

## Framing a Global Crisis: An Analysis of the Coverage of the Latest Israeli-Palestinian Conflict by Al-Jazeera and CNN

Laura Aguiar

*Universidade de Estocolmo, Suécia*

E-mail: lauraslaguiar@hotmail.com

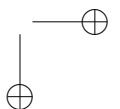
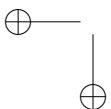
**T**HIS paper analyses the media coverage of the latest conflict between Israel and Palestine which took place between the 27<sup>th</sup> of December 2008 until the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 2009<sup>1</sup>. It was chosen as it is a war generally widely reported by the media around the world and therefore it can be quite useful in the discussion of global crisis reporting which is what this paper intends to engage. The main question this study proposes to answer is regarding the global aspect of Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Which elements seen in media reports and in historical and economical relations make Palestine a global crisis? In addition to that, this paper also does a framing analysis on the discourse used by two (considered) opposite channels, the CNN and the English version of Al-Jazeera, during the coverage of the conflict in order to complement and support the points of view expressed.

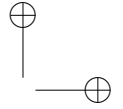
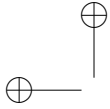
Firstly, the paper focus on to the discussion about the role of the media in a globalised world, drawing from literature on the determinants of international news coverage in an attempt to examine the myths surrounding media globalisation<sup>2</sup> as well as its main characteristics. The work of Kai Hafez (2007), who analysed the myths, Thomas J. Johnson and Shahira Fahmy's

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<sup>1</sup>On the last days of 2008, Israel started a series of military attacks in the Gaza Strip that only ended 23 days later with both sides declaring unilateral cease-fires and Israel removing its troops. During the conflict, more than one thousand Palestinians and 13 Israelis were killed and thousands of Gazans had to flee their homes and were left with no running water and buildings were badly damaged. According to Israelis authorities, the offensive began to stop Hamas throwing rockets into their territory and the smuggling of weapons through the tunnels between Palestine and Egypt. Palestinian authorities as well as the international community condemned such act and in September 2009, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) published a report in which accused both Israel and Palestine of committing war crimes.

<sup>2</sup>Globalisation has been used by many scholars with different backgrounds to describe a certain phenomenon that has been happening to mankind. In this paper, we use the term to





(2008) study on Al-Jazeera, as well as Divya C. McMillan's (2007) and Jean K. Chalaby's (2006) discussions about hybridization are the main points examined in this part and are directly related to the case of the media coverage of Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Once understood the discussions surrounding media globalisation, the second part of this paper tries thus to answer the main question by examining what makes a crisis global and hence what is global about the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Simon Cottle's global crisis reporting (2009) analysis is the main source used along with Guy J. Golan's (2008) examination of newsworthiness and examples taken from the framing analyses to complement and reinforce the arguments proposed.

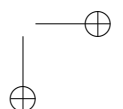
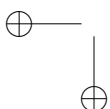
Lastly, the paper exposes the findings of the framing analyses carried out during the 23 days of the conflict. It thoroughly compared the discourse and elements (image edition, interviews selection, issues framed, etc.) utilised as well as the extent of the coverage by the American channel CNN and the English-language version of the Arab network Al-Jazeera. Other networks such as BBC, Euronews and Deutsche Welle were also analysed though in a more quantitative way so that it could be better understood the extent of the attention paid for this particular conflict.

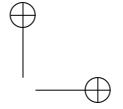
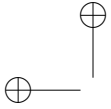
## Media and Globalisation

Kai Hafez (2007) analyses the myths that surround the media and the globalisation process. Although the author does not mention directly the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it can be easily used to ratify and exemplify some of the issues he tries to demystify. He uses the *Systems Theory* to describe the globalisation of the media. These systems can be political, such as institutions like the United Nations or the European Union, as well as transnational media channels such as CNN and more recently, Al-Jazeera. He points out three things that are currently happening within these systems, which are changes – specially cultural and political – interdependency and connectivity. Al-Jazeera can be set as an example of one of the changes in the media scenario: from a local Arab channel it has expanded into a transnational channel with an En-

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refer to the increase of interconnectivity and interdependence that not only the media producers have been facing, but also the very media consumer, mainly on television which is our focus.





