Framing the Peace and War Journalism on the Palestinian Presidents by Malaysian Media

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ABSTRACT

Peace journalism replaced the dominant war journalism due to the prevalence of propaganda in the era of World Wars and the Cold War. The need has emerged to replace, refine, reconstruct, and improve the role and reputation of journalism after serving as a part of the propaganda apparatus and being complicit in propaganda and war chaos. A transition of the role of Journalists was required to be shifted from propagandists and pro-war to peacemakers. The media coverage of peace and war influences the public on their way of thinking, thus contributing to fuelling or resolving tension and conflicts. This study explores the news stories of the *New Straits Times* (NST) on peace and war journalism on the two Palestinian Presidents. Framing theory is used in this study. To achieve the research objectives of this study, a content analysis was employed on the newspaper's coverage for a total of 21 years from 1996, since the first Palestinian General Election was held until coverage declined in 2016. A total of 335 news stories were found in NST about the two Palestinian Presidents regarding peace and war journalism. The peace stories figured 97.9% compared to 2.1% for war stories. The results revealed that President Arafat used both peace and war approaches compared to President Abbas who only used the peace approach. The coverage of NST reflected its support for peace and solution initiatives rather than war and conflict.

Keywords: *Peace journalism, war journalism, media framing, Palestinian Presidents, conflict.*

INTRODUCTION

Media play a significant role in conflict situations and the whole scenario can be adjusted through media. Media have played a key role in creating public awareness and that role was justified as thought-provoking. The news media play an important role in affecting public opinion and it is a significant information source about current events. One of the tools for conflict resolution is the media and its accurate information helps to minimise the conflict tension. The war and peace journalism trend became a worldwide phenomenon that had undeniable significance regarding conflicts and peace. News stories coverage by reporters in a specific way can change the whole event scenario (Hussain, 2015).

Media coverage is vital in shaping the direction of events, especially in the situation of peace and war a situation. News on war may incite actions and feelings since they mostly describe events in manipulative or vivid ways. In comparison, peace journalism enhances defending the humanity's universal values, especially democracy, peace, pluralism, human rights, and respecting different opinions (Ibrahim et al., 2013).

Recently, several models have been proposed for constructive conflict or peace journalism coverage. Alternative ways have been suggested by these models on conflict reporting for the sake of contributing to the process of reconciliation, peacebuilding, and de-escalation instead of escalation or exaggeration of conflicts. Thus, directing the attention to the process of news production is very important (Bläsi, 2004).

As a deliberate and conscious act by journalists, peace journalism can offer important insights into undiscovered aspects of the theory of framing (Lee & Maslog, 2005). The theory of framing is relevant for examining war and peace journalism since it explains how frames, and the embedment of specific understandings within the coverage of media (Fahmy & Eakin, 2014). The framing concept was applied widely in political and mass communication areas (Arandas et al., 2019).

Media framing influences the perception of the public (Arandas et al., 2018). Media framing helps highlight specific aspects of a news item and ignore other aspects according to the agenda of the news team or news outlet. Thus, the reaction of the public might differ towards framed news than just simple news. The media outlet has many ways to affect the public by using specific words, phrases, and undermining and promoting other ideas (Raza et al., 2012).

A few studies have examined peace and war frames in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (Fahmy & Eakin, 2014). The Palestinian- Israeli conflict lasted for a long time, unlike some other wars or conflicts that occurred in a short time (Ibrahim et al., 2013). This conflict has been stereotyped by myths and images that are widely supported by the media, the public, and political leaders (Mandelzis, 2003).

The studies of peace journalism about the Middle East conflict showed that reporting was mainly propagandistic and escalatory (Hussain & Ahmad, 2022). The coverage and media framing of the recent armed conflict has a great focus on showing violence, war propaganda, and defence of national security which limits the possibilities of supporting the process of reconciliation by media agencies (Atanesyan, 2020). However, practising peace journalism can be in international conflict which results in more world peace by creating an atmosphere favouring compromise and negotiations (Ha et al., 2020).

