No End in Sight: A Critical Discourse Analysis of U.S. National Newspaper Coverage of the Iraq War

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NO END IN SIGHT: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF U.S. NATIONAL NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE IRAQ WAR

by

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DEDICATION

To my dear mother, Gurbax Kaur, for her continued guidance, love, and wisdom. I am eternally grateful for the sacrifices she made to give me the opportunities I have had and for providing me with all the moral, spiritual and financial support throughout this process.
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ABSTRACT

On May 1, 2003, standing in front of a banner declaring “Mission Accomplished” aboard the warship U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln, President Bush announced an end to major combat in Iraq, referring to the war as “one victory in the war on terror.” Over seven years later, on August 31, 2010, President Obama in a televised speech also announced an end to the combat mission in Iraq. On October 21, 2011, President Obama once again reaffirmed that U.S. military personnel would be leaving Iraq, saluting the troops on their “success” and remarking on the Iraqi government’s readiness for governing. And finally, on December 14, 2011, four days before the last U.S. troops left Iraq, President Obama, once again declared the end of the war and said: “we’re leaving behind a sovereign, stable and self-reliant Iraq.”

The informational battlefront is a salient feature of any war, and understanding the role the mass media play in the production and packaging of information in the form of news offers fertile ground for Library and Information Science scholars. This study examines U.S. national newspapers’ representations of and discursive construction of two of these ‘endings,’ 2003 and 2011. Using the method of critical discourse analysis, news coverage is analyzed in order to understand and explain the discursive constructions of meaning in news reports about the end of the war, with a focus on outcomes, consequences, and responsibility for these. The three-part analysis that follows consists of a contextual analysis, a textual analysis, and a historical-diachronic analysis identifying the dominant discourses, and comparing and contrasting these in the two
‘endings.’ By shedding light on these discursive structures, this study seeks to elevate and make clear the ideological basis to hegemonic news discourses.

The findings showed the media offer a narrow range of discursive possibilities that delimit the parameters of discourse on the Iraq War; however, there is also some variation within these parameters which give the impression of information plurality. A pro-American bias permeates the news discourse that has implications for the democratic and educational function of news as an informational product.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Following the end of the Gulf War in 1991, Jean Baudrillard (1991/1995) published ‘The Gulf War did not take place’ in which he characterized the conflict as a carefully constructed phantasmagoria of surgical war. He argued that the public, as “hostages of media intoxication” (p.25), are induced to believe in a war that is very different from the one that is taking place. The information and mass media system constructed a simulated war in a hyperreal universe of signs, codes, and models, where the idea of a war was transmitted through media discourse without conveying the true horrors of war; this process normalized the idea of war as a surgical procedure and a ‘clean’ war without victims. Michaels (2013) and others have also highlighted the importance of this informational battlefront in relation to the Iraq War (March 20, 2003 – December 18, 2011).

Given that there were no final battles, surrender by the enemy, celebration parades, public ceremonies, or peace treaties concluding the war, communicating the ending of the war in a way that made it more comprehensible became even more dependent on rhetoric and discourse (Michaels, 2013, p. 143).

On May 1, 2003, standing in front of a banner declaring “Mission Accomplished” aboard the warship U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln, President Bush prematurely declared an end

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1 Although these are the official dates, there had been U.S. and U.K. bombing campaigns in Iraq throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s, following the end of the Gulf War in 1991 (see for example, Arbuthnot, 2004).
to major combat in Iraq, referring to the war as “one victory in the war on terror” (Bush, 2003b). Over seven years and several thousand dead American military personnel later, on August 31, 2010, President Obama in a televised speech to the nation, also announced an end to the combat mission in Iraq and a planned timetable of withdrawal by the end of 2011 (Obama, 2010). In 2010, Iraqi civilian deaths from war-related violence had fallen to its lowest since the start of the war (4,167); however, hostilities continued and the security situation for Iraqis remained precarious (Iraq Body Count, 2017). Over a year later, on October 21, 2011, President Obama once again reaffirmed that U.S. military personnel would be leaving Iraq, saluting the troops on their “success” and remarking on the Iraqi government’s readiness for governing (Obama, 2011a). Finally, on December 14, 2011, four days before the last U.S. troops left Iraq, President Obama once again declared the end of the war, saying: “we’re leaving behind a sovereign, stable and self-reliant Iraq” (Obama, 2011b). However, since the official end to the war in 2011, a further 81,211 Iraqi civilians have died,2 and there have been a huge number of Iraqi military personnel killed in the struggle with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or ISIS) as well as numerous bombing campaigns carried out by the United States. It is therefore not wholly unreasonable to extend Baudrillard’s line of inquiry to question whether the ending of the Iraq War actually took place, despite the presidential pronouncements mentioned above, and to examine what role the news media played in shaping the discourses about the ending.

This dissertation examines the prominent discourses of the most widely circulated national newspapers in the United States concerning two of these ‘endings’ of the Iraq War. Using the method of critical discourse analysis (CDA), news coverage is analyzed

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2 Figures are for the period January 2012-October 2017 (Iraq Body Count, 2017).
in order to understand and explain the discursive constructions of meaning in U.S. news reports about the end of the war, with a focus on outcomes, consequences, and responsibility for these. The analysis that follows consists of identifying, comparing, and contrasting the dominant discourses in May 2003 and December 2011. The purpose of undertaking this analysis is to examine the structures of illegitimate power, domination, and injustice reproduced or challenged in this news discourse about the endings of the Iraq War. In doing this, it is the aim of this study to elevate and make clear the ideologies shaping these discourses. As all CDA research seeks to do, the goal is to challenge structures of power that produce and re-produce social injustices.

Discourse is the primary ‘object’ of study in understanding how the U.S. news media constructed the social reality of the ending of the Iraq War. Discourse “infuses events with meaning, establishes widespread social understandings, and constitutes social reality” (Hodges, 2011, p. 5). It is the representations of reality that matter because these subsequently “materialize” in ways that produce real consequences (Fairclough, 2003 and 2009; Jager & Maier, 2009, p. 37). Discourses also constitute the soft power of war that hard power (e.g. military action) relies upon to establish legitimacy (Chouliaraki, 2005, p. 5); such soft power can permeate the media and political and entertainment landscapes to advance military goals (examples include the creation of movies or video games to glorify war and vilify political opponents).

van Dijk suggests another material consequence of discourse, pointing out that discourse may indirectly control the minds of people because “people’s actions are controlled by their minds (knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms, values), [thus] mind control also means indirect action control.” (2008c, p. 9). Because the ending of this war
has been planned for and announced on multiple occasions for various political purposes, this study examines the ending in 2003 and the ending in 2011. It uses CDA to examine the discursive construction of the outcomes and consequences of the war, as well as responsibility for the war, in national newspaper reports at the times when each of these endings were announced by U.S. presidents in office. These moments represent the official narratives, policies, and actions regarding the missions Operation Iraqi Freedom (March 21, 2003 – September 1, 2010) and Operation New Dawn (September 1, 2010 – December 15, 2011). As Hodges (2011) points out, “they articulate a perspective that has been well thought out and is representative of a larger set of ideas that underlies much of the administration’s discourse and policies” (p. 11). The dates of these speeches anchor the study by narrowing the news media coverage examined to articles dealing exclusively with the ending of the Iraq War, a specific if incomplete campaign within the broader ongoing War on Terror. In using the techniques of CDA, this study discusses the social and political implications of the discursive features of news media coverage of the denouement of the Iraq War, such as the normalization and dominance of particular discourses surrounding outcomes, consequences and responsibility in the ending of the Iraq War.

The aims of this study can be summarized as follows: (1) to shed light on the dominant discourses that are embedded in news coverage of the ending of the Iraq War in four major national newspapers (The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, The Washington Post and USA Today); (2) to demonstrate using CDA how meanings of the ending of the war were discursively constructed in 2003 and 2011; and (3) to illustrate how news is an informational product that is not free of ideology by discerning patterns
and thematic structures of discourses within the coverage that either discursively reproduce or challenge the injustices of the Iraq War. These aims are realized through conducting detailed textual and contextual analysis of newspaper coverage of these ‘endings’ of the Iraq War.

The war in Iraq was justified and launched in the context of the War on Terror by President Bush with the support of a ‘coalition of the willing’ in which the U.S. and U.K. provided the majority of combat troops. A thorough understanding of the ‘War on Terror’ construct is necessary to understand the discursive features of the media’s coverage of the ending of the Iraq War. With the rapid rise to prominence of ISIS, the War on Terror remains a key issue for the Trump administration. Furthermore, given the well-documented rise in global terrorism since the launch of the War on Terror in September 2001 (see, for example, Stern, 2014), the War on Terror has critically defined the United States’ foreign and domestic policy agendas for nearly two decades and may define it for decades to come.

In the days following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, President Bush said, “We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them” (Bush, 2001a, p. 58). He continued, “War has been waged against us by stealth and deceit and murder. This nation is peaceful, but fierce when stirred to anger. This conflict was begun on the timing and terms of others. It will end in a way, and at an hour, of our choosing” (Bush, 2001b, pp. 59-60). The Bush administration made clear that the attacks were not merely criminal and terrorist but acts of war, and that the U.S. response would be one of waging a war. At this early stage following 9/11, it was not clear how far reaching this War on Terror would be and which
nation states would be deemed as nations harboring terrorists, but as the president stated, “Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have ever seen” (Bush, 2001c, p. 77). Despite the official end to the Iraq War in December 2011, the evidence suggests that the war is still ongoing, with civilian deaths from violence continuing to increase since the withdrawal of American troops.3

The informational battlefront is a salient feature of any war, and understanding the role the mass media play in the production and packaging of information in the form of news offers many investigative opportunities for Library and Information Science (LIS) scholars. In particular, news media discourses about the ending of the Iraq War offer fertile ground for research. The Iraq War was positioned within the War on Terror which is as much a discursive construct and powerful narrative as it is a series of conflicts. It is an American construct, with successive U.S. administrations serving as the key decision-makers determining the direction of this war. Therefore, the focus of this study will be on the American perspective.

There remains much definitional ambiguity regarding the War on Terror: its scope, time frame, and geographic borders are uncertain. This ambiguity results in even greater media reliance on government information that potentially enables the U.S. government greater hegemonic control over the discourse and informational landscape. The United States “initiated an open-ended and global conflict – one that can be directed against any adversary, anywhere in the world” (Thassu & Freedman, 2003, p. 1). The war on terror thus has both domestic and foreign policy dimensions; the former is concerned primarily with domestic terrorist incidents and the expansion of state surveillance powers

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3 Civilian deaths in brackets: 2011 (4,153); 2012 (4,622); 2013 (9,851); 2014 (20,179); 2015 (17,511); 2016 (16,393). (Iraq Body Count, 2017).
to thwart terrorism at home, and the latter with defeating terrorist organizations and other sponsors of terrorism abroad.

This dissertation focuses on the foreign policy arena of the War on Terror, specifically on Operation Iraqi Freedom (initial invasion of Iraq in March 2003 and subsequent occupation until 2010) and Operation New Dawn (President Obama’s gradual withdrawal of troops and ending of military operations in Iraq). Both operations generated significant press coverage for nearly a decade but in order to conduct a meaningful and manageable study of discourse, it is the media’s coverage of the denouement of the Iraq War that has been selected as key to understand how discourse operates and to demonstrate how it is not free from ideology in propelling certain agendas.

There has not been a great deal of research in the LIS field on the Iraq War or War on Terror despite information warfare being a critically defining feature of conflicts (Thassu & Freedman, 2003; Webster, 2003). Yet there have been a few LIS studies concerned with information warfare in other contexts, such as cyber warfare, launching attacks on the information technology infrastructure of an enemy (see for example, van Niekerk & Maharaj, 2011), and the potential uses of the internet by extremists, terrorists, or activists (Crilley, 2001). Taylor has referred to the information environment as the key battlefront in the War on Terror (Taylor, 2003, p. 112); this informational war is being waged on many fronts, including with domestic as well as foreign publics. Michaels

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4 The War on Terror is so vast in scope that in addition to military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, other dimensions include a stated world-wide hunt for terrorists, sponsors of terrorism and terrorist organizations, U.S. military and counter-terrorism operations in the Philippines, Horn of Africa (primarily Sudan, Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Seychelles and Kenya but also includes operations in Mauritius, Comoros, Liberia, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania), Pankisi Gorge (Georgia), Trans Sahara (Algeria, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Nigeria, and Morocco), Caribbean and Central America (Belize, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Honduras, Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana, and Suriname), Kyrgyzstan, and Pakistan.
(2013) has studied the roles of language and discourse – that is words and meanings – in warfare, and how discourses can become entrenched and institutionalized, making them difficult to criticize or dislodge. Michaels demonstrates the functioning of this ‘discourse trap’ by examining the language of the build up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, finding that there was a discursive emphasis on terrorism with consistent references to 9/11 and al-Qaeda within official and media discourse; this was designed to strengthen public support for the invasion and occupation. However, following the failure to find weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the government and media discourse continued to focus on fighting ‘terrorists’ rather than a nationalist insurgency opposed to U.S. occupation, even though this was at odds with most ground-level military assessments and the assessments of the intelligence community (Michaels, 2013, p. 123).

The mass media inform the public about the rationale for war, the progress of war, the necessity for continuing war, and the conclusion of war. Furthermore, the media are influential in the construction of social reality or realities through discourses. On a micro-scale, this construction involves language, signs, and symbols; on the macro-level scale, it involves narratives, theories, and ideological frameworks. Combined, these aspects of discourse produce social knowledge – that is, knowledge intended to help readers make sense of the world and events that takes place in it.

News media sociologist Michael Schudson (1995) refers to newspaper participation in this process as a construction of the mental world in which readers live; this perspective also mirrors van Dijk’s work on the mental models that news discourse creates (see for example,1997b, 1998; 2008c, and 2009b). While various communication theories attempt to explain the extent to which news influences readers and audiences,
most of these also understand and account for news consumers as active participants in the process of interpreting, understanding, and disseminating the information they consume. That said, discourses produced by powerful individuals and institutions have a powerful capacity to manufacture social knowledge (see for example, van Dijk 1988, 1998, and 2008c; Herman & Chomsky, 1988). It is, after all, the media that “tell us how to think about a topic” (Tomasky, 2003, 154).

Although some LIS scholarship alludes to the disciplinary connections between information studies and communication/media studies, the relationship becomes more apparent when we acknowledge the critical role of the media in providing accurate, clear, credible, reliable, and verified information. These are just some of the key characteristics of professional journalism, yet they are also key characteristics of professional librarians and information analysts. In this sense, reporters are in the information business (Kitty 2005, p. 54), and news can be viewed as an information commodity that serves the dual purpose of educating and informing citizens. The democratic and informative role of the news media is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two.

A related point is that CDA has not been widely adopted in LIS, but early advocates of critical theory and those influenced by the works of Foucault [scholars such as Frohmann (1992a, 1992b, 1994), and Budd and Raber (1996)] bemoaned the lack of critical reflexivity in LIS scholarship, a situation that left much of the scholarship disengaged from politics in the hope of remaining neutral. One of the unique contributions of this dissertation to LIS is that it adopts an approach that expands outside of the traditional boundaries of LIS research. LIS itself is treated as a discursive construct in the Foucauldian sense: that is, this dissertation recognizes the ongoing struggle to
establish the discipline’s boundaries. Through such disciplinary parameters and the
specialized vocabulary invented for those within the community, LIS distinguishes itself
from other subjects; in contrast, this study connects LIS to disciplines outside of the LIS
community by adopting a theoretical and methodological approach that challenges the
existing orthodoxies of the discipline.

Providing accurate information to enable an informed citizenry capable of self-
government is one of the self-proclaimed roles of the news media and theoretical
justifications of a free press as affirmed in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.
According to the Project for Excellence in Journalism and Committee of Concerned
Journalists, the “central purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with accurate and
reliable information they need to function in a free society” (cited in Wong, 2006, p. 123). What’s more, as Chermak (2003) explains, the news media’s role in selecting
“relevant” facts, voices, and viewpoints has vital consequences for public discourse:

The public’s limited access to a full range of information on issues,
coupled with people’s limits on the amount of time available to investigate
issues beyond their own immediate primary life concerns, has created
reliance on vicarious sources of information. The public consumes
information but does not critically analyze or ponder the issues
highlighted, and it generally ignores whatever is not presented about the
issues. The mass media can also control the scope of public debate in a
democratic society, determining what facts are relevant, who the
authoritative voices on issues are, and when a minority or alternative
viewpoint is worthy of consideration. (p.9)
Therefore, information “confers power on those who possess it or can control its flow in a way that enables them to achieve their own goals” (Mason, Mason & Culnan, 1995, p. 32). The news media are influential in providing legitimacy or deriding certain viewpoints in coverage of events and issues (Ashley & Olson, 1998, p. 264). Kitty (2005) goes further, citing the primacy of emotions and intuition over critical thinking when it comes to the influence of news media on readers and audiences (p. 292). In assessing news coverage of controversial aspects of war, including the multiple so-called “endings” of the Iraq War, it is important to pay attention to these critical characteristics of information and news.

Following the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York City on September 11, 2001, there was limited public outcry against the U.S.-led military action against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan that had been accused of sheltering the Islamic terrorist organisation called al-Qaeda and its head, Osama Bin Laden, who had taken responsibility for the attacks. However, the second major military conflict of the War on Terror, the invasion of Iraq in 2003, has proven to be “the most resisted element” of the War on Terror narrative (Hodges, 2011, p. 55), one that raises the most questions about the motives behind the actions of the U.S. government. Prior to the invasion of Iraq, President Bush stated, “Saddam Hussein aids and protects terrorists including members of al-Qaeda” (Bush, 2003a). A CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll showed 86 percent of those polled in August 2002, and 88 percent in March 2003, believed that Hussein was involved in supporting terrorist groups that were planning to attack the U.S. (cited in Fried, 2005, pp. 125-6).
Various scholars have attributed public support of the invasion to the direct influence of the news media in making the case for war without thoroughly investigating contrary viewpoints (see for example, Freedman, 2004; Altheide & Grimes, 2005). Despite widespread news media support for the U.S. invasion of Iraq in the mainstream press (including the *NYT*, *WP* and *WSJ*), there has never been a shred of evidence made public linking Hussein’s regime to al-Qaeda or to the terrorist attacks in New York City on 9/11 (Collins, 2015). The initial invasion of Iraq and media coverage of the invasion has been widely studied, primarily in the fields of mass communications and journalism. Many writers have commented on the prominent and proactive role the news media played in galvanizing support for the war (see for example, Dadge, 2006; Hayden, 2009; Keeble, 2004; and Guelke, 2006). Some have attributed this to a traditional “rally around the flag” effect (Kull, Ramsay, & Lewis, 2003; Moeller, 2004). Others have cited the atmosphere of fear and patriotism after 9/11 when there was reluctance among journalists to question government actions for fear of being castigated as insufficiently patriotic (Chermak, 2003; Kauffman, 2004; John et al., 2007, Zelizer & Allan, 2002; Rosen, 2002; Tumber & Palmer, 2004; Waisbord, 2002). A great deal of the existing research scrutinizes and questions the media’s role in rationalizing the Iraq War, focusing largely on the justification of the war rather than examining the discourse within the news media surrounding the ending of the conflict, its legacy, and assessment of success.

1.2 Newspapers

Traditionally elite newspapers in the United States have taken the lead when it comes to investigative reporting to uncover abuses of power, corruption, and wrongdoing
(Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, & Shapiro 2011, p. 199). Newspapers are still influential opinion makers, as often these established stalwarts of the mass media are influential in determining news frames and news agendas not only for their own organizations but also for many other news outlets. Despite the emergence of non-mainstream online news sources as competition for traditional newspapers, most online news still originates with newspapers; for example, in 2016 ten of the top fifteen most popular internet news sources were either online versions of print newspapers or aggregated content from online newspapers (Ebizmba, 2016). It is for this reason that newspapers such as The New York Times and The Washington Post are viewed as “agenda-setting newspapers” (DiMaggio 2015, p. 14; Hess & Kalb 2003, p. 31), and The Wall Street Journal is widely considered one of the most influential business news source in the U.S.

Print newspaper circulation in the U.S. in 2001 was 55.6 million for dailies and about 59.1 million for Sunday editions. Circulation by 2011 (the official year for withdrawal of troops from Iraq) had fallen to 44.4 million for dailies and 48.5 million for Sunday editions. The latest figures available indicate that circulation for daily newspapers in 2014 fell to 44.1 million and 47.9 million for Sunday editions (Pew Research Center, 2015a). Despite falling circulation, newspapers remain a significant medium for access to news and information for American adults, with readership of daily and print editions still close to the 100 million mark, which is close to 41% of the adult population. The newspapers selected for this study are the most widely circulated national newspapers with circulation figures as follows: The Wall Street Journal (2,378,827), The New York Times (2,039,519), and The Washington Post (2,018,647).

5 Alex Jones, the director of the Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy at Harvard University, estimated that approximately 85 percent of today’s news (in 2009) is generated by newspaper personnel (cited in Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, & Shapiro, 2011, p. 198).

6 Data is based on average daily print and website audience of U.S. newspapers from August 2011 to September 2012, by gender and age group. (Statista, 2016).
The circulation figures for the Sunday editions of these newspapers are as follows: *The New York Times* (1,254,506) and *The Washington Post* (639,966) (AAM, 2013). These figures may seem modest at first glance when compared to the wide reach of television news programs; however, it is worth pointing out that readership of newspapers is increasing when you combine the online and print audience. For example, unique visitor traffic to digital content (mobile and desktop website access) for the month of January 2015, was 55 million visitors for *USA Today* (ranked 1st), 54 million for *The New York Times* (ranked 2nd) and 48 million for *The Washington Post* (ranked 4th) (Pew Research Center, 2015b, p. 30); curiously *The Wall Street Journal* was not ranked in the top 25 sites so figures are below 6 million (Pew Research Center, 2015b, p. 30). With the exception of *The Wall Street Journal*, the newspapers selected in this study continue to dominate the digital newspaper market in terms of audience traffic to their websites. Furthermore, by comparison to the number of visitors to the websites of major cable news networks, Fox News (55 million), CNN (50 million), MSNBC (6 million) (Pew Research Center, 2015b, p. 36) and the major TV networks, ABC (65 million), NCB (56 million), and CBC (47 million) (Pew Research Center, 2015b, p. 44) – the newspapers selected in this study are very close in terms of audience share in the online market. A further advantage of studying newspaper coverage is that, unlike T.V. news bulletins, the newspaper format offers more opportunity for critical analysis and depth and breadth of coverage.

It is also important to consider the wide-ranging influence of American English language media outlets (Reese, 2004; Magder, 2003). Many countries’ journalists will

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7 *The Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today* do not have Sunday editions.
often compare their sources with those of other languages, and the international
dominance and widespread prevalence of English language media mean that the
newspapers analyzed in this study have audiences beyond the domestic market.
Furthermore, much of the world wide web is dominated by the English language and
often, from an international perspective, American news agencies will be significantly
relied upon when agencies from other countries compile news items. Finally, American
media organizations have to be put in the context of globalization and the dominance of
the U.S. as an international power, not only in terms of military or economic might, but
also the cultural influence of the U.S. throughout the world in nearly all aspects whether
it is business, education, medicine, sports, movies, music, and more (see for example, H.
Schiller, 1981 or D. Schiller, 2007 for more about the impact of information and
communication cultural hegemony).

1.3 Research Problem

As mentioned above, there has been limited scholarly attention to news coverage
of the ending of the Iraq War. Information plurality and a multiplicity of viewpoints in
the mass media are critical to a well-functioning democracy. Thus, to what extent did the
prominent discourses in the media vary and what was the extent of their confluence? This
study seeks to examine the prevalent discourse/s in newspapers that informed the public
and gave historical assessments of the outcomes, consequences, and responsibility for the
successes and failures of the war in Iraq in relation to the aims set out by the Bush
administration and in terms of the broader aims of the War on Terror.
CDA is an approach that has been widely used in the analysis of texts, in many cases for examining the mediation of political discourse between the state and media institutions. It is an approach that seeks to bring to the fore hidden agendas and to question accepted frames of discourse; it seeks to highlight how ideology operates in discourse, and how this ideology prevents a realistic analysis of an event, in this case war, the costliest of political affairs. More specifically, CDA “focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power and dominance in society” (van Dijk, 2001, p. 353). Through paying close attention to the text’s linguistic details and other discursive structures (such as narratives and themes), a body of evidence is produced through the analysis of explicit examples of language and textual structure that constitute the discourse. In other words, how did the newspapers create meanings about the ending of the war, specifically outcomes, consequences and responsibility? This analytical approach focuses on the implications of specific representations that delimit debate and perhaps even curtail it.

CDA is concerned with highlighting illegitimate power abuses and social injustices, and if possible proposing solutions to redress these. The war in Iraq is one of the greatest injustices of our times, with some studies estimating up to 500,000 civilian deaths as a result of the war (Hagopian et al., 2013). Armstrong views the militaristic agenda pursued by the Bush administration following 9/11 and subsequently continued by the Obama administrations as a continuation of a broader American strategy that developed following the end of the Cold War, namely to use unilateral military force and conduct preemptive strikes against perceived threats to U.S. interests based on capability to ensure U.S. hegemony and leadership in global affairs (Armstrong, 2002, p. 529; also
see Acharya, 2007). Also relevant is Iraq’s enormous natural resource wealth, which in 2016 had the fourth largest proven crude oil reserves in the world (OPEC, 2016, p. 8). If Iraq did not possess such vast resources, would it still be targeted for regime change and an eight-plus year occupation? Noam Chomsky has said: “The U.S. invaded Iraq because it has enormous oil resources, mostly untapped, and it’s right in the heart of the world’s energy system. Which means that if the U.S. manages to control Iraq, it extends enormously its strategic power, what Zbigniew Brzezinski calls its “critical leverage” over Europe and Asia….So that’s the reason for invading Iraq, the fundamental reason” (quoted in Parrish, 2006, para. 15).

If this is a war being fought for the control of resources as Chomsky and others attest (for example, Ahmad, 2003), to what extent did the newspaper discourse address this perspective? There are enormous corporate interests at stake, including huge military contracts for equipment and supplies. As Nash has argued, the Iraq War “exceeds past wars in the privatization of many service-related functions in supply, engineering, and maintenance, allowing multinational firms based in the United States such as Halliburton, Bechtel, Blackwater, and their subsidiaries to expand their operations with expectations of huge profits in the Middle East” (2009, p. 40). There has been enormous profiteering by U.S. contractors for the rebuilding of Iraq’s infrastructure – strangely, one which the U.S. helped destroy in its “nation-building” effort that involved a sustained ‘shock and awe’ bombing campaign throughout the invasion period of 2003. To what extent did newspaper discourse examine the profiteers of this war when reporting the outcomes and consequences of the war? What are the other possible explanations for the war in Iraq if it had nothing to do with eliminating the threat of terrorism or dispossessing a tyrannical
regime of its WMD as argued by the Bush administration? Conducting a CDA can shed light on such questions and aspects of the war that may be absent from the media coverage and thus reveal how discourses operate (through exclusion and omission as much as through actual topical content) to serve the interests of those in power.

Examining the media’s coverage of the ending of the Iraq War, and assessing the role news discourse plays in the positive or negative characterization of the conflict requires further examination in order to raise public awareness of the cost of the Iraq War and to highlight a need for more effective alternatives to the War on Terror. By focusing on the outcomes and consequences of, and responsibility for, the Iraq War, this study can demonstrate the ideological basis of the dominant discourses as well as how these discourses normalize certain courses of action (e.g. militaristic intervention) and rationalize such action as common sense and self-evident. Studying the structures of news discourse, and breaking down its discursive features, allows for greater insights into how the news media construct meanings which legitimate certain perspectives. Another aim of CDA-based research is to offer alternatives to the dominant discourse that more accurately represent reality and injustice.

1.3.1 Research Questions

- What meanings were constructed by news discourses about the ending of the Iraq War, specifically concerning the outcomes, the consequences, and responsibility?
- What were the similarities and differences in the discourse of the selected newspapers in the 2003 and 2011 ‘endings’ of the Iraq War?
What ideological perspectives shape the discursive constructions of reality in the news about the ending of the Iraq War?

The terms *outcome* and *consequence* can be synonymous, although in this study they are employed to refer to distinguishable features. Outcomes is used to address the specific results of the war in terms of the goals set out by the Bush administration at the war’s outset, such as regime change, establishment of democracy, and general de-Ba'athification of Iraqi civil society; these are generally focused on the positives arising from the invasion. Consequences focus less on the aims of the US-led coalition and more on the negative impact and results for Iraqi society, such as civilian casualties and destruction of Iraq’s infrastructure, de-stabilization of the region, and the rise of Islamic State.

1.4 Limitations and Scope

The limitations of CDA and its tools as a research methodology are discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Three, so this section will focus on the limitations of the structure of this study and approach adopted. The duration and scope of the War on Terror, its overarching importance to the war in Iraq, and the sheer volume of associated news coverage requires selecting specific events to study. The scope of this research is limited to the discursive construction of meaning of the ending of the Iraq War. Thus, there are other critical events that occurred over this period where the newspapers selected in this study perhaps adopted alternative discourses and viewpoints. The historical-diachronic analysis adopted in this study is designed to capture any changes in discourse from the declaration of the military victory in 2003 and the final withdrawal of
troops in 2011. By examining the ending of the war, this study will shed light on the different ways meaning is discursively constructed and reveal the extent of variation in the news discourse across the mainstream national newspapers. CDA studies point out that there may be the presence of numerous discourses embedded within texts and it is only those deemed significant in the context of the aims of this study that are examined in detail.

The focus on the four major national newspapers selected for this study requires overlooking other newspapers and news media. Again, unlike content analysis-based methodologies, it is not feasible to conduct a broader analysis of the media coverage without losing the detail and richness that CDA seeks to obtain. However, perhaps the approach adopted in this study can be applied to study different mediums to give an even more complete picture of the mass media discourse on the denouement of the Iraq War. I shall touch upon some of the other studies that have been conducted on the general media coverage of the Iraq War in Chapter Two. Framing studies and content analysis approaches form the dominant approaches, but it is hoped that the findings of this CDA study can enhance and complement existing research.

1.5 Background and Context

The War on Terror poses a very real danger to international stability and peace, and as exemplified by the invasion of Iraq in 2003, sets a dangerous precedent for the U.S. to pursue a unilateralist agenda that is highly ineffective in eliminating the threat of terrorism (see for example, Aoudé, 2016). Most analysts agree that since the invasion of Iraq, Iraq has become more unstable and a breeding ground for radical or fundamentalist
Islamic terrorism (see for example, Milton-Edwards, 2006; and Baker, 2015). There is much evidence to suggest that the forced removal of Saddam Hussein from power, and the subsequent destabilization of the country that ensued, has resulted in a further destabilizing effect on neighbouring nations as well as the wider region. As General Michael Flynn (Ret.), the former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency noted, “[i]n 2004, there were 21 total Islamic terrorist groups spread out in 18 countries. Today, there are 41 Islamic terrorist groups spread out in 24 countries.” (Flynn, 2014).

In terms of financial cost, different studies of the long term costs of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have estimated costs between $4 trillion and $6 trillion (Bilmes, 2013, p. 20; and Crawford, 2014, p. 12). Nothing is more costly than the loss of human life, but there remain huge disparities in estimates of Iraqi civilian deaths in the conflict, in part due to estimates being taken for different periods in time by different agencies. For example, according to the Iraq War Logs based on classified documents released by WikiLeaks, 66,081 civilian deaths were recorded between January 2004 and December 2009 (WikiLeaks, 2010); estimates by the Iraqi Health Ministry for the period between January 2005 and December 2009 were 87,215; and Iraq Body Count – the source most often cited by coalition forces politicians (Tapp et al., 2008) – put the figure at 119,902 for the period between 2003 and 2011 (2017). However, a study published in The Lancet estimated that between the invasion and June 2006, the number of civilian deaths due to violent causes was a staggering 601,000 (Burnham et al., 2006, p. 1426). Although the figures of the Lancet study were rejected by the U.S. and U.K. governments, other studies such as Hagopian et al. (2013) have estimated the figure to be close to 500,000 when accounting for deaths attributable to the collapse of infrastructure and other war-related
causes. Breau and Joyce (2011) bemoan the lack of enforcement of the existing legal frameworks in human rights law obliging belligerents to accurately report on civilian deaths, an accounting essential to assessing the human cost of war (p. 380).