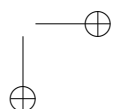
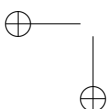
glish version and watched around the world through satellite television. The interdependency has made difficult to demarcate the societal system a certain media operates while the connectivity comprises the speed and intensity of an intercultural change of information.

According to Hafez, there is no global network, not even CNN, which is considered by many scholars the prime example of a global media. “There are many CNN’s but no global programme (...) it is thus at best a multinational but not a global programme” (Hafez 2007:13). Each continent has its own CNN and although it tries to broadcast a wide range of global issues, it does not accomplish to do it completely as it broadcasts according to its editorial and economical interest which consequently brings biased content. Furthermore, the viewer’s opinion about CNN has changed considerably over the past decades. During the Second Gulf War, 1991, the network was considered the model to be followed when it comes to foreign news reporting and also a highly trustworthy channel.

### *Far away... so close*

One of the things in common that most of these global networks (and even the local ones) have is what Hafez calls *domestication of the world*. It means that some determined information can be adapted to have a stronger local effect. This can be easily spotted in channels such as the Brazilian TV Globo when reporting an event in the Middle East, for instance, as it always tries to look for Brazilian eyewitnesses or during the American presidential elections tries to show what it means for Brazil. Euronews is a more “global” example and it is noticeable that the network generally tries to relate a determined event to a European authority or NGO. During the framing analysis of the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it was observed that Al-Jazeera used intensively locals as sources and broadcasted reaction from neighbour countries while CNN relied on transnational NGOs such as the Red Cross and Oxfam for in loco accounts. Hafez considers the Olympic Games a great example of this domestication of news, as most of the countries cover basically the performance of their own athletes instead of offering an in-depth coverage of the whole event.

In addition to that, it is important to analyse not only the content of the reporting but also which are its features. Kai Hafez argues that there is a

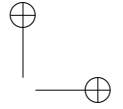
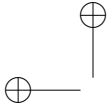


constant privilege of politics which can be notice due to the large amount of conflict reports. According to the *Media Tenor Report*, which analysed news report between 2000 and 2002, “American TV news in particular hit the absolute figure of 50% negative reporting (...) and the majority are about conflicts” (Hafez 2007:33). Another feature spotted by Hafez is the tendency to privilege elites in international reporting as he observed a concentration of official elites or counter elites as sources (in the case of Israeli-Palestinian conflict, use of Hamas and Israeli leaders) instead of marginalised groups, such as non-partisan social movements. Moreover, there is also an increasing dependency on news agencies services, which generally makes up to 80% of the information sources, due to the financial crisis that many media outlets have been through (Hafez 2007:36).

### ***CNN Effect and Satellite Television***

One of the myths that Hafez analyses is the *CNN effect*, which consists in the power of the American channel to make political changes. In the Israeli-Palestinian case it has always been clear that even with appealing images circulating in the mainstream media and more abundantly in alternative mediums such as the Internet, no international action was taken in order to stop the building of settlements or to cease the Israeli bombings last January. On the other hand, some authors still believe in the persuasive power of the media when there are disagreements in political decision making or when such crisis has moving images to be broadcasted. Nonetheless, this cannot be said about the latest Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which after 18 days of intense broadcasting no practical action was taken from international community, like prosecutions or pressure to help rebuilt what was left of Palestine. Even with appealing images, mainly from Al-Jazeera and BBC, the first international practical reaction came only in September when the UN Human Rights Council released a report with 575 pages condemning both Palestine and Israel for the last January conflict, in which both committed war crimes. The report accused Israel for using “disproportionate force” and violation of human rights and international law while it condemned Palestine for rocket firing. According to BBC News Middle East analyst, Tim Franks ...

... [The judge] Richard Goldstone [who wrote the report] recommended that the Security Council require Israel, and the Gaza authorities, to report



in six months about its own investigations into the alleged crimes. If they did not come up to scratch, then the International Criminal Court should become involved. Who, said Judge Goldstone, could object to that? (Franks 2009: BBC online).