This study provides an understanding of war and peace journalism on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through framing by the Malaysian *New Straits Times* (NST) Newspaper. The study also helps to explore the direction of NST towards covering peace and war. The importance of this study lies in the deficiency of existing studies about framing the peace and war journalism of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, especially from foreign media.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study explores the news framing of NST regarding peace and war approaches on the Palestinian Presidents Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas during their tenure in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This study is to find out how NST covered peace and war journalistic approaches on both Presidents.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Framing

Mass media sets the frames of reference that the audience uses for discussing and interpreting events based on available information. The news media create a context that influences the discussion on public issues by the audience and also has a greater influence on politicians and policymakers. The news is interchangeable among news-workers and policymakers, politicians, organisational superiors, and the rest of society are following that ongoing conversation (Tuchman, 1978).

In the process of American politics, the construction of news discourse is related to issues of public policy accuracy. This occurs partly because both interest groups and politicians take an increasingly proactive approach to extending their views about an issue. News media also play an effective role in framing public policy. Studying framing might be as a discourse of processing news and constructing as a discourse of news or as a discourse characteristic itself (Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

Frames describe the news attributes and they reside in the particular attributes of the news narrative that encourage thinking and perceiving events for developing a specific understanding of them. The construction and embodiment of news frames come through concepts, keywords, visual images, metaphors, and symbols asserted in a news narrative (Entman, 1991).

Mostly, the use of framing in news stories is related to the attributes chosen on specific issues that shape a narrative to make them more prominent than others (Mokhtar, 2018). Frames enhance the apparent ideas to evaluate a political topic. Framing comes from cultural norms, journalistic decision rules, and the interaction of developments of the real world with proficient efforts of competing elites for managing the news (Entman, 2010).

Framing is selecting specific aspects of an issue and making them more salient they become more significant in evaluating that issue (Garguilo, 2014). Media frames stress some aspects of reality, neglect other aspects, and keep out some aspects. The media frames by journalists are the decision of what should be included in the news story and what should be excluded (Eze & Elegbe, 2018).

The function of a frame in stressing the salience of some parts of reality over other parts has a rhetorical power. Although the use of framing analysis can be for examining various news media it is more suitable for examining mainstream news media. There are several ways to look at different parts of a story; framing is one of them that is a process that makes alternative interpretations of political actors, issues, and events may be muted in an effective way (Cooper, Kuypers & Althous, 2008). Framing is addressing the way of presenting a certain news story which might influence the perception of the audience on content. There is an effect of framing consistent or inconsistent information on subsequent evaluations of the audience. The consistency of the frame between personality characteristics and a character-focused story, especially the evaluated positive attributes by the media audience led to more positive reactions toward the story (Lewis & Weaver, 2013).

Framing the story and shaping the message by media are potentially changing the intent or aspect of it. If the framing of an issue is negative, the opinion of readers will also be negatively influenced, and if positive it will influence their opinion positively (Fountain, 2008). Frames determine how people pay attention to a problem how they understand and remember it, and how their estimation and decision to act upon the problem. The possibility of a particular text interpretation was increased through the frame. The frames do not have a

universal influence on the audience, but they influence a part of that audience. Frames are one of the significant means that give a specific meaning to a particular issue. The media are responsible for offering people some kind of guidance to help them make choices in related matters to their life, and informing them about opportunities and risks that exist in their environment. Currently, the media are considered the most significant social institutions that influence the perceptions, knowledge, and actions of people (Sandberg, 2007).

The perceived news coverage was a strong predictor of the perceived public opinion, regardless of the absence or presence of assuring anecdotal cues, even when reporting articles differently base-rate information. It is commonly known that the slant of media coverage regarding a specific issue is influencing the perceived public opinion about it (Gunther & Christen, 2002). Frames not only improve the understanding of an issue but also influence the opinions of citizens about it. When framing a political issue by the media to adopt the narrative structure, the citizens should have a better understanding of that issue (Berinsky & Kinder, 2006). Through news framing, the audience can learn about themselves and others, their organisations, leaders, lifestyles, and other nations and their societies. The news makes the mere happening events to be publicity discussable events and mostly they are a social institution (Tuchman, 1978).

