



YouTube- Broadcast Yourself! and your Propaganda?
Freedom of Expression and the New Media in Armed Conflict

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To be signed and placed at the beginning of the thesis



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Abstract

In wars the media struggles to execute its right to Freedom of Expression through the sophisticated approaches of the military authorities to control the flow of information. Especially in asymmetrical conflicts of today, which militarily are decided long before the conflict started, it is the media coverage that determines in the end the winner of the conflict for the public. Therefore the media transformed from a propaganda tool into a weapon of the information war, leveraged from all sides.

The new media technologies lead to the emancipation of the Right to Freedom of Expression and the Democratic Arena, through which also war reporting changed profoundly. The Internet today is considered as the way out of the propaganda trap in war.

The Internet enables people in times of armed conflict to participate in the global conversation, especially on Social Networks, most notably on YouTube, where method and means of expression is set “no limits”. YouTube’s power is people power hoisted through new technologies that allow taping and disseminating of information from everywhere. During the outbreak of violence between Israel and Hamas in December 2008 and January 2009, YouTube became the platform to broadcast information from the conflict zone and present the ‘truth’. Thus, also the Israeli military authorities began to use YouTube. The video sharing web-site developed into a ‘weapon’ in the propaganda battle but not only for the military authorities but for the million of people online, who used YouTube to propagate for their cause and trumped the Israeli Defence Force attempts online. People’s power, however, enabled through the new media showed its other side, whereby through propaganda YouTube developed into a ‘weapon’ and truth became ‘fluid’ and the fog of war thickened instead of becoming cleared.

Preface

During this research journey many people supported me, without whom it wouldn't have been as memorable as it was. First of all I want to thank Prof. Fischer for his guidance and creativity in selecting a topic, which I enjoyed working on until the last day. My mother has always accompanied me on my way, so throughout this research with support and patience. Not to forget Lynne and my dad, who were always happy to print endless numbers of drafts of this thesis on their printers. I also want to thank Hila and Adam for their honest accounts and perspective about the situation of Israel and Gaza. Last but not least, my gratitude goes to my GV friends, most notably Eke and Amanda, who put a constant smile on my face throughout the last month of writing through the constant postings of motivation messages on my facebook wall. Thank you.

As long as people believe in absurdities, they will continue to commit atrocities.
~Voltaire

And in this respect, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been a tragedy, a clash between one very powerful, very convincing, very painful claim over this land and another no less powerful, no less convincing, no less painful claim.
~Amos Oz

You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you can not fool all of the people all of the time.
~ Abraham Lincoln

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