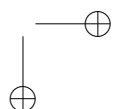
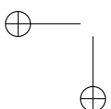
Nevertheless, many specialists say it is too soon to know if this report will indeed help to put an end in the settlements and rebuilt Palestine and even if it will accelerate the peace process in the region.

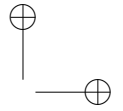
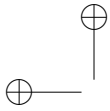
Another myth analysed by Hafez is that satellite television can break through ethnocentrism of nation-based international journalism (Hafez 2007:56). Cross-border television such as the ones with multilingual broadcast – Al-Jazeera, CNN, to name a few, the ones used by immigrants – Brazilian Globo International, and the ones used by “global” elites – Bloomberg, BBC, etc., are just a few examples of what satellite broadcast have brought to the media sphere.

### ***Regionalising the media***

Many media scholars agree that the growth of regional media markets is more significant than the advance of (mainly English language) globalization (Hafez 2007:70). Al-Jazeera is perhaps one of the main examples of this regional media. Created in 1996 with a generous grant from the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa and with the recruitment of mainly BBC staff, Al-Jazeera has since then established itself as a trustworthy network among its viewers, although it has received some criticism mainly from the US who accuses them of spreading terrorist messages through the broadcasting of videos of Al-Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden. It has also been criticised by Arab supporters for negatively covering some Arab leaders and taboo topics such as polygamy as well as accuse it of supporting western governments. Thomas J. Johnson and Shahira Fahmy examined Al-Jazeera’s credibility among its viewer’s through an online survey posted on their Arab-language website. Although the survey could not represent the public as a whole, as a considerable part of the population in the Middle East still do not have Internet access, the result can be considered quite accurate when compared to recent studies. The highest scores were in credibility and ironically in expertise.

... Al-Jazeera has won a loyal following among its 50 million Arab-language viewers as the first Arab news source to offer Arab viewers an uncensored





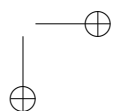
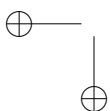
24-hour news service that has provided them a chance to voice their opinions through live phone-in shows, as well as hear the perspectives of opposition leaders, dissidents and intellectuals (...) Ironically, the network has achieved credibility by adopting western-style journalistic techniques and values that has earned it the title of 'the CNN of the Arab world'. Most of the reporters initially recruited by Al-Jazeera were from the BBC's Arabic television service, and they brought with them the BBC's editorial spirit and style (JOHNSON; FAHMY 2008:342)

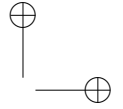
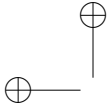
Hafez similarly considers Al-Jazeera a prime example of this new regionalism and also points out the western expertise acquired by the Arab channel. "It has largely adopted the aesthetics of American news and talk shows formats (...) As an Arab network, al-Jazeera nonetheless operates primarily with Arab sources, tackles Arab topics and is preoccupied with the perspectives of an Arab audience" (Hafez 2007:72). This was easily perceived in the framing analysis of the reports about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict this paper developed. Most of the sources were Arab leaders and Arab Victims; reactions around the world were represented mainly by neighbor's countries such as Lebanon; and the conflict was the main and first headline during the 23 days of the conflict.

### ***Hybridisation in Regional Medias***

Moreover, Al Jazeera has some elements of what Divya C. McMillan (2007) calls a producer of hybrid products. Although the network is not controlled by media conglomerates such as Murdoch's Time Inc, its products have both local and global elements. According to McMillan, hybrid fragments simply refers to the cooption of a foreign program for a local market sustaining the format but injecting local actors, sets and cultural themes (McMillan 2007: 113). Jean K. Chalaby (2006) also argues about hybrid products, which are the materials drawn from different countries that mix local and international contents as well as foreign and indigenous. Although both authors focus on the entertainment hybrid products, the concept is also applicable to journalism. This hybridisation can be seen in Al-Jazeera's news shows such as *The Opposite Direction*, based on the American *Crossfire*, to name a few.

