihilating framing; that is, it represents war and injuries as positive experiences while blurring their harsher features. Rather than exposing the personal suffering of the injured, or the embarrassment and confusion of comrades on the battlefield, this type of framing demonstrates the endurance of the wounded, the care given by his comrades, the professionalism of the medical corps. The fact that annihilating framing of wounded soldiers was adopted by public and commercial channels alike, and the fact that the features comprising this framing have not changed during the last decade (1996–2006), point to its deep ethical, cultural and political roots.

It is interesting to note that annihilating framing is a tool to facilitate public coping with the problematic emotional and political cargo attached to a range of socially relevant events. It is used with respect to the work of Israeli Air Force pilots, the most prestigious of all military specialties. Israeli television channels frequently show highly stylized video-clips taken from a bomber's cockpit. These clips might show a

target (for example, a building), but only from a bird's eye view: what the audience sees is a small, dark 'spot', which 'disappears' following the precision bombing. In both cases, the televised coverage sterilizes the events by annihilating any hint of personal damage; if such damage is mentioned, it appears disconnected from the military action's aggressiveness.

As a general mechanism, annihilating framing characterizes television coverage of other, non-militarily sensitive issues. For example, the annihilating framing of poverty in Israel is seen in the coverage of the kindness and humanitarianism of the people who contribute money and time either directly or through charitable institutions.

In the three cases described above, annihilating framing euphemized the situation. Just as it emphasizes positive values such as bravery and friendship in the case of the wounded soldier, annihilating framing exposes the positive dimensions of the other two cases. In the case of aerial bombing, it stresses the professionalism and technological sophistication of the pilots rather than the destructive outcomes; and in the case of poverty, it exposes the positive contributions of the volunteers rather than the suffering of the recipients of their charity.

This article has compared the television coverage of civil and military injuries. Since Israeli television regularly broadcasts funerals, the differences in the framings of fatal military and civilian casualties also deserve attention. The fact that the coverage of military funerals includes the ritual rifle salute and that this is the main component of coverage of these events gives us an important place to start future research.

Notes

- 1 The term 'annihilating' comes from the well-known phrase coined by Gerbner (1976) and Tuchman (1978): 'symbolic annihilation'. This term is usually applied to media criticism to describe the ways in which the media promotes stereotypes and denies specific identities. The term 'annihilation' belongs to a broad theory that we have developed in other articles (see Gavriely-Nuri, 2008, forthcoming).
- 2 We used the Archives of the *Israel Broadcasting Authority* (IBA Film Archive) and the virtual archive: *Infosite Searchable Archive*. Out of a total of 47 clips, 35 clips were from the 2006 Lebanon War and 12 clips from the period 1996–7. Among the 35 clips during the Second Lebanon War we randomly selected 17 events with showing wounded soldiers and 18 events showing ordinary citizens injured after a Katiusha attack. Unfortunately, the availability of hard copies of such clips relating to the years 1996–7 preserved in the Israel Broadcasting Authority Archives was limited. From the dozens of events related to wounded soldiers and civilians that transpired in Israel during these years we found only 14 clips including soldiers wounded in border events, we then randomly selected and analyzed 7; from a list of 10 terror-events including wounded citizens, we randomly selected and analyzed 5 items.
- 3 The coverage of the wounded civilians during 1996–7 is yet to be researched. We should note that the IBA Television Archive has recently begun converting all its materials into a digital format. This will make it possible to conduct complimentary research in the future.
- 4 Israel Broadcasting Authority Archives, Item no. 9153/96.
- 5 Israel Broadcasting Authority Archives, Item no. 8576/96–9.
- 6 Interview with Colonel Ofer Kol, the Media Head of the IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 2 September 2008.

- 7 Interview with Yossi Bar Mocha, Chair, Association of Israel Journalists, Tel Aviv, 20 August 2008.
- 8 Interview with Rafik Halabi, former Director, the News Division, IBA Channel 1 (the State's television channel), 21 August 2008.
- 9 For full details see: *The Ethical Code of the Israel Association of Journalists* 1996, article no. 9.

References

- Almog O (2000) *The Sabra: The Creation of the New Jew*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Anden-Papadopoulos K (2008) The Abu Ghraib torture photographs: News frames, visual culture, and the power of images. *Journalism* 9(1): 5–30.
- Benford RD, Snow DA (2000) Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology* 26: 611–39.
- Bennett WL (1990) Toward a theory of press state relations in the U.S. *Journal of Communication* 40: 103–25.
- Bennett WL, Livingston S (2003) Editors' Introduction: A semi-independent press: government control and journalistic autonomy in the political construction of news. *Political Communication* 20(4): 359–62.
- Bennett WL, Lawrence RG, and Livingston S (2006) None dare call it torture: Indexing and the limits of press independence in the AbuGhraid scandal. *Journal of Communication* 56: 467–85.
- Chong D, Druckman JN (2007) A theory of framing and opinion formation in competitive elite environments. *Journal of Communication* 57(1): 99–118.
- D'Angelo P (2002) News framing as a multiparadigmatic research program: A response to Entman. *Journal of Communication* 52(4): 870–88.
- De Vreese CH (2004) The effects of frames in political television news on issue interpretation and frame salience. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 81(1): 36–53.
- Dorner Committee (2007) Available at: <http://www.moaza.co.il/BRPortalStorage/a/4/04/99-HogS-5DjCZr.pdf> (in Hebrew).
- Elliott D, Elliott PM (2003) Manipulation: The word we love to hate (Part 2). *News Photographer* 58(9): 12–13.
- Entman RM (1993) Framing: Toward a clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication* 43(4): 51–58.
- Entman RM (2003) Cascading activation: Contesting the White House's frame after 9/11. *Political Communication* 20(4): 415–32.
- Entman RM (2004) *Projections of Power – Framing News, Public Opinion, and U Foreign Policy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Fontaine S, McGregor J (2002) Reconstructing gender for the 21st century: News media framing of political women in New Zealand. *ANZCA 2002 Online- Journal*. Available at: <http://praxis.massey.ac.nz/fileadmin/praxis/papers/JMcGregorSFontainePaper.pdf>
- Gamson WA, Herzog H (1999) Living with contradictions: The taken-for-granted in Israeli political discourse. *Political Psychology* 20(2): 247–66.
- Gavriely-Nuri D (2008) The 'Metaphorical Annihilation' of the Second Lebanon War (2006) from the Israeli political discourse. *Discourse and Society* 19(1): 5–20.
- Gavriely-Nuri D (forthcoming) 'Rainbow', 'snow' and 'the poplar's song' – the 'annihilative naming' of Israeli military practices. *Armed Forces and Society*.

