

AFP and Reuters' Coverage of the Siege on Gaza Issue: Analytical Comparative Study

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Abstract: *This study aims to identify how the international news agencies Agence France Presse (AFP) and Reuters cover the issue of the siege on Gaza, and to examine the topics tackled by the two agencies, the primary and media sources, the persuasion methods, the journalistic forms, and the adopted positions and languages.*

The study belongs to descriptive research, applying the survey approach with the content-analysis method and the mutual-relations approach with the systematic comparison method. The researchers used a content-analysis form to collect the data.

The sample includes the siege matters discussed by the AFP and Reuters from 1/1/2017 until 1/1/2019. The data were collected with complete census, and agenda-setting theory was adopted.

The study concludes that political topics came in the first place at a rate of (47%), followed by Israeli violations at a rate of (24.6%), economic topics at a rate of (11.3%), services topics at a rate of (7.1%), social topics at a rate of (4.7%), healthcare topics at a rate of (3.4%), and finally sports topics at a rate of (1.3%).

In the agencies' prioritization, the journalistic news was a top priority for both agencies at rates of (79.1%) in the AFP and (63.6%) in Reuters. The study also shows that the two agencies focus on the narrative style.

Keywords: Coverage - International News Agencies - Siege on Gaza

1. INTRODUCTION

Means of communication and information transfer have greatly advanced, enabling the international news agencies to play an important role in the formation of public opinion. The technical development that reached the field of communication gave these agencies power over the media, the news and the cultural production worldwide, as they now monopolize the informational flow across the globe. This has incited different countries to seek a new equation to ensure a balanced information flow.¹

While there are local, national, regional, and international news agencies, the last have recently witnessed unprecedented developments in terms of content; management; working methods; power; areas of influence; and political, economic, social, cultural and intellectual roles. There have also been prominent advancements in the scientific and technical equipment, the external services, the participants, as well as the professional characteristics added to the editing styles and the informative techniques.²

Among the issues that received coverage by the French News Agency "Agence France Presse (AFP)" and Reuters was the siege on the Gaza Strip, which began in 2007 and continued to this day. Such issue is of great importance, as it has multiple aspects and affects people's lives at various levels.

This study aims to identify "AFP and Reuters' Coverage of the Siege of Gaza" through investigating the main topics addressed by the two agencies, their primary and media sources, the main journalistic forms, and the elements of focus; and through defining the agencies' views, languages and elements of interests used in addressing the issue of Gaza siege.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Upon viewing the available literature relevant to the matter of international news agencies' coverage of the siege on Gaza, the researchers found the following studies:

1. Wafi (2020)³: this study aimed to identify the media image processing of the Great March of Return by AFP through defining the main issues it addressed, their orientation and the degree of attention they

¹ Al-Bayyati, Arabic Media: Civilizational Role and Problem of Delivery, p. 24.

² Al-Danani, Effectiveness of News Agencies amidst the Development in Communications and Information Technology.

³Wafi, AFP's Agenda in Processing the Journalistic Photographs of the Peaceful Resistance, the Great March of Return as an Example: Analytical Study.

received. The study is a descriptive study that used the survey method. The study sample consisted of pictures of the Great March of Return taken in the period of March 2018 until November 2019. The researcher applied the census method and relied on the agenda-setting theory. The researcher concluded that the pictures of the political matters of the Great March of Return comprised 81.7%.

2. Al-Turk (2018):⁴this study aimed to identify the nature of AFP's processing of the Great March of Return through investigating the processing implications and the issues that received the agency's interest. The study was descriptive, where the researcher applied the survey approach and used the content-analysis method and the case-study method. According to the study, the topics that received the highest attention were those of (the martyrs of the March) at a rate of (20.6%), followed by the topics of (local, Arab and international condemnation) at a rate of 13.5%, then other topics at a rate of (10.6%). In terms of sources, unsourced news were presented at a rate of (78.4%), followed by reporters' news at a rate of (16.4%), then written sources, and finally a representative source at a rate of (2.6%).

3. Salem (2018)⁵: this study aimed to identify the motives presented by the two agencies Anadolu and France Press. The researcher aimed to define the Arab citizens' motives and justifications for asylum, determine the solutions that the two agencies' tweets focused on to solve the issue of Arab refugees, and clarify the communicational employment sought by the tweets of the two agencies on Twitter. The study was descriptive and applied the survey approach using the content-analysis tool. The study revealed the great discrepancy between the two agencies in the attention given to the Arab refugees issue in terms of the general topic frame at Arab and international levels. It also focused on the motives that led to Arab citizens' asylum in other countries as well.

4. Al-Turk and Mushref (2018)⁶: the study aimed to identify the news framing of the siege on Gaza in the Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda and Palestine newspapers. The study is descriptive and used the survey method. The study showed that the total size of topics discussing the siege on Gaza reached 417, at a rate of (62%), in Palestine newspaper; and 256, at a rate of 38%, in Al-Hayat newspaper. The most common form was the press release at a rate of (75%) in both newspapers, followed by reports at a rate of (10.5%), and then column articles at a rate of (8%).

5. Issaand Mansour (2018)⁷: the study aimed to identify the news framing in the American newspapers' websites of the siege on Gaza. The study is descriptive, and applied the survey method. The researchers concluded that the size of coverage in American newspapers' websites was 215, with press releases being the most commonly used form (at a rate of 22%). The websites mainly relied on their reporters as a source.

6. Al-juneidi (2017):⁸the study aimed to clarify the role of international news agencies towards the Syrian refugees crisis, and the extent to which news reports released by the international news agencies under study were influenced by their affiliations and home countries. The study was descriptive, applying the survey approach and using the content analysis methods. The researcher also used the comparative approach to identify the similarities and differences in the news reports published by the agencies under study. The study concluded that no matter how neutral the agency is, it is always subject to pressure from the government to exploit the refugees issue.

