

**University of Windsor**

---

**From the Selected Works of Allen Gnanam**

---

2009

# Hamas Controlled Televised News Media: Counter- Peace

Allen Gnanam, *University of Windsor*



Available at: <https://works.bepress.com/allengnanam/8/>

Televised news media controlled by the Hamas government, is aggressively manipulating the news media as a means to propagate hostile ideology. Hamas controlled news media will be analyzed in relation to 3 interrelated dimensions, that have mystified Hamas's criminality and injustices, and have fostered unruly tensions between pro-Palestinians and Israel. The 3 interrelated dimensions are propaganda, censorship, and the historical context of the middle east. The 3 dimensional connection to Hamas controlled televised news media in Gaza, will be analyzed using functionalism, the mass society theory, the dominant ideology framework, the critical criminology framework, and the symbolic interactionist framework. The symbolic interactionist framework will be used as the overall investigative framework, as peoples interpretations on what they see and hear through the media occur in a historical/cultural context, which in turn influences peoples emotional reactions, physical reactions, and comprehension of the news. The 2008-2009 war between Israel and Hamas will also be illustrated to link state controlled media with crime, as crime has been operationalized as the negative labeling of Jews and Israeli's, and the masking of Hamas's criminal behaviours and their injustice toward the people of Gaza. This research analysis will enlighten readers about the power of state controlled media, the benefits of state controlled media, media oriented solutions that target negative media effects, and issues relating to the Israel-Hamas war, such as UN media policy, media crime control, and media factors that have fueled anti- Israel sentiments (hate crime).

An observational and interpretative method will be used to gather data that will be dissected, interpreted, and linked to the above frameworks and the 3 interrelated dimensions. In terms of procedure, I will objectively and critically analyze Hamas controlled televised news media that was aired during the Hamas- Israel war, using 3rd party media outlets such as CNN

and CBS, as I don't have direct access to Hamas controlled media channels. I realize that sound bite journalism does exist, and so I will collaborate multiple Hamas news media clips as a means to uncover re-emerging patterns, messages, and symbols. In addition, I will use the print media (e.g. Newspapers) as another source to collaborate and cite my findings. During my analysis I will record the symbolic images, ideologies, and hidden messages that are being injected into the people of Gaza, and other people in middle eastern nations. This idea of injection reflects the hypodermic syringe model, and I feel that it can be applied to the middle eastern context of state controlled news media. For example, unlike in western nations such as Canada and the U.S, the media in Gaza is strictly state controlled and as a result, citizens are constantly and consistently bombarded with unilateral ideology and religious appeals, that are never contradicted due to state censorship. Therefore, when unilateral ideology and religious appeals begin to negatively portray certain groups, propaganda is being injected into the minds of citizens and anxiety arises (Jeweles & Yvonne, 2004). With that, I will also investigate how propaganda and state censorship, in connection to middle eastern history, is being used as a tool to demonize Israel and reinforce anti- Israel religious ideology.

My research analysis focuses on propaganda, censorship, and the middle eastern historical context, because of my desire to investigate, interpret, and explain the macro-level instigating and reinforcing factors, that have generated anti- Israeli sentiments throughout the middle east and parts of the western world, due to the Israel- Hamas war.

As a means to investigate and comprehend the hegemonic force of propaganda and censorship used by the Hamas government, both concepts will be conceptualized. Propaganda will be defined as a manipulative tool, that negatively alters the opinions and attitudes of

individuals (St. John III, 2006). Based on observational research findings, it is clear that the Hamas controlled news media has broadcasted/ injected propaganda through symbolic images, that have portrayed the people of Gaza as the innocent victims, and through religious Jihad ideological claims that antagonize Israel. The Jihad ideology views all non- muslims as the enemy, specially the Jews and Christians, and it desires to eliminate all elements (e.g People, governments) that are non-muslim (Loza, 2007).

Censorship can be defined as a process that eliminates the freedom of speech (Kirtley, 1988). Based on my observational research on Hamas news media broadcasts, I have expanded Kirtley's conceptualization of censorship, as I feel that censorship is an anti- pluralistic process that serves two functions. The first function is to bolster a nations political and ideological agenda, as a means to produce and reinforce a status quo. The second function is to aid culturally relevant propaganda, as unilateral views are capable of generating biased and unfair representations of groups (e.g. Jews), religions (e.g. Judaism), and nations (e.g, Israel). In connection to context, it is essential to understand the basic historical context of the middle east, as a guiding tool in understanding the ideological claims and tensions between muslim states (e.g Gaza) and Israel, and the relevancy of Hamas's propaganda and censorship as a powerful weapon. In short, the middle east has been plagued with conflicts between neighbouring nations, on the basis of ethnicity and religion (Conant, 1992).

