

Brantner, C., Lobinger, K., & Wetzstein, I. (2011). Effects on visual framing on emotional responses and evaluations of news stories about the Gaza conflict 2009. *J&MC Quarterly*, 88(3), 523-540.

### Synopsis

The authors noted that nearly all modern mass communication texts involve a combination of image and text (and sometimes sound). They noted that news media utilize these elements to frame a story, crafting a specific narrative for that story. The authors also conducted a study in which they examined the effects that visual framing has on the readers of news stories. They broke it down into how it affected readers' emotions, readers' evaluation of effective communication, readers' ability to judge the journalistic credibility/objectivity of the article, and readers' perception of actors' representation within the story. In the study, they gave readers three versions of the same article on the Gaza conflict: one with an image of human-interest framing, one with an image of political framing, and one with no image. The authors found that images evoke emotions, guide the reader's eye/gain the most attention, and are highly influential in the message the reader will take away and remember later on. The main points they took away from the study were that human-interest visual frames were the more effective in evoking emotions than the political visual frame and no visual frame at all, and that journalists need to be aware and be careful with the visual frames that they choose to include in articles because of their powerful ability to shape viewers' perceptions and beliefs thereafter.

### Key Concepts

- **Framing:** “the observation that different media report on the same topic in different ways, emphasizing or neglecting particular evaluations or particular parts of the issue” (p. 524).
- **Priming:** “salient attributes of a message [that] activate certain ideas [in the viewers brain]” (p. 525).
- **Schemata:** “preexisting meaning structures [that] influence the recipients' information processing and interpretation” (p. 524).

### Key Quotes

- “Various studies have shown that images evoke a number of emotional and attitudinal effects and are able to influence public opinion formation, the comprehension of the news, and the evaluation of issues” (p. 526).
- “the evaluations of an article do not depend only on the question if or whether images are used in the articles, but they also depend on the question which image types are used” (p. 532).
- “The selection of images in news production is more than a simple aesthetic choice and should thus be considered a substantial, content-related, meaningful process” (p. 533-544).

### Essential Question

- How might the average reader become a more critical consumer of news media and the visual frames utilized within it?