7. Al-Sharif (2017)⁹: the study aimed to determine how the Palestinian news websites addressed the siege on Gaza, and capture the main topics on which these websites focused. The study was descriptive and applied the survey approach and the mutual-relations approach. The study concluded that social issues received the main interest of the websites under study, at a rate of (22.2%), followed by the political then the economic issues. The category "borders, crossings and travel" was the most commonly discussed topic by all four studied websites at a rate of (14%), followed by the topics of

⁴ Al-Turk, International News Agencies' Processing of the Great March of Return: Case Study (AFP).

⁵ Salem. Asylum Motives of the Arab Citizens and its Solutions as per the Tweets of Arabic-Speaking Foreign Agencies on Twitter: Analytical Study of the Tweets of Anadolu and France Presse Agencies.

⁶Al-Turk and Musharraf, the News Framing of the Siege on Gaza in the Palestinian Daily Newspapers: Analytical Comparative Study.

⁷Issaand Mansour, News Framing of the Siege-on-Gaza Cause in American Newspapers' Websites: Comparative Analytical Study.

⁸ Al-Juneidi, Position of International News Agencies on the Cause of Syrian Refugees.

⁹ Al-Sharif, Palestinian News Websites' Addressing the Siege on Gaza: Analytical Comparative Study.

"reconstruction". The study revealed that the "journalistic photograph" was the main multimedia form used by the websites under study to present the siege topics at a rate of (97.5%), followed by the video at a much lower rate of (2.5%). Other forms varied greatly.

8. Mansour (2017)¹⁰: the study aimed to identify the news frames used by the American and British newspapers to cover the issue of the siege on Gaza, and reveal the degree of interest of these websites in this issue. The study was descriptive, applying the survey and the mutual-relations approaches. **The study concluded** that the size of coverage of the siege was 215 in American newspapers websites and 164 in British newspapers websites. Both American and British websites attributed the siege mainly to Hamas' control over the Strip.

9. Abu Hadb (2016)¹¹: the study aimed to investigate the role of electronic constructive elements in designing the websites of Arab-speaking international news agencies. The study was descriptive and applied the survey method. It relied on comparison and used the form-analysis tool. **The study concluded** that pictures and drawings came in the first place. The most preferred method for journalists when reading the whole text was through the headline as a connector. The three agencies under study put their website links on the main page of their accounts.

10. Al-Batsh (2016)¹²: the study aimed to capture the political and media elites' evaluation of the Palestinian media speech regarding the issue of the siege on Gaza. The study was descriptive and applied the survey method. **The study concluded** that most of the sample strongly agreed that the Palestinian division was the main internal obstacle influencing the Palestinian speech on the siege issue. The elite found that the main feature of the Palestinian media speech on the siege was emotional/humanitarian.

11. Al-Khodary (2016)¹³: the study aimed to reveal the degree of reliance of Jordanian daily newspapers on the international news agencies as a news source, and how this affected intellectual independence. The study was descriptive and applied the survey method to study the agencies with which the main Jordanian daily newspapers deal. The researcher used the content-analysis tool. **The study showed** that 90% of the news published in these newspapers were taken from AFP, Reuters and other agencies. It also revealed that the Jordanian newspapers under study could not manage without the international news agencies to deliver news.

12. Abdul Ghafour (2015)¹⁴: the study aimed to identify the role of media and primary sources in building the news coverage bias towards the siege on Gaza in the newspapers under study. The study was a descriptive study that applied the survey method. **The study concluded** that the motives for choosing certain sources to cover the news of the siege and the information editing in line with the newspaper's policy were the main two methods used by the investigated newspapers when dealing with information sources regarding the siege on Gaza. The results showed that the editing policy was found as the main factor responsible for bias in the news coverage of the siege on Gaza.

13. Jones (2015)¹⁵: the study aimed to clarify the practices of social networks in producing news for the international news agencies at the organizational and individual levels. It also aimed to define and explain the social media framing by the international news agencies. The study was descriptive, applying a multi-case investigation approach. **The study revealed** that there was an effective relationship between technology (social media), practice (news production) and culture (international news agencies). It confirmed the presence of appropriate social ethics in the journalistic practice and the organizational practice of the international news agencies.

¹⁰Mansour, News Framing of the Siege on Gaza in American and British Newspapers Websites: Comparative Analytical Study.

¹¹ Abu Hadb, Design of the Arab-Speaking International News Agencies' Websites and its Effect on the Ease of Accessing these Websites to Find News: A Comparative Analytical Study.

¹² Al-Batsh, Political and Media Elite's Evaluation of the Palestinian Media Speech on the Siege on Gaza, Field Study.

¹³ Al-Khodary, Jordanian Daily Newspapers' Reliance on International News Agencies as a News Source and its Effect on Intellectual Independence.

¹⁴ Abdul Ghafour, The Role of Sources in Building News Coverage Bias towards the Siege on Gaza: A Descriptive Study of a Sample of Palestinian Daily Newspapers.

¹⁵ Jones, Social Media @ Global News Agencies: News (s) Technology in a Professional Culture of Practice.

14. Abdul Razzaq (2013)¹⁶: the study aimed to capture, analyze and explain the factors affecting the coverage of events by Arab and international news agencies in general and the two agencies under study in particular. The descriptive study applied the survey and comparative methods. **It concluded** a statistically significant positive relationship between the factors affecting journalists' performance in the agency and the factors affecting the quality of the overall performance of the agency when covering events.

15. Al-Qahtani (2013)¹⁷: the study aimed to identify the nature of Reuters' coverage of the Arab-Gulf security issues. The researcher adopted the analytical descriptive approach to obtain primary data from the study sample. **The study revealed** that Reuters received high priority by media persons in Kuwait, coming in the first place in terms of credibility. Reuters was found to support democracy as an important subject that would greatly affect the future of the region.

16. Abdul Rasoul (2013)¹⁸: this study aimed to reveal the influence of western news agencies on the news values at Sudan TV channel. The descriptive **study concluded** that Sudan TV was a primary source for knowing international news. It also showed that news agencies were highly perceived for their international newscasts.