Media play an important role in informing the general public and in making public consensus on specific issues. Media are providing information and forming the perception and public opinion by providing the full information on any story (Sadaf, 2011). Theories of media effects such as framing theory do not focus only on the effects of the audience but also examine how the content is presented. As a media effect theory, framing is mostly related to how presenting the message more than what is presented (Knudsen, 2014).

Frames are considered a part of the culture, they guide the way of constructing the information by the elite, they influence the selection of information by journalists, and they are obvious in the media texts. The frame building includes looking at how establishing the frames in the public discourse and then carried out for adoption by journalists and elites (Cheregi, 2015).

Peace and War Journalism

The peace journalism approach received a lot of attention since its articulation by Galtung and Ruge in 1965 (Fahmy & Eakin, 2014; Mogekwu, 2011; and Robie, 2011). Later it was proposed and coined by Galtung in the 1970s (Aslam, 2011; Fong, 2009). Peace journalism tended to shift the focus from violence or war reporting to non-violence or empathy reporting. Then, two opposing modes of reporting were developed, namely violence or war journalism, and conflict or peace journalism (Raza et al., 2012). The offered peace journalism approach by Galtung aimed to treat the conventional conflict coverage (Sreedharan, 2013; Zaheer, 2016). Then, further development for peace journalism was done by Lynch & McGoldrick (Sreedharan, 2013). Since the emergence of peace journalism until the current time, an attention was received on its development.

Although the emergence of the peace journalism concept was a few decades old, little empirical research has operationalised this type of journalism in a world of conflict and strife (Raza, Jan, Sultan & Aziz, 2012). Recently, to support and raise peace journalism, journalists were urged by scholars to promote peace culture and favour peace journalism rather than war journalism (Fahmy & Neumann, 2012). Much controversy was created upon proposing viable peace journalism as an alternative to conventional war reporting among several media scholars and professionals (Fahmy & Eakin, 2014).

The emergence of the peace journalism concept in the mass communication field from its rooted peace research was in the early 1990s. War reporting developments, especially with the Gulf War in 1991, played a critical role in raising a serious debate on war and conflict coverage (Hanitzsch, 2004). Peace journalism's emergence and continuous interest in it have been accompanied by the production of dozens of research papers that have attempted to enhance the field (Kalfeli, Frangonikolopoulos & Gardikiotis 2020). In the past few decades, the emergence of the peace journalism approach has been influential on conflict journalism (Hussain, 2020). The evolvement of peace journalism was a challenge for being an alternative to traditional war coverage, and it has encouraged focusing on nonviolent and proactive coverage approaches in covering conflict zones by journalists (Neumann & Fahmy, 2016).

 Across the world, the concept of peace journalism approach in the current trend gained acceptance from academicians and journalists and there is a paradigm shift towards this approach from the approach of traditional media. The concepts 'peace journalism', 'caring journalism', 'reliable journalism', 'citizen journalism' 'civic journalism', and 'innovative journalism' have emerged due to the role of media in conflict (Aslam, 2011). In journalism research and study, peace journalism deserves to be termed a significant growth. It has taken the attention of practitioners and researchers alike. Enriching the applicability and validity of peace journalism required deriving it from various disciplines and theories (Peleg, 2007).

Peace journalism is choosing reporters and editors of what and how to report conflict which creates opportunities for society to value and consider nonviolent responses. It undermines the differences between ethnic and religions and does not advocate for further conflict. The activities of reconciliation and conflict resolution are promoted among these groups (Raza et al., 2012). Peace journalism contributes to peacekeeping, peace-making, and changes the attitudes of media owners, professionals, advertisers and the public towards peace and war (Shinar, 2007).