Regardless of the differing opinions on how many civilian deaths have occurred, the cost of the U.S. led invasion for the Iraqi population has been enormous. In addition to civilian deaths, the numbers of those injured or maimed also run into the hundreds of thousands. Then there are other direct casualties of war such as five million orphaned children (Alternet.org, 2007), 2.7 million internally displaced Iraqis, and 22. million refugees (according to UNHCR figures, quoted in Baker and Adriaensens, 2012; similar figures are also quoted in Ismael and Ismael, 2013, p. 137), and of course, other victims of violent crimes like rape or torture. Studies have also been conducted to estimate the long term effects and indirect deaths through the fleeing of medical doctors, the destruction of medical facilities, and the destruction of sources for food and water (see for example Crawford, 2011). The war in Iraq has also come at a significant cost in terms of U.S. military and Department of Defense (DoD) personnel killed, with deaths for the period 2003-2011 being 4,497 and a further 32,249 wounded (DoD, N.D.). The invasion has also resulted in the violent deaths of thousands of Iraqi police and military personnel as well as other coalition forces.

In addition to the loss of life and economic destruction, the longer term effects of the war, including the destruction of essential infrastructure such as sewage treatment plants, factories, energy facilities, communication, transport, schools, and hospitals, will continue to be felt in Iraq for decades. In Chapter Two I will elaborate further on the LIS research that has focused on the damage to Iraq’s rich cultural heritage institutions such
as the National Archives, libraries, museums, and sites of enormous archaeological significance. The war has also had a devastating effect on Iraq’s educational institutions, a country with once high levels of literacy and education amongst its citizens (Baker & Adriaensens, 2012, p. 261). Al-Azawi (2016) has written about the extensive environmental damage, including destruction of soil texture and internal structure, and exposure to desertification as a consequence of the coalition’s intensive bombing campaigns that involved the use of 18,467 smart bombs and missiles in addition to 9,251 dumb bombs. (p.57). This dissertation will shed light on the extent to which the mainstream press and news discourse in general have addressed such issues in their assessments of U.S. “success” in Iraq.

One of the striking features of the War on Terror, and specifically the war in Iraq, has been the lack of opposition to the war in the United States from leaders of the opposite parties whether the Democrats during the G.W. Bush years or the Republicans during the Obama years. This is problematic because public protests and opposition to the war in Iraq prior to the invasion were unprecedented; however, both parties remain very closely aligned in terms of foreign policy. This dissertation will demonstrate how ideology operates within the Iraq War news discourse and discuss the implications of news media representations. The Democrats voted in favor of going to war and President Obama also had Republican support to continue the War on Terror. However, many Republicans remained opposed to a withdrawal from Iraq and critical of Obama’s re-focusing of the War on Terror to Afghanistan rather than Iraq. At present, Iraq remains key to the Trump administration as the rise of ISIS in Iraq and Syria have resulted in further American military engagement in the region.
Not only is the weakness of opposition voices to the wars a reflection of the weak state of representative democracy in the United States, but it is also indicative of a failure of the press to scrutinize government policy choices and the implications of these. This symbiotic relationship is encapsulated in the propaganda model proposed by Herman and Chomsky (1988), who assert that elite influence on the mass media is worrying for the health of democracy and the realization of justice. Furthermore, the lack of media scrutiny of the agenda of the political establishment to take the country into a war that has been so costly has damaged the image of the U.S. globally, and, as some have argued, may have increased the threat of terrorism (see for example, Stern, 2014; or Stern and McBride, 2013). News media coverage of war is clearly an informational issue when it comes to the public’s understanding of foreign policy.

Given the contextualization of the Iraq War within the War on Terror, it is necessary to draw attention to the broader conflict of the War on Terror and ask why it is necessary to pursue and when it might possibly end. Following the establishment of a weak government in Iraq that was not inclusive of all groups, parties, and ethnicities, the U.S. withdrew troops from Iraq in December 2011. Yet the aftermath of the withdrawal saw a spiraling of terrorist activity and violence directed at civilians as well as political opponents by various competing factions and groups. Iraq became destabilized, with a strong presence of al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia that did not exist prior to the invasion, with many groups competing for power, including the group known as ISIS. Furthermore, the destabilization of Iraq has resulted in the expansion of armed militias that are carrying out atrocities against political and religious opponents at an alarming rate. In addition, the establishment of a strong extremist presence in Iraq has seen the birth of ISIS, a
fundamentalist Islamist organization determined to overthrow the government of Syria as well. The effects of the War on Terror are unfolding in the Civil War that is currently taking place in Syria – a conflict that has been raging from 2011 until the present moment – resulting in 470,000 direct and indirect war-related civilian deaths by 2015, according to a policy report from the Syrian Center of Policy Research (2016, p. 61), and a further displacement of over five million Syrians (2016, p. 9), causing an immense refugee crisis. Although at the time of the official ending of the Iraq War, the full ramifications of the war could not have been known, it is important to examine the discourses about the ending of the conflict to ascertain what kinds of meaning and reality were discursively constructed by the media. The next chapter will examine in detail the relevant literature to bring attention to some of the competing analyses and discourses of the situation that arose out of the invasion of Iraq.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The Iraq War or the War on Terror have not received a great deal of attention within the Library and Information Science (LIS) discipline and much of the literature that does deal with these topics, does so tangentially or peripherally. LIS research will be the starting point for this review but as there is an abundance of interdisciplinary scholarship from numerous other fields that is highly relevant, this review will draw from much of such literature as well. In some instances, the scholarship outside LIS addresses the direct concerns of this research and therefore, the purpose here will also be to summarize this and clarify how these disparate bodies of work have helped inform this dissertation. This interdisciplinarity is typical of most Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) scholarship, and this dissertation will also advocate for such an approach.

This literature review will be organized into the following broad sections: 2.1) The Iraq War in LIS; 2.2) General Iraq War Literature; 2.3) Information and Media Landscape – which offers a survey of the literature that has dealt with questions concerning the role of the media in U.S. politics and media performance in the Iraq War; 2.4) Dominant Themes and Discourses – which gives a survey of some of the CDA studies of media coverage of the Iraq War highlighting the predominant discourses and themes that have been found to be present by other scholars; and 2.5) Summary.
A great deal of the non-LIS studies originate in the discipline of mass communications, however, this review will also bring together research that has addressed the topic at hand in the fields of political science, history, military and defense studies, critical studies and rhetoric. It is also in the final section of this review that I will address other CDA studies about the media and the Iraq War. It is worth pointing out, that CDA is as much a theoretical approach as it is a methodological approach. Therefore the relevant CDA literature that forms the basis of the theoretical foundations of this study has been addressed in Chapter Three, the bulk of which comes from the fields of linguistics and socio-linguistics.

2.1 The Iraq War in LIS

One of the features of LIS scholarship on the Iraq War in general is a reluctance to take a committed stand for or against the action that has been taken by the coalition forces in Iraq regardless of the informational issue being discussed. Much of the LIS scholarship does not address the controversies of the initial war, such as the rationale for war, its questionable legality, the massive devastation, economic, human and cultural costs, as well as the wider implications of instability in the region and loss of American standing in the international arena. These are concerns of social justice which is something that LIS scholars are keen to stress when it comes to issues such as information access; at the same time, these issues require engagement with politics, which runs against the dominant tradition of seeking neutrality that is so common in LIS research. Instead, the focus of these studies is almost entirely on an academic concern of one kind or another, whilst tactfully avoiding the slippery terrain of addressing the ethical
or moral consequences of the war. To a CDA approach this is problematic because responsibility for the outcomes and consequences are central to the ending of the war and crucial to the aims of redressing the injustice of the war.

Despite the existence of journals such as *Progressive Librarian*, which is dedicated to critical scholarship and progressive politics, only a single research paper has been published within it that addresses the Iraq War. This is not wholly surprising given that in LIS, as in most other social sciences, there is a tradition of at least presenting an academic impartiality and objectivity, with its roots in the positivist tradition of enlightenment thought. However, this is precisely what theorists in CDA highlight as non-critical scholarship that does little to address the wrongs or social injustices (in this case of the consequences of war) and may even be faulted for preserving the status quo and thereby perpetuating the injustice (see for example, Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 1995a).

A number of LIS articles on Iraq are concerned with the pertinent issue of cultural heritage institutions such as libraries, museums, and archives damaged by war (Kam, 2004; Johnson, 2005; Edwards & Edwards, 2008; and Moustafa, 2013). Edwards and Edwards (2008) illustrate the fractured national history of Iraq, and the forging of a nation state based on colonial lines drawn up by the British government in 1920-21. The authors demonstrate the critical role that cultural heritage institutions, and specifically the Iraq National Library and Archive (INLA) and its director Saad Eskander continue to play in the retention of a shared historical memory and fostering a national identity in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion. Kam (2004), Johnson (2005) and Moustafa (2013) for example, document the damage to Iraq’s cultural heritage in the form of fire and looting
but all three authors do not address the issue of responsibility for such destructive consequences. For CDA scholars this is a crucial problem as the treatment of the topic of destruction as naturally occurring without any agent, and the pretense of neutrality or objectivity further entrenches such destruction as inevitable (for similar arguments see for example, Fairclough, 1992b, p. 9; Gee, 2011, Rogers, 2011, p.4). The focus of these LIS articles on the Iraq War remain on the practical problem of ensuring that there are proper and effective disaster management plans in place for securing sites of cultural heritage during times of war. Johnson (2005) asserts that the media tendency to report negative news resulted in exaggerated claims of damage to Iraq’s cultural heritage sites following the invasion and early occupation (p. 210). His article focuses largely on questioning the veracity of various media accounts regarding the damage caused by war and like others, he steers well-clear of the issue of examining the responsibility for the destruction caused by the invasion, and instead offers suggestions for reconstruction and restoration not only of the damaged sites themselves but of the informational professional workforce. Mustafa (2013) bemoans the losses to the Iraqi National and Library Archives as a consequence of the invasion but does not engage with questions of responsibility for initiating the invasion in the first place nor the inevitable destruction to sites of archaeological and cultural importance that happened as a consequence of the Coalition forces’ shock and awe bombing campaigns. Similarly, Kam (2004) refers to the damage to Iraq’s ancient collections and archaeological sites as a “cultural crisis” and calls on scholars and librarians to provide creative solutions to mitigating the losses (p. 10).

A wider consequence of such academic discourse that does not directly engage with the politics of the war is that it implicitly treats the issue of war as something that
just ‘happens’ and that the conditions of war are merely inherited or exist, rather than being brought into existence through questionable policies such as ‘regime change’, ‘nation building’ or ‘pre-emptive war.’ Baker and Adriaensens (2012) who are not LIS scholars but specialists on Iraq, argue that there is an obligation amongst journalists and scholars to “counter the massive effort of the White House and the corporate media to whitewash America’s deplorable legacy in Iraq.” (p. 269). This is a key concern for critical discourse analysts and will be expanded on in Chapter Three.

Soyka and Wilczek (2014) in their study of challenges for archivists in military record keeping, do offer a little more of a critical stance on the archival practices of the military, specifically the need of an improvement in documenting military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan in order to increase the transparency, accountability and public trust in government actions. They also underline the importance of documenting the routines of counterinsurgency and interactions with local populations, as this data can be utilized for lessons learned and actionable intelligence (p. 183). Soyka and Wilczek also suggest that the absence of well-kept records poses a significant challenge to veterans trying to claim their medical benefits (2014, p. 191). Similar to the LIS research mentioned above, there is an absence of criticism of the decision to go to war, the conduct in terms of U.S. military actions in Iraq or a discussion of responsibility for the situation in Iraq. The article remains focused narrowly on the information issues of accurate documentation and knowledge capturing but bypasses a discussion of controversies such as the Jessica Lynch “rescue” story or the Abu Ghraib abuse scandal. It could be argued that such events have had an even bigger impact on the issues of transparency, accountability, and
public trust, and therefore the need to retain detailed information on these events is even more important for collective memory and the historical record.

Another aspect of the Iraq War that has been addressed within the information ethics literature in LIS are the implications of the broader War on Terror for civil liberties, and particularly the impact on libraries and their patrons (see for example, Hamilton, 2003; Brown, 2003; Chang, 2003). There has been a growing concern expressed within the LIS discipline with regards to the erosion of privacy, the issues of balancing national security concerns with protecting civil liberties. Although this literature is not directly relevant to the control of information and discourse in the media’s coverage of the Iraq War, it has been one of the key areas that LIS and related scholarship has branched into (see for example Caidi & Ross (2005) who examine the impact of government policies on citizens’ information rights). Hamilton (2003) examines the consequences of the War on Terror for freedom of expression, including highlighting the deliberate attempts attacks on alternative news websites such as Al Jazeera English and Yellow Times (p. 200). There are generally numerous studies from LIS and non-LIS scholars on intelligence and surveillance issues that have resulted from key events in the War on Terror, such as the passage of the Patriot Act in 2001, and the revelations of controversial events from the various theaters of the War on Terror (including Iraq) published by organizations such as WikiLeaks and by whistleblowers such as Chelsea Manning (formerly Bradley Manning) and the former National Security Agency worker Edward Snowden.

Another important study about the Iraq War was conducted by Robbin and Buente (2008). They examined the impact of internet information and communication on the
political behavior of nearly 1500 people drawn from a digital dialing survey by the Pew Internet and American Life Project concerning how respondents obtained and used information in the case of Iraq. Although the findings of the study where not directly relevant to the central research enquires of this research, it is still important for two principle reasons: 1) the authors point out that much of our understanding of political information use comes from researchers outside LIS (p. 2211) and therefore propose crossing disciplinary boundaries in order to borrow more robustly developed theoretical models for understanding the effects of political information on behavior, especially from the fields of political science and mass communications (p. 2224). And 2) their study emphasizes the interlinked nature / parallel importance of the informational component (e.g. digital libraries, newspapers, political news, etc.) and the communication component (e.g. contacting political representative, engaging in online political conversation, sharing information, etc.) (p. 2115). In other words, information is contextually dependent on communication, and communication is situated within an informational context. This connection between information and journalism, has also been examined by Rusciano (2005) who raises the informational dilemma that journalists face between the public’s right to know and “knowing what is right” from a moral point of view, even if it undermines the war effort (p. 8). Despite his research appearing in the Progressive Librarian journal, Rusciano himself is not an LIS scholar. This study also views information as intertwined with politics and communication, and political information as an important site for LIS research.
2.2 General Literature on the Iraq War

Since the events of September 11, 2001, there has been an exponential growth in research related to U.S. foreign policy and geopolitics, concerning areas such as the post-Cold War role of the U.S. in global affairs as the sole superpower and the threat of terrorism. The study of contemporary international politics and events such as the global War on Terror have drawn scholars from many different disciplines, and it is useful to draw from the extensive body of work when it comes to studying the Iraq War as the war was initiated within the broader context of the War on Terror and justified on the same grounds. Furthermore, the events surrounding the War on Terror have profound consequences for the nature of democracy for American citizens with the erosion of civil liberties and expansion of state surveillance powers being two such areas. In addition, the War on Terror due its global scale has an ongoing impact on international security, the security of many countries, and most profoundly on the populations of the regions chosen as theatres of war. Thus, the subject of the War on Terror has inspired almost an industry of academic, historical and popular books dealing with multiple facets of this era-defining conflict.

This section also briefly reviews literature dealing with the key phases of the Iraq War including making the case for war, the initial invasion, the occupation before turning explicitly to the literature that deals with the ending of the Iraq War and its legacy. It is especially necessary to examine the literature dealing with the different phases of the ending of the war as this is the central focus of this dissertation and will also shed light on the dominant discourse within each phase.
With regards to the media role in the ending of the Iraq War, *Obama, the Media and Framing the U.S. Exit from Iraq and Afghanistan* by Erika G. King (2014) is the most comprehensive study examining various aspects of the exit strategy and media coverage. King examines President Obama’s speeches and how the media reported these, with the objective of firstly, demonstrating the thematic evolution of the narratives deployed by Obama; secondly, the extent to which these narratives fit the War on Terror frame established by the Bush administration; and thirdly to evaluate the level of reliance on the foundational myth of American exceptionalism to undergird Obama’s interpretations of the outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan (King, 2014, p. 15). Although King’s work is not a traditional CDA approach, there are important elements to it such as the observation of dominant themes and narratives in the media; these elements make it highly relevant to any study on ending of the Iraq War and her work will be referenced at various points in this review.

2.2.1 Defining Terrorism

Determining meanings in language is central to discourse analysis and the phrase ‘War on Terror’ perfectly exemplifies the importance of definitions, discourse parameters, interpretive frameworks and narratives. To begin with, there is no international consensus on a legal definition of terrorism and nearly every researcher in this area highlights the problematic nature of confining it to a single definition (Tuman, 2003: 1). There are many competing definitions but when it comes to labelling groups as terrorists, this is a special right that governments have the power to exercise to determine which types of opponents are terrorists or not. According to Solomon (1999), there is an
Orwellian logic behind defining terrorism; as bombings by Third World countries are defined as terrorism while bombings by the U.S. are virtuous strikes against terror (cited in Rothe & Muzzatti, 2004: 331). This point illustrates the highly subjective nature of defining terrorism and has led Townshend (2002) to remind us that designating a group or opposition as ‘terrorists’ is merely a way of labelling as the word ‘terrorist’ is not a description that groups or individuals self-apply (p. 3). Labelling opponents in this way implicates them of criminality and disregard for human life. Rothe and Muzzatti (2004) echo this point arguing that the reason for the definitional quagmire is that conceptualizing terrorism is difficult due to the pejorative connotations of the term, its subjective nature, and that it is dependent on political power (p.331). Karim adds that the term terrorist is merely a label applied by those in power, stating that the “political violence of those who seek to upset the status quo is characterised as terrorism” (2002, p. 104). These debates reflect the contested terrain and problematic nature of the terms terrorist and terrorism.

It is important to bear in mind, historically, struggles for the end of now widely considered inhumane practices such as freedom from imperial rule, the right to self-determination, the end to slavery, the end to apartheid or segregation, or legalized discrimination, the end of occupation by foreign troops, etc. began with some kind of violent opposition and disorder aimed at those in power. In many social movements throughout different historical periods, governments opposing them had labelled segments of the struggles or supporters of the movements as terrorists, agitators, troublemakers, or criminals (see for example Chaliand & Blin’s (2007) edited collection of The history of terrorism: From antiquity to al Qaeda for detailed examples from
various social movements in history that began with some form of violence but later gained legitimacy). Labelling is therefore a critically powerful tool used by governments to preserve their own legitimacy or the legitimacy of an injustice or legal framework of injustice (Michaels 2013, p. 119). Furthermore, the importance of establishing labels within existing cultural contexts is critical to ensuring the wider public is able to place the story.

Specifically, there are pre-existing frames of reference such as the doctrine of American Exceptionalism which permeates American society that politicians from both parties draw upon when framing foreign policy issues. American exceptionalism is an informal but deeply entrenched ideology that endows Americans with the faith in a special destiny amongst nations, a belief that American wars are noble, with Americans always positioned on the right side of history, therefore casting conflict as a struggle between the forces of good and evil rather than incompatible national interests is the norm (King, 2014, p. 5; Patman, 2006, p. 964).

Aside from the use of the term ‘terrorist’ to label undesirables, others such as Schaffert (1992) focus on the role of the media in turning violence or criminality into terrorism through its power to transmit fear. He argues that “without the media there is no terror, only murder and mayhem (Schaffert, 1992, p. 47). Tuman (2003) and Altheide (2003, p. 43) also stress the role of the media, asserting that the meaning of terrorism is socially constructed and communicated through the media. However, even in the case of the War on Terror, it is not just the state that describes opponents as terrorists as these labels have also been widely adopted in Western media outlets, leading some to argue that there is a strong undercurrent of Orientalist discourse (Said, 1978), where a great
deal of media analysis has privileged a clash of civilizations discourse (Kellner, 2004, pp. 144-45).

However, what constitutes terrorism is usually dependent on specific acts being labelled as such by governments, and the news media play an important role in reinforcing such designations. The term terrorist is used to describe politically motivated violence instead of alternative descriptors such as ‘political violence,’ ‘state violence,’ ‘aggression,’ or ‘protest.’ The War on Terror framework has been widely adopted as an interpretive construct within news discourse on the Iraq War to help audiences make sense of the need for invasion and occupation. The media reliance on this framework reflects the influence of the government in news discourses as it has monopolizing power to designate the label ‘terrorist’ in order to justify its own policies. Hodges’ (2011) book *The “War on Terror” Narrative* demonstrates how this discourse has been constructed with a view to reflect a certain sociopolitical reality and his relevant findings will be revisited throughout this review.

2.2.2 The War on Terror as an Interpretive Construct

Here, I draw attention to the literature that sheds light on the phrase ‘War on Terror’ itself as an interpretive framework that has been influential in how the Iraq War has been presented officially as well as how it has been represented in the mainstream media, including the newspapers chosen for this study.

Hodges (2007a) in his study of narrative has identified six narrative ‘events’ that constitute the ‘War on Terror’ and give the moniker its lasting interpretative value. These include, 1) the introduction of a global War on Terror (GWOT); 2) naming 9/11 as the
precipitating event; 3) the Afghanistan War as the ‘first’ battle in the GWOT; 4) an ongoing discussion of GWOT fought on many fronts; 5) talk of the ‘battle’ of Iraq; 6) a recap of the precipitating event and long term commitment to continue the war (p. 69).

Some have commented on the inaccuracy of presenting Iraq as part of a terror narrative, something that many officials within the Bush administration continued to do in the run up to the invasion (King, 2014, p. 22). Regardless of its inaccuracy and lack of evidence of an Iraq and al-Qaeda connection, the GWOT narrative became a cultural narrative that was “common sense” to many Americans in their understanding of 9/11 and especially during the early years of the war (Hodges, 2007a, 2007b; 2011). Hodges’ deconstruction of the phrase ‘War on Terror’ demonstrates the discursive achievements of the Bush administration as the phrase itself characterized 9/11 as an act of war and created a dichotomy between ‘us’ – the good, innocent, peace and freedom loving people and ‘them’ – the bad, evil, freedom-hating terrorists. With such an understanding, there is limited room for diplomacy or negotiation with the enemy, and war becomes the naturalized response (also supported by findings from King & Wells, 2009). We shall revisit the discursive achievements of the War on Terror discourse and how it operates as a Foucauldian discourse – that is, one that regulates how the subject can be dealt with.

King (2014) also found that the War on Terror construct was not contested by either political party or the media, and the Bush administration had been successful in the establishment of this discourse. King concludes that despite competing narratives being presented by President Obama about the American legacy in Iraq, these were not as successful in being widely adopted by the media as the ‘War on Terror’ master narrative had been (2014, p. 185). Lewis and Reese (2009) in a study interviewing journalists from
USA Today about the War on Terror framework found that it “remains a powerful organizing principle…[and ] the meta-frame not only shapes much of foreign and domestic policy, but also defines the terms of debate, hedging public and media discourse within its framework.” (p. 96). The War on Terror narrative has remained intact, largely unquestioned, and a dominant interpretative framework for the war Iraq and the larger fight against terrorism. Similar findings have been reported by Karim (2002), who studies journalism as a cultural practice and found there was uncritical acceptance of the War on Terror frame in the media that polarized the conflict as a struggle between good and evil (p. 106).

Some scholars are heavily critical of a War on Terror as it overlooks terrorism as a tactic and not an end in itself, but rather a symptom and reaction against what are perceived injustices such as the expansion of neo-liberalist hegemony in the Third World (for example, Hasmi, 2014;). Romaya (2012) also argues that it is not possible to wage a War on Terror, nor win one, as it is not possible to eradicate international terrorism through war itself (p. 111). In this study, a close textual analysis of the newspapers selected will also illuminate the salience of this key narrative in how newspapers gave meaning to the ending of the war.

2.2.3 The Case for War and the Initial Invasion

The International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies provides critical perspectives on various aspects of the Iraq War, including media coverage, and is therefore an important scholarly arena for research on Iraq. It is the Bush administration’s rhetoric and the media coverage of the initial justification for war that has received the
most attention in terms of the Iraq War literature. Various scholars have written of the Orwellian logic behind the rationale for war, (Najjar, 2014; Lazar & Lazar, 2007; Kellner, 2004, 2005; Kalsi, 2008). Najjar (2014) has written about how frequently the terms ‘peace’, ‘liberty’, ‘freedom’, were used to justify the war in the American media (p. 19), where the war was presented as a war for peace; the destruction of Iraq’s infrastructure was for humanitarian purposes; and the large number of civilian deaths would produce a healthy democracy and freedom. Lazar and Lazar (2007) refer to this recasting of violence as moral and justified as a strategy of re-lexicalization, where war is placed as a necessary precursor to peace (p. 58) and in their examination of the speeches of three presidents (H. W. Bush, Clinton, and G.W. Bush), found this to be a running theme throughout. Such frames although widely utilized in the mainstream media, Najjar argues were not persuasive in the middle-east (2014, p. 29).

It is necessary to understand the Iraq War within the War on Terror narrative that was utilized as the primary framework for understanding the rationale for the Iraq War. There is general consensus that regime change in Iraq was an important foreign policy goal for the Bush administration (Holsti, 2011; McClellan, 2008, p. 126). Throughout both Presidential terms of Bush, the rhetoric emphasized Iraq as a key battleground in the War on Terror (King, 2014).

An important study of public reactions to the war by Feldman, Huddy, and Marcus’ (2015) concludes that in the run up to the war, there was cross party consensus of the Bush initiative for war, and that most of the media (including The New York Times and The Washington Post, and most television media) supported and amplified the administration’s case for war. They do however point out that there was greater anti-war
or neutral war coverage amongst newspapers compared to television news, and a greater skepticism about the war expressed in *USA Today*, as well as amongst the Knight Ridder Papers such as the *Philadelphia Inquirer, Detroit Free Press, Miami Herald, San Jose Mercury News* and others. Nevertheless, the authors also conclude that the elite press (*The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*) were more likely to echo the message of the administration than local papers (p. 101); and antiwar sentences within news stories by elite papers expressed relatively mild opposition whereas sentences that supported the administration were strongly supportive (p. 90).

After the media coverage on the lead up to war, another widely studied aspect of the war has been the initial invasion and various key events in the subsequent occupation have also garnered a great deal of scholarly attention. A number of military strategists and experts have blamed the lack of progress after the 2003 invasion on poor post-conflict planning; and lack of cultural knowledge about Iraq’s demography (for example, see Hooker & Collins, 2015a, 2015b; Collins, 2015; Lamb & Franco, 2015).

The period of occupation also involved a series of events that brought the legality of the war as well as the moral justification into even sharper focus, particularly the large number of civilian deaths, the lack of security and protection, the Abu Ghraib prisoner torture and abuse scandal, the dubious ‘rescue’ of Private Jessica Lynch, and the use of indiscriminate arrests, raids and detentions by the coalition forces. Hagen, Kaiser and Hanson (2015) cite these reasons and the fear generated amongst ordinary Iraqis as a result, for why many turned to Sunni or Shia insurgent groups for protection (p. 96). They provide harrowing accounts of interviews with Iraqis who were victims of occupying forces or sectarian violence, but also point out that the American media has been vague
when it comes to reporting the brutality of the war experience. (p. 61). However, numerous studies of the media covering the rationale for war have shown that although unfavorable views of the Bush administration began to surface, the overarching framework for a War on Terror was never brought into question by journalists or senior members of the Democratic Party (King, 2014, p. 13).

Another key event in the Iraq War that has received significant attention from scholars of media and political rhetoric alike is the success of the troop surge in 2007. King (2014) found that by 2007, although the mood in the press and amongst Democrats was critical of the situation in Iraq, the troop surge was put forth as the brainchild of General Petraeus and criticism of his approach would be considered as an attack on the military (p. 27). King (2014) also found that the strong Democratic opposition to the troop surge was primarily a disagreement over strategy, but the discussion took place within the hegemonic discourse of the War on Terror, and that the larger framework was not brought into question by Democrats or the press (p. 28). As mentioned, by this time the media had become more critical of the Bush administration policies in Iraq and the surge strategy received more criticism in the media as well, particularly in The New York Times and The Washington Post (King, 2014, pp. 30-31). King’s study showed that by the Fall of 2007, with reports of declining violence, The Washington Post had become more positive about improving security conditions and that by the middle of 2008, the media were back ‘on board’ with the administration about the importance of Iraq in the fight against terrorism (King, 2014, p. 32). King concludes that despite the success of the Bush administration in getting the media on side, the public’s fundamental attitudes about
the war did not change (King, 2014, p. 38). Throughout this period and up until the Presidential debates, neither Obama nor McCain questioned the War on Terror frame. Michaels (2013) found that the discourse around the surge as a success became widely adopted by politicians and the media because the media ignored the split within the Sunni insurgents and al-Qaeda, as well as Sunni calls for a ceasefire out of fear of being ethnically cleansed by Shia militias. (pp. 154-55). This once again illustrates the power of language and controlling discourse in managing perceptions and constructing social reality. Chapters Three and Four will show the way in which CDA can be used to demonstrate how this is discursively achieved in more detail.

Various scholars have provided some analysis of the change in the U.S. government’s approach to Iraq following the election of Obama. On the whole, there is general consensus that there was some divergence in the approach to the War on Terror, and specifically with regards to Iraq (see for example, Lansford & Covarrubias, 2012; King, 2014). Obama wanted to shift attention back to Afghanistan and argued Iraq was not the key battleground for the War on Terror. (Obama, 2009). One of the key changes in Obama’s rhetoric was to redefine a War on Terror in narrower terms, and usually to identify specific conflicts. The change in rhetoric has also been observed by other scholars including Katz, 2012; King, 2014; and Hodges, 2011. Terry (2013) in his study of Obama’s rhetoric and policy found that despite some policy differences and change in rhetoric between Obama’s approach and that of the neo-cons that dominated the Bush administration, there was not much change in terms of the general U.S. policy in the middle-east (p. 52).
An interesting consideration when examining newspaper performance is the nationality of the readers of newspapers. As mentioned, the strength of patriotic feeling in the United States following 9/11 was extremely high (Eisman, 2003), as was support for the invasion of Iraq amongst the public and press. This was not however the case in other countries such as Germany and China who were not involved in the war, and where newspapers were subsequently far more critical in their coverage and focused on alternative motivations for war (see for example, Yang, 2008; or Herber & Filak, 2007). The extent to which the lack of critical journalism in the U.S. in the lead up to the invasion cannot purely be down to the nationality of journalists because in the U.K. (which committed the second largest combat troops to Iraq in the coalition), the mainstream broadsheet newspapers offered more variety of opinion than in the U.S., with the Guardian and The Independent both taking more critical stances of the war and The Daily Telegraph and The Times supporting it (Kalsi, 2008). However, the sense of commitment to one’s own group and pressure of community values was found to be a concern amongst journalists in one survey of American journalists which raises further questions of the extent to which impartiality is possible (Mackay, 2012, p. 33).

2.2.4 The Ending of the War

As highlighted in the introductory chapter, the ending of the Iraq War and analysis of media coverage of its end has not received as much scholarly attention as the earlier phases of the war. This is in part due to the war officially having ended fairly recently, but also because of the ongoing sense of war that persists in Iraq long after the troop surge and declarations of an end by President Obama in 2010 and 2011. However,
it is the discourse constructed around war’s denouement that provides an interpretive framework for understanding the construction of meaning of the ending of the war as well as an assessment of whether the outcomes were successful or not, and worthwhile. Studying the news media constructions of success and failure in the outcomes of the Iraq gives this study its novelty amongst the existing scholarship.

2.2.4.1 End of Combat Mission – Bush, 2003

There is limited scholarship specifically about the legacy of the Iraq War in May 2003 as a point of ending in the war as it became evidently clear not long after President Bush’s May 1, 2003 ‘Mission Accomplished’ speech that the situation in Iraq was deteriorating far more rapidly than anyone in the White House had anticipated. In general, the scholarship here is part of the same body of literature that deals with the initial invasion period and is quite critical of the government and media. Joseph J. Collins (2015) at the National Defense University still refers to the initial invasion as a success but admits there was a lack of planning for the insurgency that resisted the occupation. (p. 58). This view is echoed by other strategists such as Hoffman and Crowther (2015). Hayden (2009) who examines in detail the Bush administration’s relationship with the media, writes that Bush’s premature celebration badly lacerated the White House in the long run, especially because of the dramatic spectacle and triumphant tone of the speech (delivered atop the USS Abraham Lincoln) (pp. 130-1). He goes on to stay that the administrations campaign of disinformation in cases such as the staging of Iraqis pulling down Saddam Hussein’s statue or the deceptions of Ahmed Chalabi eventually discredited the administration (Hayden, 2009, p. 136). Scott McClellan (2008), the
former press secretary for President Bush, recalled in his memoir, that in his role as press secretary, the priority was to protect the image of the President and administration and the administration “short-circuited debate over the necessity for war in Iraq and chose instead to turn it into the subject of a massive marketing blitz. (p. 249). This dissertation will re-visit the discourse of the press at the time of this ‘first’ ending of the Iraq War to ascertain what kind of meaning was constructed about the conflict given such aims of the Bush administration to emphasize a successful end to the conflict.