17. As-Sayed Jad (2012)¹⁹: the study aimed to reveal the role played by the foreign news agencies through the news services they provide on their websites in framing the Arab-Israeli conflict events and developmental paths in 2011. The study was descriptive and applied the survey and the comparative approaches. **The study concluded** that the significance analysis of the linguistic framing methods for the main, regional and international acting powers relevant to the conflict revealed the use of terms with ideological orientations that are related to these powers' identities and journalistic characters when expressing the event. It also revealed that the foreign news agencies' websites that provide news services played an important role in the events of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

18. Yanson (2010)²⁰: this study aimed to clarify how the international news agencies provide worldviews through a media outlet. The study was descriptive and applied the survey approach. **The study concluded that** Associated Press produced (542) pieces of news, followed by France Press with (508), then Reuters with (446). Thailand was the most frequently mentioned country, as its topics represented (60%) of the agencies' new content, followed by China.

19. Murad (1997)²¹: the study aimed to identify the nature of news coverage of France Presse (AFP), its orientations, styles and influential factors. The study was descriptive, applying the survey approach and using the content analysis tool. **The study concluded** that most of the agency's news was on the Afghani matter as the events escalated, compared with very little coverage when there was no escalation. The explanatory news coverage of the Afghani crisis was the main feature of the agency.

20. Al-Khadr (1997)²²: the study aimed to investigate the nature of international news agencies coverage of Sudan news. The study was descriptive, applying the survey approach and the comparative approach and using the content-analysis method. **The study concluded** that there was clear focus on the war in the south of Sudan as well as the displacement and the deterioration of population's health conditions, with rates of (57.5%) and (52.2%) of AFP's and Reuters' news on Sudan, respectively.

21. Qalanji (1995)²³: the study aimed to evaluate Reuters' news, reports, information, and analyses; and determine the general criteria adopted by the agency to collect and edit the news. The study was descriptive/analytical and used case study. The study concluded that the news and information promoted by this agency did not match the reality or the needs of the third world, but worked to serve the interests of its home country when covering the news of the world.

¹⁶ Abdul Razzaq, Main Factors Affecting the Coverage of Arab and International News Agencies, Study of the Content and the Communicator.

¹⁷ Al-Qahtani, Reuters' News Coverage of the Arab Gulf Security Issues: Field Study.

¹⁸ Abdul Rasoul, Role of News Agencies on the Choice of News at Sudan Television Channel: Field Study.

¹⁹ As-Sayed Jad, Frames of Presenting the Arab-Israeli Conflict in the Foreign News Agencies Websites and their Relationship with the Framing of the Palestinian Factions in the Egyptian Daily Newspapers.

²⁰ Yanson, International news coverage online as presented by three news agencies.

²¹ Murad, Agence France Presse Coverage of the Third World Issues, Analytical Study.

²² Al-Khadr, International News Agencies' Coverage of Sudan news: Applied Study on AFP and Reuters.

²³ Qalanji, Reuters and News Industry.

The Researchers Benefited from the Available Literature as Follows:

The two researchers reviewed the previously-mentioned studies and benefited at the theoretical and empirical levels through determining categories and analysis units; examining the data analysis tools; articulating the study problem; clarifying the study objectives, questions, and journalistic processing method of the study problem; and defining and employing the study theory. The researchers also managed to determine the type, approach and method of the study; and were able to discuss the study results.

Study Problem: to identify the nature of coverage of the international news agencies AFP and Reuters of the siege on Gaza; and determine the implications of interest, sources, orientations, methods and styles used in the presentation. The study also investigates the used languages, the geographical area, and the elements of focus. It highlights the similarities and differences between the agencies in terms of covering and addressing the siege issue.

3. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

- 1) The topic is modern and rarely discussed at the Palestinian level, thus requires good knowledge and attention at Arab and international levels. This benefits readers and enriches their knowledge, especially that the Palestinian library is in need for studies that discuss international news agencies amid the modern informational flow.
- 2) The study sheds light on the suffering of the Palestinian people due to the siege imposed on the Gaza Strip and its negative effects on the society as a whole.
- 3) The study highlights the role played by the international news agencies in discussing the siege issue, as they are followed by a significant part of the society. This gives these agencies the power of forming public opinion in a way that would serve the Palestinian cause.

4. OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

The study aims to answer its main question: How did the international news agencies cover the Siege on Gaza? The following questions are derived from the previous main question:

- 1) What is the degree of interest and the prioritization of topics of the international news agencies AFP and Reuters when it comes to the issue of the siege on Gaza?
- 2) What are the journalistic positions adopted by the two agencies AFP and Reuters while covering the siege on Gaza?
- 3) What persuasion methods did the two agencies use when addressing the issue of the siege on Gaza?
- 4) What media sources did the two agencies use to obtain the special information related to the siege issue?
- 5) On what geographical region did the agencies under study focus when publishing the topics related to the siege on Gaza?
- 6) What journalistic forms did the two agencies use to address the issue of the siege on Gaza?
- 7) What highlighting elements did the two agencies use in the news materials presented when addressing the topics of the siege on Gaza?
- 8) What are similarities and dissimilarities between AFP and Reuters in the form and content of the news processing of the siege issues?

5. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The study relies on a significant theory; the Agenda-Setting theory (Theory of Prioritization). The theory was found useful in answering the study questions with justification through the content analysis that was conducted on the study sample; the two international news agencies AFP and Reuters. The study includes several topic categories and persuasion methods to identify the agencies' interest in certain issues related to the siege and examine how they focus on these issues in form and content to conclude whether or not the siege on Gaza is a priority to these agencies.

