

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:

In this article, the authors discussed framing, priming, and visual framing and their effects on readers' emotional responses, judgements, and perceptions of news, using the topic of the Gaza conflict as an example. The experiment gave all participants the same article with different additions that would hypothetically alter responses, priming the readers to respond in a certain way. One version of the article contained two images representing the visual political frame, another with two images representing the visual human-interest frame, and the last with no images at all, only an information graphic displaying geographical data (which all three versions included). The article summarized the data collected from this experiment, which supported the idea that texts containing images have a more significant impact on readers than texts with words alone and the idea that visual human-interest framing elicits strong emotional responses. They conclude that in general, framing can have strong effects on readers. The authors also argued that ultimately, the presence of visual frames as well as the types of visual frames used have a strong effect on recipients' evaluation of the text and should be used responsibly.

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 issues" (p. 2)
- **Accessibility effect/priming effect** - "Media frames serve as primes for the subsequent evaluation. Schemata activated by media frames often compete with chronically accessible schemata." (p. 3)
- **Schemata** - "Preexisting meaning structures" (p. 2) "which influence information processing and interpretation" (p. 3)

Key Quotes:

- "Understanding image-text interactions in the journalistic coverage of conflict and war is especially important since...it "is no light matter to use words and images together in mass communication, for their combination is powerful; they demand respect" (p. 1)
- "Recipients create their view of the world on the basis of personal experiences, conversations, and the interpretations of the media." (p. 2)
- "Images affect recipients' evaluations of articles and should, therefore, be used in a responsible way in journalistic news production, particularly because recipients are less aware of visual framing than of verbal framing." (p. 11)

Essential Question:

- How can readers determine if journalists are aware of the effects their images have on readers and if images are selected for a desired effect or at random?