

# Textual analysis

MEVIT 4800

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# Textual analysis

- Today's lecture will be based on a case study -> demonstrate general challenges with qualitative textual analysis.
- Case: Information War in Gaza 2009

# Textual analysis

In your textbooks you have chapters on...

- Narrative analysis (Hansen et al Ch. 6 and Berger Ch. 3)
- Genre analysis (Hansen et al Ch. 7)
- The analysis of still and moving images (Hansen et al Ch. 8)
- Semiotic analysis (Berger Ch. 3)
- Rhetorical analysis (Berger Ch. 4)
- Ideological criticism (Berger Ch. 5)
- Psychoanalytic criticism (Berger Ch. 6)

# Textual analysis

- Case: Asymmetrical War, *asymmetrical* information war
- Mainstream western media: Systematic *source imbalance*, subscribing to the official Israeli point of view.

# Framing (def.)

To frame, according to Entman's (1993) authoritative definition, is to

'select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular *problem definition*, *causal definition*, *moral evaluation*, and/or *treatment recommendation* for the problem described'.

## Israeli core frame:

*Hamas broke the ceasefire by firing rockets into Israel. Israel had no choice but to attack in response to the 8-year-long barrage of 12,000 Hamas rockets. Having exhausted all other options, Israel had to attack 'the infrastructure of terror' in Gaza. Israel principally targets Hamas terrorists, but Hamas operatives regularly fired rockets into Israel from within or near their own residential and public buildings, including schools, mosques and hospitals. They intentionally chose to base their operations in civilian areas not in spite of, but because of, the likelihood of harm to civilians, which could then be used as propaganda against Israel.*

# Hamas core frame:

*Israel broke the ceasefire when it killed Hamas members inside Gaza in November 2008. Israel has not lifted the blockade on Gaza although this was part of the ceasefire agreement. The blockade was punishing the people of Gaza for voting Hamas into office. Hamas had no choice but to react to the blockade that was wrecking the economy and causing desperate shortages of food, fuel and medicine. Only after the Israeli killing-machine stops the aggression, lifts the siege and opens all crossings will Hamas stop the rocket fire. Israeli occupation, oppression and aggressive military operations in Gaza continue to kill innocent civilian Palestinians.*

# Analytical concepts:

- These core frames illustrate how the two parties *define problems* ( Hamas rockets vs. Israeli blockade),
- make *moral judgments* (terrorism vs. Israeli aggression and oppression),
- support *remedies* (destroying the ‘infrastructure of terror’ and end Hamas rockets vs. stopping the Israeli aggression, lifting the siege and opening all crossings)



# The AJE Frame:

*War means people, people who die and people who kill. People are the centre of the story, and the ugly face of war and civilian suffering ('the voiceless') should be documented in the coverage. Official representatives, regardless of which side ('every angle, every side'), will strive to spin the story, and AJE must be well prepared to ask the hard questions and expose the spin. Because the Israeli information campaigns and official spokespersons are more accessible and more professional than the Palestinians, it is imperative to actively seek more Palestinian voices ('the other opinion').*

# Summary: Key challenges to textual analysis

- 1) Constructing analytical concepts
- 2) Data sample - circularity
- 3) Systematic analysis and argumentation > opinions, loose interpretations
- 4) The neglect of visual elements
- 5) Finding what you are looking for - and nothing else....