Study Type, Approach and Tools

1. Study Type:

This study is descriptive, aiming to capture and analyze certain features or positions that can be identified, or to examine the facts related to the nature of a phenomenon, a situation, a group of events or a group of situations so as to obtain sufficient and accurate information without interfering in the causes. This type also aims to estimate the frequency at which a certain phenomenon occurs and determine how it is connected to another phenomenon or set of phenomena.²⁴

2. Study Approach

The researchers adopted the following approaches:

a. Survey Approach

This approach is an organized scientific approach. It facilitates obtaining the data and information related to the phenomenon under study, as well as documenting, analyzing and explaining the phenomenon at its current status after collecting sufficient information about it and about its elements through a set of organized procedures that determine the data type, source and collection methods.²⁵ In this approach, the researchers used the **content analysis method** to analyze the content provided by the two agencies on the issue of the siege on Gaza.

b. Studying Mutual Relations

This approach seeks to investigate the relationships between the obtained facts to identify the causes that led to the occurrence of the phenomenon and conclude what can be done to change the surrounding factors and conditions in a positive direction.²⁶ In this approach, the researchers used **the systematic comparison method**, comparing AFP and Reuters to draw the nature of each agency's processing of the various issues related to the siege imposed on the Gaza Strip and highlight the similarities and differences between them.

3. Study Tool

a- Content analysis form: the researchers used a content-analysis form to collect the necessary data and information, including the following categories:

First: the "what is said?" category:

This is the most commonly used category in content analysis studies, as it categorizes the content based on its topics and answers the question on the topic discussed by the media material.²⁷ These categories are used in analyzing the content presented by the two agencies regarding the siege on Gaza to identify how they addressed this issue. The subcategories are:

1. Category of issues and topics: it includes

- a. Political topics: comprising the subcategories (crossing points movement, reconciliation, division, the captives, the Great March of Return, the negotiations, and others)
- b. Economic topics: comprising (tunnel trade, reconstruction, trade, crossing points agreements, industry, import/export suspension, unemployment, and others).
- c. Topics related to Israeli violations: comprising (freedom of travel and movement, fishing bans, arrests, killing at borders, random shelling at empty lands, confrontations near the border fence, and others).
- d. Services topics: comprising (fuel deficiency, electricity cuts, water and sanitation problems, communications, and others).
- e. Health topics: comprising (medications and medical equipment deficiency, medical referral obstruction, medical staff and medical facilities targeting, foreign medical convoys, and others) .

²⁴ Hussein, Media Research (p. 131).

²⁵ Hussein, Content Analysis (p. 131).

²⁶ Hussein, Media Research (p. 101).

²⁷ Hussein, Content Analysis (p. 88).

f. Social topics: such as the current conditions of education in the Gaza Strip, emigration, convoys, solidarity, others).

g. Sports topics: such as (inability of sports teams to travel and participate in international games, the unavailability of support and equipment, the poor sports facilities and the absence of new ones, and others).

2. Category of position: this category includes (supporter, neutral, and opponent)

3. Category of persuasion methods used in presenting content: comprising (narrative style, statistical style, emotional style, no style, other).

4. Category of media sources: includes (internal source, correspondents or representatives, agency's own source, agency's own writer, multiple sources, no sources).

5. Category of geographical area: includes (local "Gaza Strip", West Bank, occupied Al-Quds, occupied lands of 1948, the Arab region, and international community).

Second: the Category of "How it is said?", which includes

1. Journalistic forms: (journalistic news, news report, feature story).

2. Elements of Focus: (printing and saving the topic, lengthening or shortening the topic, summarizing the topic, colors, charts and maps, backgrounds, pictures "personal, news, archive, none").

3. Category of headlines: (headlines, subheading, paragraph heading, introductory heading, no heading)

4. Study Sample

a. Sample of Sources: the researchers chose **France Presse (AFP) and Reuters** as a sample deliberately for the following reasons:

- Both agencies publish various topics related to the siege on Gaza, and they are both of the largest international agencies that are characterized with rapid news delivery and have their own archives.

a) Time sample: the researchers chose a deliberate sample according to the complete census method from 1/1/2017 until 1/1/2019, due to the possibility to retrieve the media materials in the archives of the agencies under study. It was difficult to retrieve material from earlier dates.

Analysis and Measurement Units

a) Analysis units: the researchers used two units: the natural unit of the media material and the topic unit.

b) Enumeration and measurement: the method applied by the researchers was repetition.

Validity and Reliability Procedures

1. Validity procedures: in analysis, validity refers to the correctness of the applied method, or the confirmation that the method used for measuring actually does achieve the intended measurement such that the confidence in the results is sufficiently high to allow generalization.²⁸

To achieve that, the researchers developed a categorized content-analysis form that best serves the study objectives, answers its questions, provides a clear definition, and defines the measurement method and presents it to a group of arbitrators.

2. Reliability procedures: reliability refers to the strong ability of the tool to collect the intended information to ensure a high degree of conformity. This allows the tool to measure whatever phenomenon it measures with high accuracy and enables the achievement of exact or similar results upon repeated use of the tool to collect the information whether by the same or other researchers and whether on the same sample or other samples.²⁹

²⁸ Abdul Hameed, Content Analysis in Media Research (pp. 222, 223).

²⁹ Hussein, Content Analysis (p. 309).

The researchers used repetition to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the results. They re-tested a random sample of several days in the two agencies (21% of the original sample) to ensure the conformity of the results.³⁰

Reliability can be tested in several methods; the most common being the Holsti method. It measures the reliability in analyzing nominal data based on the agreement between two coded items. The following equation is used:³¹

$$\text{Holsti Reliability} = 2M / (N1 + N2)$$

The reliability percentage reached (91.9%), which is considered high in media studies.

Study Terms

1. Journalistic Coverage: the way the agency handled and presented the problem, issue, or event using different methods to achieve its objectives.

2. International News Agencies³²: national, regional and international organizations and corporations that work in the field of providing newspapers, media and relevant entities with the needed news, explanations, information and pictures in exchange for money to make profit or for free to achieve certain political and publicity objectives for their individual or government owners.