2.2.4.2 End of Military Combat – Obama, 2010

King (2014) argues that Obama changed his narrative of criticism of the Iraq War in 2008 and brought it more in line with Bush (p. 3). Obama had made clear that his administration intended to de-escalate the war in Iraq and re-focus resources on Afghanistan. Media interest in Iraq had also been declining with the global economic crisis of 2008 getting more coverage. In February 2009, Obama laid out his exit strategy to end the combat mission in Iraq by August 31, 2010. (Obama, 2009). In the same speech he also re-iterated the successful completion of the job in Iraq, stating “We sent our troops to Iraq to do away with Saddam Hussein – and you got the job done. We kept our troops to help establish a sovereign government – and you got the job done. And we will leave the Iraqi people with a hard-earned opportunity to live a better life – that is your achievement; that is the prospect you have made possible.” (Obama, 2009). King found that from the point in time when Obama assumed office, to the withdrawal of troops from Iraq, there were five interrelated themes that were consistently present in his rhetoric. 1) The U.S. had fulfilled its responsibilities in Iraq; 2) U.S. troops served with
honor and met with success; 3) the war’s benefits outweighed the costs; 4) It was necessary to re-focus on the real security threat of terrorism in Afghanistan; 5) Iraq was now able to achieve its democratic destiny. (King, 2014, p. 128). The analysis conducted for this dissertation will draw from King’s findings by examining the extent to which such themes dominated newspaper discourses concerning the ending of the war, and could therefore shed light on whether news discourses reproduce or challenge such presentations of the outcomes of the war.

2.2.4.3 Full Withdrawal of Troops – Obama, 2011

Many commentators who have studied the war feel that the principle reasons for failure to implement a functioning democracy in Iraq were the sectarian divisions amongst the Sunni, Shia and Kurdish populations of Iraq (for example, Katz, 2012; Collins, 2015; Hagen, Kaiser, & Hanson, 2015). To what extent did the selected newspapers focus on such explanations for ongoing problems in Iraq? Prior to the full withdrawal and earlier declarations of victory, there had been various landmark events such as the capture and trial of Hussein and the death of al-Qaeda in Iraq leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in 2006, and the death of Osama bin Laden in May 2011, all at the time were heralded as victories in the war but as Katz (2012) points out, the death of bin Laden for example, was noteworthy for its lack of impact in ameliorating the War on Terror (p. 108).

Obama’s speech on December 14th, 2011 at Fort Bragg, North Carolina to American troops stated: “we’re leaving behind a sovereign, stable and self-reliant Iraq, with a representative government that was elected by its people…This is an extraordinary
achievement, nearly nine years in the making.” (Obama, 2011b). King (2014) in her analyses of various White House speeches and statements asserts that the careful selection of information and subsequent presentation of reality was designed specifically to promote a particular understanding of the story of the Iraq War (p. 3). However, King (2014) also found that there was still caution to declaring complete victory in Obama’s rhetoric but that there was emphasis on positive achievements of freedom, democracy and progress – core American values that were comforting to the public (p. 141).

Obama’s Iraq War narrative was firmly entrenched in the notion of American exceptionalism, tying the purpose of the Iraq War to the U.S. self-image of promoting the cause of human rights and democracy globally (King, 2014, p. 142). In his speeches there was muted criticism of the Bush administration’s legacy in Iraq and scant mention of the existing deteriorating conditions in Iraq. However, King found that the media outlets “constructed their own, more foreboding narrative” about the war at its conclusion. (2014, p. 144).

News organizations, including The New York Times and The Washington Post, highlighted the inadequacies of the Obama narrative whilst praising U.S. fighting forces. Specifically, counter news discourses emerged concerning the aftermath in Iraq, the effect on the image of the U.S., and the war’s meaning and legacy (King, 2014, p. 149). However, King also found that once the withdrawal of troops had been announced, media interest in the U.S. legacy in Iraq virtually disappeared (2014, p. 187). This study seeks to build upon King’s findings using the CDA methodology by investigating additional sources such as The Wall Street Journal and USA Today which are excluded from her study.
2.2.5 Iraq War Legacy

Chapter one elaborated on some of the physical destruction of Iraq’s infrastructure as well as civilian casualties and deaths resulting from the war, therefore, this section will focus on the narratives put forth by the Obama administration and media to represent the legacy of the war. King (2014) found that Obama’s rhetoric downplayed the ongoing problems caused by the destruction of war and instead focused on looking positively at the future, emphasizing the removal of Hussein as a success, and the fall in violence since the troop surge in 2007 (p. 134).

Raymond Baker, an international specialist on the Arab and Islamic world as well as a critical scholar, views the Iraq War as a “carefully calculated and lucrative war crime” (2015, p. 89). He draws attention to the ways in which regime change and nation building creates opportunities for profit, arguing that ‘winning’ a war is not the most important objective as ‘lost’ wars can be profitable too. (Baker, 2015, p. 87; see also Baker & Adriaensens, 2012; Terry, 2013). He points out that “service contracts over the course of the war totalled some 138 billion dollars” (p. 88); this is an aspect of the discourse of war that will be investigated when examining the coverage of the selected newspapers, as the overwhelming majority of mass media coverage did not address this facet of the war at its outset.

At the time of the initial invasion, there were calls amongst the anti-War movement that the aggressive approach to the War on Terror, and particularly the invasion of Iraq and the destabilization that that would ensue would result in fueling Islamist extremism. This is a thesis supported by Baker (2015); Chernus (2006); and Ramazani (2013). Iraqis in general have experienced a great deal of trauma, even prior to
the invasion, including from the authoritarian regime of Saddam Hussein as well as from the economic hardships inflicted through 13 years of sanctions. The median age is 20.9 (Ismael & Ismael, 2013, p. 142) and youths make up 40 per cent of the population (Bowring, 2011). Youth vulnerability and the appeal of extremist groups are likely to be highest amongst young men who have had little opportunity and never experienced life without sanctions or war (Ismael & Ismael, 2013, p. 142). This study will elaborate on any media commentary on Iraq’s future and the potential for democratic participation in the political process, as this is one of the outcomes of the war that President Obama was keen to emphasize.

Much of the literature on the post-war situation in Iraq dealing with the aftermath of the war has also drawn attention to the plight of women (for example, Al-Ali, 2005), children and minorities. For example, Bowring (2011) argues that the fate of Iraq’s diverse population (minorities include significant communities of Armenians, Baha’is, Black Iraqis, Chaldo-Assyrians, Circassians, Faili Kurds, Jews, Kaka’I, Palestinians, Roma, Sabian Mandaeans, Shabaks, Turkmen and Yazidis) is uncertain and in peril. The growing sectarian divisions emerging since the invasion (Selim, 2012, pp. 63-4) reflected not only in the Interim Governing Council (IGC) but by the force of various militias is likely to exacerbate the plight of minorities. Others have documented the ‘cleansing’ of Baghdad’s mixed neighborhoods which were once diverse but are now Shia occupied (Hagen, Kaiser & Hanson, 2015, p. 112). Given some of the findings of these studies, it is important to examine the extent to which the dominant discourses of the media contained or reflected such outcomes.
Another outcome of the Iraq War has been avoiding a military defeat but at enormous cost to U.S. international standing as a result of controversies over torture, undermining civil liberties at home (Foot, 2004, p. 6; Chang, 2003), as well as the economic and human costs of the war (Baker & Adriaensens 2012, p. 266). Selim (2012) in his study of the impact of the invasion on the process of democratization in Iraq also found that Arab distrust of the U.S. remains high (p. 60) and the process of democratization has been set back. This study will also examine the extent to which the information contained in the newspapers reported on the debate surrounding the repercussions for the U.S. image abroad.

There is also an emerging array of scholarship that is beginning to assess the current conditions in Iraq, the prospects for democratization and other potential consequences, not only for Iraq but for the Arab world in general. Selim (2012) argues that the war has set back the prospects of democratization, and that despite the rhetoric about bringing democracy to Iraq, the U.S. continued to provide financial and military support to autocratic regimes in Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and others, as the democratic movements would be likely to bring about anti-Western groups as happened in the case of Muslim Brothers in Egypt in 2005 and Hamas in Palestine in 2006 (p. 75) (similar views are echoed by Katz, 2012, p. 114; and Hashmi, 2014;). Some observers had argued that the Arab Spring movements were a reflection of the growing desire for democracy inspired by the success in Iraq but Selim points out that both Bush and Obama’s administrations had continued to support Ben-Ali in Tunisia and Mubarak in Egypt, until it became clear that the regimes were collapsing (2012, p. 81). Such actions bring the U.S. commitment to democracy into question; as Romaya (2012) points out, for
a democracy to be authentic, it must reflect the values of the culture in which it arises (p. 3). It is therefore important to examine the news media’s congruence with this narrative of U.S. commitment to freedom and democracy, both of which were central arguments to justifying the war even after no WMD were found in Iraq.

2.3 Information and Media Landscape

The mass media are the primary mechanism by which information, especially information on foreign affairs reaches the public. This section deals with the informational component of this war, namely the control of information, information as the key battlefront in this war, and an overview of the media’s coverage. This section also presents competing theories on the social power of mass media, a brief look at competing elite theory models of media influence, how news agendas are set, and an examination of the scholarship of journalism in the War on Terrorism.

2.3.1 The Role of the Media in General: an Overview

Central to the modern conceptualization of democracy is the role of a free press and media that acts as a watchdog against abuse of government and corporate power. Access to information and news is essential for there to be an informed citizenry or for consumers to make informed choices. As Michael McCurry, former press secretary for Clinton noted, “the adversarial relationship” between the press and administration is critical for a meaningful civil discourse (quoted in Hess & Kalb, 2003, p. 46). McChesney (1999), Carey (2002) and others view journalism as a public service and have lamented the increasing commercialization of news at the expense of democracy;
they argue that the for-profit model for journalism views news as a consumer product at the mercy of economic forces. Just like any other consumer product, the news product must be made appealing to consumers in an increasingly fragmented marketplace and this often occurs at the expense of high standards of journalism. If anything, the digital age has led to greater competition and placed greater pressure on media companies to make news more entertaining in order to retain audiences, again resulting in a decline in the quality of investigative journalism (see for example Picard, 2004; Kitty, 2005). However, it is also worth bearing in mind that regardless of the type of ‘product’ that news is, it is still a product, that is produced by a certain industry with its own economic constraints, and produced by organizations that are not ideologically neutral.

Another central concern to media scholars that advocate for a freer and more independent media is the concern of media ownership being concentrated in few hands. For example, “in 1983, fifty companies together controlled 90 percent of American media; in 2011 the corresponding number of companies was six.” (Baum & Potter, 2015, p. 229). Proffitt (2007) in her study focusing on Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation (News Corp.) of which Dow Jones which owns The Wall Street Journal was a part, found there was a lack of contestation of official reasoning in the lead up to the Iraq War and concludes that the marketplace of ideas is dominated by a corporate ideology that stunts public discussion through controlling information dissemination (pp.66-68). Bagdikian (2004) and McChesney (1999, 2005) have reached similar conclusions about the structure of media ownership. Bagdikian (2004) compares the top five media conglomerates (Time Warner, The Walt Disney Company, News Corporation, Viacom, and Bertelsmann) to a cartel, who although in competition with each other, all seek to expand beyond
dominance in a single medium which further narrows the diversity of information available (pp.3-4). McChesney thus concludes that “the global media system is better understood as one that advances corporate and commercial interests and values and denigrates or ignores that which cannot be incorporated into its mission.” (2005, p.95).

The extent to which the media and a better informed public could have altered the course of the war is questionable, as the public has limited influence in foreign affairs policy (Holsti, 2011, p. 181). An influential study by Gilens and Page (2014) concluded (as have many others before this study) that the state of U.S. democracy was jeopardized as most citizens had almost no influence over government policy, and that economic elites and interest groups had far greater power shaping policy, making the U.S. system more a plutocracy with some democratic institutions and features (pp. 576-7). Such studies do reflect a dangerous state of affairs and the weakening of democratic representation if the public’s ability to impact policy formation is reduced to almost nothing. Furthermore, even in countries like the U.K., Italy and Spain, where there was unambiguous opposition to involvement in the Iraq War, the media still failed in altering government policy (Baum & Potter, 2015, p. 16). News is only one factor within the media that impacts beliefs and behaviors; there are of course other institutions (for example schools as well as entertainment organizations) that influence and structure discourses.

Jensen (2005) argues that at the heart of the uncritical coverage in the lead up to the Iraq War and the early years of the occupation, was patriotism amongst journalists, which he argues undermines American democracy (p. 67). There is the glaring conflict between the professional practices of fairness, balance and objectivity which results in
journalists typically avoiding pronouncements about their own personal political beliefs, yet an open patriotism which makes questionable any claims to neutrality (Jensen, 2005, p. 80; see also, Hess & Kalb, 2003, Ch. 10; Allan & Zelizer, 2004; Waisbord, 2002). This however, also fits into what Sonwalker (2004) argues is a socio-cultural binary of “us” and “them” which on a fundamental level determines how journalists cover news stories. Hayden acknowledges that media failed in their watchdog duty but says American news organizations were “snookered into supporting the rationale for going to war.” (2009, p. 111). The CDA conducted in this dissertation seeks to elevate the underlying ideologies that are operating within the news discourse, and will therefore also be able to determine the extent to which the four newspapers embraced patriotism in their coverage. This is something that CDA studies of media seek to demonstrate through a dissection of various linguistic devices and the language used in coverage; how this is done will be addressed more fully in the Chapters Three and Four.

Within media scholarship, there are a wide variety of theories that seek to explain how media function, operate and ultimately influence mass opinion. The purpose here is to focus on the informational component of the media, that is, the role of the media to mediate, communicate, produce, and re-produce information, knowledge, and ideologies. Speaking of its functions, Fuchs (2005) writes: “The mass media don’t map objective reality, but construct social realities that distort objective reality due to the subjective views, interests, and complex relationships that are contained in this [media] system.” (p. 191). In others words there is no neutral ground to stand on when it comes to the production (or indeed consumption) of news commodities. It is the purpose of CDA to
demonstrate how such realities are discursively achieved and what the implications of these informational realities are for material reality.

2.3.2 Informational Battlefront

The concept of a post-industrial society\(^8\) was popularized in 1973 by Daniel Bell in his influential book, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*. For Bell, it is a society in which the socio-economic structure is reconfigured from being a goods producing society to one in which the production of information and knowledge take precedent. The predominant industrialized structure characterized by the manufacture and trade of physical goods is transcended by a structure that is driven by the centrality of information and knowledge as primary commodities. The ubiquity of information in our lives have led many to term the current age as a truly ‘information age’, as our lives in the modern world are saturated with the production and consumption of information. However, this incessant flow of information is not value free, “we are constantly subjected to, as well as in control of a plethora of technological and medial informational flows that both construct and transfer ideologies between ourselves, our information providers, and our target audiences.” (Johnson & Enslin, 2007, p. 11)

Information and knowledge are increasingly viewed as commodities in the information economy, since these are utilized in a way to gain competitive advantage, and many of the dominant global industries such as banking, accountancy, legal services, ‘trade’ expertise and knowledge. If as mentioned above, news is subject to the forces of supply and demand, and is increasingly commodified as many have argued (McChesney

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\(^8\) The terms digital age, information age, network society or knowledge society are also often used interchangeably in Library and Information Science (LIS) and Communications literature to describe a post-industrial society.
1999; Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, & Shapiro, 2011; Fuchs 2005), it is then necessary to expand on the effect this has on our conceptualization of news as a public good. Others have said that as citizens are treated more and more like consumers, the consumer-citizen’s own demand for “McNuggets of information for easy digestion” (Artz, 2005, p. 19) also needs to be considered as it has an obvious impact in terms of quality and depth of news.

In addition to the ubiquity of information, the informational battlefront fits well with Baudrillard’s (1981/1994) simulacrum concept, which posited that society had advanced to a stage whereby signs or models of what is real substitute for reality itself. The signs are the language and images transmitted through the media to consumers (readers and viewers) who are physically removed from the reality, of war for example. Keeble (2004) refers to the key function of media in manufacturing war as the “media-military-industrial complex” (p. 46). All the images transmitted through the media, and the rhetoric of the war used by leaders and re-produced through the media, create a certain discourse and perception of war. In the Iraq War (2003-2011), McLaren and Martin (2004) in their exploratory study of the dialectical relationship between the domestic policy and War on Terror during the first Bush administration, also found there to be media complicity in giving ideological oxygen to the Bush administration’s message on the war with Iraq and this they deduce amounted to domestic psyop (psychological operations) (p. 287). It can be deduced that perception management and the nature of the information battlefront in the information age are critical aspects of warfare which CDA is well suited to investigate through its focus on the role of language.
2.3.3 Information Control

Numerous media scholars have argued that reporters are thoroughly dependent on government officials for information (see for example, Di Maggio, 2015; Richardson, 2007; Kauffman, 2004; Herber & Filak, 2007); this is especially true in times of war. This control of information works in several ways, with varying degrees of impact on the final message that is communicated through the press. Three models for theorizing how elites control information and influence news are discussed in section 2.3.4. There are also many layers of how information is conveyed from elite voices such as from the White House to the public; press releases, media appearances, press conferences and speeches are activities that seek to develop common media frames over time (Robinson, 2004, p. 105). The mere act of quoting official sources enables those sources to set the agenda and frames for the news, and this in turn results in the replication of official rhetoric through the mass media. For example, during this initial phase leading up to the war, newspapers such as *The Washington Post* were heavily reliant on official sources (Herber & Filak, 2007). Miller and Ko (2012) applied Herman and Chomsky’s (1988) propaganda model to analyze media coverage (*The New York Times, Al Jazeera English, The Christian Science Monitor, BBC and Reuters*) of 4 bombings in the run up to the Iraqi election in 2010 and found that despite sufficient plurality of voices and competing narratives, most news organizations also promulgated elite narratives that relied on official sources (p. 109).

DiMaggio (2015) found in his analysis of media coverage of the Iraq War that the range of opinions expressed by journalists were “extremely narrow” (p. 288) with the media regularly failing to achieving the goal of exploring diverse and competing views.
King (2014) however found that the five media outlets she examined all embarked on different interpretive paths to the one presented by President Obama, but there was some congruence in praise for American troops for example (p. 166).

There are not always unified voices from those in power that shape media coverage either. As Baum and Potter (2015) point out, the extent to which media voice opposition opinion is dependent on the extent to which the party in opposition to the government raises criticisms (p. 7). The professional practice of journalistic impartiality also results in what DiMaggio (2015) refers to as bipartisan bias; which is the reporting the views of both parties but excluding other competing perspectives. And if, as in the case of the Iraq War, there was not a loud enough Democratic Party voice against the war, the media tends to overlook other criticisms. As both Republican and Democrats strongly supported the invasion and regime change, there was limited diversion from the dominant political opinions in the press. But as opposition in the Democratic Party grew as the situation in Iraq deteriorated, there was also an evident shift in the mainstream media from disproportionate support to disproportionate criticism of the war (Baum and Potter, 2015, p. 29).

Another widely studied area relating to information control in the Iraq War was the use of embedded journalism and the wider attention garnered by embedded coverage over other coverage (Allan & Zelizer, 2004, p. 6). Numerous scholars have examined the effects on the quality and accuracy of information produced through embedded journalists in shaping the news (see for example, Hess & Kalb, 2003; Miller, 2004; Boyd-Barret, 2004; Tumber & Palmer, 2004; Reese, 2004; Richardson, 2007). One of the effects of embedded journalism is the identification the journalist feels with the soldiers
and military unit responsible for their protection. This effectively means the objectivity standard is jeopardized and the journalist no longer has the same freedom to interview whoever s/he likes and is less likely to provide critical and unfavorable coverage. In a war environment, the scarcity of information also makes journalists more dependent on official sources, more fearful of being labeled as unpatriotic and the government more tight-lipped about information.

Others have also produced works that have demonstrated the tight control of information coming from the Bush White House in the lead up to the war, with John Dean, former counsel to Richard Nixon, labelling the administration as the “most secretive” in his life time (quoted in Hayden, 2009, p. 75). Richardson (2007) in his study of British media in Iraq also comments on the strict controls and limits imposed on embedded journalists as well as those stationed in Doha as a key way in which the propaganda campaign during the initial invasion was achieved (pp. 193-4). Similar conclusions are drawn by Tumber and Palmer (2004) from their interviews with journalists stationed in Doha who complained about lack of information received from the military command. Lewis and Reese (2009) conducted interviews with various journalists covering the War on Terror for USA Today and found that these journalists inadvertently found themselves utilizing (and therefore reifying) the Bush administration’s framing of the War on Terror out of convenience even though many of them questioned whether Iraq belonged to that framework (p. 96).

Within the media and communications literature, there are various competing theories that seek to explain how individuals interpret events. One school of thought, “Elite Theory” argues that public opinion is shaped by political elites who are able to
frame events and set agendas through their public statements and rhetoric. Furthermore, this position posits that elites own and control the media; and that elites also control cultural institutions such as entertainment and schools that encourage spectatorship rather than citizen involvement (Kamalipour, 2005, p. 3; Artz, 2005, p. 9). Researchers such as Baum and Potter (2015); Kamalipour (2005); Artz (2005) in various settings, found this to be the case with a corporate media representing elite interests. However, scholars who hold this opinion also remind us that elite power is not unlimited and the influence is not merely through manipulating the masses, but rather more a means through which consent arises from the “common sense” of everyday life that has been institutionally organized.” (Artz, 2005, p. 9). Three elite theory models of media influence are discussed in further detail below as such phenomena have a direct effect on how discourses are shaped.

On the other hand, “democratic theory” posits that the public are less influenced by political elites and are rational and informed when it comes to their opinions and beliefs about world events. King (2014) also reminds us that despite a President’s power to frame issues, the president’s message must still compete with the background noise of infotainment, celebrity gossip and scandal (p. 9). Both schools have some overlap and acknowledge the merits of the other, however, it is possible to draw from both and posit that the strength of opposition to government from opposition parties, especially with a multi-party electoral system that offers a greater diversity of viewpoints, also leads to a wider range of viewpoints being expressed in the media. This in turn improves the range of information that citizens have. This assumption is supported by Baum and Potter’s (2015) findings, where media and public opposition to the Iraq War was highest in Germany, where the public has high access to media and there are a high number of
opposition parties. Whereas countries like Poland (which was one of the coalition partners), had low party representation, and lower access to media, and the Polish government was greater able to frame the war in the media to galvanize public support.

2.3.4 Elite Theory Models of Media Influence

2.3.4.1. Indexing

In this model it is political establishment elites and primarily those highly ranked administration officials who garner the most media attention and their perspectives are privileged in media coverage. However, unlike the hegemonic model, when elites diverge in their perspectives, the media reflect these disagreements as conflict provides eye-catching headlines and public attention (See for example, Althaus et al., 1996; or Entman, 2004, Ch. 1). The indexing model privileges the established political parties and non-establishment perspectives are ignored. The indexing model provides a useful framework for understanding source selection and what social actors and voices are represented in the news discourse.

2.3.4.2 Hegemony

Also falling within the ‘elite theory’ perspective, the hegemony model posits that public consent is obtained by elites through the construction of a social reality that taps into society’s underlying myths and core principles (King, 2014, p. 16). It is predominantly through the cultural dimension of which media are one part, that dominant meanings are established. In such an arrangement, journalists replicate and thereby amplify the views of those in power by encapsulating such views within the dominant
discourses of society. There is ultimately less variation in the perspectives represented in
the media and limited disagreement (or manifestation of disagreement amongst elites)
within the media. The implications of this model for this study are that the range of
possibilities of what the ending of the war means is limited by the dominant discourses
that surface in the news. These discourses, in order to become hegemonic encapsulate
and draw upon specific values such as freedom, democracy, patriotism, the myth of
manifest destiny that many Americans can readily identify with.

2.3.4.3 Cascading Activation Model

Entman (2003; 2004, pp. 15-20) expands on the elite theory perspective in his
cascading activation model, noting that a counter frame to the dominant perspective may
emerge within the media if the competing interpretation/s better explain events and
manage to gain the support of political elites from the opposition party as well as striking
a chord with the public’s general overview of the events (King, 2014, p. 17). This model,
like the others is also a top-down model, but one where disagreements amongst elites
may emerge and eventually surface in the public discourse, leading to a lack of consensus
and divergent views gaining coverage in the media. There is a vast literature on elite
media influence and these models offer a useful starting point. The purpose here
however, is to draw attention to these and tie these in with the concerns of this
dissertation which is the construction of meaning and the resultant hegemony of certain
discourses in the informational battlefront.
2.3.5 Control of Information in the Iraq War

In terms of controlling the informational battlefront, the U.S. government has been more successful at home than abroad. Selim (2012) in his study of democratization in Iraq concluded that Arab media frames for the war differed extensively from the portrayal of the war to the American audience. The dominant frames cast the U.S. in a negative light: as a violator of UN charter; as driven by an agenda to expand hegemony in the region and control oil; as an imperialist power (p. 74). The extent to which such critical perspectives and themes emerged in the discourse of the selected U.S. newspapers will become apparent from how the outcomes and consequences of the war were represented.

As mentioned above, the use of embedded journalists was a prominent feature of the Iraq War; during the initial invasion phase, there was a larger contingent of embedded journalists, but as the occupation prolonged, the number of embedded reporters declined, which Haigh (2014, p. 41) argues resulted in more thematic coverage of the war. Holsti (2011) in his book examining American public opinion on the Iraq War, points out that as public and media criticism of the war grew, there were concerted efforts from the Pentagon to hire high ranked retired officers to make supportive comments in media interviews and appearances (p. 149-50). These however were ultimately unsuccessful in changing public perceptions as the public sentiment seemed to reflect the deteriorating situation in the ground (Holsti, 2011, p. 155); nevertheless these efforts are indicative of the importance of controlling discourse and perceptions in war. Others such as DiMaggio (2015) also recognize 2005-2007 as a turning point in public opinion against the war as
failure to find WMD, a growing insurgency against American occupation; and the Abu Ghraib controversy affected public mood.

2.3.6 Media Coverage

2.3.6.1 General Media Performance in Iraq War Coverage

Most media scholars agree that there was a failure by the media to scrutinize government sources and information about the claims of the Bush administration with some characterizing the media’s coverage as propaganda (see for example, Curtis, 2004; Miller, 2004; Snow & Taylor, 2006; Altheide & Grimes, 2005; Altheide, 2004; Kauffman, 2004). It is worth drawing attention to the scholarship on the coverage of *The New York Times*, and particularly the articles supporting the invasion written by journalist Judith Miller. Her reporting widely quoted the now disgraced Ahmed Chalabi without fact-checking her source or claims about the WMD program of the Hussein regime; her reports exaggerated the threat Iraq posed and many scholars have analyzed her coverage with some calling it outright propaganda (for example, Hayden, 2009, p. 115). Although Miller’s reporting was concerned with the initial justification of the war, this dissertation will seek to examine the extent to which (or if at all) *The New York Times* and other newspapers reporting of the end of the war contained ‘white and grey propaganda’ – the former involves the intentional suppression of potentially harmful information, combined with the deliberate promotion of positive information or ideas to distract attention from problematic events. Grey propaganda essentially involves the non-verification of facts or the avoidance of questioning their validity, especially when the content serves the interests of the propagandist (Baran & Davis (1995, p. 62). Although *The New York*
Richardson (2007) points out that the public are far more likely to remember an original incorrect story than a subsequently corrected version of the story (p. 184). Judith Miller’s reporting also received widespread attention because of the importance of The New York Times as an agenda-setting newspaper with an international reputation for high quality journalism, and how such an institution, and one of its pre-eminent journalists produced such poor quality of journalism.

Baker (2015) states:

The problems of Iraq are projected as an age-old Iraqi propensity to violence, corruption and sectarianism. It came naturally for Americans to think of Iraqi’s as ‘savages’, dishonest and violent, a people who neither think nor feel as we do. Native Americans, African slaves, and various categories of immigrants, including European populations like the Irish, have all at some point exemplified these subhuman qualities. (2015, p. 95)

Similar Western-centric interpretive frameworks were observed by Lemons (2007) in her analysis of discourses on freedom in relation to gender and religion in The New York Times; she found that there was an unwillingness to acknowledge or critically engage with differing conceptions of liberation and religion (pp. 90-94). According to Abu-Lughod (2002) this was apparent even earlier, as following 9/11, she argues there was a tendency in the U.S. news media to use patronizing rhetoric for saving Muslim women and interpreting events through the lens of religion and culture instead of the history of US involvement in the region (p. 784).
There is a general consensus amongst scholars that the media rely heavily on government officials and institutions, and a consequence of this is an increasing ability of the government to frame the news and set the parameters of the mass-mediated debate (Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, & Shapiro, 2011, p. 12; see also DiMaggio, 2015; Herber & Filak, 2007; Hayden, 2009; Hodges, 2011). This has been largely observed during the early years of the war under the lead of the Bush administration. However, King (2014) argues that as the war wore on, and the situation on the ground did not improve, journalists began to diverge in their assessments from the official frames. By the end of the war, this was even more the case with greater media criticism and contestation. Despite the Bush administration’s best efforts to control the language and discourse of war, one study of newspapers found that, the number of mentions of Vietnam and words such as guerilla war and quagmire began to increase, indicating growing contestation and divergence from the official narrative (Hayden, 2007, p. 47).

Media scholars found that leading news organizations failed in their responsibility of scrutinizing government information during the lead up to the war and early phase of the war (see for example, Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, & Shapiro, 2011; DiMaggio, 2015; Fuchs, 2005; Tomasky, 2003; Christie, 2006). Some are more critical of the media, arguing that in many ways the failure to inform citizens about important public matters was tantamount to propaganda (see for example, Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, & Shapiro, 2011, p. 124). Various media scholars have commented on the widespread public support for the wars at the time of the initial invasion, where for example according to polls by Pew and CNN/Gallop over 70% of respondents felt that taking military action in Iraq was the right thing to do (cited in Holsti, 2011, p. 39). Feldman, Huddy and Marcus in their analysis of
the Threat and National Security Survey (TNSS), reported that in October 2002, 90% of Democrats and Independents, and 95% of Republicans believed Saddam Hussein was actively supporting anti-U.S. terrorist groups (2015, p. 47). Such data indicate a worrying lack of knowledge amongst American citizens of Iraq, its regime, and the ideological differences between Hussein and Islamist terror groups like al-Qaeda. However, as numerous other scholars have demonstrated, there was some growing criticism of the war in the mainstream press, especially following the 2006 Abu Ghraib scandal, the ongoing violence and growing resistance to the occupation that between April-June 2008, only 40% of Americans had felt that taking military action was the right thing (Holsti, 2011, p. 39). Demonstrating direct media effects is not straightforward and there are numerous reasons for the change in public opinion over time, but these studies underline the media role and impact on the public in understanding attitudes towards policy decisions.

Gasher (2005) conducted a textual analysis of Newsweek and Time magazines during the period (March-April 2003) and found that the themes of technical superiority (co-developed with moral superiority) and sophistication provided a surgically precise image of the war. For example, there were regular emphasis on American military technology in the reportage, often contrasted with descriptions of Iraqi WMD or nerve gas (Fuchs, 2005, p. 217; see also Iskandar & el-Nawawy, 2004). One of the important advantages of looking at studies undertaken of different mediums is to enable a comparison to the four national newspapers that will be examined in this study.

King (2014) in her study of The New York Times, The Washington Post, Associated Press, NBC News, and Fox News concludes that within these organizations there was sufficient independence from the official administration’s endgame narrative
and that there was plenty of criticism, highlighting of uncomfortable truths about the war such as the ongoing violence, the destruction to Iraq, the political instability, the lack of infrastructure, as well as mentioning of realities of war such as the psychological effects on returning soldiers (p. 163). Other news outlets such as *Fox News* praised American success but also cautioned about a quick withdrawal and reminded readers/viewers about ongoing violence and instability.