In terms of policy, I feel that my research will help U.N policy makers understand that a legitimate long term cease fire, would not be accepted by Hamas or Israel. Based on my analysis on Hamas's propaganda and censorship, it is evident that Hamas's ideological agenda is to destroy Israel at any cost, even if it means risking the lives of innocent citizens in Gaza. With

that, no cease fire policy brokered by the U.N would satisfy that claim, and as a result Hamas would not accept a long term cease fire. Israel also may not accept a long term cease fire, as they may conclude that Hamas may only use that time to stock pile weapons in order to fight again, as they did on Dec 27, 2008 (Zakaria, 2008). To some extent, I feel that my opinion which was based on observational research, does seem to reflect Hamas's stubborn 3 week stance against Israel, despite raising death tolls in Gaza. In addition, the fact that both Israel and Hamas ignored a cease fire policy brokered by the United Nations on Jan. 09, 2008 (Pisik, 2009) (CBS.com & Associated Press, 2008), reinforces my point that a legitimate long term cease fire would not be accepted by either Israel or Hamas.

In terms of crime control and policy, by critically analyzing and understanding state censored news media propaganda, one can uncover a nations hidden agenda and ideological stances. This finding will not only benefit U.N policy makers, but it will also benefit the C.I.A and other intelligence services, as it will help them understand the political agenda of different nations. As a result, this may promote the implementation of sanctions, that may prevent the fulfillment of a devastating political or religious agenda. For example, news clips that show government (Iran) support for the chanting of "death to American" (Sayah, 2009), not only helps in understanding historical tensions, but it also helps in identifying a potential political/ religious agenda. Basically, if government support for hatred toward the west is strong and evident throughout state censored news media, it is plausible that uranium enrichment is not for peace but war. Therefore, U.N policy makers must implement stronger sanctions to prevent such a situation.

Through the utilization of the functionalist framework, some of the benefits of state controlled news media have been uncovered. In light of Parsons AGIL scheme, two of the four functional imperatives necessary for a societies survival is universal goal attainment, and latency (Trevino, 2005), and I feel that the media is capable of fulfilling these two imperatives. For example, if one government (e.g. Hamas) has the sole power of deciding what gets injected into mainstream society, they have the ability to decide universal goal attainments, and the ability to generate a dominant cultural atmosphere (latency). My research findings have indicated that, through the use of news media propaganda and censorship, Hamas has injected hatred toward the state of Israel and Jews in general, in order to paint the termination of Jews and Israel as the universal goal. This constant and continuous ideologically based injection of propaganda into Gaza, and other middle eastern societies, can be seen as a tool that is trying to generate an anti-Israel status quo/ cultural atmosphere. It is evident that Hamas censorship is allowing unilateral behaviours, opinions, beliefs, and religious ideology to be broadcasted throughout news media outlets in Gaza. The critical criminology framework can also be associated with the above finding, as critical criminologists view the news media as an anti-pluralistic broadcasting system, that eliminates the presence of diverse ideologies and perspectives (Jeweke, 2004). In connection to the Israel- Hamas war, Hamas controlled news media is only reporting on the civilian casualties, the wounded, and the hospitalized in Gaza, as they prevent the release of news reports that would negatively frame their government. For example, news agencies in Gaza are not reporting on their government's inhuman military tactics, such as aiming rockets into civilian populations in Israel (Mann, 2009), launching rockets from residential areas within Gaza

(Miller, 2009) (CBS.com), and using women and children as human shields during battle (Cooper & Brackman, 2009).

Censorship, referring to the mystification of inhumane military tactics used by Hamas, and propaganda, referring to news media depictions that demonize Israel, are hegemonic forces that are capable of manipulating the minds of individuals, who are solely exposed to Hamas censored news media. The dominant ideology framework discusses the hegemonic force of the media, which is used by the ruling class as a means to propel their interests (Jeweke, 2004). In relation to Gaza, the Hamas government can be viewed as the ruling class, and it is evident that Hamas is using the hegemonic force of the media to legitimize their attack on Israel, as they portray themselves as the victim and spread hatred against Israel. It is evident that the ideological interests of Hamas are being absorbed into the minds of adults and children, as many protesters around the middle east (Penhau, 2009) and in the western world (Cook, 2009), are conceptualizing Israel as the offense and Hamas as the defence. Hatred toward Israel is also present during these protests, and the Jihad ideology is unconsciously captivating the minds of middle eastern citizens, as these citizens want Israel and Jews destroyed (Penhau, 2009)