3. Siege³³: a strangulating siege imposed by 'Israel' on the Gaza Strip after the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas won the legislative council elections in 2006 and one year before Hamas entered Gaza. The siege was then tightened by Israel in 2007 after Hamas had seized control of Gaza in July 2007.

Analytical Study Results of the Two International News Agencies' Address of Gaza Siege

First: General Features of Content and Form of Gaza Siege Issues in Both Agencies

This section addresses the general features of the content on the siege of Gaza in the international news agencies under study. It identifies the interests of the agencies in covering issues related to the siege on Gaza, the methods of persuasion used in doing so, and the geographical areas covered.

First: Category of Issues and Topics on Gaza Siege Covered in Both Agencies

The following table shows the rate of repetitions and occurrences of issues and topics on Gaza siege in the two agencies (AFP and Reuters):

Table4.1. shows the topics and issues analyzed in the examination of both agencies

Topics and issues on Gaza Siege	AFP		Reuters		Secular Trend	
	W	%	W	%	W	%
Quantitative Distribution						
Political topics	179	49.7	91	42.9	270	47.2
Israeli violations topics	83	23.0	58	27.3	141	24.6
Economic topics	38	10.5	27	12.7	65	11.3
Services topics	27	7.5	14	6.6	41	7.1
Social topics	15	4.1	12	5.6	27	4.7
Health topics	14	3.8	6	2.8	20	3.4
Sports Topics	4	1.1	4	1.8	8	1.3
Total*	360	100	212	100	572	100

Table 4.1 indicates the following:

The results of the analytical study revealed both agencies preference of political topics over the others. Political topics constituted (47.2%), then Israeli violations constituted (24.6%), followed by the economic topics in third place (11.3%), the services topics in fourth place (7.1%), the social topics in fifth place (4.7%), medical topics in sixth (3.4%) and finally sports topics (1.3%).

³⁰ The original sample testing ended in mid-March 2019, and the re-testing was conducted in April 2019.

³¹ Zugheib, Research Approaches and Statistical Uses in Media Studies (p. 159).

³² Mustafa, News Agencies between the Past and the Present (p. 23).

³³ Aljazeera net taken from Reuters, Siege on Gaza: from the beginning and while waiting for an end.

Considering how the Israeli violations as a topic can be deemed as part of the political issues, political topics as a category constituted 71.8% of the interest of both agencies.

The study disagreed with the study conducted by Israa Al-Sharif³⁴. Al-Sharif's study results showed that the Palestinian electronic websites focused on social topics the most, since such issues are humanitarian in nature and greatly affect the social life and conditions of the people.

Among the topics that are addressed are the rise in rates of poverty and unemployment, which exceeded highest rates worldwide; low wages given to laborers; dependence on aids; types of solidarity shown by various international, governmental and popular institutions, whether relief or financial aids area provided; and "solidarity caravans against the siege"³⁵.

This study agrees with the study conducted by Ahmed Al-Turk and Rami Mushref³⁶. There is clear interest in and great focus on topics on the Gaza siege in the newspapers under study.

The current study also agrees with the study of Tal'atEissa and Mohammed Mansour³⁷. Their study showed how American and British newspapers have clear interest in the issues related to the Gaza siege despite the newspapers' bias to the Israeli narrative in the justifications and reasons behind the siege.

Both AFP and Reuters agencies share having the greatest focus on political topics as the AFP's focus reached (49.7%) and Reuters' (42.9%). In addition, in both agencies the Israeli violations topic came second (23.0%) in AFP and (27.3%) in Reuters. Regarding the economic topics, AFP had (10.5%) of focus and Reuters had (12.7%). Following that, the AFP (7.5%) and Reuters (6.6%) focused on services topics. Social topics came in fifth in AFP (4.1%) and Reuters (4.1%), health topics came in sixth in AFP (3.8%) and in Reuters (2.8%); and sport topics came in last in AFP (1.1%) and in Reuters (1.8%).

The researchers explain this in reference to the type of life the people in the Gaza Strip have: the bad political conditions and the ongoing siege. Because such issues affect people's aspects of life and their various demands, they were the focus of the agencies.

Economic issues are essential to the Strip because they are the result of the suffocating siege, and which led to the deterioration of the political reality. This explains why the political topics constituted (11.3%), almost high, reflecting the extent to which the agencies are interested in the economic topics. These issues have been greatly influencing the lives of Palestinians since the beginning of the siege, and they include: industrial, commercial and maritime sectors. Other relevant issues are the restriction over allowing the construction materials into the Gaza Strip, prevention of reconstruction and closure of tunnels. These results agree with the results of Israa Al-Sharif whose study showed economic issues coming in the third place (17.3%), which means the economic issues were also plenty.

Following are examples for political issues that were focused on in the agencies under study: 'Israeli army receives orders to shoot at Great March of Return in Gaza'³⁸ **shedding light on the Great March of Return**. Another example in this regard is 'Palestinians preparing for activities at the borders for the 12th Friday since beginning of Great March of Return'³⁹.

Other topics also include **the reconciliation agreement**: 'achieving Palestinian reconciliation over consumers in Gaza'⁴⁰; **agreements on crossings and movement**: 'PA hands over Gaza Strip crossings'⁴¹; and **peace agreements**: 'two Palestinian delegations head to Russia to conclude peace process'⁴².

*Some topics may include more than one item in the news material in both agencies.

³⁴ Al-Shareef, Palestinian Websites' Addressing of the Gaza Siege Issue, p.165

³⁵ Al-Shareef, Palestinian Websites' Addressing of the Gaza Siege Issue, p.165.

³⁶ Al-Turk and Mushref, News Frames of Gaza Siege in Palestinian Daily Newspapers, p.3.

³⁷ Eissa and Mansour, News Frames of Gaza Blockade in the Websites of U.S. & U.K. Newspapers, p. 5.

³⁸ AFP, 28/3/2018.

³⁹ AFP, 30/6/2018.

⁴⁰ Reuters, 9/11/2017.