2.3.6.2 Newspapers’ Performance in Covering the Iraq War

Newspapers are often seen as elite organs of American discourse as a result of their greater in-depth coverage and analysis of issues. The *Newspaper Research Journal* has published a number of articles that offer a variety of content analysis studies on Iraq War coverage that give insight into the journalistic and democratic performance of newspapers. Porpora et al. (2013) found that prior to the invasion, *The Wall Street Journal* was “Hawkish” even in the opinion pages with over 95 percent of articles published between 15 August 2002 and October 2002 in favor of the war (p. 81), *The Washington Post* had been calling for Saddam’s removal even before the Bush administration (p. 73), and *The New York Times* had resisted the call for war before the invasion citing that 78 percent of the articles they examined were against the war (p. 81). *The New York Times* later did come aboard as the invasion drew closer but both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* admitted belatedly that their coverage was heavily tilted in favor of the Bush administration (Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, & Shapiro, 2011, p. 25; similar findings are reported by DiMaggio, 2015, p. 73; Fuchs, 2005). Fuchs (2005, p. 204) also drew similar conclusions about *USA Today* although Feldman, Huddy and
Marcus’ (2015) do believe that the newspaper did contain more critical coverage than elite papers (p. 78). Various content analysis studies of *The New York Times* have found the newspaper to have been supportive of the war (see for example, Artz, 2004; Fuchs, 2005). DiMaggio (2015) found that Knight Ridder papers were the only ones which consistently printed articles that questioned Bush’s claims about WMD. He cites the relative independence of local newspaper reporters compared to many national newspaper journalists as a reason for offering more critical coverage as there was less access to and therefore dependence on official resources. Similar findings are also supported by the research of Feldman, Huddy and Marcus’ (2015).

When it came to the exit strategy from Iraq, there was much coverage in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* that remained cautious. King found that news in editorials and opinion pages, in both newspapers, on the whole was more independent of official rhetoric and that reporters drew their own conclusions about the political stalemate, ongoing violence, and uncertainty in Iraq (King, 2014, Ch. 5). King (2014) examines numerous articles from *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* where coverage was critical, and often scathing, reminding readers of the fragility of Iraq. In her qualitative content analysis, she found plenty of evidence of a disconnect between the language used by the Administration and that offered by the media, saying there was a more sobering assessment of the war’s achievements in the media. (King, 2014, Ch. 5).

King (2014, p. 157) also found that within *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*’s coverage, there were competing voices from Iraq that also countered the President’s frame of endgame success, specifically surrounding the U.S. commitment to security in Iraq and complaints about the lack of functioning infrastructure and
difficult living conditions. The analysis conducted in this study will compare and contrast the discourse of the selected newspapers and examine whether the coverage was indeed critical of the outcomes and consequences of the Iraq War. In addition, King’s work does not examine the discourse of attributing responsibility for the outcomes of the war which forms a focal point for this dissertation. There are no other major works examining the rhetoric and media discourse of the American exit from Iraq which is the major contribution this dissertation will make in terms of the gap in literature.

2.4 Dominant Themes and Discourses

This section addresses the findings of other various discourse-related studies that have revealed the dominant themes or narratives that surfaced in media discourse of the ending of the Iraq War. Collectively, these sections will bring to the fore some of the important debates that researchers in the field are grappling with as well as shed light on the shortcomings, challenges and future directions that research in this field can take. The nature of discourse, competition between discourses, its varied interpretations and meanings will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three, however, in this section, I will draw attention to some of the important studies on discourse and the Iraq War. In general, these can be divided into two broad categories, those studies that deal with the official voices of government which involve the study of rhetoric; and those studies that examine the media discourse which largely originate in the field of mass communication studies but due to the interdisciplinary nature of CDA, attract scholars from a variety of other backgrounds too.
2.4.1 Absence of Moral Discourse and Questionable Legality

From the literature examining the control of discourse, an emergent theme amongst some authors was the absence of a public debate on the morality of the war (Porpora et al., 2013; Hagen, Kaiser & Hanson, 2015; DiMaggio, 2015). Whilst humanitarian intervention was one of primary justifications of the war, especially once the key reasons for war fell apart (Moeller, 2004) there was limited debate about the morality of the war itself as the situation in Iraq deteriorated. This thesis is propounded by Porpora et al. (2013) in their book *Post-Ethical Society: The Iraq War, Abu Ghraib, and the Moral Failure of the Secular*. The authors analyzing the news media’s moral reasoning and discover what they call the “privatization of morality” (p. 2). They found that in various phases of the war although the media coverage became more critical of the lack of progress, there was a tendency to leave out any moral critiques that this was a war of aggression in violation of international law and prosecuted by torture (pp. 18-19). They found that there was a marginalization of the moral arguments across the elite newspapers (p. 86). Romaya (2012) in *The Iraq War: A Philosophical Analysis* highlights the inadequacy of the existing philosophical discourse, specifically ‘Just-war’ theory for being ill-equipped to deal with the complex nature of modern wars (such as non-state actors, the inequalities produced by globalized capitalism, or greater threat to civilians than armed combatants). He calls for a greater moral awareness of the human toll on civilians in modern wars as the risk of injury and death to civilians is far higher than it is for the traditional combatants (Romaya, 2012, p. 112).

Closely associated to the morality of war, is studying the legal language surrounding the legality of the war. The work of Hagen, Kaiser and Hanson (2015) on the
questionable legality and immorality of war, especially in light of the ensuing genocidal chaos that was emerging concurrently in the Darfur region (given that humanitarian intervention was a later justification), raises important questions of the media coverage related to the characterization of the war, whether it was characterized as a war of aggression or criminal act (as Hagen, Kaiser and Hanson (2015) argue) or a ‘just’ war for humanitarian reasons. How war is characterized is important because it also raises the need to examine the media discourse on the Iraq War legacy and how it will be remembered as there is the problem of the public’s historical amnesia and the possibility of continuing the policy of pre-emptive wars without sound moral and legal justification.

2.4.2 CDA Studies on Official Rhetoric

As various researchers have found, the President has immense power in setting the media agenda (for example, Porpora et al., 2013, p. 87; DiMaggio, 2015; Hodges 2011; and Entman, 2003). Hodges (2011) demonstrates how this is discursively achieved when politicians make statements in a concise and catchy way so that these become soundbites that are repeated over and over again in the media; examples include, “war on terror,” “WMD,” “either you are with us or the terrorists.” (p. 87). Hodges (2011) examines the relationship between micro-level discursive actions such as the rhetoric of the president and shared cultural understandings bound up in the macro-level discourse of the War on Terror narrative. In other words, although the discourse of the War on Terror began at a macro-level, reference to it, repetition of certain phrases, and media discourse about it reified it and established it as a dominant frame of understanding events such as the Iraq War.
In discourse studies, language is the fundamental unit of analysis, but for critical discourse analysis scholars, language is analyzed in the context of social phenomena (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 2) and societal values which are linked back to the workings of ideology (van Dijk, 1997a). Numerous critical scholars have demonstrated the strategic use of political metaphors during the Iraq War that can polarize the debate between Us vs. Them or Good vs Evil. For example, Sowinska’s (2013) study of President Bush’s State of the Union Speeches between 2001 and 2008, found that the metaphors of “freedom is a story” and “America is a writer” played a key role in reasserting the idea of American leadership in the pursuit of the ideals of peace and democracy (p. 803). Sahlane (2013) also examined the strategic use of five metaphors in The New York Times and The Washington Post, and how this coverage reflected the U.S. official perspective of the ‘legitimacy’ of attacking Iraq. For example, 1) the ‘Schedule/timetable’ metaphor was used to emphasize the running out of time, or countdown to military action; 2) the ‘game metaphor’ was used to present the U.S. decision as a calculated risk, and use of phrases like Hussein playing ‘hide and seek’ being ‘cornered’ or talk of ‘winning the contest’ to underline the foul play of the Iraq regime; 3) the ‘Making a case’ metaphor was used to represent the efforts of the Bush administration as having exhausted diplomatic options; 4) War as a ‘driving’ metaphor utilized language that constructed the future as a realm of inevitable democratic change, with the U.S. in the driving seat, and the public ‘bracing’ itself for the inevitable crash, that was war, without the option of a u-turn; and 5) the disease/germ metaphor for which war is the best medicine was routinely deployed in the media, using imagery of ‘health’ and ‘vigor’ which translated to military strength, ‘precision [surgical] strikes’ against
‘terrorist cells’ to ‘contain’ the ‘spread’ of the disease of terrorism (p. 162). The textual analysis conducted in this dissertation will also examine the use of metaphors as they are a key rhetorical device not only to legitimate actions but to create mental models in readers’ understanding of a situation.

Dunmire (2007) in her CDA of two Bush speeches illustrates how the Bush administration’s ‘doctrine of preemption’ depended on gaining a control of the future as an ideologically important site, one where it was able to use language that would determine how the future could be “imagined, articulated and realized” (p. 19). She found, that rather than presenting policies as being motivated by political or ideological goals, the policies were “presented as a necessary response to external imperatives, forces and impending future realities” (p. 31). Sahlane (2015) examined the use of *argumentum ad baculum* (argument by force, or threat of force to make some agree with a conclusion) and *argumentum ad hominem* (attacking the arguer’s character), and employing political metaphor to present a discursive reality whereby the pro-war position was presented as the natural and only course of action. Similar conclusions about the Bush administration’s rhetoric are reached by Cohen (2005) who states that there was a “fortiori” nature to the argumentation used. Fortiori is a rhetorical practice where the arguer proves that the opponent acted cruelly in the past and demonstrating on another level that there remains the possibility of future cruel actions (p. 39). Porpora et al. (2013) refer to Bush’s rhetoric as manipulative through its simplification and dramatization (p. 65) as well as use of arguments that appealed to emotions rather than sound logic (p. 69). Cole (2005) argues that the rhetoric characterized the enemy as inherently evil and evoked the image of savagery which in turn closes any possibility to an alternative in
dealing with the threat other than the course of war (p. 150). This was a persistent theme in both Bush and Obama’s rhetoric and is revisited below.

According to Entman (2004), in order for a narrative to become dominant and salient, it should “strike a public chord by drawing upon perceptions and opinions already stored in memory, bringing these habitual ways of thinking, or schemas, to the forefront of people’s minds.” (pp. 6-7). King’s (2014) analyses showed that Obama’s rhetoric fit into the discourse of American Exceptionalism (p. 5). This notion of the United States as a special, divinely ordained nation, with its uniqueness of celebrating the core human values of individual rights is widely believed by many Americans and is thoroughly culturally and historically institutionalized (King, 2014, p. 5; Moeller, 2004, p. 66). Artz (2005) reminds us that “[t]he ritual of the pledge of allegiance and the national anthem are publicly enacted discursive affirmations of the good, clean, wholesome, benevolent empire of innocence” (p. 17). Therefore, if Presidents are able to tap into such pre-existing discourses, or grand narratives of the nation’s history, Americans are more likely to be persuaded by the story being told.

A study by Graham, Keenan and Dowd (2004) adopted Wodak’s discourse-historical approach to illustrate how Bush’s speeches declaring a War on Terror had linguistic similarities to three other ‘call to arms’ speeches delivered by Pope Urban II in 1095, Queen Elizabeth I in 1588, and Hitler in 1938. They identified four generic features that had endured in these texts:

1) an appeal to a legitimate power source that is external to the orator, and which is presented as inherently good; 2) an appeal to the historical importance of the culture in which the discourse is situated; 3) a
construction of an evil Other; and 4) an appeal for unification behind the legitimating power source. (Graham, Keenan & Dowd, 2004, p. 201)

The findings of these past studies are useful as they help the researcher look out for the presence of similarities in the data set being analyzed for this study.

2.4.3 Constructing Dominant Discourses

Chapter Three looks at the various theoretical perspectives of discourses and how these become ‘hegemonic;’ here discourse is understood in the Foucauldian sense, as the range of possibilities within the discursive terrain, that is, controlling the language and thereby colonizing concepts of truth so as to make the basis of one’s own position as self-evident (see for example, Foucault, 1972, 1975/1995; or Foucault & Rabinow, 1984, pp. 72-75). Within this understanding of discourse, Foucault also stresses the importance of conceiving discourse as a “series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable.” (1978/1990, p. 100). In other words, discourses remain in a constant state of struggle that can be both instruments of dominance and resisting dominance. (Foucault, 1978/1990, p. 101). Nearly all critical discourse analysts emphasize the importance of culture and ideology in establishing a dominant discourse within a community, that promotes an ideological common sense’ (Fairclough, 1995, p. 123) and other ‘common values’ (see for example, Fairclough, 1992b, p. 49; Holland, 2006, p. 43; Sowińska, 2013; van Dijk, 1997b, 2008). As previously mentioned, the ‘War on Terror’ narrative/discourse has been widely adopted within the media, and even opponents of the policies of the Bush and Obama administrations must utilize the same language which inadvertently perpetuates the discourse. In his study of the War on
Terror, Michaels (2013) highlights three functions of what he calls the “discourse trap” that can result in government actors losing control over the discourse. Firstly, blowback is where the discourse is used by opponents to condemn its policies; secondly, bandwagoning is where others adopt the discourse for their own purposes (for example, in the way that governments of Russia, China and India have been engaged in fighting domestic opponents); and thirdly, marginalization, which indicates a widespread adoption of the discourse but it results in the marginalization of other discourses (Michaels, 2013: pp. 10-11).

Also critical to the establishment of legitimacy for the War on Terror discourse is the consistent references to the terrorist attacks of September 11th, which according to Reyes (2011) has been a strategy deployed by both Bush and Obama as it appeals to the emotions related to 9/11, such as fear, sadness, insecurity and revenge, but also serves the purpose to justify current American military actions (pp. 789-90). Another important CDA study of the Bush administration’s National Security Strategy of 2002 disrupts the ‘9/11 changed everything’ narrative, demonstrating how 9/11 was used as a justification for the ‘preventative war’ doctrine by the administration (Dunmire, 2009). Chang and Mehan’s (2008) discourse analysis of the argumentation strategy of the Bush administration, illustrated that preventative war to combat evil and madness was central to the discourse of building the case for war, particularly, the authors demonstrate how syntactical formations convoluted the debate about the threat by heightening the connection between Iraq and Al Qaeda and sidelining the debate about the factuality of the presence of weapons of mass destruction (p. 473). Ferrari (2007) goes further by comparing the political metaphors and language of the Bush administration to the cascade
propaganda used by totalitarian regimes, indulging in self-flattery, construction of an evil but less objective enemy, denigration of the antipatriotic spreaders of doubt, etc. (p. 605).

King (2014) points out that one of the key elements to crafting storylines that resonate amongst the public is that they have to employ the “underlying assumptions, beliefs, and values, the symbols, images and histories and myths.” (p. 15). As mentioned about, she discovered how the reliance on the rhetoric of American exceptionalism shaped Obama’s exit speeches. American exceptionalism is a central concept as it is within this ideological frame that other dominant metaphors such as the ‘clash of civilizations’ or prevalent Manichean characterizations of the conflict as a battle between as ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘good’ and ‘evil’, as well as themes of democracy, freedom, and patriotism are contained. It is to this polarization of the discourse that we now turn our attention.

A CDA study by Denton-Borhaug (2012) examining the war rhetoric of Obama argues that the President discursively “links the practice of war with the achievement not only of peace and prosperity, but also global security and democracy.” (p. 126). Denton-Borhaug contrasts Obama’s language with speeches by Martin Luther King on Vietnam and war; for King, war is a travesty, especially for the poor; whereas for Obama, war is a necessity, requiring sacrifice, and constitutes a central part of the American national identity, character and wellbeing (pp. 130-131). The results of this study are an excellent example of the prominence of intertextuality in war discourse to construct reality. Obama, who has often invoked the legacy of Martin Luther King, in many ways considered a voice for justice and morality, reconstitutes his message within his own war discourse; which is often reproduced by the media, and is influential in how we make
sense of events or understand their meaning/s. It is worth remembering that the ‘naturalization’ of a war discourse did not begin with Obama, indeed discourses, in order to become hegemonic must resonate culturally and historically. Analyzing how discourses are placed within cultural and historical contexts is pertinent to all three central research questions of this study. This placement of discourses influences the nature of meaning that is given to social phenomena or events; this study will ascertain whether this changed over the course of the three periods of announced ending of the war.

2.4.3.1 ‘Clash of Civilizations’

Stocchetti (2007) argues that the ‘clash of civilizations’ metaphor has been an influential interpretive framework for explaining the causes of terrorism for some time (p. 224-5). This conceptualization polarizes the Western world against the Islamic world as two separate and ultimately incompatible cultures. However, Hasmi (2014) states that Western discourse on Islam has been largely an Orientalist discourse – for example, he points out the readiness of Western leaders and press to speak of a clash of civilizations or discuss the compatibility of Islam and democracy but the same questions are never raised of the incompatibility of Catholicism in Latin America and the lack of democracy there. (p. 105). The Iraq War fits into what Knox (2013) believes is the civilizing mission of the War on Terror, where the option for pre-emptive action is only possible for the West when dealing with ‘rogue states;’ this is encapsulated in Knox’s analysis of international law which demonstrates that the legal language of war remains racialized and imperialist. (p. 128). It is the task of the CDA conducted in this study to discern the
extent to which such discourse structures were reflected in the newspaper coverage of the Iraq War.

Various studies have observed the presence of a Manichean narrative of ‘us’ as good versus ‘them’ as evil in media and official rhetoric (see for example, Kellner, 2004; Patman, 2006; Bartolucci, 2012; Zagacki, 2007; King & Wells, 2009). For example, there was a constant bringing to light the transgressions of the Iraqi regime but not the violations of unilateral action by the U.S. (Porpora et al., 2013, p. 96). Stocchetti (2007) argues that such characterization has the effect of polarizing the discourse in a way where the enemy is presented as completely de-rational or fanatical (p. 234). Richardson (2007) echoes similar observations in his critical discourse analysis of British newspaper coverage of the Iraq War, by highlighting that war propaganda typically describes conflicts in polarized ways that the discourse only allows for two possibilities: for and against (2007, p. 179). He analyses the language of British Labour politician John Reid in the lead up to the Iraq War and how the rhetoric functioned in the above described way:

1. No war = doing nothing = sustaining murder, torture = undesirable
2. War = doing something = opposing murder, torture = desirable

Being attentive to such moral absolutism and dichotomization in media discourse can reveal a great deal about how discourse operates in setting the boundaries on contentious issues and topics.

2.4.3.2 ‘Us’ vs. ‘Them’

Erjavec and Volcic (2007) in their study of Bush’s discourse, argue that the War on Terrorism established a new discursive order that aimed to control representations and
communications, where anything but support for the U.S. leadership was seen as anti-Americanism and taking sides with the terrorists (p. 125). Numerous studies have shown how the Bush regime utilized an ‘us’ vs ‘them’ framework that the media also perpetuated and adopted to a large degree (see for example, Hutcheson, Domke, Billeaudeaux & Garland, 2004; Castonguay, 2004; Coe et al., 2004; Kalsi, 2008; Kellner, 2007). Various terms are used to describe this process, but from a discourse perspective, Lazar and Lazar referred to this as a process of ‘outcasting’ (2004) through ‘criminalization’, ‘enemization’, ‘evilification’, and ‘orientalization’. (2007, p. 46). ‘Us vs. Them’ frames are utilized by politicians not only in times of war but within countries, and between political groups (Becker, 2007, p. 181). This type of discourse was utilized throughout the Bush presidency by officials, and also later adopted by Obama as he sought to shift attention from Iraq back to Afghanistan. One of the ways CDA seeks to unearth how this dichotomy is discursively achieved is through analysis of the text that illuminates the presentation of a vivid self against a blurry other. This dissertation seeks to reflect on whether all four newspapers selected adopted such a binary presentation and what the implications of such discourses are.

2.4.3.3 Theme of Fear

Various studies of the media have found that the mainstream media contributed to the atmosphere of fear of terrorism after 9/11 and forfeited their role as government watchdog (see for example, Altheide, 2003, 2004; Chermak, 2003; Der Derian, 2005; Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, & Shapiro, 2011). DiMaggio (2015) also found that during the Bush presidency, the rhetoric of fear was prominent in the President’s statements (p. 157) and
that in 2014 along with the rise of ISIS, there was a return of the rhetoric of fear (p. 303). This dissertation will examine the extent to which the news discourse during the ending of the Iraq War made reference to the fear propounded about Iraq’s WMD at the start of the war, and whether the end of the war meant the removal of a threat.

2.4.3.4 Democracy Theme

The theme of democracy was repeatedly present in Presidential rhetoric and media coverage after the failure to find WMD but democracy was also being undermined because the vast majority of Iraqis remained opposed to the occupation and privatization of Iraqi oil (DiMaggio, 2015, p. 129). Closely tied to the theme of democracy was the theme of liberation; Michaels (2013) points out how there was a reluctance in the early stages of the occupation to refer to the insurgency as the word insurgency had connotations of an uprising or resistance movement that could be interpreted as legitimate, so words like al-Qaeda, terrorists or Saddam loyalists were preferred (p. 133). Similarly, the absence of the term civil war in Iraq during the occupation was also noticeable as the administration and media referred to sectarian violence instead (p. 132). Such debates illustrate the discursive battleground, with contested terminology and meanings having more to do with politics rather than achieving semantic accuracy (p. 136).

2.4.3.5 Sanitized War Discourse

This study has been limited to study the textual details that reveal the dominant discourse surrounding the ending of the Iraq War, but some researchers such as Machin
(2007) make a case for “visual discourses” that are captured through photographs and other multimodal analyses. Machin’s assertion that discourses can be realized through images capturing various features of war – such as suffering, enemies, combat, and civilians – would certainly enhance the existing approach but is beyond the scope and ambitions of this project. Furthermore, multimodal analysis of photographs appearing in newspapers would also require a detailed analysis of the printed text in order to establish a fuller understanding of the discourse present; however, this is not necessarily the case for textual analysis which is not as dependent on the visual (that is indeed if there is a visual aid provided at all).

Machin (2007) examined the visual photography of the Iraq War appearing in U.S. mainstream media and found that the visual discourse has clearly changed in its presentation of suffering, combat, enemies, and civilians when compared to the Vietnam, Crimean or first Gulf War. (p. 124). For example, he points out how depictions of agency and action of U.S. soldiers has changed from showing bombings of targets or soldiers firing guns to depicting “behavioural processes” of observing, searching, keeping guard – emphasizing peacekeeping rather than destruction. (p. 135). Machin reminds us that images are frequently used to convey concepts or emotions rather than be informative (p. 139). The news presented images of “technologized soldiers” who are depicted professionally, and working in small teams to protect civilians who are often portrayed as helpless and weak became (p. 140). Agency in terms of the responsibility for the outcomes and consequences of the situation in Iraq is a critical dimension and this study will shed light on how it is discursively achieved.
This dissertation seeks to unearth the extent to which the textual details of the Iraq War represented the reality of the situation, especially the ongoing extreme violence between sectarian militias as well as the ongoing repercussions and suffering caused in the aftermath of a war that had been fought on Iraqi soil for over 8 years. As Machin (2007) and others have observed, there was a great deal of emphasis on the technologies of war, especially the equipment and sophistication of American precision missiles. The language used to describe such technology can almost make one forget that these are weapons that inflict immense harm and lasting destructiveness. Using language in this way can easily shift the emphasis on to the brutality of the ‘other;’ it is the enemy that is brutal and carrying out acts of terrorism and carnage whilst overlooking the carnage caused by the actions of coalition forces. CDA helps illustrate how language operates to enable the creation of such social realities that sanitize and eradicate the true horrors of war.

2.5 Summary

In section 2.1 I highlighted how LIS scholarship on the Iraq War is characterized by a reluctance to take a critical stance concerning the decision to go to war or responsibility for its aftermath. CDA and this study in particular take a position of examining the war as an injustice, with the express aim of examining the role played by media information (in the form of news discourse) in constructing meanings for the ending of the war, and how responsibility for the disastrous aftermath of the war was discussed in the selected newspapers.
The general literature dealing with the Iraq War (2.2) provides important historical details and context that shed light on the central discourses (interpretive frameworks) that were utilized in media coverage such as the War on Terror, American exceptionalism, and patriotism. King’s (2014) study on the discourse of President Obama and the discourse in the press concerning the Iraq War endgame has illuminated areas where the press coverage was critical and deviated from the President’s rhetoric on success in Iraq. As has been shown, the news media were criticized by various scholars for their uncritical support of the rationale for war with Iraq. During the invasion and occupation, the media generally continued to support the war although did question some specific points of strategy (for instance, the troop surge of 2007) but this occurred only when there were strong opposition voices from the Republican or Democratic parties. Hence, the elite theory models that were addressed are often used to explain why such opposition occurs in the press when it does. Media coverage of the ending of the war has received limited attention, but King (2014) and Feldman, Huddy and Marcus (2015), in their studies found sufficient evidence of press criticism and skepticism towards the endgame narrative.

The CDA approach adopted in this study is particularly useful in scrutinizing discourse in such a way as to unearth underlying ideological positions that can illuminate the extent to which the newspapers selected in this study did actually offer critical perspectives about the outcomes and consequences of the war, and responsibility for these. This study will also give a glimpse of how mainstream media discourse operates in terms of offering citizens information that is representative of reality. The literature covered in section 2.3 highlighted the importance of the media and news to a healthily
functioning democracy but also showed that news is an informational product that is packaged in a particular way to serve the business interests of the media organizations that produce it.

A defining feature of this literature review has been the wide range of studies from different disciplines that have been consulted in order to form a fuller picture of the media discourse in the Iraq War. Section 2.4 highlighted the dominant discourses and themes extrapolated from this broad literature. These were: clash of civilizations; Us vs. Them; themes of fear and democracy; and a discourse of sanitized warfare. These will act as useful starting points when trying to identify dominant discourses within the articles selected for this study. In addition, by drawing heavily from disciplines outside LIS, it is hoped the interdisciplinary nature of this study will further aid the methodological procedure of the type of CDA carried out. Specifically, CDA seeks to shed light on dominant discourse not only from an informational point of view (i.e. content contained in the text), but also from being able to understand the context of the textual content in relation to society and history.
Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) offers rich theoretical foundations as well as a variety of methodological approaches to analyze communication. The leading scholars of CDA are Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, Teun van Dijk, and Paul Chilton; all four have backgrounds in various strands of linguistics. The CDA program that these scholars along with others formulated sought to bring a linguistic emphasis to the study of society and discourse, as language plays a central role in the legitimization or delegitimization of power relations (Fairclough, 1989, p. 41). The works of these scholars form a great deal of the theoretical framework for CDA. There remain some theoretical shortcomings and criticisms that CDA scholars continue to grapple which are examined in more detail below. Sections 3.1 and 3.2 deal with the intellectual roots and theoretical terrain of CDA and elaborate on its epistemological rationale. Section 3.3 addresses the major critiques of CDA. And finally, Section 3.4 reviews the CDA literature within Library and Information Science (LIS) and situates this study in the field.

3.1 CDA as Theoretical Approach

CDA does not constitute a single unified theory or methodological approach; it is best understood as a school of thought (Weiss & Wodak, 2003, p. 12; Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 5) with roots in rhetoric, text linguistics, anthropology, philosophy, socio-
psychology, cognitive science, literary studies and sociolinguistics, as well as applied linguistics and pragmatics (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 1-2). Given the varied disciplinary origins and backgrounds of practitioners of CDA, CDA emphasizes interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches to investigating a wide range of social phenomena. Indeed, the definition of discourse the analyst utilizes impacts the type of CDA that proceeds. For example, a discourse is not limited to that which appears in text form, it can constitute other communicative events such as the dialogue that occurs in a classroom or workplace; it can be a system of thought that shapes social or cultural practices; it can be conceived of as a genre such as scholarly writing or journalistic writing; it can be a visual discourse such as the display of artefacts in a museum that shapes patrons’ behavior; it can be conceived of as the unspoken establishment of rules particular to a specific setting such as the layout of a library which influences the behaviors of participants and interactions between a patron and librarian for instance. Furthermore, discourse is not limited to form, i.e. syntactic, grammatical, semantic, semiotic structures, or mental processes, but is extended to include the “complex structures and hierarchies of interaction and social practice and their functions in context, society and culture” (van Dijk, 1997a, p. 6).

Often, different types of discourse overlap and contain numerous other discourses, so for example, a speech by the President of the United States, can be analyzed as both political and media discourse, as it is a part of both the world of politics, and the world of media (assuming the speech is documented, reported or broadcast in some way). Furthermore, the content of the speech contains a host of other discourses depending on the topic of the speech. For example, a Presidential speech about the Iraq War may
contain within it a historical discourse, a war discourse, a moral discourse, a security discourse, or a legal discourse, as well as less obvious examples such as an American exceptionalism discourse, or just-war discourse. In addition, the form the speech takes influences the type of discourse, for instance, if the speech is broadcast on television, there is an audio-visual discourse dimension as well as a spoken-textual component; if the speech is only reported in the printed press, the form it takes again influences the type of discourse (the speech can be understood as a written-textual discourse, that is reproduced by the writer/editor, that may also be altered with the reporter’s own evaluative statements added). The texts to be analyzed in this dissertation are news articles from major newspapers that reported the ending of the Iraq War, specifically selected from 2003 and 2011 when the United States President announced the ending of the war, as it is through these representations that meaning is ascribed to issues and events. And as one of the pioneering theorists of CDA van Dijk states, the media “are manufacturers of public knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, norms, values, morals and ideologies…[and] their symbolic power is a form of ideological power” (2008c, p. 32).

Compiling a history of the vast intellectual heritage of CDA would be an ambitious undertaking and is beyond the task set here; however, the influence of social and linguistics theories is often cited by critical scholars as fundamental to the theoretical foundations of CDA. The former addresses the contribution of European social theorists that have informed what could be described under the umbrella term of critical studies. For example, critical social theory has been heavily influenced by the various traditions of Marxism, the Frankfurt School of philosophers, the French post-structuralist tradition of thinkers such as Pierre Bourdieu, Jean Baudrillard, Michel Foucault and others, as well
as broadly by British social theorists such as Anthony Giddens, Stuart Hall, and Raymond Williams. In addition, the work of Antonio Gramsci on theories of cultural hegemony are often cited as heavily influential too. The second oft-cited influence amongst critical scholars is the impact of critical linguistics, specifically the works of Fowler et al. (1979); Kress and Hodge (1979); Fairclough (1989) and various works by Halliday which are considered seminal. However, the works on critical approaches to language have a tradition that started in the 1920s and 1930s, with the works of Voloshinov and Bakhtin. Although the term critical linguistics came later on, Voloshinov (1928/1973) viewed language (the sign) as an ideological product inseparable from society (material reality). In critical linguistics or critical language studies, language is thought of as a social practice and a socially conditioned process that is shaped by the various elements of society (Fairclough, 1989, p. 22; Fowler et al., 1979). It is not analyzed as an objective and transparent medium independent of the workings of ideology.

One aspect of these various philosophical influences that remains constant in critical studies is a critique of positivism and rejection of the notion of objective truths in social scientific inquiry. This perspective is captured by the following statement by the historian Hayden White, who emphasizes the role of human agency, ideology and interpretation in historical and scientific inquiry:

there is no value-neutral mode of emplotment, explanation, or even description of any field of events, whether imaginary or real…the very use of language itself implies or entails a specific posture before the world which is ethical, ideological, or more generally political: not only all
interpretation, but also all language is politically contaminated. (White, 1978, p. 129).