It is not only "westernisation" of formats that have been taking place in regional media, but also major channels such as BBC and CNN have been



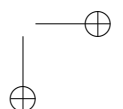
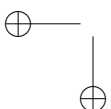


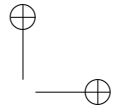
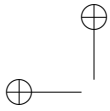
setting the news agenda and how the stories should be reported. In the framing analysis, it was highly noticeable that both CNN and Al-Jazeera initially started their reports focusing on death tolls and had live reporters in the region – Al-Jazeera had the only reporter in Gaza and CNN had correspondents in the border with Gaza and in Jerusalem. Within few days both started taking their directions in representing their respective sides of the story, the Palestinian in the case of Al-Jazeera and the Israeli by CNN. This could be readily noticed by not only the speech adopted but also by the use of images and victimhood representation. Hence, Al-Jazeera makes use of some western formats but also adds its own in order to broadcast their own point of view.

### **Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a global crisis?**

Once understood the role of the media in the process, we can move on to the discussion about what makes the Israeli-Palestinian conflict a global crisis? Simon Cottle (2009) provides a glimpse of some of the contemporary considered global crisis, such as *Global Warming* and *The War on Terror*. It is important to understand beforehand what a global crisis consists of so that afterwards it is possible to identify the characteristics that categorises the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as such.

Cottle cites the *Carma Report*, which analysed six humanitarian disasters, and one of its main findings was that there seem to have no connection between the scale of a disaster and the media story. It also appeared that the coverage of major events have become more intense over the past years. Cottle also observed that there is a ritual of international reporting. They generally focus initially on death tolls and destruction and then move to the explanations of what happened and at last come the personal accounts. In the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict of last January all of these elements were observed although not necessarily in this order. In the first reports of late December, both CNN and Al-Jazeera started with a brief summary of the latest happenings which began with the death toll followed by images of the destruction. Al-Jazeera though started using personal accounts in the third day of reporting, with their own reporters interviewing civilians. CNN, on the other hand, did not use any ordinary civilian report whatsoever; instead it used Aid Workers (most of them foreigners) and a Palestinian journalist who works for the



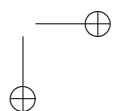
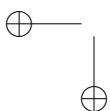


New York Times to give account of the situation in Gaza. In addition to that, it interestingly did not use any strong image to portray what their interviewees were relating; instead they used repetitively images of crowded hospitals, a few victims (mainly men) and aid arrival while their interviewees spoke.

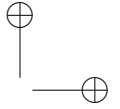
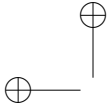
John Langer (Cottle 2009:51) points out the role of victims in international reporting. According to him, they became more authentically sympathetic and worthy of our 'reflex of tears' when an ordinary person located in the real world rather than someone from the potentially manipulative world of professional newsmakers (Cottle 2009:51). In other words, the account of a victim is likely to attract more sympathy than a report of a journalist, especially if the victim is a child, woman or an elderly. As mentioned before, Al-Jazeera broadcasted continuously these kinds of victims, as it could be seen on the report of the third day of the conflict (29/12/08), in which the reporter not only interviewed a mother who had lost her three children, but also entered houses where parents were shown crying for their children and vice-versa. Another approach made by Al-Jazeera was the broadcast of a blurry and smoky mobile phone footage done by one of its cameraman at his home in Gaza which showed "a glimpse of what is like when an Israeli missile hits just meters from your home". Along with the smoky images you could hear women and children crying in the background. CNN, on the other hand, did not make use of any of these kinds of images even when it mentioned the rising death toll or when it interviewed the witnesses; instead it used more images of men in coffins, houses and commerce destruction as well as military images, which makes it clear that CNN did not intend to strike a chord with Palestinian victims whatsoever.