Peace journalism is a distinctive form of socially responsible journalism that contributes to the settlement of conflicts peacefully. It is a frame or programme of journalistic coverage of news that contributes to the keeping and making of peace process respectively to settle the conflicts peacefully (Hanitzsch, 2004).

The emergence of peace journalism was an attractive alternative approach to conventional war reporting which sparked some productive debates in academia and among journalists. Peace journalism would be peace-orientated which explores the formation of conflict and aims to prevent it and truth-orientated which exposes all sides of untruths. It is also people-orientated focuses on peacemakers as people and suffering all over, and solution-orientated highlights initiatives of peace and presents solutions more than ways to victory (Sreedharan, 2013). Proposing peace journalism was an alternative journalistic approach which is against conventional naivety, conflict research, and uncritical war and peace journalism. Peace journalism has developed an alternative agenda and counterstrategies as a professional credo (Nohrstedt & Ottosen, 2008).

Peace journalism asserts the resolution of conflict, the implicit causes of conflict, uses a language that does not over-emphasise frames of conflict, and alternative sources of news. Peace journalism addresses issues of journalistic practices regarding the selection of stories, sources and presentations, to facilitate the responses non-violent to conflict (Rodny-Gumede, 2016). Generally, peace journalism is a type of journalism that frames stories in a way that promotes or supports nonviolent response and conflict analysis (Mogekwu, 2011).

In situations of conflict, the media plays the role of an agent for peace or perpetrator of a conflict that largely depends on agenda-setting and framing. Also, in the interpretation of

any events, the prejudices and biases of journalists can be reflected (Aslam, 2011). Drawing on the insights of conflict transformation and analysis, peace journalism is a fairer, more accurate, and broader way of framing stories. Peace journalism focuses on common ground and urges reconciliation rather than differences, retaliation and vengeance, and emphasises the invisible violent influences such as the damage to social structure and emotional trauma. The journalists of peace hope to create a setting that causes possible solutions to the conflict and make it transparent through the conscientious, careful, and consistent, application of peace journalism practices (Fong, 2009). Peace journalists have proactive reporting on giving voice to all sides of conflict through empathetic and responsible journalism, and on solutions and causes of a conflict (Gouse et al., 2019).

Currently, there is greater acceptance for peace journalism as an attitude of framing a news story, besides its link to advocacy and conflict resolution. The application of peace journalism was to other media forms and disciplines such as investigative journalism, documentary making, photojournalism, film production, good governance and democracy, and community and specialised media (Aslam, 2011). The focus of peace journalism road is on the transformation of conflict. It is the journalism of attachment to all potential and actual victims (Galtung, 2003). Peace journalism creates opportunities to value and consider non-violent developmental responses. Peace journalism takes an analytical approach to the conflict, seeks opportunities to identify needs, goals, interests, and parties. It projects a multiparty model of conflict, finds other perspectives rather than the usual official sources, and seeks opportunities to report the initiatives of peace (Lynch, 2007a).

The focus of peace journalism road is on the transformation of conflict. It is the journalism of attachment to all potential and actual victims (Galtung, 2003). The beginning of most of the initiatives of peacebuilding in many parts of the world was when the conflict passed its peak point and the readiness of local communities to start life anew (Aslam, 2011). Peace journalism should be a genre by itself with its standards, rules, and ethics. It is a type of journalism that aims to prevent conflict from moving from an implicit to an explicit level to avoid violence which is mostly the main characteristic of explicit conflict. Peace journalism must be free of some of the parameters that aim to restrict the practice of mainstream journalism. It must be devoid of the straitjacket of mainstream journalism, thus, preventing crisis escalation, focusing on making change, and doing its best to create a dialogue among people who have values and ideas conflict on any issues at the intranational or international level (Mogekwu, 2011).