However, what sets CDA apart from other approaches such as rhetorical analysis, content analysis, or other types of discourse analysis without the prefix *critical*, or indeed most of the typical approaches to social scientific inquiry, is its commitment to social justice by intervening “on the side of dominated and oppressed groups and against dominating groups, and that it openly declares the emancipatory interests that motivate it” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 259). In other words, CDA scholars seek to address and combat discursive injustices in texts (van Dijk, 2009a, p. 63), including the inequities of discourse access and control (van Dijk, 2008c, p. 14). The way analysts do this is through de-naturalizing the language of illegitimate domination by those in power, highlighting amongst other things, the workings of ideology in texts through misrepresentation, omission of information, and social manipulation. Keeping to this approach, this study seeks to go beyond merely highlighting the workings of bias in media coverage, as CDA is concerned with the subtle ways in which ideology and power operate through discourse. Indeed, it is the subtleness that makes it difficult to detect illegitimate power abuse and unjust representation in which certain beliefs, values, and rationales are naturalized as attitudes (Fairclough, 1992b, p. 51) and can materialize in the form of policies for instance. In this sense, rather than contributing to a specific discipline, paradigm, school or discursive theory, CDA researchers are motivated by social issues (van Dijk, 1993, p. 252), and addressing and overcoming social wrongs (Fairclough, 2009, p. 163).
3.2 Three Dimensional Framework of CDA: Critical – Discourse – Analysis

3.2.1 Critical

The usage of the term *critical* in CDA operates in a similar fashion to its usage in Critical Theory or Critical Studies in that it designates an orientation towards challenging and changing assumptions about society, as opposed to the traditional social scientific approach, which seek to explain and understand phenomena often without questioning the institutions and frameworks from which such social systems emerge. Ultimately it is concerned with individual emancipation, refusing “to identify freedom with any institutional arrangement or fixed system of thought” through skepticism towards existing forms of practice and the purposes behind these (Bronner, 2011, p.1). There are other traditional methods that espouse greater academic neutrality towards social problems; however, such approaches do not necessarily seek to find solutions to the problems and for critical scholars, these may in fact, contribute to the perpetuation of the problems by becoming part of the institutionalized rhetoric of a discipline. For example, van Dijk (2012) shows how elite discourses (those discourses that are dominated by politicians, journalists and other experts for example) in the media on immigration issues can reproduce and reinforce a system of racism through the use of language that represents migrants as a problem. Another example occurs when the discourse on one issue, such as the presentation of sex education in the classroom, can use language that is heteronormative which can inadvertently reinforce a paradigm that presents alternative sexualities as deviant or abnormal. In these ways, traditional methods that do not question the underlying assumptions (and prejudices) present in the mind of the researcher, may be
somewhat responsible for the lack of progress in addressing injustices – that is, as far as academic research can be expected to bring to light the true nature of social problems.

The realm of critical linguistics emphasizes that a great deal of social meaning is implicit and not always contained in the language of texts or statements. The movement of critical linguistics is concerned with unveiling how language can conceal or distort, often without the awareness of the speaker (Fowler et al., 1979, p. 196). This critical aspect is made clear in CDA with the analysts positionality, as well as through the explicit aims of CDA, which for instance are to demystify discourses by unearthing ideologies (Weiss & Wodak, 2003, p. 14); to bring to light structures, strategies and other properties of text that play a role in the reproduction of dominance (van Dijk, 1993, p. 250); to question and criticize discourses and thereby reveal contradictions within and between discourses, highlight the boundaries of what can and cannot be said, and what role discourses play in making particular perspectives seem rational (or natural) (Jager & Maier, 2009, p. 36); and to contribute to the resolution of social problems, especially those where there are victims of unjust domination and illegitimate power relations (van Dijk, 1997b, p. 22; 2009a, pp. 63-64). Despite the diversity of aims and approaches in CDA, the presence of this critical dimension is essential for a study to be considered as a CDA study.

3.2.2 Discourse

The concept of discourse has been defined in many ways across a broad range of disciplines. In linguistics, it is common for ‘discourse’ to refer to extended pieces of either spoken or written language but can also refer to the different types of language
used in social situations, such as newspaper discourse, advertising discourse, or classroom discourse (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 3). As mentioned above, even within CDA ‘discourse’ can broadly be defined to incorporate a wide range of meanings. However, in general the CDA concept of ‘discourse’ incorporates a bi-directional influence between society and language, with each constituting the other. In other words, discourses are socially constructed representations of the world as it is perceived or as it could be imagined (Fairclough, 2003, p. 124). These representations become material realities when they manifest as verbal and non-verbal expressions, symbols, texts or actions; in addition, discourse also includes those representations that form the mental maps that we use to finding meaning in, interpret and understand society (Gee, 2011, p. 39; van Dijk, 1995a, p. 21).

In social theory, our understanding of ‘discourse’ has been largely shaped by the work of Michel Foucault and the term generally refers to the ways in which areas of knowledge are structured through social practices. For example, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault states that a discourse is a group of statements that belong to the same discursive formation, and a discursive formation exists whenever “between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations)” (1972, p. 38). Examples of such discursive formations include disciplines such as medicine, psychiatry and law (or indeed Library and Information Science, see Frohmann, 1992a, 1992b) as well as conceptualizations such as the discourse of the ‘War on Terror’ which like the disciplines mentioned above, has its own foundational premises of the causes of the war, its own explanations and justifications, or descriptions of enemies and allies, in short, a
constructed reality for understanding events such as in the cases of the atrocities committed on September 11th 2001, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the expansion of the surveillance state, or the rise of ISIS for instance. However, the Foucauldian conceptualization of ‘discourse’ undergoes various incarnations from his earlier work on *archaeology*, where the focus was on discursive formations, to his later work on *genealogy*, which examines the relationship between knowledge and power (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 39). What is constant though is that discourses are viewed to “exercise power in a society because they institutionalize and regulate ways of talking, thinking and acting.” (Jager & Maier, 2009, 35). It is this perspective that makes Foucault central to CDA and the reason critical scholars are interested in analyzing the power of discourses in shaping material realities.

Although Foucault’s theories aim to illustrate the power relations that are sustained, perpetuated and reinforced by discourse, his work also offers perspectives on a variety of related aspects such as the nature of truth, objectivity, knowledge, history, individual and mass consciousnesses, individual and group agencies, and social and political relations. Foucault’s oeuvre has influenced CDA on these subjects as well and continues to be highly relevant for scholars across the humanities and social sciences.

Another aspect of Foucault’s work that informs the theoretical foundations of CDA in general is what he refers to as *genealogy*, that is the various historical components and discourses that constitute a discipline. As Jager and Maier (2009, 37) point out “[a] single text has minimal effects, which are hardly noticeable and almost impossible to prove. In contrast, a discourse, with its recurring contents, symbols and strategies, leads to the emergence and solidification of ‘knowledge’ and therefore has sustained effects.” It is an
examination of this larger corpus of discourse and its placement in the correct historical
context that also inspires the approach to CDA adopted in this study. There are of course
different ways within CDA to unearth this larger body of discourse, but all acknowledge
the influence of Foucault in setting out to examine the epistemological evolution of
discourses beyond the linguistic features of texts, by including an analysis of the socio-
cultural and socio-political contexts within which these discourses operate.

Also related to the conceptualization of discourse as a body of socially
constructed knowledge, is the importance of truth and reality as socially constructed
entities. This is lucidly articulated in the works of Baudrillard (1981/1994, 1991/1995,
2009/2007), who puts forth the idea that signs and images are now substituted for reality
itself in a universe of simulacra, a hyperreality that privileges simulation over the real. In
other words, it is through language and the ensuing discourse that the real is
overshadowed, indeed, replaced by a constructed reality of signs and symbols. For
example, in the case of the first Gulf War (1990-91), Baudrillard questions the reality of
the war, as it was a one-sided onslaught against an inferior army unwilling to go into
battle: there are no great battles, no engagement with the Iraqi air force, no large number
of dead coalition soldiers, no final battles or victory parades; instead, we are spectators,
watching carefully selected images of ‘war,’ troops preparing, fighter planes being
readied, journalists reporting about the coming battles and dangers, or experts discussing
the technological superiority of the coalition forces and so forth. Baudrillard brands such
discourse “a masquerade of information” (1991/1995, p. 40) that presents a sanitized
informational version of war without displaying any of the true horrors of warfare or its
victims. CDA analysts Jager and Maier (2009) also highlight the importance of collective
symbols, through which “we interpret reality, and have reality interpreted for us, especially by the media.” (p. 47). CDA seeks to bring to light these kinds of social constructions of reality and specifically, analyze the role of the social, political and ideological dimensions within discourses to help create hegemonic discourses that give meaning to events and appear truthful, rational and natural.

3.2.3 Analysis

There are various social domains of analysis that are of interest to CDA practitioners such as media language, political discourse, economics, advertising, gender, institutional or work place discourse, and education discourse. Within each domain practitioners have developed analytical methods that are suitable to achieve the overarching CDA aims of unearthing ideology and power at work but are at the same time quite eclectic and dissimilar. One noticeable difference is in the micro and macro level of analysis – where the former places a greater emphasis on the linguistic details of the discourse (such as vocabulary, syntactical structures, metaphors, etc.), and the latter seeks to analyze broader socio-political contexts (e.g. grand narratives, thematic structures, intertextuality, etc.). The macro-level of analysis is largely Foucauldian in character with emphasis on historical contexts and processes and having a greater social theory emphasis. For example, Foucault’s (1961/1988) study of the history of insanity involve a macro-level analysis with limited attention to linguistics, as he engages with the broader social landscapes and institutional processes that eventually impacted the development of medicine and psychiatric practice, as well as the formation of the penal system for dealing with transgressors of social norms (madmen). Another example of a
macro-level analysis with limited linguistic attention to the analysis is Edward Said’s (1978) study of the concept of Orientalism; through a critical analysis of Western literary cultural products over time he demonstrated that the macro-level discourse of Orientalism permeated and culminated in negative cultural representations of non-Western peoples and places and was deeply colonial in ideological outlook. Thus, in a general sense, macro-level analysis is concerned with structures such as genre, paradigms, and models of understanding that ground knowledge within such frameworks. Within CDA, macro-level approaches can include analysis of semantic macrostructures, thematic analysis, or what van Dijk calls schemata, these are the overall forms of a discourse, its superstructure (1985b, p. 69). In CDA the purpose of a linguistic analysis is to aid the analysis of the overall discourse as a social phenomenon by providing additional material (linguistic structures) to use as units of analysis and evidence in explaining social structures.

In terms of a micro-level discourse analysis, there are varying degrees of emphasis on linguistic features and numerous methods for the analysis of linguistic structures and characteristics upon which the analyst can choose to focus. For example, in political discourse, breaking down the strategies of argumentation used in the text in terms of logos (appeal to reason), pathos (appeal to emotions), ethos (appeal to morality) is concerned with local meaning. The analyst then delves deeper into the semantic and syntactic structures of the text to shed further light on the nature of the discourse. Since CDA is largely descriptive and interpretive in methodological approach, it is essential for the analyst to situate the micro-level (local) meaning or meanings contained within a text in the macro-level (global) structure within which the text is contextualized. In other words, the analysis of the text must be interpreted in terms of its relation to the social
structures in which power operates. The combining of “the discursive with the textual, through a conjunction of analysis of both text and its intertextual context” is one of the key methodological strengths of CDA (Chouliaraki, 2000, p. 297).

A central aspect of the analysis in this study is examining the evolution of the dominant newspaper discourses across two endings of the Iraq War, 2003 and 2011. Most studies of representation tend to focus on how a certain event or issue was represented at a specific point in time (synchronic) rather than over a certain period of time (diachronic). The obvious reasons for this are that conducting a diachronic analysis of the media’s coverage of an issue is laborious and time-intensive. Furthermore, establishing a suitable period to contextualize the issue remains problematic and highly subjective. Indeed, van Dijk’s socio-cognitive approach underlines the subjective nature of context; he defines context as “a specific kind of mental model, that is, as subjective participant representations of communicative situations, and not as the communicative situations themselves” (2008b, p. 21). However, in this study context is also understood in the Foucauldian sense outlined above, that is, tracing the ‘genealogy’ of certain discourses over time. This study adopts Carvalho’s (2008) framework for tracing such a genealogy of meanings in media discourses, which incorporates analyzing the sequence of media texts that appear at key moments. The specific procedures for this analysis are explained in Chapter Four.

Another important aspect of discourse analysis that CDA practitioners devote attention to in their examination of texts is the issue of omission. This is sometimes referred to as deletion as well and is concerned with what is left out of a text in order to present someone or something in a particular light to make the speaker or writer’s point.
of view more persuasive. It is in this regard that a purely linguistics-focused analysis or quantitative content analysis approaches that document frequency and co-location of words for example – that examine only what is ‘there’ in the text – will inevitably miss what is not part of the text. In the context of media discourse analysis, these “informative omissions” (Molina, 2009, p. 187) become critical in revealing strategies of evasiveness, deceit, or manipulation. Also, related to the issue of omission is the issue of implication, or what is implied by a statement; a text does not necessarily have to explicitly state something in order for it to imply something. As Fairclough (1995) points out, “the unsaid, the already said, the presupposed, is of particular importance in ideological analysis, in that ideologies are generally embedded within the implicit meaning of a text rather than being explicit” (p. 108). Presuppositions in texts are an example of textual features that reveal what the producer of the text takes as ‘given’ or to be understood by the reader, for instance the phrase ‘the Iran threat’ presupposes that Iran is a threat and is clearly a value-laden construct.

Foucault’s writings also engage with the topic of silence and the effects it has on ‘truth;’ he elaborates in numerous works how this is achieved discursively through concepts such as ‘regime of discourse,’ ‘regimes of truth,’ ‘orders of discourse’ and epistome, and these remain largely relevant in CDA. For example, establishing parameters of operation for a field of enquiry or selecting a specialized vocabulary, by default requires a process whereby what is deemed most relevant is selected and what is deemed less so excluded. Foucault writes:

Silence itself – the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name… is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is
separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside
the things said, with them and in relation to them within overall
strategies….There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral
part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses.” (Foucault,

This understanding of how silences operate within discourses undergirds the CDA
emphasis on the necessity of examining the context within which the text ‘speaks.’

3.3 Critiques of CDA

Although CDA has been firmly established as a research approach in the
humanities and social sciences, there continues to be debate surrounding its limitations
and weaknesses. There have been numerous criticisms of CDA on both theoretical and
methodological grounds (see for example, Billig, 2008a, 2008b; Billig and Schegloff,
1999; Blommaert, 2001, 2005; Breeze, 2011; Hammersley, 1997; Jones, 2007; Jorgensen
significant critiques of its philosophical assumptions, its heavy reliance on linguistics at
the expense of other aspects of discourse (e.g. non-discursive, contextual, and societal),
fragmented framework, variation in analytical approaches, and apparent contradictions.
The variation that exists in studies that identify as CDA means that occasionally these
criticisms appear directed at specific theorists or interpretations of CDA; however, here I
will address those that challenge the broader premise of CDA itself.

CDA’s opposition to philosophical presupposition, normative research and values
on truth and objectivity prompted Hammersley (1997) to criticize CDA on several levels.
He argues that advocates of CDA treat the validity of a critical approach as obvious (p. 239) and that much of the research of the ‘critical’ tradition in the social sciences takes for granted its own philosophical foundations, concluding that “the term ‘critical’ has become little more than a rallying cry demanding that researchers consider ‘whose side they are on’.” (p. 244). Hammersley is alluding to the problematic nature of the higher value placed on the position that the analyst adopts that places her/him on the right side of morality. However, this type of critique is also levelled at other traditions that also reject normative schemata such as critical theory, ethnographic studies, social constructivism, and post-modernism. Like these traditions, CDA has continued to improve and attract a growing following in academia and as Carvalho (2008) reminds us, ideological commitment “does not equal analytical distortion.” (p. 162).

Critical discourse analysts have also been criticized for imposing their own interpretations on texts at the expense of other possible interpretations (Widdowson, 1995, 1996 and 1998). Widdowson (1998) charges that analysts are selective of fragments of texts that support their argument and disregard inconvenient textual features (p. 145). Breeze (2011) also highlights that there is a tendency amongst analysts to ignore “text trajectories” by focusing on fragments of discourses rather than tracing their larger contextual history which can lead to an incomplete picture of the discourse. (p. 515). These criticisms can be addressed by the individual analyst and are not necessarily the result of a defective methodology however; indeed they serve as useful reminders of retaining analytical rigor.

CDA requires the analyst to make her/his position explicit, but as Fairclough (1996) points out, CDA need not be oriented towards the political left, and that it is
conceivable for those on the right to also perform CDA. This is problematic for Hammersley (1997) and Breeze (2011) for the same reason that the work of Foucault has been criticized as being decisionist. Hammersley writes that such foundations “allows political commitments of any kind to govern research…the implication is that all commitments are necessarily and equally irrational.” (p. 243). This argument suggests that there are some political viewpoints that are more valid than others and displays an inherent discomfort with the possibility of researchers being led by political and ideological convictions rather than scientific ones. However, as discussed above, the perspective of CDA adopted in this study holds that all political viewpoints are critiqued and that there is no neutral ground in the traditional positivism-influenced methodologies; the approach is rather centered on those in power, regardless of where the party in power might be regarded on the political spectrum.

CDA analysts have also been charged with over-interpretation at the expense of disregarding the language user’s agency, whether it is the agency of the text producer or text consumer (reader) (Billig, 2008a, p. 793; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 90; Widdowson, 1995, 1998). Widdowson argues that analysts interpret the ideology of the text producer vicariously, as well as ignoring the ideological disposition of the reader which reflects an adoption of a simple transmission model of communication (1995, p. 168). The lack of attention that has been devoted to the reader or listener’s interpretation of the text is also cited as an overall criticism of CDA studies. Given the interdisciplinary

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9 Breeze (2011) writes that “in a post-modern framework, it has been suggested that one simply “chooses” particular values or stances, in a process of existential self-definition [sic] which is sometimes referred to as decisionism...In this perspective, although we may try to form our commitments by following “rational” procedures, the fragmentation of the moral and intellectual order is such that it is hard to find consistent grounds for a rational politics, or for reasoned political discourse, and there is little real hope of furthering human emancipation.” (p. 500).
emphasis of CDA, Breeze cites as a criticism the rare references by CDA practitioners to the literature from media studies or ethnography of communication to examine audience effects and responses to discourses. (2011, p. 512). This is a criticism also raised by Molina (2009), who asserts that many CDA analysts assume a weak and disengaged audience that is easily manipulated by dominant discourses, and he points to the electoral successes of left-leaning governments in South America, such as those of Chavez in Venezuela, Lula in Brazil, Correa in Ecuador, and Morales in Bolivia; these electoral successes demonstrate that the will of the people can overcome the dominance of media discourse by elites that were opposed to these leaders (p. 195).

It is ironic that the success of CDA in establishing itself and achieving wider recognition and acceptance across disciplines, has also led to criticisms of its institutionalization as part of an academic and therefore elite discourse. For example, Billig (2003), himself a critical scholar, has been critical of the re-branding of the analysis of critical discourse into the acronym “CDA” as a marketing ploy as if it is an intellectual product to become part of the academic economy. (p.46-42). He argues that this type of standardization can lead to discourse analysis losing its ‘critical’ stance and establish its own critical orthodoxy. Billig (2008a) critiques analysts’ use of nominalizations to instantiate their own writings in the same way that they criticize others for; and particularly points out the development of a “technical language which is filled with nominalizations rendering processes as entities” (p. 786). The result is a creation of a specialized language of technical jargon belonging to the world of the initiated (p. 796) which ensures a formalization of the CDA discourse. Verschueren (2001) was one of the earlier critics of this happening in CDA, stating that CDA forming its own community of
scholars overrides the importance of mutual critique, resulting in an oxymoronic ‘critical community’ of like-minded scholars (p. 67). In essence this is not wholly dissimilar to what Foucault says occurred in the formation of the fields of medicine (Foucault, 1978/1995, p. 185) and psychoanalysis (Foucault, 1970/1973, pp. 373-374) through the development of a disciplinary episteme that contributed to the development of hierarchical power structures. van Dijk (2008a) reminds us that CDA is principally concerned with illegitimate uses of language, and the use of nominalization by CDA scholars is not done so to hide forms of domination (p. 823). Fairclough (2008b) and Martin (2008) have also defended the use of technical language and nominalizations, arguing that they are needed in theory development, and to organize discourse building knowledge, and is therefore essential to academic writing.

Also related to this point is the forming of a discipline that steers away from its own emphasis on interdisciplinary study towards an over-emphasis on linguistic analysis, which comes at the expense of understanding the wider societal contexts (Blommaert, 2001, 2005; Jones, 2007; Molina, 2009). Blommaert (2005) criticizes the lack of historical and contextual analysis that accompanies the linguistic analysis in most CDA studies, and suggests that this can lead to the analyst ignoring how hegemonic discourses come in to being in the first place. Jones (20007) goes further stating that linguistics in general and CDA specifically do not have the tools to meaningfully explain the connection between discourse and material economic process and the relations between the dominant and dominated in society in the same way that political writers and activists can do so using a different set of skills (p. 366). It is also worth bearing in mind that whilst there are criticisms of the linguistic orientation towards understanding discourses,
criticisms pointing in the other direction have also been made, pointing out a lack of linguistic theory (Widdowson, 1998) or vagueness and ambiguity of the terminology of CDA (Hammersley, 1997; Billig, 2008a), as well as an over-reliance on social theory to link the textual analysis to the evaluations made by analysts (Verscheuren, 2001, p. 69).

CDA’s eclectic theoretical epistemology although criticized can also be its strength, as it can prevent a critical orthodoxy from forming. This is because such diversity can prevent the formation of rigidity of theoretical approach, which could over-regulate and delimit CDA, resulting in a version of institutionalization that can make CDA less critical. Criticisms about analysts drawing ideologically driven conclusions can be addressed if researchers make explicit their positionality and agendas. Furthermore, the researcher should remain attentive to methodological issues such as clarity of usage of terminology, remain consistent in usage of utilizing social theories to explain discourse phenomena, and being cautious and measured about the conclusions drawn from the micro-level discourse within texts about the macro-level discourse about societal problems. As can be seen from the diversity of literature that this study draws from, my approach crosses disciplinary boundaries to obtain a deeper understanding of the institutions of government and media and their relations to each other and the general public. Drawing from the research of such a diverse range of disciplines also helps address the charge that most CDA studies ignore the historical and contextual issues relating to discourses. Issues of representativeness of data and validity are addressed in Chapter Four, as these are largely dependent on the CDA approach of each individual study.
3.4 CDA in Library and Information Science

The methodological relevance of CDA to LIS is evident because both aim to address social problems and issues of social justice; in LIS this commitment is reflected by the core values of the American Libraries Association’s (ALA) such as democracy, education, diversity, intellectual freedom, the public good and social responsibility (2004). Mehra, Albright, and Rioux (2006) cite methodology as playing a central role in enabling research committed to social justice; they, like critical scholars, point to the inadequacy of traditional positivism-based approaches to responding to issues of power abuse and discrimination. Oliphant (2015) uses Kelvin Rioux’s five underlying assumptions of social justice metatheory to make the case for CDA in LIS, concluding that “critical discourse analysts share a political orientation found in the LIS community, taking a research position that explicitly involves seeking positive, empowering effects on dominated social groups.” (p. 241).

Although there are very few instances of the explicit reference to CDA in LIS research, there have been a number of studies that focus on discourse or utilize discourse analytic tools to address a broad range of LIS concerns. The earlier of these studies tended to focus on the methodological and theoretical possibilities of discourse analysis for LIS research (for example, Frohmann, 1994; Budd & Raber, 1996; R. Day, 2000 and 2005; Radford, 1998; Radford & Radford, 2005; Talja, 1999) as well as an application of a critical approach to the dominant paradigms and streams of theory within LIS (for

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10 Rioux’s five underlying assumptions of social justice for LIS are: 1) All human beings have an inherent worth and deserve information services that help address their information needs. 2) People perceive reality and information in different ways, often within cultural or life role contexts. 3) There are many different types of information and knowledge, and these are societal resources. 4) Theory and research are pursued with the ultimate goal of bringing positive change to service constituencies. 5) The provision of information services is an inherently powerful activity. (Cited in Oliphant, 2015, p. 231).
example, Budd, 2006; Frohmann, 1992a, 1992b; Haider & Bawden, 2007; and Touminen, 1997). A number of other studies have utilized discourse analysis to critique the LIS profession or its disciplinary publications to trace the development of specific discourses. For example, M. Day (1998) traces the emergence of transformational discourse; Hicks (2014) examines the construction of professional identities; Hicks and Given (2013) apply discourse analysis to chart the evolution of a leadership discourse and how it has become incorporated into most MLIS programs; Radford (1992, 2003) and Radford and Radford (2001) have been amongst the major advocates of utilizing discourse theory and applied it to the study of various discourses within LIS; and Willet (2016) who examines discourse within the scholarship on the maker movement.

As discourse-related studies (including CDA studies) asserted itself as a legitimate field of inquiry in the social sciences and humanities, its theories and methods drew greater academic interest, including from LIS scholars in the last decade. Some of the discourse studies in LIS have a clear critical orientation for social justice (for example, Brook, Ellenwood and Lazzaro (2015) focus on the reproduction of racism through the privileging of whiteness as a default for library standards, values and practices; Hudson (2012) advocates for a critical stance on the discourse of information inequality; and Kumasi and Hill (2013) evaluate the workings of ideology behind the cultural competency discourse. Another set of studies make power relations within organizational structures their principle focus, (for example, Gallagher, McMenemy and Poulter (2015) analyze the language of acceptable use policies in Scottish public libraries; Hedemark, Hedman and Sundin (2005) identify various discourses and how these lead to the reproduction of inequality of power between users and librarians; Stevenson (2001)
uses Fairclough’s model of textually oriented discourse analysis (TODA) to examine policy documents concerning the funding of Canadian Community Information Centres and how information is treated as a commodity within a capitalist discourse; and Wadas (2017) who conducts a discourse analysis of library mission statements to examine how closely they resemble those of their parent institutions). The studies mentioned above are not a complete list as there have been some other LIS studies that utilize discourse analysis on a diverse range of topics, however, what is clear from a general search in the leading LIS databases is that these are few in number; for instance, there were no discourse analysis articles published before the 1990s, and only around forty since, and of these only a handful make explicit reference to CDA. The rest of this section will summarize some of the studies that are most closely related to CDA, and then situate this dissertation within the LIS / CDA corpus.

Bernd Frohmann (1992a, 1992b, and 1994) was one of the first to recognize the value of a critical approach to dominant theoretical paradigms within LIS. His works proposed discourse analysis for investigating talk and text within the discursive practices of librarianship in addition to critiquing conceptualizations of ‘information’ within LIS scholarship. Frohmann (1994) demonstrated the various ways that concepts such as information and information use are discursively constructed, and how information users’ identities are constructed as to present a particular identity (for example, library user as consumer) as natural or objective; his work also highlighted the role that social and institutional practices play in achieving “closure over the discursive elements available to articulate social and personal identities.” (p. 135). Frohmann (1992a, 1992b) adopts a Foucauldian discourse analysis of the archaeology of the LIS discipline, arguing that LIS
theory is unreflective about its underpinnings and that concepts such as an information ‘user’ and ‘generator’ remain uncontested within the dominant cognitive discourse. He goes on to charge that:

   The cognitive viewpoint presents itself neither as one theory among many, nor as a local theory of specific problems, but as a total theory for LIS, and as its only theory. It occupies not only the LIS homelands but also colonizes its hinterlands, silencing theoretical guerrilla movements by the imposition of a universal discourse. (Frohmann, 1992b, p. 371)

Frohmann’s analysis is thus, congruent with Foucault’s conceptualization of discourse, demonstrating how knowledge is constructed and how power operates through specific discursive procedures which permeate and control the scholarly terrain. Frohmann (1992a, 1992b) thus demonstrates how the cognitive paradigm in LIS has obtained hegemonic control over the field not just through its delimitation of conceptualizations such as ‘information’, ‘document’, ‘users’, ‘knowledge stores’, etc., but also through setting the parameters of what constitutes the discipline of information science.

   The discursive structures of LIS that enable its existence as a discursive formation are also addressed by several other LIS scholars. Radford (1992, 1998, and 2003) has argued that much of LIS scholarship is inward-looking, pointing out that it “develops and uses a specialized vocabulary that differentiates its users from those in fields such as sociology, psychology, or philosophy. It is the discourse of a particular intellectual community and is institutionalized through specific professional associations, journals, and conferences. Taken together, this talk in these contexts forms an easily recognizable discursive formation.” (Radford, 2003, p. 5). R. Day (2005) has also commented on the
general resistance to post-structuralism within LIS as a result of its historical anxiety over its disciplinary status and what he calls an “obsession over creating a uniform sense of theory” (p. 591). Much LIS scholarship is still entrenched within a positivist view of knowledge that understands it as “an independent object that can be stored, classified, and arranged in an objective manner.” (Radford, 1992, p. 410). As a result of this, there are fewer challenges to the established orthodoxies of the discipline, including theoretical and methodological approaches, which is why CDA and other closely related philosophical movements remain on the outskirts of the discipline.

Budd and Raber (1996) and Budd (2006) also make the case for the use of discourse analysis (closely related to but distinct from CDA) as an approach to information problems, as it is concerned with both the form and functions of communication. The LIS profession is preoccupied with the intersection of information, communications and technologies – as well as with the role Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) play in facilitating the plethora of objectives of information professionals revolving around access, organization, storage and retrieval. Budd and Raber (1996) propose that discourse analysis can be useful for penetrating tacit forms of knowledge in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the workings of discourse in formal structures in the form of cognitive, psychological, and emotional insights (p. 220).

Whilst Budd (2006), Budd and Raber (1996), R. Day (2000, 2005), Frohmann (1992a, 1992b, 1994), and Radford’s (1992, 1998, 2003) work does not utilize the term ‘CDA’ it does resemble many of its principle features (e.g. heavily influenced by Foucault, concern with discursive formations and the effects these have on the conceptualization of inequitable relations between user and librarian for instance); a
noticeable exception however, is the absence of a detailed attention to linguistic analysis. The lack of attention to detailed linguistic analysis of discourse is also noticeable in most of the LIS scholarship that uses discourse analytical approaches; this scholarship has largely been influenced by the important contributions of Budd, R. Day, Frohmann and Radford but there remains a void in terms of CDA. A citation analysis study of the references to Foucault’s seminal works *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) and *The Order of Things* (1970/1973) in LIS journal found there was limited use of these works by LIS scholars; and even discourse analysis studies tended to engage with secondary works that explained Foucault’s ideas through the works of scholars such as Budd, Frohmann or Radford rather than turning directly to the original works themselves (Dewey, 2016, p. 474). Part of the reason for the limited use of critical theory, post-structuralism or postmodernist ideas is due to the ‘classical’ (outdated) manner in which information science treats history (R. Day, 2005, p. 579) with little regard for the historical discontinuities or the rejection of the notion of truth as a discursive construction emphasized in the works of Foucault and others.

In addition to theoretical critiques of LIS that form a key body of the discourse analysis literature, there are numerous other studies that adopt discourse analysis to examine a wide range of texts, issues and discourses in the field. For instance, Haider and Bawden (2007) employed discourse analysis for tracing the ontological roots of the notion of information poverty in LIS scholarly journal articles. Although the authors do not refer to the study as a CDA, their theoretical ambitions and Foucauldian approach resemble some features of the historically oriented critical discourse analysis, also
sometimes referred to as the Vienna school approach.\textsuperscript{11} Moreover the study is concerned with the role played by the LIS discourse to fix concepts such as information or knowledge in order to stabilize the relations between user and librarian and thereby concentrate power in the hands of LIS professionals. Amongst other things, they conclude that the discourse of information poverty involves the discursive construction of an “information poor” and a positioning of the LIS professional, armed with a specialized knowledge as the savior; and that various discursive procedures tie the “information poor” to the LIS profession and its institutions, thereby lending LIS an ethical dimension to its practices (p. 552).

Another related study by Hudson’s (2012) advocated for LIS to adopt a more critical approach to Western discourse on global inequality, suggesting that practitioners have paid scant attention to the assumptions inherent in the discourse of development (p. 70), and accepted the taken-for-granted language of the information inequality (digital divide) narrative which is inattentive to the role of colonial legacies (p. 79). Hudson conducts a textual critique of LIS literature through “a critical unpacking of the discourse of “information inequality” as a key conceptual constellation through which LIS communities have tended to articulate concern for global inequalities and desire for transformative intervention….\textemdash[but] such uncritical acceptance and reproduction of such a discourse results in the unwitting reinforcement of presumptions of civilizational superiority through notions of Western “information societies” and invention of ICTs.”

\textsuperscript{11} The Discourse-Historical Approach to CDA was developed by Ruth Wodak and her associates at the University of Vienna, and is a method that is concerned with charting the intertextual history of phrases and arguments; its distinctive features are that it combines theories and methods (including ethnography); it takes account of historical context in interpreting texts and discourse which permits the analyst to reconstruct how recontextualization functions in the linking of texts and discourses over time. (Blommaert, 2005, p. 28; Wodak, 2015, p. 2).
In terms of the analysis, there is a clear emphasis on language features such as word choice and metaphors in addition to the focus on narratives and themes. Hudson concludes that the LIS profession and its accompanying discourse remains fixated on conceptual narratives of “information poverty” and “digital divides” without acknowledging the legacies of colonialism, and the West’s historical and present-day role in globalization practices which only perpetuates the discrimination discursively.