### ***Actual Conflicts and Newsworthiness***

Furthermore, another characteristic of actual conflicts, including the Israeli-Palestinian, is that most of them are about identity with national and ethnical goals rather than geopolitical and ideological objectives. Technology has also been playing an important role in actual conflicts not only due to its military importance but also for crisis reporting. Human rights events have made use of tools such as the Internet to broadcast and though slowly it has received considerable responses. Cottle exemplifies it comparing the Burma protests of 1988 and 2007. In the first, there were protests with 2000 deaths and it was





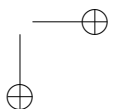
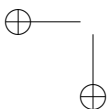


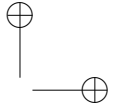
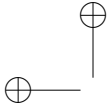
barely reported in the mainstream media, unlike the protests of 2007, in which journalist and activists used the Internet to show the situation in the country. Other activists and NGOs have also been doing the same as the case of the *Doctors Without Frontiers* which reports forgotten wars and the *Free Gaza Movement* which promotes meetings and lectures with activists from several countries giving their accounts about what they have experienced in Palestine as well as use the internet as a form of communicating with the ones interested about the conflict.

Newsworthiness of an event is one of the key items that turn a crisis into a global issue. Cottle as well as Guy J. Golan (2008) identified a few requisites that make the events globally newsworthy. Golan analyses the American coverage of African issues and identifies some predictor factors of international reporting. He noticed that the more trade a certain country kept with the US as well as the higher GDP and population, the more likelihood of receiving coverage. Ironically, the results showed that important issues such as the continuing AIDS and humanitarian crisis did not draw much attention as armed conflicts, US *War on Terror*, Africans international relations and disasters (natural, human and crashes). Cottle uses the war in Congo as an example of a conflict neglected by mainstream media.

It is estimated to have killed over four million people since 1998 and has left countless thousands traumatised by rape, massacres and the extreme violence inflicted by machetes. Despite a formal end to hostilities in 2007, unrestrained violence continues in Congo. It is the single most deadly conflict in the world in recent time, it is Africa's Second World War and yet it has barely been registered on the world's media (Cottle 2009: 115)

So why even with this astonishing death toll, the conflict did not receive as much attention as the Middle East although they happened in different times? During the 23 days of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there were other crisis happening in the world, such as another massacre in Congo on Christmas Day (it had no follow up coverage in neither CNN or Al-Jazeera and was briefly cited in BBC); Ghana Presidential elections; Bomb blast in Bilbao; Night Club fire in Thailand on New Years Eve; and the Danish mall shootings that killed two Israeli, to name a few. Curiously, even suicide bombings in Afghanistan and Iraq, which happened throughout January, did not receive as much air time as the Gaza conflict even though both conflicts are considered part of





the “Global War on Terror”, perhaps because both events no longer needed any in-depth explanation as they had already been exhaustively covered due to their long durability. This shows that Iraq and Afghan bombings have thus become banal, they no longer shock nor interest as in the beginning of their respective wars while Gaza’s war was a “hot” issue.

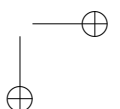
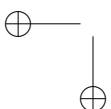
### ***Economic and political newsworthiness***

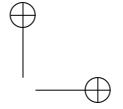
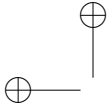
If we gather the key predictors of Golan and Cottle we will realise that Palestine and Israel fit perfectly in the international reporting dynamic. Firstly, because they are in a strategic political and economical region for the US and Europe, as they represent an important ally in the troublesome and “petrolled” Middle East. Robert Fisk, correspondent of the British paper *The Independent* who has covered the Middle East for almost three decades, points out the straight relation between England and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which dates back the Crusades and has intensified in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

British support for an independent Arab nation was expressed when Britain needed Arab forces to fight the Turks. The Balfour declaration giving support for a Jewish national home was made when Britain needed Jewish support - both politically and scientifically during the First World War (Fisk 2006: 449).

Since then, the number of Jewish arrivals in Palestine increased considerably, doubling the population. After the Second World War, major western countries saw the partition of Palestinian territory and the creation of Israel as a way to make amends for the atrocities the Jewish went through. In 1947 with the conflict spiralling out of control, Britain decided to turn the Jewish problem to the UN, who proposed to divide the land in two states, in which 47% would go for the Arab Palestinian and 53% to the Jewish, even though the former made up for two thirds of the population.