The approach of peace journalism describes active participation that encourages peacemakers more than reporting warriors and wars in a specific prescribed way. In peace journalism, this prescription is the toughest part since it attempts to show itself as a new orthodoxy (Loyn, 2007). Peace journalism emphasises presenting all conflict sides, seeks to contextualise a controversy, and it achieves these measures without compromising the coverage accuracy or investigation thoroughness. In peace journalism, reporters unreservedly uphold balance, sensitised thoroughness, and transparency in covering disputes which is a power to reckon with (Peleg, 2007).

Clearly, the accuracy of peace journalism is more than war journalism, and as a representation form, it is preferable due to its preparedness to include a broader range of parties, across the formation of conflict. Also, the content of conflict and peace studies is different by recognising the possibility of having a creative conflict transformation (Lynch, 2007b). The supporters of techniques and principles of peace journalism suggest that it might drive better interpreting and reporting towards social and human awareness away from the

culture of ratings. Hence, the seemingly inherent contradiction between the journalists' professional demands and the peace stories nature might be changed which might increase the peace news value (Shinar, 2007).

It is argued that peace journalism makes findings of material relevance to both the influence on source behaviour and the operation of conflict reporting. Also, the cause-and-effect feedback loop, and highlights suitable steps for reporters and editors to ensure their coverage balance (Lynch, 2006). The reporting of peace journalism would contain people who offer solutions and condemn violence. The reporting would always seek to clarify the deep reasons for the conflict rather than blaming any ethnicity. The training and education of conflict-sensitive journalism or peace journalism should give journalists a context to guarantee including both sides in any reports (Robie, 2011).

The aim of conflict or peace journalism is to explore the conflict formation background to show the transparency of conflicts to the public. It seeks the causes of conflicts and their solutions on each side and presents all the rival parties' views. The philosophy of conflict or peace Journalism is strongly committed to preventing war and violence. It focuses on conflict resolution creativity and both peace-keeping and peace-making efforts. Conflict or peace journalism reveals the suffering of all parties of the conflict, culprits on all sides and cover-up attempts, and exposes lies (Hanitzsch, 2004).

Highlighting the peace process and reporting peace journalism on the two Palestinian presidents contributes to peace-oriented and de-escalation of war-oriented and violent journalism. Thus, sheds light on the peace initiatives by those presidents throughout the peace process and negotiation between Palestinians and Israelis. Besides, framing the right response to an event reduces the minimal losses and allows the protection of their reputation (Arandas & Ling, 2020; Arandas & Loh, 2021).

On the other hand, maintaining, exacerbating, and instigating violence, war, and conflict in the coverage and role of news media have taken much attention (Rodny-Gumede, 2016). Reporting conflict by war journalists propagates an elitist orientation, victory and violence. (Gouse et al., 2019). It is believed that media coverage plays a significant role in easing the tensions between governments and among people during wars or conflict situations. Yet, a tilt was found in the media towards disagreements, violence, and aggression during the coverage conflict (Zaheer, 2016). As a response to crises and conflicts, war journalism leads or leaves audiences and readers to over-value the violence (Lynch, 2007a). Currently, there is a growth of awareness about the tension between stresses on journalism and its impact on mediating and shaping the way of pressing public debates. In some ways, displaying war journalism can be to make it tougher for broadcast news services to fulfil the obligations of public service (McGoldrick, 2006).

War journalism is journalism that uses military offensive language and focuses on the conflict from one side picture. For journalists, the coverage of conflict or war is a very interesting field (Raza et al., 2012). The focus of war journalism is on escalating, polarising, and calling for more hatred and violence. The coverage of the war journalism approach focuses on violence-oriented, victory-oriented, propaganda-oriented, and elite-oriented (Galtung, 2003). It focuses on the visible influences of reporting the conflict, presenting the voices of the elite, propaganda-oriented by exposing untruths and portraying victory over enemies as the end goal (Sreedharan, 2013). The propaganda characteristic is likely to give justification for the response of violence, and, thus, war journalism staple (Lynch, 2006). Greater efforts are made by warring parties to control, influence, and steer the reporting

disseminated via international media, and in the case of visual materials such as videos and photographs, this is true (Nohrstedt, 2009).