Studies of discourse in the LIS field demonstrate the versatility of discourse analysis as it has been applied in many different ways and to various types of texts (e.g. government policy documents, library policies, library and university mission statements, scholarly articles, or interview transcriptions) in order to investigate a range of discourses which are more often than not, related to the functioning of power relations in society. Most of these however would not fall under the umbrella of critical studies, although they may have critical dimensions. For example, Hicks’ (2014) study of interpretive repertories that librarians use to construct their professional identities focuses predominantly on what was said in the texts (which included LIS literature, discussion boards and interviews), and takes note of the prominence, recurring themes, word choice and descriptions (which are all important in critical discourse analysis too) with limited attention to how it was said, and linguistically constructed. Whilst not denying the value of the study, Hicks does not devote much direct attention to the deconstruction of the workings of ideology in the discourse structure. This is not a criticism of the study but rather, is intended to illuminate the difference between discourse analysis and CDA. Other examples of studies which would not come under critical studies include Hicks and Given, 2013; Rabina, Drabinkski & Paradise, 2016; or Wadas, 2017. There are natural
overlaps between the two approaches, for example, the interest in the formation of knowledge, and its relation to power, understood through how specific knowledge structures become hegemonic. But, these studies are not necessarily dealing with a social injustice, redressing social wrongs, or seeking to unearth the illegitimacy of hegemonic discourses in the same way that CDA and this dissertation seek to. In many ways this has largely to do with the positivist traditions of LIS that still dominate research approaches in the sense that researchers still seek to find that ideal neutral, unbiased, and objective ground to stand on. This point is echoed by Jaeger, Bertot and Gorham (2013) who bemoan the lack of attention to and awareness of within the LIS profession of politics, its effects on policy, and how librarians can advocate against damaging policies such as library closures or underfunding. Their recommendations that LIS research and education needs to address politics and policy issues more effectively rather than remain disengaged, searching for that ever elusive neutral ground coincides with the broader aims of CDA mentioned above. M. Day (1998) in his study of the influence of transformative discourse within LIS argues that there is a tendency in LIS to adopt dominant discourses in the managerial culture (such as corporate organization and corporate culture discourses which are often seeped in capitalist discourse) which results in the acceptance of the prevailing order and conditions (p. 3). CDA as a methodological approach aims to de-naturalize these accepted orders of discourse by critiquing the dominant models of thought or readily accepted consensuses that prevail.

In summary, this study aims to put into practice the recommendations of LIS theorists such as Frohmann and Budd for researchers in the field to pursue discourse studies as a way of enhancing the critical scholarship tradition within the discipline. As
mentioned, the concern with social justice issues has been central to the tradition of the LIS field with research championing equal access to information for instance. This dissertation treats the Iraq War as an injustice and highlights the need for a news discourse that illuminates the true outcomes and consequences of the war. Therefore, this study, by scrutinizing critical information products such as news reports, is also concerned with predominant LIS issues such as the accuracy and reliability of information sources.
CHAPTER 4
METHODOLOGY

The analytical framework for CDA in this study is based on Carvalho’s (2008) model for analyzing media discourse, and has been adapted in order to meet the specific research aims of this study. To recap, these are: (1) to shed light on the dominant discourses that are embedded in news coverage of the ending of the Iraq War in four major National newspapers (The New York Times (NYT), The Washington Post (WP), The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) and USA Today); (2) to demonstrate using CDA how meaning of the ending of the war was discursively constructed in 2003 and 2011; and (3) to illustrate how news is an informational product that is not free of ideology by uncovering patterns and thematic structures of discourses within the coverage that either discursively reproduce or challenge the injustices of the Iraq War. The essential methodological concepts of the analytical method have been influenced by various theorists but remains largely Foucauldian in character, in that discourses are understood as broader frameworks of interpretation that delimit the parameters of dialogue and regulate how reality is textually constructed. Central to this objective is highlighting the workings of ideology within discourses, how this is achieved is discussed in detail below. This chapter also describes the method of data collection and analysis, the specific procedures of Carvalho’s (2008) framework, and addresses the issues of validity and reliability.
4.1 Data Collection and Analysis

The newspaper articles from *NYT*, *WP*, and *USA Today* were retrieved from the LexisNexis Academic database, whereas *WSJ* articles were retrieved from the Factiva database. The search query “Iraq” AND “War” (appearing anywhere in the text), was used to identify articles from two periods (see Table 4.1 below for exact dates) in which the American President announced the ending of the Iraq War. Articles were then selected based on relevance to the topic of this dissertation. This involved an open-ended reading of the retrieved texts, paying close attention to headlines and lead paragraphs to ascertain an article’s relevance. The sample of articles selected directly addressed the ending of the war, specifically, its outcomes, consequences and the issue of responsibility. The dates of news coverage were based on Presidential announcements of the ending of the Iraq War, as these are deemed to be critical discourse moments in the news coverage. Carvalho defines critical discourse moments as “periods that involve specific happenings, which may challenge the “established” discursive positions. Various factors may define these key moments: political activity, scientific findings or other socially relevant events.” (2008, p. 166). The focus on these critical discourse moments also enables the researcher to restrict the amount of data to ensure the feasibility of the study. Those articles that merely mentioned the Iraq War but were not directly about the ending were not selected for analysis. Complete transcripts of the President’s speeches, book reviews and letters to the editor were also weeded out at this stage. The May 2003 and December 2011 ‘endings’ were selected for comparison in this study as these two periods marked points closest to the beginning and official end of the conflict (there had been news coverage about the drawing down of the conflict in Iraq in 2009, 2010 and
earlier in 2011). In addition, examining the coverage from 2003 and 2011 would enable to highlight the evolution of discourse over a longer period of time as well as between different administrations. Furthermore, restricting the scope and data was necessary in order to attain the richness of textual and contextual analysis that CDA seeks to. This process resulted in a total of 219 articles (158 from May 2003 and 61 from December 2011) being selected across all four newspapers shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Number of articles for each newspaper by event and date range

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Mission Accomplished” Speech by Bush, 1 May 2003 (Thu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 April 2003 (Wed) to 7 May 2003 (Wed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Official ceremony marking formal end of war, 15 December 2011 (Wed) |
| Date Range | NYT | WP | WSJ | USA | Total |
| 11 Dec 2011 (Sun) to 19 Dec 2011 (Mon) | 22 | 21 | 9 | 9 | 61 |

219

For the textual and contextual analyses components, important metadata such as date, headline, byline, article type (e.g. editorial, op-ed), location (e.g. section, page number), and article word length were documented for all 219 articles. Data such as word length and article location was used as indicators of importance attached to a report by the newspaper. These articles were then analyzed and coded using NVivo 11 Pro – a qualitative data analysis software. Similar to many grounded theory approaches to coding, the newspaper articles were analyzed using open-coding, which aimed to capture all the different ways the outcomes, consequences and attribution of responsibility in the war were represented. The process of open-coding involved a line-by-line reading and
designation of meaning within texts into appropriate categories of discourses. So for example, if an article contained a reference to a successful military mission, the reference was coded under ‘military operation as a success.’ Once numerous such codes had been developed, axial coding was used whereby the data within the open codes was integrated and re-categorized into broader discourse categories. So for example, in analyzing the outcomes of the war, the openly coded discourses of ‘liberating Iraqis’, ‘democratization’, ‘women’s liberation’, and ‘justice for Iraqis by holding former regime officials to account’ were all re-categorized under the overarching discourse of ‘removal of dictatorship.’ As highlighted in earlier discussions about the aims of CDA, this approach enabled the identification of the sustained discourses, themes, narratives, representations and ideological perspectives that appeared in multiple texts over the course of the selected coverage and therefore allowed a more meaningful interpretation of the vast data set. Once all articles had been analyzed in this way, the dominant discourses concerning the outcomes, consequences and attribution of responsibility were ranked for each newspaper by prevalence in the overall data set. These results were then used to conduct a contextual analysis; these were then compiled into summaries and are presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven (also see Appendix A and Appendix B for coding summaries).

Following the contextual analysis, key articles from 2003 and 2011 were chosen for detailed textual analysis. As is typically the case in many CDA studies, the amount of data selected for such an analysis has to be restricted in order to achieve the level of detail which can enable a thorough deconstruction of discourses and demonstrate how these operate within a single text. Therefore, one major article from each newspaper for
2003 and 2011 was selected, making a total of 8 articles. For 2003, articles from May 2\textsuperscript{nd} were chosen as it was the first Presidential announcement of the end of major combat operations. For 2011, articles were selected from December 16\textsuperscript{th}, as all the newspapers in this study reported the official ending of the war (marked by a formal ceremony held in Baghdad on December 15\textsuperscript{th}) as lead stories.

4.2 Carvalho’s (2008) Framework for Media Discourse Analysis

Carvalho’s model for analyzing media discourses is well-suited to address the concerns of this dissertation as it integrates several elements of analysis (detailed below) and crucially offers a procedure that addresses the synchronic and diachronic temporal dimensions. Carvalho’s framework promotes analyzing an extended period of time thereby privileging the analysis of continuity (and discontinuity) in media discourse over episodic analysis. The original model actually places the textual analysis as preceding the contextual analysis, however for this study, it was decided that analyzing the larger corpus of data (219 articles) using NVivo 11 Pro would offer an understanding of the wider context of the 8 articles chosen for textual analysis. Starting out from a larger data set and narrowing down to a more granular level of analysis would also aid in the presentation of findings. Below is an outline of the key features of the methodology, followed by a detailed description of each component.

\textit{I. Contextual analysis}

1. Comparative-synchronic analysis
2. Historical-diachronic analysis
II. Textual analysis

1. Layout and structural organization
2. Objects
3. Actors
4. Language, grammar and rhetoric
5. Discursive strategies
6. Ideological standpoints

I. Contextual Analysis

In this stage of the CDA the aim is to analyze the coverage beyond individual news articles and examine the overall coverage of an event in a particular newspaper, as well as the wider social context. It is therefore necessary to establish how many texts are dedicated to each event in a given amount of time (see section on data collection above). As Carvalho highlights, the number of texts is indicative of the importance attributed by a news outlet to an event (2008, p. 171). In addition, collecting data on the number of articles appearing in a given period also enables a comparison of changes in the amount of coverage across different time periods as well as across different newspapers.

The second research question of this study (What were the similarities and differences in the discourse of the selected newspapers in the 2003 and 2011 ‘ endings’ of the Iraq War?) is concerned with understanding how discourse evolved over time. Carvalho’s (2008) CDA framework accounts for the temporal aspect of discourses by focusing on two time-related dimensions of analysis, synchronic and diachronic. The principle methods employed are comparison and historical analysis, thus requiring a
comparative-synchronic analysis and a historical-diachronic analysis. In order to aid the contextual analysis, the dominant discourses concerning the outcomes, consequences, and attribution of responsibility for the consequences of the war were coded, organized into summaries and then ranked (see Appendix A and Appendix B). The rankings of discourses were determined by the number of times a particular discourse had appeared in the articles of a particular newspaper. So for example, in 2003 there were 27 articles about the war’s ending *USA Today*, of these 18 articles (or 67 percent) characterized the outcomes of the war as a success; 10 articles (or 37 percent) emphasized the uncertainty over Iraq’s future as an outcome; 9 articles (or 33 percent) highlighted the war’s failures and removal of the dictatorship as important outcomes; and 7 articles (26 percent) contained the discourse of U.S. reconstruction of Iraq as an outcome. In this way, those discourses deemed most prominent were analyzed and discussed in the results. The same procedure of ranking discourses was followed for consequences and attribution of responsibility. It is also worth re-stating that a single article can contain numerous discourses, which for example, can characterize the war’s outcomes as both success as well as failure. The methodology applied here does not attempt to quantify *how much* of an article contains a particular discourse; CDA acknowledges that this is a highly subjective process whereby the researcher attempts to ascertain what the most dominant discourses on a particular issue across multiple texts.

1. Comparative-synchronic analysis

A comparative-synchronic analysis means examining various representations (news articles) of an issue or event at a specific point in time. This involves comparing
one text with others published within the same period by different authors in the same news outlet and in others (Carvalho, 2008, p. 171). By comparing different media depictions of reality, a more accurate or complete picture of the event can be formed (than by focusing on just individual texts for instance). In addition, this also enables a better assessment of the author’s discursive interventions in the creation of certain realities. A comparative-synchronic approach thus helps identify the specific discursive traits of a given news outlet (Carvalho, 2008, p. 172). In this dissertation, the primary focus of the comparative-synchronic analysis is on the outcomes, consequences, and attribution of responsibility for these.

2. Historical-diachronic analysis

There are two levels at which the historical-diachronic analysis takes place: 1) examining the evolution of an event and its wider socio-political context; 2) examining the temporal evolution of media discourses about a given event or issue which culminates in a history of media constructions about the event or issue (Carvalho, 2008, p. 172). At the first level, the analyst has to account for the historical conditions and contexts within which texts have been produced. This requires an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates the contributions of related disciplines such as political science, communications, sociology, and history to the analysis of media discourses on relevant topics such as the global War on Terror in the case of the Iraq War. Much of this has been presented already in Chapter Two.

At a second level, examining the temporal evolution of a mediated discourse “involves looking at the sequence of discursive constructions of an issue and assessing its
significance.” (Carvalho, 2008, p. 172). Pertinent questions for the analyst to ask at this stage include: How did representations of reality at one point in time impact representations at later points? How were such representations reproduced or challenged in subsequent representations? Once again it is important for the analyst to bear in mind the socio-political and socio-cultural significance and implications of dominant discourses, such as the impact these might have on government or military agendas as well as the public debate about certain events or issues. Carvalho underlines the critical importance of ascertaining the sequential development of events and construction of issues for understanding the present (2008, p. 172). The resemblance to Foucault’s concept of *genealogy* that involves tracing the life-span of certain discourses in order to understand the socio-political arrangements of the present is apparent. Furthermore, Foucault’s remarks on the analytical approach are also pertinent, he states:

> One has to dispense with the constituent subject, to get rid of the subject itself, that’s to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework. And this is what I would call a genealogy, that is, a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledge, discourses, domains of objects, etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history.” (Foucault & Rabinow, 1984, p. 59)

It is hoped that by undertaking these procedures, the discursive effects of media discourse are also identified. In order to aid the organization and a clearer presentation of the results
of the historical – diachronic analysis, the findings are presented separately in Chapter 7 comparing analyses from 2003 and 2011.

II. Textual analysis

This approach focuses the analysis on six areas of the text in the newspaper articles which matter the most in the construction of meaning. The importance of each area is explained in detail below. As various CDA researchers have emphasized, the analyst must continuously examine what is both present in the text as well as what is absent (see for example, Fairclough, 1995; 2003; Gee, 2011; or van Dijk, 2009a). Additionally, the analyst must bear in mind how the inclusion and exclusion of information gives meaning to the discourse on an issue. (Carvalho, 2008, p. 171). The procedures outlined below were used in the detailed textual analysis of 8 selected articles.

1. Layout and Structural Organization

Carvalho refers to specific “surface” elements in the structuring of a text such as article location in the newspaper or the size of the article as playing a key role “in the definition of what is at stake, as well as the overall interpretation of an issue” which can reveal more about the valuation of the issue by a given news outlet (2008, p. 167). The headline and lead not only serve the function of summarizing the key information the news item (Fairclough, 2003, p. 74) but also activates general social knowledge (van Dijk, 2003, p. 99). As mentioned above, various metadata on each news article was collected as these are helpful in getting an overview of the data set and do enable some useful inferences to be made regarding issues of importance or salience. In the interests
of keeping the data to a manageable size, this study does not examine any accompanying
images even though these can add additional meaning to an article. As highlighted in
Chapter Three, conducting a visual discourse analysis of images requires a different set of
methodological procedures in addition to conducting a detailed textual analysis;
moreover, images are still dependent on the accompanying text to give meaning to them.

2. Objects

The objects of the text are similar to topics and themes but enhance the
conceptualization of discourses constituting rather than merely referencing the realities at
stake (Carvalho, 2008, p. 167). Identifying objects helps in deconstructing the role of
discourses. For example, in the case of the War on Terror, broader objects that are
constructed as part of its discourse are the topics of intelligence and national security,
humanitarian issues, or international solidarity. The objects can also be more specific, for
instance, how the War on Terror impacts airport security. An important question to
consider in the case of the ending of the Iraq War is what events and specific issues are
associated to the broader discourse being constructed? For example, does the article
support or oppose the policy of troop withdrawal? Addressing such aspects of the text is
likely to reflect the political standing of certain discourses.

3. Actors

Here the analyst seeks to illuminate the identity and representation of principle
actors; this includes the individuals, groups, organizations or institutions that are referred
to in the text, either by direct quotation or otherwise. Carvalho notes:
The term “actors” in this analysis means both social agents (someone who has the capacity of doing something) and characters in a (staged) story (which is ultimately what news reports are). Actors are then both subjects – they do things – and objects – they are talked about. (Carvalho, 2008, p. 168)

A useful tool for extrapolating the workings of ideology and a strategy of polarization in the construction of the identity and agency of social actors is what van Dijk (1998) calls the “ideological square.” It involves creating an “US” vs. “Them” framework which, 1) emphasizes our good properties/actions; 2) emphasizes their bad properties/actions; 3) mitigates our bad properties/actions; and 4) and mitigates their good properties/actions (p. 33).

Numerous CDA scholars have written about the major role that language (and ideology) plays in constructing identity, group identities, relations and images of social actors. An examination of the representation of actors in texts plays an essential role in helping our understanding of their perceived influence in shaping the overall meaning of the text. Important questions to ask are whose perspectives dominate the text? What “framing power” do social actors have in relation to the media? Regarding framing, Carvalho states:

Framing power may be defined as the capacity of one actor to convey her/his views and positions through the media, by having them represented by journalists either in the form of quotes or regular text. Having the predominant framing power in relation to a certain issue is an important form of social influence. (Carvalho, 2008, p. 168)
As highlighted in Chapter Two, there are certain actors, for example, Presidents and high-ranked government officials that are more likely to be quoted and given voice in media coverage on account of the public office they hold.

4. Language, Grammar and Rhetoric

This dimension of the analysis zeroes in on the lexical choices that are made by the author/s of the text as vocabulary (verbs, adjectives and adverbs) directly influence how meaning is created and realities represented. As many CDA scholars advocate, it is also important to pay attention to the grammar of a text, such as its syntactic features (presuppositions, nominalizations and active/passive sentences) which can shed light on issues of agency as well as ideological viewpoint. The final part of the linguistic analysis pays close attention to the rhetoric of the text, which includes an examination of important metaphors and persuasion devices that are employed (by both social actors as well as those of journalists), as these can be employed to appeal to emotions. There are other CDA approaches that focus far more heavily on linguistic analyses that require an advanced knowledge of specialist branches of linguistics such as pragmatics, semantics and syntax, however, Carvalho’s model adapted for this study is limited to the aspects listed above (2008, pp. 168-9).

5. Discursive Strategies

“Discursive strategies are forms of discursive manipulation of reality by social actors, including journalists, in order to achieve a certain effect or goal.” (Carvalho, 2008, p. 169). The implication however is not of an illegitimate shaping of reality but rather a
discursive intervention. One such discursive intervention to look out for in the text is the process of claims making, and examining the strategies involved in “showing”, “proving”, or “calling attention” to a given argument. (Carvalho, 2008, p. 169). For example, how does the use of sources add weight to the argument being presented?

Carvalho identifies four key discursive strategies that require attention in undertaking CDA, these are: 1) the angle of the reality being presented which is integral to the framing of that reality; 2) positioning; 3) legitimation and 4) politicization. The ‘angle’ ought to be understood in terms of framing as an action or operation, rather than as something that is a fixed entity. Similar to Entman’s (1993; 2007) understanding of framing, framing involves the organization, selection and composition of the discourse to promote a certain point of view. Selection focuses on what information (facts, opinions, perspectives, etc.) is included or excluded in the frame. Composition is concerned with how these elements are arranged in order to produce a specific meaning for the issue or event being described. As highlighted in Chapter Three, critical scholars view the language choices made by authors as inherently political; Carvalho also points out that framing is thus an inherent operation in the construction of texts when talking about reality (2008, p. 169).

“Positioning is a discursive strategy that involves constructing social actors into a certain relationship with others, that may, for instance, entitle them to do certain things” (Carvalho, 2008, p. 169). It is therefore concerned with the process of constructing the identity of the subject through discourse. Thirdly, legitimation involves the justification and sanctioning of certain actions or authority and the reasoning behind these. The fourth discursive strategy highlighted in Carvalho’s model is politicization which is how issues,
actions or events are given political attributes so as to give a political stance or understanding of the issue. For example, how the representation of an event such as a gun-related homicide in the U.S. can become a political issue about fire-arm control that focuses either on tighter regulatory policies or about punishing such crimes with severer penalties. As many other CDA theorists point out, Carvalho’s model also acknowledges the importance of the reverse of these discursive strategies such as de-legitimation and de-politicization (2008, p. 170). Others such as Chilton have said on this issue:

[Delegitimization] can manifest itself in acts of negative other – presentation, acts of blaming, scape-goating, marginalising, excluding, attacking the moral character of some individual or group, attacking the communicative cooperation of the other, attacking the rationality and sanity of the other. The extreme is to deny the humanness of the other.”

(Chilton, 2004, p. 47)

The procedure for analyzing discursive strategies must discriminate between the journalist’s strategy from those of the actors mentioned in the text. For the purposes of this dissertation however, the primary focus shall remain on the media discourses, that is the newspapers’ construction of discourses. The reason for this is that examining the discursive strategies of all social actors such as government officials, would also require a detailed examination of other forums and documents where such actors might air their views (e.g. televised speeches, websites, press releases etc.) which is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, analyzing the discursive strategies of the journalists and comparing these to those of the key actors in the texts (as exemplified through quotations in the news articles), can enhance our understanding of how media discourse reproduces
or challenges such perspectives, and also shed light on what the dominant perspectives in the media are.

6. Ideological Standpoints

This part of the textual analysis is directly related to the third research question of this dissertation which is about unearthing the ideologies shaping the discursive construction of the ending of the Iraq War. As van Dijk points out, ideologies are not simply true or false, they rather represent the “possibly partisan, self-serving ‘truth’ of a social group.” (1995b, p. 246). Fairclough also highlights that it is the presentation of a discourse as naturalized that is of concern to CDA stating:

“Ideology is most effective when its workings are least visible….And invisibility is achieved when ideologies are brought to discourse not as explicit elements of the text, but as the background assumptions which on the one hand lead the text producer to ‘textualize’ the world in a particular way, and on the other hand lead the interpreter to interpret the text in a particular way.” (1989, p. 85)

One particularly helpful schema for ideology advocated by van Dijk identifies five areas that can be helpful at identifying ideology. These can be summarized as:

- Membership devices (who belongs to us?)
- Typical acts (what do we do?)
- Aims (why do we do it?)
- Relations with other (opponent) groups
- Resources, includes access to public discourse (2009a, p. 79).
Carvalho’s conceptualization of the discursive realization of ideology also requires understanding ideology as an overarching aspect of the text (2008, p. 170). In other words, it is not something that can simply be extrapolated from examining one particular feature of the text but is rather constitutive of the entire discourse (and is therefore expressed in all of the textual features outlined in her framework). Despite this, it is not always straightforward bringing to light the ideological standpoints of an author, especially because appearing balanced, fair or unbiased is at the core of the news-making process. One approach to identifying ideological standpoints is looking at alternative constructions of the same realities by comparing media reports on the same events, and also comparing the news articles with factual information about that event (for instance, the information presented in newspaper reports compared with information from other sources such as government reports or NGO reports).

4.3 Reliability and Validity

Questions regarding criticisms and weaknesses of CDA as an approach have already been discussed in detail in Chapter Three. CDA as an interpretive enterprise leaves ample scope for the validity of the analyst’s claims to be subjected to scrutiny and contestation. Despite differences in the model applied in this study and Gee’s (2011) model for CDA,12 Gee advocates four key areas to be scrutinized to enhance the validity

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12 Gee’s (2011) model for CDA identifies seven ‘building tasks, that require the analyst to ask the following set of questions related to each building task but acknowledges that although not all of these may be necessary to raise, a critic can raise the unanswered questions as a criticism.

1. Significance: How are situated meanings, social languages, figured worlds, intertextuality, Discourses, and Conversations being used to build relevance or significance for things and people in context?
2. Practices (Activities): How are situated meanings, social languages, figured worlds, intertextuality, Discourses, and Conversations being used to enact a practice (activity) or practices (activities) in context?
of claims made by the researcher. These are: convergence; agreement; coverage; and linguistic details (2011, p. 123). Convergence refers to the compatibility of the findings between each of the areas of textual analysis and contextual analysis identified. Agreement relates to the level of conviction “native speakers of the social languages and members of the [d]iscourses being implicated in the data agree that the analysis reflects how such languages actually functions in such setting” and the more other data analysts support the conclusions reached also increases the validity. Inevitably this is something that takes time until other research is published on similar data. Thirdly, coverage is concerned with the how much the analysis and findings can be applied to related sorts of data (e.g. other informational / news products). “This includes being able to makes sense of what has come before and after the situation being analyzed and being able to predict the sorts of things that might happen in related sorts of situations.” (Gee, 2011, p. 123). The fourth area of validity refers to linguistic details. The validity of the analysis increases the more it is tied to the linguistic structure. (Gee, 2011, p. 123). In other words, the analyst must be able to produce linguistic features from the text as evidence for the claims being made. In addition, to the above four criteria, also relevant to the aims of

3. Identities: How are situated meanings, social languages, figured worlds, intertextuality, Discourses, and Conversations being used to enact and depict identities (socially significant kinds of people)?
4. Relationships: How are situated meanings, social languages, figured worlds, intertextuality, Discourses, and Conversations being used to build and sustain (or change or destroy) social relationships?
5. Politics: How are situated meanings, social languages, figured worlds, intertextuality, Discourses, and Conversations being used to create, distribute, or withhold social goods or to construe particular distributions of social goods as “good” or “acceptable” or not?
6. Connections: How are situated meanings, social languages, figured worlds, intertextuality, Discourses, and Conversations being used to make things and people connected or relevant to each other or irrelevant to or disconnected from each other?
7. Sign Systems and knowledge: How are situated meanings, social languages, figured worlds, intertextuality, Discourses, and Conversations being used to privilege or disprivilege different sign systems (language, social languages, other sorts of symbol systems) and ways of knowing? (2011, pp. 121-122).
CDA is the notion of fruitfulness of the analysis. Jorgensen and Phillips explain that fruitfulness emphasizes the importance of producing new knowledge “that may foster new types of thinking and action.” (2002, p. 172) but acknowledge that how this is applied can vary depending on the researcher’s perspective on the status of scientific knowledge and her/his perspective on what it should be used for (p. 173).

The issue of reliability is not as great a consideration in qualitative research as it is in quantitative research as there is a “fundamental assumption of multiple, changing realities” which asserts the importance of the researcher’s own continually changing understanding of the object of study (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 272). Furthermore, CDA acknowledges that each researcher is likely to interpret and read the data (newspapers) differently (as indeed are the wider public), and therefore, CDA recognizes and embraces the variation that can occur in different and competing interpretations. In this way, CDA practitioners differ from the recommendations of Lincoln, Guba and Shenton (cited in Shenton (2004, p. 64)) for ensuring the trustworthiness of research by adopting constructs that correspond to criteria employed in a positivist tradition (e.g. credibility in preference to internal validity; transferability in preference to generalizability; dependability in preference to reliability; and confirmability in preference to objectivity).

Despite the differing views on how to ascertain validity and whether there is a universally acceptable set of criteria to determine it, Jorgensen and Phillips stress, the importance of the researcher explicating the validity criteria s/he intends to follow so that the reader is able to critique and evaluate the findings before accepting or rejecting the claims (2002, pp. 173-147). In addition, the inclusion of supporting evidence in the form

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of excerpts and quotations allows readers to make their own assessments of the analyst’s interpretations as well as allowing them to make their own.
CHAPTER 5

MAY 2003: “MISSION ACCOMPLISHED”

This chapter presents the findings from the contextual and textual analyses of newspaper articles from the first ‘ending’ of the Iraq War on May 1, 2003 when President Bush announced: “Major combat operations in Iraq have ended. In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed.” (Bush, 2003b). The chapter is organized in a way that incorporates the analytical evidence into the discussion by presenting first, the results of the contextual analysis – a discussion based on the coding analysis of 158 newspaper articles utilizing NVivo 11 Pro – to ascertain what the dominant discourses concerning the outcomes, consequences and attribution of responsibility were in the construction of the war’s ending. Prominence of a discourse was determined by the number of selected articles from a given newspaper that contained a particular discourse; a percentage was calculated in order to aid the visual presentation of the coding analysis (See Appendix A and Appendix B for summaries of coding). Second, I present the findings and discussion of the textual analysis of selected articles which is based on Carvalho’s (2008) model of analysis outlined in Chapter Four. Both sections incorporate elements of the comparative-synchronic analysis where the focus remains on demonstrating how the ending of the war was discursively constructed at a specific point in time across the four newspapers selected in this study.
5.1 Brief Overview of Data

As mentioned earlier, the announcement of the declaration of victory in the Iraq War by President Bush on May 1, 2003 generated significantly more media coverage in terms of articles across each newspaper (158 articles), than any other announcement of ending, including the official withdrawal of troops in December 2011 (61 articles) (see Table 4.1 on p. 120). This suggests, as King’s (2014) study also found, that news media interest (and possibly public interest too) in the issue of the Iraq War was highest during the initial invasion period but that it declined as the war wore on.

In addition to the amount of coverage, the importance attributed to an issue by a newspaper is also reflected by the location of the article within the newspaper, with front page items generally being considered the most newsworthy. A brief examination of the percentage of the articles selected in this study, which appeared on the front page for each newspaper shows that all four newspapers gave a similar amount of front page coverage to the war in 2003 (between 18-26 percent; see Figure 5.1 below), suggesting that there was some consistency in giving prominence to the war when it was covered (judging by front page coverage). In the ending announced in 2003, the *WSJ* contained the most front page articles out of the four newspapers selected in this study, but many of these were ‘news in brief’ pieces that listed several headlines on the front page, and did not necessarily constitute devoted coverage to the issue hence, underlining the disadvantages of conducting a purely quantitative content analysis. In the ending of the war in 2011, the figures for front page prominence did not change dramatically for the *WP* or *NYT*; although overall news media interest in the Iraq War did decline for all four newspapers as reflected by total number of articles (see Table 4.1 on p. 120). In 2011, coverage of the
war was considered just as worthy of front page attention for both the *NYT* and *WP* as it was in 2003. However, for the *WSJ* and *USA Today*, front page coverage did show a significant decrease in 2011 compared with 2003, suggesting the Iraq War was not as important an issue for these two newspapers over eight years after the start of the war.

![Figure 5.1: Percentage of articles appearing on front page](image)

There are of course other factors that can reflect a newspaper’s attribution of importance to an issue such as the size of an article in terms of both word count and page space coverage (and whether photographs are included), or by prominence and visibility of headline. CDA is not preoccupied with compiling quantitative data on such issues or data on frequency of words or numbers of articles for instance, but highlighting these features of the data does provide some helpful insight and give a contextual perspective of media interest in the issue of the war over time. CDA delves deeper into the constructions of meaning within the texts and how these meanings become hegemonic interpretive frameworks for understanding discourses.
5.2 Contextual Analysis: Outcomes

5.2.1 War as a Success

Across all four newspapers, the discursive construction of the war as a success characterized the overall coverage. Although there was slight variation in how the meaning of success was constructed by different newspapers, this outcome appeared as the pre-eminent characterization of the war. As mentioned above, prominence of this outcome was determined by the percentage of the selected articles, which presented the war in this way. Rank of outcomes simply refer to how frequently it formed a part of the discourse, with the most often cited outcome being ranked first, and the least often (although still prominent) being ranked lowest (see Tables A.1 to A.4 in Appendix A for coding summaries, which show specific descriptions of discourse categories with examples). The discourse characterizing the war’s outcomes as a success was most prominent in the NYT (70 percent) and USA Today (67 percent), and was the second and joint second most prominent discourse in the WP (48 percent) and WSJ (57 percent) respectively. In general, this discourse emphasized the success of the military operation, the progress that was being made in Iraq in terms of favorable effects on regional politics and the situation in Iraq returning to normal. The coverage also characterized Iraq as heading towards modernity and a brighter future. The success of the war was naturalized in all four newspapers with consistent references to the ending of the war, to “military victory”, and speaking of the war’s end or victory in the past tense. It is worth bearing in mind that although the ‘war as a success’ featured prominently, there were other discourses, including those that highlighted the failure of the war that also surfaced
concurrently in the overall coverage of newspapers, and sometimes within the same articles.

