From the Mosque to Satellite Broadcasting:  
A Historical Perspective of Hamas Media Strategy

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Abstract

The media keeps the Palestinian dream of a homeland and quest to end the occupation alive. Thus, the media has been a potent weapon in the story of the Palestinian people’s struggle for freedom. This thesis examines the Hamas media strategy in three different periods, and in its historical and analytical context. The first period begins with the outbreak of the Palestinian intifada in 1987 and ends in 1993. In this period, Hamas was strictly a secret/underground organisation. The second stage is from 1994 to 2005. This period witnessed the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994 and the second intifada. The third period begins after the 2006 elections, where Hamas came to the power after its victory in the PLC elections. The thesis uses an empirical investigation, which relies on two qualitative methods: interviews and document analysis. It illustrates how the Hamas media strategy developed over the mentioned periods and outlines the overall media strategy. The research critically assesses four elements of the Hamas media strategy, which were the media message (discourse), the media objectives, the infrastructure, and the target audience. The present research concludes that Hamas, since 1987, has developed a media strategy based on the four mentioned elements. In particular, it finds that the idea of the resistance is the key element of the Hamas media discourse. Political and ideological/religious agendas and impulses drive Hamas’s discourse. Second, it finds there are two types of objectives tactical and strategic. The former are subject to the context, while the latter is based on ideological political agendas. Third, it finds there are five ‘circles’ of the target audience, which Hamas considers in its media strategy. Finally, it finds that the Hamas media infrastructure expanded from 1987 to the present by using the maximum capacity of the media outlets and benefited from the new media institutions under the rubric of the ‘independent media’. Overall, the thesis is the first in-depth academic study on Hamas' media strategy.
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