The approach of war journalism is considered harsh and stern since it is mostly linked with the zero-sum game where almost all victory benefits go to the winner (Zaheer, 2016). In the conflict, war journalism focuses on the visible influences of war and plays up as an arena that groups the participants starkly into two opposing sides in a zero-sum game (Fong, 2009). There is a clear opportunity in the conflict for the progress of humans, to find new ways through using conflict, being creative, imaginative, and transforming the conflict to give the upper hand to the opportunities (Galtung & Fischer, 2013).

The media turns into a battlefield, and there is a draw into the conflict by journalists either unawares, under orders, or voluntarily. The fight of modern wars cannot be without the support of the public. The acceptance of the public requires great effort, and in a conflict, it is preferable to support the actions of their sides. Greater efforts are made by warring parties to control, influence, and steer the reporting disseminated via international media, and in the case of visual materials such as videos and photographs, this is true (Nohrstedt, 2009). Although war is the most recognisable situation of conflicts, to varying degrees all conflicts tend to threaten international, national, local and or group peace. The figures of high casualty in wars attract the reporters a lot. The aim of journalists in most wars is to predict the loser and the winner, and the vanquished and victor, since not distinguishing these roles makes the conflict in vain (Mogekwu, 2011).

METHODOLOGY

This study explores the frames of peace and war journalistic approaches in the *New Straits Times* (NST) on two Palestinian Presidents. Selecting this newspaper is influenced by several elements such as its wide circulation. It is considered a government-controlled newspaper, and it is English- language newspaper which can go beyond ethnic and language barriers.

This study did a content analysis of news stories in the daily issues of NST covering a period of 21 years from 1996 to 2016. The period began the first Palestinian elections on 20 Jan 1996 until the death of President Arafat on 11 Nov 2004, and then from 9 Jan 2005 since electing President Abbas until the decline of coverage in NST in 2016.

The quantitative part of this study focused on the descriptive statistics of the peace and war approaches used, while the qualitative part focused on how these approaches were used. A total of 335 news stories were selected and analysed. Retrieving the news stories was done through both microfiche and microfilm. Then, the collected news stories were coded in the coding sheet.

Selecting the news stories was through focusing on some keywords such as Palestine, Israel, presidents, peace, and war. This process has been guided by Ibrahim et al. (2012) by focusing on the headlines and sub-headlines, first three paragraphs, Illustrations, tables, figures, captions, and photos. Then, these news stories were thoroughly examined. The concepts and indicators of peace and war journalism (Aslam, 2011; Galtung, 2003; Galtung & Fischer, 2013; Lynch, 2006; Lynch, 2007a; Raza et al., 2012) guided coding, categorising, and analysing of the news stories. Assessing the validity of the coding sheet was through face validity, and assessing the reliability was through inter-coder reliability by three coders. The agreement level of the inter-coder reliability between the coders was 8.5 based on the Holsti (1969) formula. The coded stories have been keyed in SPSS to generate the statistical findings of this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The frames of peace and war journalism on Palestinian Presidents by the *New Straits Times* newspaper were analysed from January 1996 to December 2016. Table 1 presents the frequency of these journalistic approaches employed in the news stories. The results revealed that a total of 335 news stories on the topic were found. Overall, the results showed that peace journalism was more dominant than war journalism in the vast majority of news stories (97.9%). In comparison, the war journalistic approach was only (2.1%) of the news stories.

Table 1: Journalistic approaches of news stories

Journalistic Approach	Frequency	Percentage
Peace	328	97.9
War	7	2.1
Total	335	100.0

Table 2 shows peace and war journalistic approaches to Palestinian Presidents. For President Arafat, the peace approach was included in (97.2%) of news stories, while the war approach was included in (2.8%) of news stories. In comparison, for President Abbas, all the news stories (100%) were peaceful.