- Gerbner G, Gross L (1976) Living with television. The violence profile. *Journal of Communication* 26: 172–199.
- Gluzman M (2007) *The Zionist Body: Nationalism, Gender and Sexuality in Modern Hebrew Literature*. Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad (in Hebrew).
- Gramsci A (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Griffin M (2004) Picturing America's 'War on Terrorism' in Afghanistan and Iraq: Photographic motifs as news frames. *Journalism* 5: 381–402.
- Griffin M, Lee J (1995) Picturing the Gulf War: Constructing an image of the war in *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News & World Report*. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 72: 813–25.
- Hall S (1982) The rediscovery of ideology: Return of the repressed. In: M Gurevitch, T Bennett, J Curran, and J Woolacott (eds) *Culture, Society and the Media*. London: Methuen, 56–90.
- Hariman R, Lucaites JL (2003) Public identity and collective memory in U iconic photography: The image of 'accidental napalm'. *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20(1): 35–66.
- Howe P (ed.) (2002) *Shooting under Fire: The World of the War Photographer*. New York: Artisan.
- Keith S, Schwalbe CB, and Silcock W (2006) Images in ethics codes in an era of violence and tragedy. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 21(4): 245–64.
- King C, Lester PM (2005) Photographic coverage during the Persian Gulf and Iraqi Wars in three U.S. newspapers. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 82(3): 623–37.
- Lakoff G (2004) *Don't Think of an Elephant*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing.
- Liebess T, First A (2003) Framing the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. In: P Norris, M Kern, and M Just (eds) *Framing Terrorism*. New York: Routledge, 59–74.
- Lubin O (2001) The boundaries of violence: The boundaries of one's body. *Teoria U'vikoret* 18: 103–38 (in Hebrew).
- McCombs M, Ghanem S (2001) The convergence of agenda setting and framing. In: SD Reese, OH Gandy, and AE Grant (eds) *Framing Public Life*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 67–80.
- Matthes J, Kohring M (2008) The concept analysis of media frames: Toward improving reliability and validity. *Journal of Communication* 58: 258–79.
- Pan Z, Kosicki GM (1993) Framing analysis: An approach to news discourse. *Political Communication* 10: 55–75.
- Paterson TE (1998) Political roles of the journalist. In: D Graber, D McQuail, and P Norris (eds) *The Politic of News: The News of Politics*. Washington: CQ Press, 17–32.
- Peri Y (2005) *Brothers at War: Rabin's Assassination and the Cultural War in Israel*. Tel Aviv: Bavel (in Hebrew).
- Reese SD (2007) The framing project: A bridging model for media research revisited. *Journal of Communication* 57(1): 148–54.
- Scheufele DA, Tewksbury D (2007) Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models. *Journal of Communication* 57(1): 9–20.
- Schudson M (1995) *The Power of News*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Swidler A (1986) Culture in action: Symbols and strategies. *American Sociological Review* 51(2): 273–86.
- Sylvester J, Huffman S (2005) *Reporting from the Front: The Media and the Military*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Tuchman G (1978) *Making News – A Study in the Construction of Reality*. New York: The Free Press.

- Tuchman G, Daniels AK, and Benet JW (1978) *Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Van Dijk TA (2006) Discourse and manipulation. *Discourse & Society* 17(3): 359–83.
- Vliegthart R, Roggeband C (2007) Framing immigration and integration: Relationships between press and parliament in the Netherlands. *International Communication Gazette* 69(3): 295–319.
- White H (1980) The value of morality in representation of reality. *Critical Inquiry* 7(1): 5–29.
- Yosef R (2001) The military body: Male masochism and attitudes toward homosexuality in Israeli film. *Teoria U'vikoret* 18: 11–46 (in Hebrew).

Biographical notes

Dalia Gavriely-Nuri is a senior lecturer at Hadassah College Jerusalem and in the Political Studies department at Bar-Ilan University. Her research focuses on the cultural and discursive aspects of national security and the Israeli–Arab conflict, political communication and political culture. *Address*: Political Studies, Bar-Ilan University, 52900 Ramat-Gan, Israel. [email: gavriely1@gmail.com]

Tiki Balas is a lecturer in Bar Ilan University, Department of Political Studies – Communications Program and in the Division of Journalism and Communication Studies. His research specializations are media research (news editing and news editors, news framing) and audience research (uses and gratifications, reception study). *Address*: Department of Political Studies, Public Communications Program, Division of Journalism and Communication studies, Bar-Ilan University, 52900 Ramat Gan, Israel. [email: tikibalas@gmail.com]

Fonte: Journalism, v. 11, n. 4, p. 409-423, 2010. [Base de Dados]. Disponível em: <www.sagepub.com>. Acesso em: 20 dez. 2010.