Furthermore, Israel has grown into one of the most powerful military nation as well as has a prosperous economy thanks mainly to the goods exportations and “generous” donations from the US, which means that both countries, as well as European countries, keep straight trade relations and therefore a conflict in the region is globally newsworthy.





The documentary *Occupation 101* reviews this straight relation between the US and Israel countries. Paul Findley, a former US Congressman, explains that this relation is a result of a number of factors. Firstly, there was the lobby inside the US Congress for Israel, the AIPAC (The American-Israel Public Affairs Committee), which outlined the elections. The second factor pointed out is the fundamentalist Christian community view of the Armageddon day approaching in which the Jewish people would suffer hugely and the US then would be the ones who could proudly help them. “It may sound to a viewer a very far out-n(2006)otioned view, but believe me it was highly held and supported by millions of Americans”, explains Findley. Richard Falk as well as Noam Chomsky argue in the documentary *Occupation 101* (2006) that the US sees Israel as an strategic ally to exert control and influence in the Middle East, which is an important oil production region.

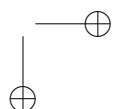
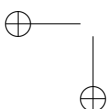
Richard Falk also stresses out that Israel receives as much foreign economic assistance as all the countries combined in the world. This can be viewed in the Richard H. Curti’s *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*<sup>3</sup>, which compares the US foreign donations. Of the total aid, US donated to Africa and Americas between 1949-1996 a total of \$62.5 billion which is the same amount donated in the same period for Israel alone. It means that the amount spent per person corresponds to disproportional \$10,775 for Israel and \$59 for Americas and Africa together. Hence, of the total aid donated by the US during that period, Israel has received annually one third, which is high if we compare the population of both continents combiner (over 1 billion) and Israel (over 5 million). A conservative estimate says that from 1949 to 2006 the US has directly donated to Israel approximately \$108 billion.

### ***Death Tolls and Richness***

In addition to that, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict of last January had a high death toll, approximately 1,500, although small if compared to conflicts such as Rwanda and Congo, in which at least 500.000 died in 100 days and 5.4 million killed in 5 years respectively.

And lastly, Israel also fits in the hypothesis formulated by Golan that a nation with a high GDP and population is more likely to receive coverage.

<sup>3</sup>These report can be seen on the documentary *Occupation 101*.



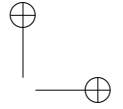
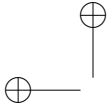
Although Israel's GDP is not as high as European countries, it occupies the 42<sup>nd</sup> position according to the IMF ranking and is also the 24<sup>th</sup> in HDI, closer to European nations, and it has more than seven million people (2009 estimate) while Palestine, by the contrary, is the 106<sup>th</sup> in HDI and has more than four million and is considered one of the highest densely populated region in the world.

### 23 Days... Daily (Long) Reports

The framing analysis done about the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict tried to show not only the discourse used by two considered opposite channels – CNN and Al-Jazeera – but also to observe the extent of such coverage. Some findings were already exposed in the previous pages and there are others that are worth being shared in this paper.

It was initially observed that although Al-Jazeera has some western elements, mainly technological, it had a thoroughly different approach from CNN. It was easily noticeable in both channels which side they were supporting – Al-Jazeera was pro-Palestine and CNN was pro-Israel – by the discourse and the images used as well as the choice of the sources. Since the very first day, CNN let it very clear when it broadcasted Bush's reaction to the beginning of the Israeli offensive and quoted his opinion, such as " Hamas must end its terrorist activities if it wishes to play a role in the future of the Palestinian people! The US urges Israel to avoid civilian casualties as it targets Hamas in Gaza". From then on, the American network basically reproduced the Israeli speech and although it did aired to some extent the humanitarian crisis in the following days, it always reminded the viewer that the conflict is Hamas' fault and Israel is only defending itself from the deadly rockets firings. This could be easily noticed in the December 29<sup>th</sup> report in which the Jerusalem correspondent reports the reaction inside Israel in this three days of attack: "So there is certain here a window of opportunity for Israel to do as he wanted in the past two years, which is really go after this organisation [Hamas], try to ride it out of Gaza and try to decapitate it..."