Reporting the frames of peace journalism by NST on Palestinian Presidents appeared in several statements in the news stories. These stories included connotations to the peace and discussed the issues related to Palestinian-Israeli peace-making and negotiation process, the eagerness of Palestinian Presidents for peace, and their disagreement with Palestinian attacks and their efforts to thwart the attack.

Several news stories discussed the eagerness and initiatives of President Yasser Arafat towards peace issues. The following statements are examples:

We have made the peace of the brave. We are committed to it, We ask the other side not to violate this peace (NST, 8 Jan 1996).
Arafat paid a confidence-building visit to Israel today, pledging to pursue peace without restoring to violence (NST, 9 Oct 1996).
We want peace, Arafat tells Jewish settlers (NST, 20 Jan 1997).
Arafat has accused Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of refusing to comply with the demands of an internationally-backed Middle East peace plan (NST, 25 Jan 2004).
Arafat has arrested more than 200 Islamists since the Jerusalem and Ashkelon attacks (NST, 2 Mar 1996).
Today's calm came after Arafat announced he had ordered his forces to prevent attacks on Israelis (NST, 20 Sep 2001).

Moreover, many other news stories discussed the pledge and intention of President Mahmoud Abbas towards peace issues.

President Mahmoud Abbas urged Palestinian factions to halt rocket fire and renew a truce that expired at year's end, as Israel struck targets in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon (NST, 29 Dec 2005).
Abbas presented the US president with a document outlining ideas about how to take the peace process forward (NST, 30 May 2009).
Obama said Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas wanted peace but had to contend with Hamas (NST, 30 Jan 2010).

> Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said yesterday he was very ready to return to the negotiations with the Israelis, saying he did not want to isolate or delegitimize Israel (NST, 24 Sep 2011).

In comparison, seven news stories included the war approach on President Arafat which occurred during the second intifada (uprising) time. The following are examples of these stories:

> A demonstration by Jewish settlers yesterday pushed Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat into a move he has not made since he returned from exile in 1994, he showed a holstered weapon in public (NST, 6 Dec 2000).
>
> Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat again violently rejected surrendering to Israeli troops outside his West Bank headquarters and said he preferred to become a "martyr" in an interview late yesterday (NST, 4 Apr 2002).
>
> "Responding to the threat, Arafat was quoted by the Voice of Palestine radio saying he was "not afraid of Sharon's statements.
>
> Martyrdom is my destiny and I am a believer (NST, 25 Apr 2004).

Table 2: Journalistic approaches on Palestinian presidents

Journalistic Approach	Frequency of Arafat	Percentage of Arafat	Frequency of Abbas	Percentage of Abbas
Peace	247	97.2	81	100
War	7	2.8	_	0.0
Total	254	100.0	81	100.0

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the framing of peace and war approaches used by Palestinian Presidents as covered by NST. All news stories published by NST from January 1996 until December 2016 that related to peace and war journalism were analysed. The framing of peace and war approaches on Palestinian Presidents as covered by the *New Straits Times* showed a clear inclination towards a peace approach. Also, the coverage revealed the eagerness of those presidents to find a peace process and initiatives.

The continuous immersion of the public in the news of violence shapes their societal beliefs and version of reality, and contributes to framing their mind which supports the continuance and exacerbation of war (Sreedharan, 2013). Additionally, it is argued that media and news framing influence the perception, understanding, and public opinion of the public (Fountain, 2008; Lewis & Weaver, 2013; Sadaf, 2011; Sandberg, 2007).

The media can influence peace-building since recently media workers and journalists have direct access to more public than at any past time. The awareness about the influence of their reporting on calming or exacerbating the conflict is required (Adam & Holguin, 2003). Thus, the stance of NST framing by highlighting the peace approach stimulates and supports peace initiatives and reaching solutions to conflicts among its public. The high coverage of NST on peace journalism was very encouraging and promising since it supports resolving the conflicts rather than inflaming them.

BIODATA

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