The mass society theory identifies the above mentioned idea of mind control, as it views the media as a tool for controlling the minds of people (Jeweke, 2004). This theory paints the media as a manipulative tool that not only controls the minds of people, but makes them oblivious to real political agenda's (Jeweke, 2004). In light of this theory it is plausible to assume that, even though Hamas is projecting the Jihad ideology and anti- Israeli sentiments, they may have a deeply hidden political agenda, such as to study the military movements of Israel for future references, or to drain Israel's military resources before an attack by Iran. This

finding based on the mass society theory, has the potential to inform and warn the U.N, the Israeli government, and the U.S, of a potential threat that should be analyzed and neutralized.

Observational research findings have also provided evidence that, Hamas is logically and systematically using censorship and propaganda, as a means to ignite negative emotions among middle eastern people, in order to prevent them from critically analyzing the Israel- Hamas war. The symbolic interactionist framework, in connection to the historical context of the middle east, illustrates why Hamas censorship and propaganda was effective at igniting the negative emotions, seen among individuals in the middle east. In terms of the symbolic interactionist framework, people have the power to socially construct meaning through their own interpretations, which are based on unique world views. Therefore, due to historical ethnic and religious tensions between Jews and muslims in the middle east (Conant, 1992), peoples world views are influenced by these historical tensions and conflicts. As a result, interpretations of Hamas news media propaganda during the Israel- Hamas war, have escalated negative emotions (e.g. Hatred towards Jews) and religious tensions (e.g. Judaism and Islam). My research findings have indicated that, interpretations that are centered around conflict driven world views are powerful, and they are highly important to consider when understanding the historical context that fuels Hamas controlled news media propaganda. This perspective reflects cultural criminology, as these criminologists feel that there is a cultural significance to crime (Jewkes, 2004). Therefore, I feel that if the historical context of the middle east was not plagued with ethnic and religious tensions, the emotional component attached to the Israel- Hamas war would be less based on religious ideology (e.g. Jihad), and more based on economic and political gain.

With that, it is plausible to assume that this war may not have even occurred, if the cultural history of the middle east was not conflict provoking.

In collaboration with all of the above frameworks and theory, the linkage between media and crime is two fold. Due to propaganda and censorship, Hamas has spread hatred against Israel and the Jewish people, and they have camouflaged their role in humanitarian injustices. For example, negative labeling through Hamas censored news media, has stained Israel as the terrorizer and the initiator of the war, when in fact it was Hamas that broke the 6 month cease fire on Dec. 27, 2008 (Zarkaria, 2008). In relation to camouflaged injustices, Hamas has used religious Jihad Ideology to rationalize their goal to fight against Israel. Secondly, by breaking the 6 month cease fire, Hamas put their country and citizens in harms way. Thirdly, Hamas has hidden the fact that they used women and children as human shields (Cooper & Brackman, 2009), and the fact that they used civilian areas in Gaza as rocket launching sites (Miller, 2009) (CBS.com). All these injustices have been hidden from the people of Gaza, and all other individuals who only tune into Hamas controlled news media.

It is important to realize that if news media outlets around the world are used in a positive manner, they are capable of fostering understanding, tolerance, and peace worldwide to a certain extent. The criminology based media frameworks that were used in this research analysis, have not touched on the positive aspects of the media. Therefore, I feel that it is important to formulate a solutions- oriented criminology framework, that will help generate media oriented intervention strategies that will target media crime, and reduce historical tensions in the middle east. Unlike propaganda and censorship, the historical context of the middle east can not be removed, and so media programs that foster working relationships between Muslims and Jews, are needed to

reduce tensions and conflicts rooted in middle eastern history. The media as a tool to reduce tensions is also held by Sacco and Silverman to a certain extent, as they feel that the media can be used as a tool to prevent crime (1982). However, a unilateral solution consisting of only the media is quite simplistic, as media intervention strategies alone can not solve or dilute historical tensions, propaganda, and censorship.