5.2.2 Removal of Dictatorship

The toppling of Saddam Hussein’s regime as an outcome of the war appeared in the top three discourses across all newspapers. Prominence of this outcome (in relation to the range of other outcomes) in terms of a percentage of the selected articles in which it featured was: WSJ (57 percent, ranked second), NYT (50 percent, ranked second) and WP (50 percent, ranked first), and USA Today (33 percent, ranked third). The USA Today was an anomaly in the regard that there was a greater amount of critical coverage emphasizing uncertainty about Iraq’s future and offering some critical coverage questioning the outcomes. Nevertheless, the removal of the dictatorship as an outcome featured prominently in its most dominant discourses on the outcomes. The social reality being conveyed in the removal of the dictatorship discourse was that Iraqis had been liberated, were now free and better off than before, would be able to seek justice by holding former regime officials to account for their crimes, and that democratization was underway. Another critical reason for the dominance of this outcome was that the removal of the Ba’athist regime from power was later stated as a justification for the war, especially once it became evident that there were no WMD and the Hussein government were not linked to al-Qaeda or the terrorist attacks in New York on September 11th, 2001. This outcome also strengthened the moral justification for the war by characterizing the war as a war of liberation for a humanitarian agenda, especially once it became increasingly clear that the initial rationale before (WMD and Iraq’s terrorist links) began to fall apart.
5.2.3 Reconstruction of Iraq

This discourse was constituted by coverage that emphasized the U.S. role in rebuilding and positively transforming Iraq; it featured discussion of economic opportunities for American companies as well as for Iraq; focused on the re-building and modernization of Iraq’s infrastructure and industries; and naturalized the post-war occupation of Iraq. The U.S. reconstruction of Iraq was emphasized in the discourse on the outcomes of the Iraq War most strongly in the *WSJ*, with 61 percent of the selected articles focusing on this outcome, thus making it the most pre-eminent outcome featured in the *WSJ’s* coverage (i.e., ranked first). Prominence of this outcome in terms of a percentage of the selected articles in which the reconstruction discourse featured was: *NYT* (41 percent, ranked third) and *WP* (35 percent, ranked fourth), and *USA Today* (26 percent, ranked fifth). Like the previous two outcomes discussed, this one emphasized the positive impact of the war in offering Iraqis a brighter future.

5.2.4 Uncertainty over Iraq’s Future

This discourse was characterized by critical coverage that expressed warnings over risks and challenges facing Iraq, emphasized the uncertainty of the future, potential problems facing the U.S. occupation, and raised questions about the type of democracy that might emerge from Iraq. Prominence of the uncertainty discourse in terms of a percentage of the selected articles for each newspaper was: *USA Today* (37 percent, ranked second), *NYT* (29 percent, ranked joint fourth), *WP* (31 percent, ranked fifth), and *WSJ* (13 percent, ranked sixth). Often, such critical coverage appeared within the same articles emphasizing the positive outcomes of the war, and the discourse may have
manifested in the form of questions being asked about the political challenges Iraq may face and the uncertainty over achieving a lasting peace. The overlap of multiple discourses and emphasis on different outcomes is discussed in more detail below. In this discourse, there is a marked difference between the coverage of the individual newspapers, with this outcome forming a more prominent feature of the coverage of USA Today compared with the coverage of the NYT and WP. Also, evident was that this outcome was not a prominent feature of the WSJ’s coverage, which coincides with the newspapers overwhelming emphasis on the positive aspects of the war.

5.2.5 Critical Coverage Questioning ‘Success’ Discourse

This category was an eclectic mix of news coverage that included challenges to the rationale for war, and specifically to the failure to find WMD or evidence linking Hussein to al-Qaeda; it also raised questions about the negative impact on the U.S.’ international relations as well as pointed to the ongoing violence as evidence of failure. Prominence of this outcome in terms of a percentage of the selected articles for each newspaper was: USA Today (33 percent, ranked joint third), WP (37 percent, ranked third), and NYT (29 percent, ranked joint fourth). The WSJ (17 percent, ranked joint fourth) was not necessarily critical of the war but did question outcomes in a less critical way by mentioning the failure to find WMD or evidence of the link between Iraq and al-Qaeda. The presence of this outcome reveals that there was some degree of critical coverage, especially in the USA Today, however, this coverage would likely have been ‘drowned out’ by the preeminence of the other outcomes mentioned above.
5.2.6 Summary of Outcomes

The purpose here has been to provide a brief overview of prominent outcomes, in order to offer part of a picture (the other parts being consequences and the issue of responsibility) of how the ending of the Iraq War was constituted in news discourse. From the evidence extrapolated from the coding exercise using NVivo 11 Pro, it is evident that the discourses on the outcomes emphasized the success of the war most vociferously in the *WSJ* but also evidently in the *NYT*, *WP* and *USA Today*. This is not wholly surprising and is line with much previous research that analyzed media performance in the lead up to and during the Iraq War, finding that American media in general remained supportive of the war and continued to echo the sentiments of the White House, specifically by situating Iraq in the context of the War on Terror. However, the *USA Today* counter-balanced its coverage of the ‘positive’ outcomes of the war with more balanced coverage that raised questions about the war compared with the others newspapers examined in this study. The *WP*’s coverage was also more critical than the *NYT* and *WSJ*. Coding the outcomes in this way enabled summarizing a large number of articles which is useful in providing contextual detail about the overall coverage and should be viewed as complimentary to the evidence extrapolated by conducting a detailed textual analysis.

5.3 Contextual Analysis: Consequences

5.3.1 General Emphasis on Positive Consequences

This consequence was characterized by expression of positive sentiments about the consequences of the war with coverage focusing on future improvements of public
services and industries as a consequence of U.S. occupation. It was the most prominent discourse to emerge when coding the consequences in the coverage of the NYT (30 percent, ranked first) and WSJ (39 percent, ranked first). This is not surprising and fits with the findings discussed above in the outcomes, where the NYT and the WSJ’s coverage of the ending strongly emphasized success. Although such sentiments were also expressed in the WP and USA Today, this category was not preeminent in their coverage.

5.3.2 Worsening Security Situation in Iraq

The focus of this consequence was on increased lawlessness and threat of violence due to insecurity resulting from the war; this category also included mentions of instability and heightened risk of terrorism in Iraq. Prominence of this consequence in terms of a percentage of the selected articles in which it featured was: WP (33 percent, ranked first), NYT (29 percent, ranked second), and USA Today (11 percent, ranked joint sixth). Interestingly, this preeminent consequence of the Iraq War appeared in less than 10 percent of the WSJ’s news articles on the ending of the war. As we shall see below this fits the pattern of the rest of the WSJ’s coverage, which continued to represent the war as a success and deemphasized its negative consequences. Up until today, security remains a vital concern with daily violence; however, at this point in the war, the situation had not deteriorated to the same degree, which could explain why the worsening security did not extensively dominate coverage for any of the four newspapers. For the WP and NYT, much of the coverage was concerned with the potential risks and threats to security.
5.3.3 Growing anti-American Sentiment

This category included reporting that drew attention to the growing Iraqi suspicions of U.S. intentions in Iraq; coverage also focused on anti-American protests and mentioning of Iraqi frustration with the U.S.’s efforts in Iraq. Prominence of this consequence as a percentage in which it appeared in the selected articles for each newspaper was: WP (31 percent, ranked second), USA Today (26 percent, ranked first), and NYT (13 percent, ranked seventh). The mention of growing anti-American sentiment only featured as a theme in less than 10 percent of the WSJ’s coverage. The coding analysis of this category reveals that the WP and USA Today were once again more critical of the war than the NYT and WSJ by highlighting the diminishing support of ordinary Iraqis for the American-led invasion. Clearly highlighting the anti-American feelings of the Iraqi feeling would contradict the dominant narratives of the NYT and WSJ presenting the U.S. as liberators, welcomed by the Iraqi population. This does not mean that the discourse of anti-American sentiment was excluded altogether but rather, it was less visible than the discourses emphasizing the positive impact of the war.

5.3.4 Destruction of Iraq’s Infrastructure

This consequence refers to coverage of damage to public services such as schools, hospitals and other civilian infrastructure such as the energy sector. Prominence of this consequence as a percentage in which it appeared in the selected articles for each newspaper was: NYT (27 percent, ranked third), WP (23 percent, ranked fourth), and USA Today (11 percent, ranked joint sixth). The WSJ’s discourse on the destruction of infrastructure (13 percent, ranked fourth) focused more on fuel shortages and lack of
energy but not necessarily occurring as direct consequences of the war, as sometimes these consequences were attributed to poor maintenance during the pre-war period and thereby implicating the Hussein regime (see section 5.4 on responsibility below). Furthermore, the WSJ’s coverage placed less emphasis on the destruction of infrastructure and instead focused more on the ‘challenges to reconstruction,’ which entailed examining the perspective from the point of view of American ambitions in Iraq rather than the misery caused by the initial destruction due to the invasion. The ‘challenges to reconstruction’ discourse appeared in 22 percent of the selected articles in the WSJ’s coverage but did not feature as a significant discourse in the other newspapers. Once again, the WSJ’s discourse focused more on the positive consequences and subjected the negative consequences to de-emphasis. Considering the widespread damage caused by the U.S. led bombing campaign in the initial invasion period, it is not surprising to see that there were numerous reports across the news media of destruction to civilian infrastructure but how responsibility for the destruction was attributed offers further insight to how the reality of this was constructed in the media and conveyed to the public. On many occasions, when the consequence of destruction was discussed in the four newspapers, it was done so in way that discursively ‘naturalized’ Iraq’s infrastructure problems as existing without any identification of causation or agent (see the textual analysis of selected articles below and Appendix A for examples).

5.3.5 General Negative Consequences

This was a broad coding category that emerged from miscellaneous codes that did not coherently fit as a single cohesive consequence and also differed slightly for each
newspaper. However, the essence of the category was drawing the reader’s attention to
general critical coverage of the negative outcomes of the war, such as the potential for
adverse impact on the U.S. economy, focusing on the costs of the war, challenges to the
U.S. military, and criticisms of the unilateralist policy pursued by the U.S. This category
did not include the other negative consequences already mentioned separately in this
section but collectively formed an important part of the coverage for USA Today, WP,
and the NYT. Prominence of this consequence as a percentage in which it appeared in the
selected articles for each newspaper was: WP (27 percent, ranked third), NYT (23 percent,
ranked fourth) and USA Today (19 percent, ranked joint third). Similar to the above-
mentioned negative consequences, this category did not feature prominently in the WSJ
(less than 10 percent of articles).

5.3.6 Civilian Deaths

Another important part of the discourse of the ending of the war was covering
civilian deaths and casualties as a consequence of the invasion. Prominence of this
consequence as a percentage in which it appeared in the selected articles for each
newspaper was: USA Today (26 per cent, ranked joint first), NYT (18 percent, ranked
fifth), WP (15 percent, ranked joint seventh), and less than 10 percent for the WSJ. The
pattern that emerges is that the coverage of USA Today did draw its readers to this
negative consequence more than any of the other newspapers. However, it is not
surprising that civilian deaths (regardless of cause) did not draw the majority of media
attention in the early days of the war as coverage in wars tends to focus on supporting
troops as adverse public sentiment against the war could potentially affect troop morale
negatively. Furthermore, doing so would have brought into question the *NYT*, *WP* and *WSJ*’s support for the war in the first place. Nevertheless, the *USA Today*’s coverage emphasizing civilian deaths as an important consequence of the war distinguished it from the other newspapers.

### 5.3.7 Worsening Political Situation

Although not the most prominent consequence covered in newspapers, all four newspapers did at least pay some attention to the deteriorating political situation in Iraq. This included but was not limited to coverage that emphasized a political quagmire, political instability, the opening of a political power vacuum with the toppling of the Hussein government, and other general challenges following regime change in Iraq. Prominence of this consequence as a percentage in which it appeared in the selected articles for each newspaper was: *WP* (19 percent, ranked joint fifth), *USA Today* (19 percent, ranked joint third), *WSJ* (17 percent, ranked third), and *NYT* (16 percent, ranked sixth). The lack of political solution to form a government that satisfies all sides as well as puts an end to the sectarian violence has been an ongoing issue in Iraq since the start of the war. It is therefore surprising to see this consequence of the war not being addressed more prominently in the *WP* and *NYT* – both newspapers have a considerable ability to devote more space for analysis to foreign news issues than the *USA Today* or *WSJ*. This consequence did feature in the *WSJ*’s coverage but it was also often contextualized as a problem resulting from pre-existing conditions or the Islamic religion rather than as a result of the war. This is discussed in more detail below when we consider the issue of attributing responsibility for the negative consequences.
5.3.8 Increase in Suffering of Iraqi People

This was discussed as a consequence in two out of the four newspapers. The key features of this consequence were specific moments where coverage focused on issues facing Iraqi civilians such as unemployment, food or energy shortages, or poverty. Prominence of this consequence as a percentage in which it appeared in the selected articles for each newspaper was as follows: WP (19 percent, ranked joint fifth), USA Today (11 percent, ranked joint sixth), with the NYT registering less than 10 percent of coverage and WSJ none. The lack of attention to this issue as a consequence is once again suggestive of a concerted effort by newspapers to construct a discourse that focuses on the positive outcomes of the war, as otherwise, civilian suffering would be an inevitable consequence of any war. It was in line with the other results of this contextual analysis that the WP and USA Today were the most likely of the four newspapers selected in this study, to bring attention to the suffering experienced by Iraqis.

5.3.9 Summary of Consequences

From the coding analysis it has emerged that consequences proportionately made up less of the coverage for all four newspapers than the outcomes of the war discussed above (see appendices for details). In other words, the success of the war in terms of its outcomes was emphasized to a much higher degree than the consequences of the war. The WSJ’s coverage stood out for having devoted the least attention to the negative consequences of the war out of the four newspapers. The most balanced coverage and attention devoted to consequences came from WP and USA Today. The NYT touched on many of the consequences but these did not necessarily dominate its discourse of the
ending of the war in 2003. Some of the other consequences of the war that came up in the coding analysis included the damage to Iraq’s cultural heritage and deaths of U.S. personnel, both of which appeared in less than 10 percent of all the articles examined – the exception being USA Today which did devote about 15 percent of its coverage of consequences to coalition forces deaths.

5.4 Contextual Analysis: Responsibility

5.4.1 Responsibility for Destruction

In terms of the general discourse surrounding the destruction caused by the invasion, for example, destruction of civilian infrastructure or cultural heritage, the coverage of all four newspapers omitted the role of the U.S. in causing the conditions of the chaos or the actual destruction. It is clear from Figure 5.2 that when responsibility for destruction was attributed, it was mostly attributed to the Hussein regime and former Ba’athists or to unnamed criminal elements often referred to as “looters.” USA Today was the only newspaper where attribution of responsibility for destruction was equally shared by Americans as well as the other groups indicated. What becomes clear is that often when talking about the hardships caused by the destruction of civilian infrastructure, there was a tendency across the newspapers to remove agency. Also interesting is that most of the blame is shifted onto the Hussein regime for the destruction but there were many contrary reports that appeared in these newspapers indicating that the invasion of Iraq had not witnessed the destruction of oil fields as some had predicted.
5.4.2 Responsibility for other Negative Outcomes

The general discourse on various negative war-related outcomes included things such as general comment about the security, lack of civilian services, and political fighting amongst various ethnic groups. As Figure 5.3 shows, *USA Today* and the *WP* attributed responsibility to U.S. actions (that is either the U.S. government or military) more than the *NYT* or *WSJ* did. In fact, from the *WSJ* articles analyzed on the discourse of general negative outcomes, the U.S. was not considered responsible for any of the negative outcomes. Instead, all of the *WSJ*'s articles often did not directly attribute responsibility onto the Iraqis or Americans, but stated that the problems pre-dated the invasion, and thereby the implication was that the previous government was responsible for the post-war problems. The resultant implication was further vindication of the U.S.-led invasion and decision to forcibly overthrow the government of a sovereign state as it was due to the Hussein government that Iraq faced such acute problems. Such a selective recounting of history and lack of historical context often also overlooked the impact of
U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq following the end of the first Gulf War in 1991 and the devastation these wrought until 2003 when they were officially lifted.

![Bar chart showing attribution of responsibility for general negative outcomes](image)

Figure 5.3 Attribution of responsibility for general negative outcomes

5.4.3 Responsibility for Positive Outcomes

When it came to attributing responsibility for improvements in Iraq, including better security or services for the Iraqi people, and helping the recovery and reconstruction effort, only occasionally were Iraqis deemed responsible, and only in the coverage of *USA Today* and *NYT*. Such praise for Iraqis was absent from the selection of articles analyzed in the *WP* and *WSJ*. However, even in the *NYT* or *USA Today*, the overwhelming majority of the time the positive outcomes of the war were attributed directly to the Americans. This fits exactly with van Dijk’s ideological square (1998) which stipulates that the good deeds of others are downplayed or ignored, whilst ‘our’ good actions are illuminated and championed in media coverage. The purpose of utilizing the ideological square (whether consciously or unconsciously) is to fit the wider narrative
which vilifies the enemy by contrasting ‘our’ good actions with their evil ones, and to engender further support for the military action being carried out against the enemy.

Removing the responsibility of the Iraqis for positive outcomes also constructs an identity of Iraqis as a weak, almost feeble people incapable of helping themselves. Such issues are examined in more detail in the textual analysis section.

![Figure 5.4 Attribution of responsibility for positive outcomes](image)

Figure 5.4 Attribution of responsibility for positive outcomes

5.4.4 Responsibility for Civilian Deaths and State of Violence

When it came to attributing responsibility for deaths of civilians and the general state of violence in Iraq (see Figure 5.5 below), 80 and 71 percent of the selected articles in the WP and USA Today respectively, did identify American responsibility. The NYT only attributed responsibility for civilian deaths to the U.S. in 23 percent of the cases and it was 40 percent for WSJ articles. A significant amount of responsibility was placed on the Hussein regime and its supporters, with the exception of USA Today, which only did so in 14 percent of cases. It was not uncommon in the coverage of all four newspapers to also omit responsibility for the American role in civilian deaths which, further illustrates the problems with drawing conclusions based solely on quantitative analyses of the data,
as clearly there are contradictory discourses that require closer textual analysis in order to understand how they operate and co-exist.

Figure 5.5 Attribution of responsibility for civilian deaths

5.4.5 Responsibility for Negative Political Situation

Figure 5.6 shows that *USA Today* more frequently cited American culpability for the deteriorating political situation in Iraq than any other newspapers. This often came in the form of criticism towards the Bush administration’s policy of invading without a more effective plan for the post-conflict situation. We can see the newspaper did not place responsibility for the political mess on Iraqis as the aftermath of the war and lack of non-Ba’athist leadership were clear factors preventing any kind of transition to democracy. There was some blame apportioned to Iraqis in the *NYT* and also to Shia militants by the *WP* but when examining the coverage more closely, the *NYT* and *WSJ* did raise questions about Islam and democracy. The discourse surrounding the political problems contained the implication in some of the coverage of the incompatibility of Islam and the type of Western democracy that the Bush administration had hoped for. This theme appeared in the *WSJ*, *NYT* and *WP* but not in *USA Today*. Once again, the
omission of U.S. responsibility for the political situation on the part of the WSJ and also within a significant number of the selected articles of the WP and NYT’s coverage reflected unwillingness to direct blame at the U.S. and instead present the political situation through the ‘clash of civilizations’ discourse. For example, the WSJ warned:

The situation is made all the more volatile by the fact that the various components of Iraqi society are always on the brink of violence. Whether they are easily manipulated by the Iranian mullahs or not, the Shiites -- 65% of the population -- need to play a leading role in the coming government: it is the best way to prevent the real threat of an Islamic regime in Baghdad. (Kouchner, 2003, p. A16).

The implicit suggestion being that an “Islamic regime” is undesirable to the Americans as well as incompatible with democracy. What was often overlooked in the coverage was the context of the cultural formation of Iraq; specifically, that whatever form of democracy Iraq formed, would in some way reflect its cultural and religious heritage.

Figure 5.6 Attribution of responsibility for political situation
5.4.6 Responsibility for Worsening Security Situation

Attributing responsibility for the deteriorating security situation in Iraq formed a significant part of the *WP’s* coverage. As shown in the discussion above, this issue appeared as the most important consequence in the selected *WP* articles, so it is not surprising that the *WP*’s coverage also addressed responsibility directly. As Figure 5.7 shows, in 60 percent of the cases the U.S. was held responsible for the worsening security situation (at other times, Shia militants or Hussein loyalists were also blamed). What is striking about Figure 5.7 below is none of the other newspapers linked the responsibility for the deteriorating security situation back to American or coalition forces’ failure to ensure stability in the post-war environment. This is a case where the absence of attribution of responsibility reveals a great deal about the overall media discourse. Part of the explanation could be that the overlapping of discourses and simultaneous discussion of related consequences of security, political instability, civilian deaths, or Iraqi suffering, and how coding responsibility for such related consequences is not an exact process.

![Figure 5.7 Attribution of responsibility for worsening security situation](image)

Figure 5.7 Attribution of responsibility for worsening security situation
5.4.7 Responsibility for Economic Problems Facing Iraq

Similar to the apportioning of responsibility for the worsening security, the attribution of responsibility for the economic problems facing Iraq was not a prominent feature across all four newspapers. It is unsurprising that the *WSJ* devoted a great deal more coverage to the economic issues of the war, at least from an American, business and investor perspective, than the others newspapers as it is a widely regarded as an influential business information source. However, it is revealing that the *WSJ*’s coverage squarely laid the blame for economic difficulties on the previous regime (see Figure 5.8 below); discussing problems such as shortages in critical equipment and lack of industry expertise as though they pre-dated the invasion, and not addressing the U.S. role and responsibility in infrastructure destruction that had contributed to and exacerbated the economic hardships facing Iraq.

![Figure 5.8 Attribution of responsibility for deterioration of economic situation](image)

Figure 5.8 Attribution of responsibility for deterioration of economic situation

5.4.8 Summary of Attributing Responsibility

Comparing the NVivo 11 Pro coding analysis of discourses on the attribution of responsibility for the consequences of the Iraq War across the four selected newspapers
shows clear patterns that are revealing of the discursive context of the news coverage. Overall, there was a tendency in the NYT, WSJ and to a lesser extent in the WP and USA Today, to omit the agency and role of the U.S. in the negative consequences of the war. However, the coverage of USA Today and the WP more frequently attributed responsibility for negative outcomes when the issue of responsibility was actually addressed, and it is fair to say these two newspapers offered more balanced coverage of the ending of the Iraq War compared to the NYT and WSJ. In contrast, when the NYT did attribute responsibility for negative outcomes to the U.S., its coverage also emphasized the responsibility of the former regime. This was also the case for the WSJ, only it attributed even greater responsibility to the former regime for the negative consequences of the war than it did to U.S. policy or actions. The effect of this was to advance a patriotic or nationalistic discourse that constructed a positive self-representation of the U.S. role in Iraq.

As highlighted at various points in this dissertation, the importance of establishing the context through which the outcomes, consequences, and attribution of responsibility are given meaning is critical as it illuminates the macrostructure of discourse; that, is the global conditions in which local meanings of the ending are constructed. The contextual analysis of the 2003 ending of the Iraq War reveals the workings of ideology through the presence of an ‘ideological square’ (van Dijk, 1998) in which the positive outcomes of the war are attributed to the U.S., and responsibility for the negative ones are deflected away from the U.S. to others. Although, the ending of the war had been declared, much of the news media coverage continued to focus on the previous regime for causing the problems faced by Iraqis in post-war Iraq. This fit within the Manichean discourse that
permeated much of the pre-war media coverage (discussed in Chapter Two) which sought to win the U.S. public’s approval for the invasion. In order to demonstrate how such contexts for discourses are constructed, it is important to conduct a granular level analysis of the text.

5.5 Textual Analysis: The New York Times

Sanger, David E. Bush Declares 'One Victory in a War on Terror': He says military operation in Iraq has ended.’ NYT, Friday, May 2, 2003, A, C6, p. 1. (1730 words).

Layout and Structural Organization

This article was selected for close textual analysis because it was the preeminent story printed in the NYT about the declaration of the end of major combat operations in Iraq made by President Bush. The article made up the lead story and appeared prominently on the front page alongside a photograph taken showing the President giving a thumbs-up gesture during his speech aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln, in front of a banner decorated in the stars and stripes of the American flag with the phrase “Mission Accomplished” salient. The message contained within the headline also referred to “victory” in Iraq as one that was part of the larger War on Terror, thus giving the impression of success to what was being presented as the finale of a six week conflict that started on March 20, 2017.

Objects

David E. Sanger, the author of the article, situates the ending of the war within the broader discourse of the War on Terror by deferring to President Bush’s quote that the
Iraq War is “one victory in a War on Terror that began on Sept. 11th, 2001, and still goes on.” The effect of this is that it reminds the reader without explicitly stating that the Iraq War is to be understood in the context of the terrorist attacks of September 11 and the ensuing War on Terror, a war propagated to be one of self-defense against those responsible for the 9/11 terrorist attacks or deemed to be a threat to the U.S. The article then goes onto quote excerpts of the President’s speech that continue this contextualizing of the war within the War on Terror frame.

There are numerous other discourse objects that are part of this article. For example, mentioning the Presidential election to come in 2004, the supposed link between al-Qaeda and Iraq, the danger Iraq posed to world security, the speculation about where Iraq’s supposed WMD might be hidden, the unilateralist policy of the U.S. under the Bush Administration, and references to the search for proof of Saddam Hussein’s whereabouts. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, it is the actual ending of the conflict as an event that constitutes the most important discourse object that is constructed in the text. The author re-iterates the key message of the President about the ending of the war, stating:

Mr. Bush's speech tonight, 43 days after he announced to the nation from the Oval Office that the war had begun with a surprise bombing of a compound where Mr. Hussein had been sighted, ended the combat phase of one of the swiftest wars in American military history, and one of the most dramatic chapters of Mr. Bush's presidency.
In this passage and throughout the article, Sanger normalizes the ending of the war by making reference to its swiftness and placing it historically in U.S. military history. However, appearing further along in the article Sanger explains:

White House officials said they did not want to declare a final end to the war, in part, because that would require them, under the Geneva Convention, to release more than 6,000 prisoners of war, many of whom are still being interviewed.

Thus, the war is effectively over but the U.S. need for “interviewing” prisoners is cited as the reason for the non-declaration of victory. Sanger does refer to the WMD search as “largely unsuccessful” and the search for Saddam Hussein as unfulfilled but overall, the article does not dwell on these issues and instead retells the core elements of the President’s message about removing “an ally of al-Qaeda” and the necessity for a unilateral policy of using military force to eradicate threats to U.S. security. Despite a cautionary reminder of a mission that is incomplete, Sanger then goes onto report the President’s speech as follows: “Still, he told the sailors and fliers that "major combat operations in Iraq have ended," and that "in the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed."” Furthermore, Sanger goes on to describe the military mission in Iraq as “largely completed” and utilizes the word “victory” to describe the war. Sanger then describes the President’s pronouncement on the war as “carefully measured” which struck an “optimistic and purposeful chord.” Sanger offers little critique or challenge to the narrative of the ending presented by Bush; he makes little reference to the destruction caused by the invasion and of the potential for Iraqi resistance to a foreign occupation.
Actors

The principle actors (i.e., social agents that ‘do’ things as well as ‘objects’ that are talked about (Carvalho, 2008, p. 168)), within the text that are illuminated in the discourse on the ending of the war, can be separated into two broad categories. First, the U.S., represented by President Bush as Commander in Chief; “Mr. Bush’s war council,” which included senior Administration figures such as Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld; and various unnamed persons referred to as “senior officials” or “senior administration official” or “White House officials” – who all generally represent the perspective of the United States. As is usually the case in journalistic writing, there are also various synecdochic identifiers such as “White House” and “Pentagon” used to refer to either the U.S. government or Department of Defense respectively which can obscure agency but are also used for the sake of brevity. The various social actors representing the U.S. are “activated” rather than passivized. Fairclough refers to activation in social actors as “their capacity for agentive action, for making things happen, for controlling others” as contrasted with passivation where “what is accentuated is their subjection to processes, them being affected by the actions of others, and so forth.” (2003, p. 150). In Sanger’s article, the U.S. forces are described as active agents that “invade”, “liberate”, “defeat”, “confront major threats”, “defend peace”, “remove an ally of Al-Qaeda”, and re-build Iraq. There is a complete absence of any of the inevitably negative consequences of war (regardless of how the act of war is described) on Iraq’s civilian population and infrastructure. The actions taken by the U.S. are therefore portrayed in a purely positive light.
The second broad group constructed in the article is that of the enemy, which lumps together Saddam Hussein, “Hussein loyalists,” Al-Qaeda, “the Qaeda Network,” “terrorists,” and “terrorist networks.” Peripheral enemies such as North Korea and Iran are also identified as being next in line to face the wrath of the U.S. military for their nefarious actions. Mentioning these two countries follows on from previous references Bush had made to confront an “Axis of Evil,” and now turning attention to North Korea and Iran also marked the conclusion of the Iraq phase of the War on Terror and possibly the beginning of a new phase; thus, further adding to the impression that the Iraq War has ended. In the article, the principle actions that Hussein and his government are described to be responsible for are pursuing banned weapons with the possibility of supplying WMD to terrorists. Although Sanger, acknowledges the “Bush administration has never linked the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon to Mr. Hussein,” he follows up stating “although senior officials did charge that Iraq had ties to the Qaeda network.” Thus, the second portion of the sentence somewhat negates the effect of the first. Following a quotation by the President that referred to Hussein as an “ally of Al Qaeda” and “source of terrorist funding” Sanger goes on to write: “Mr. Bush did more this evening than simply meld Mr. Hussein's fallen government with Qaeda terrorists” but he does not critique or question this information; instead by positioning Hussein and Al Qaeda in this way, the message of linking Iraq and Al-Qaeda is amplified and reified in his article.

When discussing the failure to locate Hussein in the aftermath of the invasion, Sanger writes “other members of the administration are clearly concerned that until Mr.

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14 The ‘Axis of Evil’ is what President Bush used to describe North Korea, Iran and Iraq in his State of the Union Address in 2002. In May 2002, its ‘members’ were expanded to include Cuba, Libya, and Syria (Bush, 2002).
Hussein is proved dead, his loyalists will still harass American occupation troops, setting off grenade attacks or car bombs.” This sentence exemplifies the “activation” of the enemy group, in other words highlighting agency only with regards to criminality and sneak attacks. The polarization of the identities of the U.S. and its opponents is clear and follows a Manichean presentation, which contrasts the U.S.’s good actions with the evil actions of the opponents. This dichotomy is further accentuated by equating the identity of Hussein to Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin, with clear implications of evil.

What is evident from the construction of the identities and the text is the absence of the voices of the Iraqi people or political opponents of the war inside as well as outside of the United States. Sanger’s exclusive reliance on Bush Administration figures to report the story and the implications this has, enables the administration’s perspective to dominate the discourse and frame the issue within the War on Terror construct. This dominance is further entrenched by excluding the voices of the war’s critics. This exclusion of relevant voices illustrates the working of Foucault’s (1978/1990) conceptualization of how silence operates by closing down the possibilities of alternative realities. In other words, it is an example of how dominant discourses become hegemonic by delimiting the scope of the debate.

Language, Grammar and Rhetoric

Some of the lexical choices relating to the verbs and adjectives made by Sanger about the topic and actors have already been commented on above, particularly how these convey agency and aid polarization between positive self-presentation and negative ‘other’ presentation. In addition, grammatical features, such as the author’s use of
presupposition display deference to the Bush Administration’s rhetoric regarding the Iraq War. For example, in the second paragraph, Sanger sets the scene as follows:

Speaking from the deck of the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln before thousands of uniformed sailors and aviators as the ship approached San Diego Harbor, he argued that by vanquishing Mr. Hussein's government, he had removed "an ally of Al Qaeda," and he vowed to continue to search for banned weapons in Iraq -- a search that so far has been largely unsuccessful -- and to confront any other nations that use such weapons to threaten the United States or could sell them to terrorists.