Similarly, All-Jazeera showed in the very first day of the Israeli offensive that it had chosen the Palestinian side. The report starts with the death toll of 200 and then it moves to the speech of Hamas leader, Ismail Haniya, in which

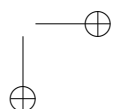
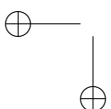


he says that ‘Palestine has never witnessed an uglier massacre’. Thirdly, it shows the Arab reaction and give little space for the Israeli government’s explanations. Throughout its reports during the 23 days of war, they opted to show overwhelming images of not only the structural destructions but also the pain of the victims as well as their own account of what they had just witnessed, unlike CNN who only interview one ordinary civilian who was from Israel.

### ***An attempt to frame the conflict***

Both networks “named” the conflict according to their own point of view; while CNN refused to call it a war and created a *Crisis in the Middle East* logo and started using it from the fifth day of the conflict, AL-Jazeera started using *War in Gaza* since the second day. Moreover, air-strikes images were frequently used by the US to show the accuracy of Israeli attacks in their Hamas targets even though the death toll of civilians continued to rise while AL-Jazeera used the same images only once as a form to express irony. On the first of January report, after showing the images of the increasing number of civilian casualties, it cuts straight to the image of the Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni in a press conference reaffirming that “Israel carefully distinguishes its target”. Another example of usage of a same event but portrayed in a different way by both channels was the death of a Hamas leader. While AL-Jazeera gave him a human approach stressing that he was killed along with his wife and three kids and more five people, CNN briefly reports that a Hamas leader was killed along more nine people, never mentioning the death of his wife and children.

One feature of CNN reporting during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was the constant use of graphics to explain some historical and basic facts as well as to summarise the latest happenings of the conflict. On the December 29<sup>th</sup> report, CNN presents a Brief Gaza Timeline since 2005, obviously with an Israeli point of view, which can be seen in the December 2008 part: “2000 mortars and rockets attacks, 3000 since the beginning of the year, Hamas fault for actual problems”. The other explanatory graphic showed the Weaponry in the Middle East. Although it says on the beginning that there are high weaponry in both sides and it urgently says that there are differences in the tactics and weaponry, it is once again clear which side CNN is taking. It states that Hamas

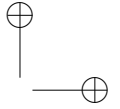
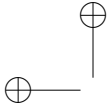


is a well-armed, highly motivated who carries anti-tank weapons and thousands of rocks, which can reach up to 40km, as well as 25.000 security forces plus supporters. Israel, on the other hand, is one of the most powerful militaries in the world which has navy, army and air forces as well as a fleet of modern fighter's jet, thousands of tanks and vehicles and 125.000 troops plus 600.000 reservists. Interestingly enough, why did the CNN graphic opted for omitting the nuclear weaponry of Israel?

### ***“Metamedia” and Sharp Interviews***

Another interesting finding was that both networks also analysed the coverage of the conflict by the media. CNN criticised on December 29<sup>th</sup> the Al-Jazeera promotion of *Gaza on Fire* as a “pretty emotional video” and stresses the Arab channel sympathetic tone with Palestine and angry feelings towards Israel. Al-Jazeera, in turn, analysed twice – on December 31<sup>st</sup> and January 14<sup>th</sup> – the media coverage of the conflict, which were done in the program *Listening Post*. In the first one, it was part of how the Middle East media reported the global world in 2008 while in the second it analyses the global coverage on Gaza specifically. Furthermore, CNN also analysed the videos that were posted in *Youtube* and showed that the Israeli Defence Forces used mainly air strikes images to influence the public opinion regarding the accuracy of their targets as well as trucks arriving with aid. In contrast to that, CNN showed that from the Palestinian side, Hamas videos were posted with military images and their spokesperson, ignoring the other videos posted by the very victims of the conflict.