⁴¹ Reuters, 9/11/2017.

⁴² AFP, 19/12/2017.

Examples for topics related to Israeli violations in the two agencies are murders at the fence (targeting the protestors), random bombardment of empty lands, prevention of fishermen from fishing, restricting travels and movements, arrests, and others. **An example for Israeli violations topic** in AFP 'Palestinian youth shot by Israeli army dies in east Gaza'⁴³.

Both researchers explain the agencies' interest in killings occurring at the fence of being the result of recent increasing repetition of such phenomenon which threatens the Palestinians' security and safety amidst ongoing siege and killings. The agencies' interest in the other issues is approximate because of their nature and durability, especially in times of crisis and tension.

Examples for economic topics related to the blockade of Gaza in the two agencies are reconstruction, crossings agreements, tunnel trade, unemployment, trade, restriction on importation to and exportation from the Gaza Strip, industry and other relevant issues.

An example for an economic issue addressed by Reuters is 'Gaza's Destroyed Economy Leaves the Gazans with Hard Choices'⁴⁴.

Examples for service-provision issues related to the siege of Gaza in the two agencies are power cuts, shortage in fuel, sanitation and water issues, communications, and others.

The researchers believe that both agencies' agreement on the first issues of power cuts, shortage in fuel, and water and sanitation emerge from the fact that these are essential problems that burden the Palestinian community and are gradually worsening without any indications of solutions. As for the AFP's interest in industrial issues, it only constitutes a minor difference at a small percentage; generally relevant to journalistic preferences and presented programs without referring to sensitive or important matters.

Regarding the examples for health issues related to the siege on Gaza in the two agencies, they include but are not limited to shortage in medications and medical equipment, restriction on medical transfers, targeting of medical crews, restriction on fuel for medical equipment, and other health issues related to the siege on Gaza.

An example for the aforementioned health matter mentioned in Reuters is the deterioration of health conditions in Gaza amidst trading accusations among the Palestinian factions⁴⁵.

Social issues related to the siege of Gaza in the two agencies include: rise in rates of unemployment and immigration, fragile reality of education in the Gaza Strip, and solidarity caravans and other relevant issues.

There are also examples for sport-related issues affected by the siege of Gaza in both agencies: clubs' inability to travel and participate in international games, poor conditions of the sport facilities, and absence of support and assets among others.

Second: Both Agencies' Orientations towards Gaza Siege Issues and Topics:

The following table shows the analyzed repetitions and percentages of agencies' orientations towards issues and topics on the Gaza siege in both agencies (AFP and Reuters):

Table 4.2. clarifies the orientations of the two agencies towards the analyzed issues and topics

Orientation of Gaza siege topics	AFP		Reuters		Secular Trend	
	W	%	W	%	W	%
Supporters	51	20.1	26	16.2	77	18.6
Opponents	11	4.4	12	7.5	23	5.5
Neutrals	191	75.5	123	76.3	314	75.9
Total*	253	%100	161	%100	414	%100

Table (4.2) indicates the following:

The results of the analytical study show neutral orientations coming first (75.9%), supporting in second place (18.6%) and opposing in third (5.5%).

⁴³ AFP, 18/6/2018.

⁴⁴ Reuters Agency, 28/2/2018.

⁴⁵ Reuters Agency, 19/7/2018.

Results showed both agencies using neutral orientations the most; the repetitions in the AFP reached (75.5%) and in Reuters (76.3%).

Both agencies also have supporting orientations in the second place: the repetition in the AFP reached (20.1%) and in Reuters (16.2%); and opposing orientations in the third place as the repetitions in the AFP reached (4.4%) and Reuters (7.5%). Therefore, the researchers concluded that international agencies prefer to be neutral, especially when addressing sensitive political issues.

Fourth: Persuasion methods used by both agencies in addressing the issues of the siege on Gaza:

The following table shows the analyzed repetitions and percentages of the two agencies' use of persuasion methods in the issues of the siege on Gaza in both agencies (AFP and Reuters):

Table 4.3. Identifies the persuasion methods used by both agencies

Persuasion Methods Quantitative Distribution	AFP		Reuters		Secular Trend	
	W	%	W	%	W	%
Narrative method	116	45.5	101	62.8	217	52.4
Statistical method	13	5.1	19	11.8	32	7.8
Emotional method	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scare tactics	1	0.3	0	0	1	0.2
Rational method	4	1.5	0	0	4	0.9
No persuasion method	119	47.0	41	25.4	160	38.7
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	253	%100	161	%100	414	100

Table (4.3) indicates the following

The results show that the narrative method was the one most used by both agencies (52.4%), and was followed by the absence of any persuasion method (no persuasion method 38.7%). As for the statistical and rational methods, they were found to be (7.8%) and (0.9%) respectively. Finally, the fear tactics came last (0.2%).

Both agencies had the narrative method as the most used persuasion method; the AFP (45.5%) and Reuters (62.8%). The second most used method was the absence of any persuasion method; the AFP (47.0%) and Reuters (25.4%).

The two researchers explain the use of narrative method and no method at all the most to the agencies' use of quick news that does not require confirmation nor negation. The results of this study agree with the results of Al-Sharif in which the narrative method was also found to be the most used. The results of both studies also agreed on having the same interest in this method because of the use of news presentation rather than news interpretation.

Fifth: Media sources used by both agencies to address the issues of siege on Gaza:

The following table shows the analyzed repetitions and percentages of the two agencies' use of media sources in the issues of the siege on Gaza in both agencies (AFP and Reuters):

Table 4.4. shows the media sources analyzed in both agencies

Media Sources Quantitative Distribution		AFP		Reuters		Secular Trend	
		W	%	W	%	W	%
Sources	Correspondents or representatives	253	%100	161	%100	414	0
	Internal sources	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Agency's writers	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Multiple sources	0	0	0	0	0	0
	No sources	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	253	%100	161	%100	414	%100

Table (4.4) shows the following:

The analysis of both agencies' use of sources indicated that the AFP and Reuters depend only on correspondents or representatives (100.0%), without any interest in internal sources or writers, authors, or other sources.