In terms of news media intervention strategies, multiple pluralistic news media sources are needed in Gaza, as well as in other middle eastern states, in order to reduce the provocation of historical tensions in the middle east. Through the implementation of pluralistic news media outlets, systematic propaganda fueled through censorship will be reduced, and the people of Gaza and neighbouring nations will not be constantly, and consistently exposed to unilateral symbolic images that demonize Israel, and fuel anti- western sentiments. Another potential strategy that my research findings have uncovered, is related to the symbolic interactionist framework. In terms of this framework, it is possible that the intensity of negative labels associated with the west and Israel can be reduced, if interpretations are less emotionally and historically charged. With that, I feel that the U.N should not only consider implementing strong laws and sanctions, that would deter governments from using censorship as a tool to fuel propaganda, but I feel that they should also form an international media cabinet, that would be responsible for analyzing state censored news media outlets worldwide, in order to determine whether or not religious ideology and historical happenings, are being used to fuel propaganda.

The hegemonic power of the media can not be denied, and the powerful role of propaganda and censorship in a historical context, can not be underestimated. Hamas controlled news media was effective at using the media as a tool to antagonize Israel, and mystify their own

criminal behaviors and injustices. Through state censored news media, Hamas was able to generate culturally relevant symbolic propaganda, that the people of Gaza and middle eastern nations could identify with. Therefore, when used inappropriately or criminally, the effects of the media are evocative, however when used justly, the media can be a problem solving tool, an informational outlet, and a peace generating part of culture.

**RESEARCH DATA & REFERENCE LIST**

- Kirtley, J. (1988) A Walk Down a Dangerous Road: British Press Censorship and the Spy Catcher Debacle. *Government Information Quarterly*, Vol. 5, Issue. 2, Pg. 117-135.
- Trevino, A. (2005) Parsons's Action-System Requisite Model and Weber's Elective Affinity: A Convergence of Convenience. *Journal of Classical Sociology*, Vol. 5, Issue. 3, Pg. 319-348
- Conant, M. (1992) Middle East stability: A view from the USA. *Elsevier Journal of Energy Policy*, Vol. 20, Issue. 11, Pg. 1027- 1031
- Cooper, A., Brackman, H. (2009, Jan 09) The Threat of the Human Shield Strategy Hamas Uses Extends Beyond Israel, Gaza. *U.S News Weekly*. Retrieved Jan. 23, 2009, from <http://www.usnews.com/articles/opinion/2009/01/09/the-threat-of-the-human-shield-strategy-hamas-uses-extends-beyond-israel-gaza.html>
- Sacco, V., Sliverman, R. (1982) Crime prevention through the mass media: Prospects and problems. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, Vol. 10, Pg. 257- 269
- St. John III, B. (2006) The case for ethical propaganda within a democracy: Ivy Lee's successful 1913 - 1914 railroad rate campaign. *Public Relations Review*, Vol. 32, Pg. 221-228
- Miller, J. (2009, Jan 24) Did Hamas use "human shields". *CNN*. Retrieved Jan. 30, 2009, from <http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/world/2009/01/24/miller.gaza.hamas.itn>
- Jeweke, Yvonne. (2004) "Chapter 1: Theorizing Media and Crime" (Pg. 2-33) in *Crime and Media*.
- Zakaria, T. (2008, Dec. 27) U.S Blames Hamas for ceasefire break with Israel. *Reuters*. Retrieved Jan. 22, 2008, from <http://www.reuters.com/article/politicsNews/idUSTRE4BQ1T220081227>
- Pisik, B. (2009, Jan. 9) U.N calls for immediate Gaza cease- fire. *Washington Times*. Retrieved Jan. 13, 2008, from <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/jan/09/un-calls-for-immediate-cessation-of-fire-in-gaza/>
- CBS.com (2008) Israel leaders on Air Strikes. Retrieved Jan. 13, 2009, from <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=4687723n>

CBS.com., Associated Press. (2008) Israel, Hamas Defy Calls For Cease-Fire. Retrieved Jan. 13, 2009, from <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/01/09/world/main4709370.shtml>

Penhau, K. (2009) Protests on the Egypt Border. *CNN.com*. Retrieved Jan. 14, 2009, from <http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/world/2009/01/09/penhaul.egypt.demos.cnn?iref=videosearch>

Sayah, R. (2009, Feb 10) Islamic revolution anniversary. *CNN.com*. Retrieved Feb. 12, 2009, from <http://http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/world/2009/02/10/sayah.iran.revolution.rally.cnn?iref=videosearch>

Mann, J. (2009, Jan 09) Regev: Operation working. *CNN.com*. Retrieved Feb. 14, 2009, from <http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/world/2009/01/09/mann.israel.regev.isr.op.cnn?iref=videosearch>

Cook, L. (2009, Jan 02) UK Egyptian Embassy Protests. *CNN.com*. Retrieved Feb.14, 2009, from <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/meast/01/03/gaza.protest.britain/index.html#cnnSTCVideo>