It is also noticeable to analyze the depth of the interviews carried out by both channels. In CNN, most of them where with either Israeli officials or as previously mentioned mainly NGO and Journalists in the region, excluding the Gazans accounts from its reports. Al-Jazeera, by contrast, had a wider range of interviews which varied from civilians, Hamas members, Aid workers and also Israeli officials. It was quite clear that Al-Jazeera interviewed the latter with more criticism than the former ones. One example of this is the interview with Yuval Steinitz, Israel's Minister of Finance, who tries to justify the latest Israeli offenses. The anchor then asks sharply: “So you are saying that you are using only 2% of your military power, which is the fourth in the world, against a group of people firing homemade rockets, and yet you are



portraying yourself as a victim?” The Israeli official stutters and then answers: “What do you expect, we see 6000 rockets being fired and just because we are stronger we cannot use our arsenal and tell our citizens we cannot do anything to protect them? Ask the same question to the US and Britain when they went to Afghanistan”. What can be concluded from the dialogue is that Al-Jazeera is clearly on the side not only of Palestine, but also Hamas, as in any moment it criticised the continuous firing of rockets while the US basically reproduced Israeli speech.

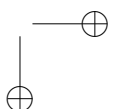
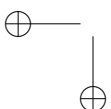
### ***Air timing***

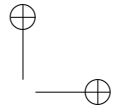
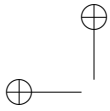
During most of the 23 days, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict received immensely coverage by both CNN and Al-Jazeera, as well as other channels such as BBC, Euronews and DeutscheWelle. In Al-Jazeera they lasted from five minutes to one hour depending on the events of the day. However the average coverage observed during the framing analysis was of at least 30 minutes, which were dedicated exclusively to the *War in Gaza* while other news would be reported very briefly afterwards. CNN, by contrast, began dedicating approximately 30 minutes to cover the conflict but a slightly fall was observed from January 6<sup>th</sup> due to the preparations for Barack Obamas Inauguration on the January 20<sup>th</sup>.

On the last day of the conflict, January 18<sup>th</sup>, some channels chose the Obamas Inauguration as the main headline while others opted for the cease-fire that finally put an end in the Israeli offensive. Like BBC, Al-Jazeera surprisingly started its news with reports about the Inauguration and then moved to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict while CNN did not report it at all, only dedicated 30min to Obamas future as the next American President. Deutsche Welle, by contrast, started its news with six minutes of Gaza’s reports and afterwards it gave an in-depth analysis of the conflict and did not report any preparation for Obama’s Inauguration.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has investigated the global aspect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as the differences between CNN and Al-Jazeera’s coverage during the 23 days of bombings and bloodshed. The results showed that both channels established their opinion in the very first day of coverage and throughout their





broadcasts the viewer had both sides of the conflict exposed the Palestinian by Al-Jazeera and the Israeli by CNN. For the former, the rockets firing were a form of protest to end the Israeli occupation while for the latter the rockets firing where the main cause of the beginning of the December-January conflict. They practically worked as spokesperson of each country as it can be seen in the following example. In one of its reports, the CNN reporter asks one Israeli how his children are dealing with fleeing from home which was the kind of question never asked when he interviewed one of CNN's "eyewitnesses" in Gaza while Al-Jazeera, on the other hand, focused only on Palestinian victims and never interviewed any Israeli civilian whose life was affected somehow by the rockets firing during this conflict.

It was important to start this paper with the discussions that authors such as Hafez, McMillan and Cottle engaged regarding media globalisation and global crisis insofar that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been covered world widely throughout its 60 years. It is indeed a global crisis as it relates to interconnection and interdependence between nations and peoples tough in different contexts. And it is a newsworthy issue in a global scale if we consider its historical and economical bonds with powerful western actors, such as the US and the European Union, as well as its astonishing death toll, Palestinian densely populated area and Israel's GDP and high IDH. Once we have all of these aspects clear in mind, we begin understanding the major role the media play in framing the issues. Hence, a crisis will be global if the media portrays it as such as well as an issue will be newsworthy if it fits in the pre-determiners already established not only by the media, but also by the economical and political institutions surrounding them.

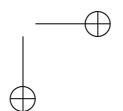
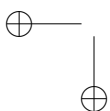
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