The researchers illustrated that such results may be attributed to the importance of correspondents in the political and violations fields; as they identify, trace and publish the news.

These results are in-line with the results of Al-Khodary's study which indicated that 90% of the news in the daily Jordanian newspapers depends on the correspondents of the AFP and Reuters, and the results of Abdul Rasoul's study which identified international news agencies as the primary and main source of information for news.

Seventh: The geographical regions covered by both agencies in addressing the issue of the siege on Gaza:

The following table shows the analyzed repetitions and percentages of the two agencies' coverage of geographical regions when addressing the issues of the siege on Gaza in both agencies (AFP and Reuters):

Table 4.5. shows the geographical regions analyzed in both agencies

Geographical Regions		AFP		Reuters		Secular Trend	
		W	%	W	%	W	%
Local Coverage	The Gaza Strip	165	65.2	102	63.4	267	64.4
	The West Bank	22	8.6	17	10.6	39	9.4
	Occupied Al-Quds	37	14.6	28	17.4	65	15.8
	Lands of 1948	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arab coverage		7	2.7	4	2.4	11	2.6
International coverage		22	8.6	10	6.2	32	7.8
Total		253	100	161	100	414	100

Table (4.5) indicates the following:

The results of the analytical study show that the Gaza Strip was the most covered (64.4%), then the occupied Al-Quds (15.8%), followed by the West Bank (9.4%), the international community (7.8%) and finally the Arab world (2.6%) in the AFP and Reuters. However, the lands of 1948 were not covered by either agency.

These results agree with the results of Al-Sharif's study which showed 'the Gaza Strip' as the most covered region among all others. Whereas the West Bank was found to be covered second in Al-Sharif's study, in this study the occupied Al-Quds came second.

The Gaza Strip is more likely to have been the focus of coverage in both agencies because of the continuous major events that occur there due to the siege.

The researchers point out that the coverage of the Arab world and international community was significantly lower due to the limited influence of such regions on the issues of the siege, and diverse reactions that do not match the difficult situation during the siege.

Main features of the types of topics addressing the siege on Gaza in both agencies:

This section addresses the main features of the types of topics that address the siege on Gaza in both agencies. It discusses the artistic traits of journalism used in covering the siege topics in the AFP and Reuters, the degree of interest in them, and the type of titles and multimedia and interactive elements they use.

First: Artistic features used in covering the topics of the siege on Gaza in both agencies:

The following table shows the analyzed repetitions and percentages of the two agencies' use of artistic features in covering the issues of the siege on Gaza in both agencies (AFP and Reuters):

Table4.6. shows the artistic features analyzed in both agencies

Arts of Journalism Quantitative Distribution	AFP		Reuters		Secular Trend	
	W	%	W	%	W	%
News	170	67.2	98	60.8	268	64.8
News report	74	29.2	50	31.2	124	29.9
Feature story	9	3.6	13	8.0	22	5.3
Total	253	100	161	100	414	100

Table (4.6) shows the following:

The analysis of the results showed that the two agencies use news as the main method of reporting with (64.8%) of the total. The news is followed by news reports (29.9%) and finally feature stories (5.3%).

Both agencies prioritize the use of news firstly as it reached (67.2%) in the AFP and (60.8%) in Reuters, and the news reports secondly as it reached (29.2%) in the AFP and (31.2%) in Reuters. As for the final method of reporting, both agencies also agree on the use of feature stories with the AFP at (3.6%) and Reuters at (8.0%).

The researchers explain such agreement being the result of how news reporting is the fastest method of presenting the incidents. It is also the audience' favorite type. News reports usually discuss social issues, and the stories are used to address certain incidents.

Second: Highlighting elements accompanying the topics of the siege on Gaza in both agencies:

The following table shows the analyzed repetitions and percentages of the two agencies' use of highlighting elements when addressing the issues of the siege on Gaza in both agencies (AFP and Reuters):

Table4.7. clarifies the analyzed highlighting elements in both agencies

Highlighting Elements Quantitative Analysis	AFP		Reuters		Secular Trend	
	W	%	W	%	W	%
Printing and saving topics	255	70.2	0	0	255	65.9
Lengthening or shortening the topic	0	0	0	0	0	0
Topics Summary	0	0	0	0	0	0
Colors	103	28.3	19	86.3	122	31.7
Charts	4	0.5	0	0	4	1.0
Backgrounds	3	0.8	2	9.0	5	1.2
Maps	0	0	1	4.5	1	0.2
Total*⁴⁶	363	%100	22	%100	387	%100

Table (4.7) reveals the following:

The study results show that the highlighting elements were used in the following order: printing and saving topics (65.9%) was first, the use of colors came in second (31.7%), the use of backgrounds came in third (1.2%), the use of charts(1.0%) and finally maps (0.2%). Lengthening or shortening the topic was not preferred by either agency.

While the AFP prioritized the use of printing and saving topics (70.2%) and colors (28.3%) in this order, Reuters prioritized the use of colors (86.3%) first and backgrounds (9.0%) second. The AFP then focused on the use of backgrounds at (0.8%), but Reuters focused on maps (4.5%). Finally, the use of charts came in fourth (0.5%). The AFP did not show any interest in printing and saving topics, zooming in and out on topics, summarizing, and using charts. Reuters did not show any interest in zooming in and out on topics, summarizing and using maps.

* The highlighting elements occurred less in Reuters because each topic did not provide enough elements.

The researchers point out that the great variation in presenting the highlighting features between the two agencies reflects the differences in their presentation preferences of their media content.

Third: Headlines used in addressing the issues of siege on Gaza in both agencies:

The following table shows the analyzed repetitions and percentages of the two agencies' use of headlines when addressing the issues of the siege on Gaza in both agencies (AFP and Reuters):

Table4.8. clarifies the analyzed headlines in both agencies

Headlines Quantitative Analysis	AFP		Reuters		Secular Trend	
	W	%	W	%	W	%
Headlines	253	56.3	161	56.8	414	56.5
Subheadings	80	17.8	52	18.3	132	18.0
Leads	2	0.4	21	7.4	23	3.1
Titles	114	25.3	49	17.3	163	22.5
No title	0	1.1	0	0	0	0.6
Total*⁴⁷	449	%100	283	%100	732	%100

Table (4.8) shows the following:

The study results show the use of various headlines in the following order: First, the use of headlines (55.9%), second the use of titles (22.5%), third the use of subheadings (18.0%), fourth the use of leads (3.1%) and finally the no use of titles (0.6%).

Both agencies use headlines the most. The AFP uses them at 55.2% while Reuters at 56.5%. The results of this study are in-line with the results of Al-Turk's⁴⁸ study which revealed headlines being the most used type at (42%). This also reflects the interest the agencies have in the headlines addressing the issues of the siege on Gaza.

Fourth: The pictures accompanying the issues of the siege on Gaza in both agencies:

The following table shows the analyzed repetitions and percentages of the two agencies' use of pictures when addressing the issues of the siege on Gaza in both agencies (AFP and Reuters):

Table4.9. shows the analyzed types of pictures used by both agencies

Pictures Quantitative Analysis	AFP		Reuters		Secular Trend	
	W	%	W	%	W	%
News	175	41.7	163	70.6	338	52.0
Personal	9	2.1	10	4.4	19	2.9
Feature	15	3.6	3	1.3	18	2.8
Archive	21	5.0	0	0	21	3.2
Gallery	12	2.8	5	2.2	17	2.7
No pictures	188	44.8	49	21.5	237	36.4
Total*	420	%100	230	%100	650	%100

Table (4.9) shows the following:

The results show that news pictures were the most used (52.0%), then without using any pictures came second (36.4%), archive pictures came in third (2.5%), personal pictures came in fourth (2.8%), and finally galleries came in last (2.7%). These results are in-line with the results of Al-Turk's study⁴⁹. Pictures were the most used at (42%), and this is a very high percentage in the AFP's coverage of the Great March of Return and the Palestinians' sufferings.

* The number of headlines occurred more than the number of issues, because some issues sometimes used more than one type of headlines.

⁴⁸-Al-Turk, International News Agencies' Processing of the Great March of Return: Case Study, AFP, p.18.

* The number of pictures occurred more than the number of issues, because some issues used more than one picture or an entire album sometimes.

⁴⁹ Al-Turk, International News Agencies' Processing of the Great March of Return: Case Study, AFP, p. 18.

The researchers point out that both agencies cared about all types of pictures in presenting the siege on Gaza. This is in-line with the results of Abu Hadb⁵⁰ which found that the use of pictures and drawings came in the first place.

6. MAIN STUDY RESULTS

1. Both the AFP and Reuters prioritized the topics of the Great March of Return, which ranked first in the AFP (33.6%) and Reuters (49.6%).
2. The two agencies had different prioritization regarding economic issues relevant to the siege on Gaza. While the AFP covered the crossings issues the most (27.0%), Reuters covered them fourth (7.4%).
3. The two agencies prioritized the coverage of service-related issues affected by the siege on Gaza as the power cuts were covered most by the AFP (55.5%) and Reuters (64.2%) as well.
4. Immigration ranked third in the AFP (18.1%), but reality of education and others ranked third in Reuters. The reality of education ranked fourth in Reuters (9%). As for the fifth rank, the AFP did not show interest in others.
5. Both agencies showed neutral orientation the most: the AFP (75.5%) and Reuters (76.3%).
6. Both agencies used the narrative method as the main method: the AFP (45.5%) and Reuters (62.8%).
7. Regarding the type of sources used, both agencies used correspondents and representatives only (100%).
8. Both agencies discussed the Gaza Strip as a geographical region the most (63.4%) each.
9. Both agencies used the news as a type of reporting the most: the AFP (67.2%) and Reuters (60.8%).
10. The two agencies had different ranking of printing and saving topics. While the AFP ranked the printing and saving first (70.2%) Reuters did not do so at all.
11. Both agencies used headlines the most: the AFP (55.2%) and Reuters (56.6%).
12. While the AFP did not use pictures at (44.8%), Reuters used news pictures the most (70.6%).

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

This section introduces the recommendations upon the conducted analysis of the general features of journalistic processing of content and issues of the siege on Gaza in the international agencies under study. The researchers recommend the following:

- 1) The international agencies under study should not focus on political and Israeli violations topics at the expense of other major issues. Other service-related, medical and sport issues should also be more covered.
- 2) The agencies should have positive position regarding the topics of the siege on Gaza when addressing this topic.
- 3) The agencies should care more about the interpretive and analytical journalistic arts when covering events. They should use feature stories, article writing and news-talk as methods other than news reporting only.
- 4) There should be focus on the use of Palestinian primary sources, and presentation of information with clear statement of sources so the public could have more trust in the agencies under study.
- 5) There should be more focus on the use of highlighting methods which are used in the agencies under study; examples are using colors, shades, drawings, pictures and maps since they attract the audience to the topics which address the siege on Gaza.

⁵⁰ Abu Hadb, Design of the Arab-Speaking International News Agencies' Websites and its Effect on the Ease of Accessing these Websites to Find News: A Comparative Analytical Study, p. 121.

- 6) The agencies under study should comprehensively cover the siege topics and include other topics such as the health, agricultural, industrial and educational sectors.
- 7) The media content should include statistics, figures, legal evidence, and different views on the issues of the siege on Gaza.
- 8) There should be diverse use of pictures when discussing the siege on Gaza since pictures, caricatures and graphics can influence readers.
- 9) Reuters and the AFP should publish their news in Arabic among other languages to target the greatest amount of Arabic public and attract their attention to the agencies' topics in general and the siege on Gaza in particular.

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