In the last two lines, the reference to confronting other nations contains the implicit assumption that Iraq had been confronted because it had used WMD to threaten the U.S. or could potentially have sold them to terrorists, both claims, which were unproven. As the scholarship discussed in Chapter Two showed, many in the media were found to be merely reproducing the same message from the White House that Iraq possessed WMD without scrutinizing the evidence around the claims.

Reifying the Bush administration’s rhetoric was also evident in the nominalization contained in the phrase “the invasion and liberation of Iraq” used by Sanger to describe the war. Dunmire (2007) describes nominalization as “a process of transformation through which verbs, which represent “reality” in terms of processes and actions, are reclassified as nouns, which represent “reality” in terms of objects and entities, that is, as “reified processes.”” (p. 26). Nominalization is not by itself evidence of manipulation but it is often highlighted in CDA as a syntactical feature that can be used to obscure or delete agency; and here its usage is interesting in conveying “liberation” as a substitute
for war. In addition, van Dijk reminds us that CDA is interested in the illegitimate usage of nominalization by elite authors to distort the presentation of social events and therefore reality (van Dijk, 2008a, p. 822). The use of the term “liberation” also adds a moral dimension to the war’s end, by representing the war as one fought on humanitarian grounds to set a people free. It is worth reminding the reader that it is not a single linguistic feature that ought to be the focus of analysis, but how such features relate to the rest of the text (and context) and how these impact the discourse.

Discursive Strategies

In examining the discursive interventions that constitute manipulation of social reality, all of the textual features described above play into the overall discursive strategy. To begin with, the headline reads “Bush Declares ‘One Victory in a War on Terror,’” which performs the critical function of summarizing the principle topic of the text (the end of the war) and thereby expressing:

- a strong strategic suggestion to the readers to construct this as the top macro proposition of their mental model of the event to be represented – or to add or modify an opinion already formed in an earlier model when readers heard about the case. (van Dijk, 1988, p. 99).

The ‘angle’ of the reality being presented therefore, was that the Iraq War ought to be understood as finished as well as a part of the broader War on Terror.

In terms of packaging the information in the news story, the author relies heavily on sources and perspectives that reinforce the Administration’s claims and add weight to its perspective of the war being constructed; this is reflected by only quoting President
Bush and other unnamed White House officials. Legitimation is another feature of the text that sheds light on the discursive strategy, which allows the White House perspective to dominate. Sanger in effect is justifying the war by celebrating the swiftness of victory and sidelining controversies. For example, the decision by the U.S. to pursue a war without the backing of the U.N. Security Council is presented by Sanger without critique or attention to the legal or other implications of unilateral military action. Sanger describes the unilateralism of the “Bush doctrine” as “the aggressive commitment his administration has made to confront major threats before they reach American shores. He described the attack on Iraq as an example of the extreme lengths he would go to stop such threats.” In other words, the attack on Iraq is presented as an act of self-defense. Sanger does not challenge the Iraq-as-a-threat narrative presented by the Bush administration and by describing the Bush Administration’s policy of pre-emptive unilateralist military action in this way, Sanger sanctions the authority and reasoning behind such actions.

Ideological Standpoints

CDA seeks to unearth how ideology operates discreetly within the dominant discourses of the text. The presentation of the war’s ending is naturalized throughout the article by presenting it as a victory and referring to outcomes such as the “vanquishing of Hussein’s regime”, “liberation of Iraq” and repeating that major combat operations have “ended.” There is also evidence of positive self-presentation and negative ‘other’ presentation, which, although subtly presented, shows how the text producer “textualizes” the war’s end in a particular way that in turn influences the reader’s
interpretation (Fairclough, 1989). Sanger’s writing also gives the impression of appearing to be balanced and measured by interspersing a few challenges to the war as a success narrative, namely mention of the unconfirmed whereabouts of Hussein and the alleged stockpiles of WMD.

The purpose here is not to try to show that Sanger’s article is typical or representative of all of the NYT’s coverage. However, when coupled with the findings of the contextual analysis, there is some congruence between the presentation of outcomes, consequences and responsibility. Specifically, the principle outcome is military victory for the U.S.; there are few if any allusions to the consequences of the war; and responsibility for the positive outcomes is bestowed on the U.S. and the blame for ongoing problems is levelled at loyalists of the former regime. Some of the discursive strategies identified, the incompleteness of information presented in the article (through exclusion of alternative voices), the reliance on White House sources, and resorting to a Manichean representation of ‘us’ and ‘them’ are elements of what van Dijk (2006, p. 375) identifies as power abuse through manipulative discourse, because readers are led to believe the war was one of self-defense and therefore justified, with limited negative consequences, and that major combat has ceased.

5.6 Textual Analysis: The Washington Post


Layout and Structural Organization

Karen DeYoung’s article was the leading front page story about President Bush’s announcement of the ending of major combat operations in Iraq, and like the NYT’s
article reporting the same story, it featured a similar photograph of the President giving a thumbs-up although the “Mission Accomplished” banner was not visible. There were two related stories that also appeared on the front page less prominently (and not accompanied by photograph) but DeYoung’s article was chosen because it was the longest in terms of word length, and most prominent in terms of space and location on page, thus indicating the importance attributed to the story by the WP editorial staff. The story dominated the front page and the headline specifically making reference to “Victory in Iraq,” which gave the impression that the war had ended; the by-line did offer some retreat from the emphatic declaration of the headline by cautioning “Work on Terror Is Ongoing, President Says.”

Objects

Similar to the David E. Sanger article in the NYT, DeYoung’s article is situated within the War on Terror construct as well. The widespread adoption of the War on Terror discourse in the media has received widespread attention already as shown in the literature review of existing scholarship in Chapter Two. The key discourse objects established in the article are 1) the ending of the war and 2) the speech as a spectacle.

There are numerous instances of DeYoung repeating the President’s message of the end in her own words, for example, referring to “Victory in Iraq”, to the President as “fresh from victory in battle”, and that the Bush administration’s focus “has clearly moved on” from military policy to domestic economic policy. When describing the speech, De Young writes:
Portraying the anti-terrorist battles in the tradition of the Normandy invasion and Iwo Jima, Bush placed his own doctrine of overwhelming American strength and the use of preemptive force along side [sic] Franklin Roosevelt's Four Freedoms, the Truman Doctrine of containment, and Ronald Reagan's challenge to the Soviet Union's "Evil Empire."

The author adopts the War on Terror frame, contextualizing the War in Iraq as one battle in the War on Terror and also referring to “anti-terrorist battles,” which inadvertently, situates Iraq in that context and perhaps sanctions the use of pre-emptive force against a sovereign state without formal UN approval. The effect of this is to normalize the understanding that the Iraq War was about the struggle against terrorism, despite the lack of evidence to support such claims. In addition, DeYoung situates the characterization of the War historically, comparing the “Bush doctrine” of pre-emptive force to previous epochs in U.S. history. The effect of this is to historicize the War in Iraq, thereby putting it in its place in the nation’s history and adding further to the discursive construction of the war’s ending. The ending of the war discourse is not challenged, although reference is made to the legal ramifications of declaring the war’s ending as a reason for there not to have been an official declaration of end. DeYoung also reports that although the speech was written “over the past week,” the President waited until Gen. Tommy R. Franks, the U.S. military commander in Iraq, “told him the fighting was over” thus adding further to the discourse of an effective end to hostilities.

Unlike the NYT article, a great deal of the article is devoted to describing the spectacle of the speech, at one point describing it as “a scene straight from “Top Gun” that is sure to appear in future campaign ads.” The construction of the scene as a
discourse object is relevant as it further adds to the celebratory tone of the speech about the military victory in Iraq. Almost half of the article is dedicated to describing how the President helped co-pilot S-3B Viking onto the Lincoln, and how the speech was carefully stage-managed, quoting instructions given to gathered sailors and other military personnel about when to cheer and not too. The dedicated focus on the event itself results in a lack of attention to the issues and controversies surrounding the war and its consequences. It does however illustrate that the scene has been carefully orchestrated and gives a rather hollow impression of the substance of the President’s speech. DeYoung seems to focus her story away from commentary on the President’s announcement of the ending or war. Instead DeYoung quotes excerpts from the speech, which addressed the gathered sailors who Bush congratulated for their performance in Iraq, and whom he referred to as “homeward-bound”, thus further add to the impression of the conclusion of the war. She also quotes unnamed White House officials who described the event as the “bookend” to the beginning of the war. DeYoung’s analysis therefore overlooks the implications of the ending of the war for Iraq.

Actors

Unlike the NYT article by Sanger (2003), DeYoung does not dichotomize the war as one between ‘us’ and ‘them’ or good and evil, and carefully avoids accentuating the President’s rhetoric. The principle identity constructed is that of President Bush as a politician. There is no hyperbolic language to contrast the President with an opposite villain figure in the form of Hussein. There is also not a litany of the crimes of the Hussein government. As mentioned above, the focus of the article is largely on the scene
which results in descriptions of the President’s behavior during the speech such as interactions with sailors, his swaggering, his dress in full flight regalia, his avoiding the mistakes of a past presidential candidate, and “cultivating an aggressive, can-do image.” This again adds to the impression of a stage-managed performance, albeit one that DeYoung suggests has been well-performed. DeYoung writes:

Bush was so exhilarated by the sights and sounds of the ship, he abandoned his usual media aversion and became a virtual camera hog, grinning and posing with sailors, shouting at journalists to take more pictures and ask about his flight. "I miss flying, I can tell you that," the former National Guard pilot yelled at one point, over the constant din of the carrier.

The excerpt above typifies the fixation on the scene of the speech rather than on the contents of Bush’s speech, or on the implications of the ending of the war. Overall, the speech does not glorify Bush or indeed the military. Instead, at one point, DeYoung reminds the readers that “Bush sidestepped U.S. failure thus far to find any chemical or biological weapons in Iraq, nearly a month after toppling Saddam Hussein’s government.” This has quite a critical tone of the President characterizing his action as evasive and political maneuvering to mask failures. Similar to the NYT article, the article does not construct the identities of Iraqis or give voice to those challenging U.S. action in Iraq. Inevitably, what this results in is the silencing of dissenting voices. However, the effects of this silencing are not as amplified through an excessive reliance on White House or Administration officials as was the case in the NYT article by Sanger (2003).
Language, Grammar and Rhetoric

Despite not resigning to the hegemony of the Bush Administration’s rhetoric, there is nevertheless a certain level of inevitable journalistic acquiescence to it from DeYoung, especially when quoting the President, thus indicating the power of the President to assert his influence in to the news discourse. DeYoung does not challenge the President’s statements on Iraq, but frequently uses verb phrases such as “he proclaimed victory in Iraq”, “he portrayed Iraq as one more battle in the global war on terrorism”, and adverbs in sentences such as “Bush repeatedly justified the war as necessary” all of which have the effect of distinguishing the author’s view from the propositions being put forth. The President is identified clearly as the active agent in the quotes above, for example, there is no agency deletion from “he portrayed Iraq…” to “Iraq was portrayed as…” Furthermore, although the author did not openly challenge the President’s claims (such as the claims of a “victory” in Iraq, or links between al-Qaeda and Iraq), she also did not reify the President’s claims in her own analysis through repeating them. For example, DeYoung did not make references to “the victory in Iraq” or to “the removal of the WMD threat posed by Iraq.” Hence, the language of the author does not re-inforce the normalization of the war’s ending as strongly as it potentially could. Transitive choices are critical to representation in journalism; however, these have to be considered along with the meaning that the rest of the text conveys (Richardson, 2007, pp. 57-8). Therefore, while it is difficult to gauge DeYoung’s intentions or political stance, there are not robust challenges to the White House discourse in her article despite the report retaining some distance by avoiding outright amplification of the President’s message through adopting his rhetoric and language.
Discursive Strategies

In this article it is difficult to find clear instances of discursive manipulation or examples of persuasive rhetoric that are directly attributable to the author. Harre points out that “[i]n particular the two prime features of persuasive discourse are the use of examples to prove a point, and the use of enthymemes, compressed stretches of logically connected reasonings, in which commonly understood premises are not mentioned explicitly.” (1985, p. 127). Instead of strong argumentation, the news report retains the typical narrative structure of a description of an event, with a beginning, middle, and ending. This is not to suggest that the effects of discourse on the construction of the reality presented in the story are not operating within the text, rather, they are somewhat more difficult to detect.

To examine further, we can turn to what van Dijk (1985b) terms the summary portion of the “macrostructure” of a news story as it is realized through the headline and lead paragraph. For example, typically the information placed at the beginning of the story also reflects the part of it considered the most important by the editorial staff. The headline captures the principle theme or topic of the event; and in this case it is the President’s announcement of “Victory in Iraq;” thus, signaling to the reader that there is some kind of ending to the conflict. However, as Scollon (1998) observes, news stories undergo a process of mediation from the writer, sub-editor/s to editor and that it is often the sub-editor that determines the headline and byline, and sometimes the lead paragraph too (p. 192). Therefore, even though DeYoung’s article may not be politically aligned to the Bush administration’s policies, the structural emphasis of the article, as expressed by the headline and lead paragraph, echo the message of the President.
In addition, Carvalho’s (2008) analytical model of CDA adopted for this study stipulates analyzing the composition of the discourse through an examination of what information is included or excluded from the event being described. As mentioned, the reliance on White House sources and absence of any oppositional political commentary and Iraqi voices to the reality of the proclamation of victory in Iraq does exclude any alternative discourses. For instance, the absence of discussion about the uncertainty of the political future of Iraq, the ongoing security problems, the widespread anti-American sentiments in Iraq as well as in the wider Middle-East, are all neglected even though these issues are critical to providing any meaningful commentary about the ending of the conflict.

Ideological Standpoints

The above section on discursive strategies illustrates the subtle ways in which ideological perspectives can manifest in a news story even when there is the absence of detailed analytical commentary on the announcement as well as lack of provision of historical context. Although DeYoung does not overtly support the Bush administration’s policy, there remains evidence of deference to the President, which is made more visible as a result of the lack of critique and absence of alternative voices rather than through a show of support. As a result of the lack of oppositional voices, van Dijk’s (2009a) schema (discussed on p. 129) for identifying ideology is helpful here. In terms of group membership, there is essentially the presentation of a single, unified perspective of the U.S. with a focus on the actions of what ‘we’ do (fight “anti-terrorist” battles); an explication of ‘our’ aims (to impede those countries “aiding terrorists or seeking weapons
of mass destruction”), and vague allusions to ‘our’ opponents described by Bush as “[a]ny person, organization or government that supports, protects or harbors terrorists.” In this sense, the representation of the event and issue is almost exclusively through a nationalistic perspective.

The discourse on the ending of the Iraq War in this article is ultimately colored by the Bush administration’s perspective as the war is represented as a success and its ending normalized. Due to the discursive features examined above, particularly the absence of critique and alternative voices, this article ends up confined to and reproducing much of the Bush administration’s discourse although not always directly.

5.7 Textual Analysis: *The Wall Street Journal*


Layout and Structural Organization

President Bush’s announcement of the ending of the Iraq War featured in two locations in the *WSJ*. The first, in a 180 word bulletin that appeared at the top of the list in the daily news summary section called ‘World-Wide: What’s News.’ This bulletin directed readers to other Iraq-related stories that appeared elsewhere in the edition. As it is so brief, a second article was also selected for detailed textual analysis. The second article was by Cummings and Hitt called “Bush Says War Ending, Looks to '04” and appeared above the fold and as the main story in the ‘Politics and Policy’ section of the
newspaper on page A4, accompanied by a 2” x 3” cartoon sketch of the President standing atop the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln. The WSJ published other news stories more prominently on its front page, these were: “After Inflating Their Income, Companies Want IRS Refunds”, “Line of Fire: How TV Crew, Off On Its Own in Iraq, Fell Into Fatal Fight --- U.K. Network Presses Military For Word on 2 Men Missing In a Clash Outside Basra --- SUVs Raced Toward U.S. Tanks”, and “Inside the WHO As It Mobilized for SARS.” It is peculiar that the President’s announcement did not feature as the main story, or indeed that there was no photograph but the fact that the announcement appeared at the top of the ‘World-Wide: What’s News’ section does indicate its importance and did give the story greater visibility. Also, the headline of the Cummings and Hitt article (“Bush Says War Ending, Looks to ’04 --- Declaration Frees President To Focus on Broader Agenda, Including Campaign Plans”) activates in the readers a sense of conclusion to the conflict and looking ahead to the future or moving onto other issues important to the 2004 Presidential election.

Objects

In the news bulletin, the principle discourse object of interest is the reference to a “victory over Iraq” solidified by the following sentence: “Because of you, the tyrant has fallen,” the president told the cheering crew of the carrier Abraham Lincoln off San Diego, chosen for a moment of finality in a war ending with no formal surrender.” These references contribute to a sense of finality to the war. There are other events in the news brief that are not related to the announcement but report on events in Iraq, such as seven
soldiers being injured by grenades in Fallujah; the death of a Jordanian airport guard; and
the return of U.N. relief workers to Iraq.

The Cummings and Hitt article is in part dedicated to the ending of the Iraq War
but also as the headline suggests to offering political commentary on the future
Presidential campaign. The principle discourse objects of concern are: 1) the normalizing
of the ending of the Iraq War; 2) the spectacle of the speech; 3) constructing Iraq as a
‘clean’ war; and 4) the uncertainty over the future of Iraq. The lead paragraph contains
the President’s declaration that “major combat operations in Iraq have ended. In the battle
of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed.” Thus, forming the
macrostructure, that is the framework of the topic of the article as a whole, and
establishing the impression of an ending. The article also devotes attention to the
spectacle of the speech describing the “cheering troops,” how the president “personally
helped fly an S3 Viking Navy plane used for refueling during the war,” and how “Mr.
Bush strutted around the deck in a military flight suit, shaking hands with pilots and crew
under the shadow of a tower adorned with a sign that read: “Mission Accomplished.””
This, along with an earlier reference to removing a tyrant, and a later reference to Bush’s
announcement as “good news” evokes a sense of celebration and success in the war.

Thirdly, the article downplays the destructiveness associated with the invasion of
Iraq by contrasting the “devastating American attacks on civilian populations during
World War II” with the “relatively light damage to Iraq in this battle.” This point is
backed up in the following quote from the President that further adds to the metaphor of a
medical intervention to attack a disease in the form of a surgical procedure: “With new
tactics and precision weapons, we can achieve military objectives without directing
violence against civilians.” There is no mention of civilian casualties and infrastructure
destruction, or the difficulties faced by civilians in Iraq following the invasion. Thus,
constructing the reality of war as one that is surgical, precise and ‘clean.’ Without
commentary on consequences of the war, the authors also add to the sense of
righteousness associated with the actions of the United States.

Fourthly, within the context of the 2004 Presidential campaign, Cummings and
Hitt allude to a sense of uncertainty surrounding the future of Iraq. They write:

While Mr. Bush is riding a wave of public support fueled by war-time
sentiment, even Iraq can pose complications for the president. Voters may judge him by what happens inside Iraq in the months ahead, by how
effectively he rallies other countries to help pay for Iraq's reconstruction,
how smoothly Iraq's transition to self-government goes, and whether the
U.S. finds the weapons of mass destruction that Mr. Bush used to justify
the invasion. The president, attempting to quell skepticism about the
existence of such weapons, said troops "already know of hundreds of sites
that will be investigated."

And:

Mr. Bush's remarks last night reflected the broader political sensitivity
within the White House about the war. Officials don't want to declare
victory for fear of appearing a conqueror rather than a liberator of Iraq.
That kind of flat-out declaration also is deemed inappropriate since
military clashes, such as the shootings this week in Fallujah, are
continuing inside Iraq. Indeed, several U.S. soldiers there were injured yesterday when two grenades were tossed into their compound.

The excerpts above do not necessarily paint a bleak picture of the situation in Iraq but allude to the issues of security, the challenges of reconstruction, and the establishment of effective political leadership. However, the article mimics the sentiments expressed by Bush that the “transition from dictatorship to democracy will take time.” The authors do not challenge or criticize the Bush administration for the absence thus far of discovering banned WMD but instead continue to give oxygen to the notion that there is a possibility of finding them. The result is continued justification of the rationale and outcomes of the war.

Actors

The key social agents developed in the WSJ’s two articles are the President, the American electorate, the U.S. military, and al-Qaeda. The majority of the focus remains on the President as he is portrayed as a war-time leader who is responsible for success in the War on Terror, including the military victory and removal of Saddam Hussein from power. The authors go on to say Bush’s administration will also build its campaign around his “commander-in-chief role” and “national-security themes.” The article does not develop any relationships between Bush and his political opponents or policy critics. The absence of any such actors enables the Bush administration’s voice to dominate the news discourse. Both the Cummings and Hitt article, as well as the brief bulletin appearing on p. 1 of this WSJ edition, almost exclusively quote President Bush when reporting; hence, allowing his perspective to dominate by affording him the most
“framing power” (Carvalho, 2008, p. 168). The quotations from Bush enable the Iraq War to be contextualized within the publicly ubiquitous War on Terror discourse (Hodges, 2007a, p. 80), for example, by mentioning the atrocities of September 11, 2001 as the precursor for U.S. military action, and asserting “nearly one-half of al Qaeda’s senior operatives have been captured or killed” in a speech that was about the end to major combat in Iraq. Finally, Bush’s presidency is exalted in the article’s concluding sentence, ending with a quotation from the former President George H. W. Bush, praising “the focus, clarity of purpose and sense of duty that Americans have come to know and admire [in President Bush].”

Cummings and Hitt also discuss the importance of the American voter describing Bush as he “went before the nation” in what they view as “the beginning of his 2004 re-election campaign.” The discussion of voters’ choice in judging Bush’s success in Iraq gives some insight into what might be important to the wider public and electorate. The authors do not dwell on the questions they raise regarding the outcomes of the war. Instead, they defer to quoting Bush when raising questions about the failure to find WMD or definitively prove links between Hussein and anti-American terrorists. Although the voters are talked about, there are no mentions of public opposition to the war and no voice given to the anti-war movement. Like the NYT and WP, there is heavy reliance on the White House as a source, which limits the parameters of the news discourse. This construction of the voter in the text, also illustrates the dual way in which discourse not only reflects the existing situation in Iraq (in the present), but also constitutes a future reality by forecasting what factors will be important to voters.
The institution of the U.S. military is also an important actor established in the discourse of the text, even though the writers do not refer to official military personnel as sources. The presence of the military is significant because Bush is physically present with military personnel in his speech. When describing the scene in the news bulletin, Bush is described as thanking “the cheering crew of the carrier Abraham Lincoln” and quoted as describing the war as one fought “for the cause of liberty and for the peace of the world.” Cummings and Hitt also describe the gathered sailors and marines as “cheering” and Bush as “shaking hands with pilots and crew.” The co-piloting of the S3 Viking Navy plane also adds to the closeness of the relationship between the president and military, something that is critical to ensuring public approval by conveying the ‘support our troops’ mantra to the wider public. Cummings and Hitt describe the voyage of the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln as “bringing home sailors and marines who had participated in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars,” which is further suggestive of a successful “ending” to the war. Again, the close proximity that the authors establish between Bush and reporting success in Iraq and the return home of military, seem supportive of the President’s bid for re-election.

Language, Grammar and Rhetoric

As touched upon above, the vocabulary used to represent the situation in Iraq is sanguine; the use of phrases such as “great strides” and “military victory” to describe U.S. progress, and Bush “riding a wave of public support” exemplify the positivity that runs throughout the two WSJ articles. As mentioned, Bush’s leadership is also described in glowing terms, which also adds to the sense of accomplishment and victory.
Roughly midway through the Cummings and Hitt article there are two references describing Iraq as being in transition from dictatorship to democracy. This is an example of nominalization by the authors (used by Bush in his speech as well) as the verb ‘to transition’ is transformed into a noun to describe a process. When stating that Bush could be judged by voters depending on “how smoothly Iraq’s transition to self-government goes” one of the effects of this usage is that it naturalizes the assumption that such a transition is actually in process and that it will take place. This, in turn, has the effect of retaining a positive outlook by ‘buying time’ and requesting voter patience towards the existing instability in Iraq. Also, syntactically placing the terms “how smoothly” at the start of the quotation helps continue the positive tone of the article by creating the impression that the transition will be measured on a scale of “smoothness” rather than simply “how the transition goes” or replacing the adverb “smoothly” with the less certain and perhaps more accurate conjunction “whether” Iraq will transition to self-government smoothly.

The rhetoric and formulations advanced by key social agents President Bush and the authors of the article, frequently mirror each other and rarely clash. The result is a cohesive discourse that permeates the text, which portrays the ending of the conflict as a success and contextualizes the Iraq War as part of the broader War on Terror, which must continue to be fought (see ‘Discursive Strategies’ below for more on this point).

Discursive Strategies

The authors of the articles in the *WSJ* readily adopted the War on Terror discourse, which thereby determined the interpretive framework used to report the
announcement by President Bush. Hodges (2007a) highlights six key components of the global War on Terror narrative, almost all of which are strongly present in the article: 1) introducing the theme of a global War on Terror; 2) naming 9/11 as the precipitating event; 3) mentioning the first ‘battle’ Afghanistan; 4) discussion of the many wars fought on many fronts (only vaguely present); 5) talk of the ‘battle’ of Iraq; 6) recap of the precipitating event and commitment to continue war. (2007a, p. 69). The discursive impact of this narrative is not merely a representation of a pre-existing social world but the language used plays a critical role in the construction of that social reality. Part of this constructed social reality was the adequation between Iraq and al-Qaeda despite the evidence against such an alliance (Hodges, 2007a, p. 83). Furthermore, by presenting the Iraq War as part of a broader war to defend America, freedom and peace, the authors legitimate Bush’s pre-emptive war policy despite the skepticism being voiced by War critics as well as U.N. inspectors about the alleged Iraqi WMD program.

Ideological Standpoints

As mentioned already, there are some examples from Cummings and Hitt article that suggest the authors would support the re-election of Bush. The presentation of Bush, his policies, and the situation in Iraq are examples of positive discursive construction on behalf of the authors. As was the case for the NYT and WP, there are noticeable absences of the counter-arguments to Bush’s characterization of the ending and therefore effectively silencing alternative discourses. Cummings and Hitt largely reinforce and reproduce the Bush administration’s discourse allowing it to establish further hegemonic presence in the public domain. Interpreting the data in light of the rest of the WSJ’s
coverage examined in the contextual analysis of this dissertation makes clear that there is close alignment between the Bush administration’s ideological stance and that of the *WSJ*.

In terms of the most vivid examples in the text of the workings of ideology, it is neither the case that there are a large number of presuppositions or implicatures, nor that it is through the semantic structures of the text that ideology is most visibly realized. Instead, the attempt here has been to illustrate how ideology permeates the entire discourse structure of the articles analyzed. It is through the simultaneous examination of the various features of the text that a pattern of political support for the Bush administration is revealed. The diachronic-historical analysis in Chapter Seven will help illuminate some possible explanations for this support; in other words is it the strong conservative political allegiance of the *WSJ*, or do the news media and *WSJ* specifically tend to support the President at times of war as part of their ‘patriotic duty’?

5.8 Textual Analysis: *USA Today*


Layout and Structural Organization

Of the articles selected for textual analysis, this one is the shortest in terms of word length but is also fairly typical compared to the length of other *USA Today* articles on the topic of the Iraq War. The article appeared on p.1 as a front page cover story and was deemed the most important of eight other articles on the topic of Iraq appearing in the same issue. The story was accompanied by a large photograph of President Bush
addressing smiling military personnel on the deck of the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln. The headline was “Bush hails win, looks ahead” was also salient and establishing the story as the key story on the front page. Beneath the photograph, another story about the sailors nine and half month mission at sea and their return home added to the sense of “victory.” The headline and lead paragraph established that the article was about the U.S. “winning” the Iraq War, with the authors referring to the ‘end’ of the conflict as “America’s triumph.” The lead also established the discourse of the War on Terror, stating Bush’s warning that “the war on terrorism is far from over.” As others have discussed, the effect of the War on Terror discourse appearing in the lead is that it activates general social knowledge, which readers use to make sense of the information being presented (see schema established by Hodges, 2007a, p. 69 cited above on p. 184), namely that the Iraq War is one of many battles against the terror threat posed by enemies of the U.S. that first manifested on 9/11.

Objects

As with the NYT, WP and WSJ articles, McQuillan and Benedetto also accepted the President’s announcement of an ending to the war without challenging it, referring to the war as a “swift success” and “triumph” and as the declaration by the president as bringing “closure to the heavy fighting and [serving to] symbolically, if not officially, declare victory.” The President is also quoted saluting the U.S. troops, saying “[b]ecause of you, our nation is more secure. Because of you, the tyrant has fallen and Iraq is free.” Thus, the discourse object of Iraqi freedom is established as an outcome of the war. The authors do not question or raise concerns about what such freedom looks like, especially
in light of the lack of means for Iraqis to conduct effective governance and amidst the widely reported growing Iraqi frustration with the American-led invasion. This relatively short article also describes the speech as an event that was “crafted” by the White House to “highlight Bush’s credentials as commander in chief and lay the political groundwork for the 2004 presidential campaign.” The combined impact of these discourse objects is to discursively construct the war as a success, as looking to the future of presidential race signals moving forward from the war and consigning it to history.

Actors

As with the coverage of the NYT, WP, and WSJ, the principle actor is President Bush as it is his voice that is most amplified throughout the report. The authors do not assert many counter-arguments to the President’s announcement in their commentary, which renders their voice subservient to his. Saddam Hussein is mentioned twice in the context of the War on Terror and therefore established as the enemy. However, other than contextualizing him in the War on Terror discourse, there are no overt examples of evilification of his character. Interestingly, given that the Iraqi leader’s whereabouts were not established at the time of the speech and that there had been no formal surrender or ceasefire, it is surprising that the authors do not raise it as an important issue in declaring victory.

President Bush is represented as a worthy commander in chief with no questions raised regarding his leadership in the war. Even the unproven claims of Iraq’s WMD threat made by the President and his administration to justify the invasion of Iraq is downplayed by citing the results of a USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Poll of 409 people
watching the speech, 79% of who said the war was justified even if no WMD are found. The implication of including such information is that the President is presented as having public support and his decision to go to war vindicated. The authors also speak positively of Bush’s leadership by referencing his “successes in Afghanistan and Iraq.” Finally, in terms of the dominant voice in the article, it is clearly President Bush whose perspective determines the framing of the ‘ending’ of the war. One possible reason for the lack of other voices that challenge the President’s perspective contained in the article could be the briefness of the article and that there were seven other articles on the Iraq War appearing in the newspaper on the same day. Some of these articles do offer different voices as shown in the contextual analysis; and some did raise challenges to the President’s narrative regarding the consequences of the war and issue of responsibility for these. However, McQuillan and Benedetto’s article was the most salient and attributed the most importance editorially judging by its appearance on the front page.

Language, Grammar and Rhetoric

In addition to the lexical choices characterizing the war’s end as a success mentioned above, the descriptions of a “buoyant” audience and “cheering sailors and Marines” give the reader the impression of celebrating victory and success. Indeed the audience is invited to celebrate “America’s triumph,” a phrase, which carries with it a patriotic tone, perhaps designed for broadening the emotional appeal of the outcomes of the war to the readers. However, this is an isolated incidence of patriotic undertones from the authors, and despite a few examples of patriotic sentiments expressed by Bush in his
speech, there are not many concrete examples of rhetorical devices employed to emotionally manipulate readers.

Inevitably the aim of the President’s speech was to characterize the war as a success and galvanize public approval for the policies of his administration. McQuillan and Benedetto quote elements of Bush’s speech, which contextualize the war in the War on Terror discourse. It has been demonstrated in various studies that the discourse of the War on Terror was manipulative through its evocation of the imagery of 9/11 and thereby generating a paranoia and fear of another such attack in the public mindset (see for example, Nacos, Bloch-Elkon, & Shapiro, 2011, p. xii). By submitting to the Bush administration’s rhetoric, and conceding the discursive terrain in their article, McQuillan & Benedetto enable the Bush administration’s rhetoric to be amplified, even though this may be not be a conscious choice.

Discursive Strategies

In addition to reproducing the War on Terror discourse, the article by McQuillan and Benedetto also reified the legitimacy of the “Bush Doctrine,” which they describe as serving to inform nations that they “must side with efforts to stamp out terrorists or they will be viewed as standing with the enemy and will be “targets of American justice.”” Or more succinctly stated as “either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.” (Bush, 2001c, p. 69). Although the authors to do not overtly advocate for the use of pre-emptive military strikes against sovereign countries without obtaining the necessary legal approvals from the U.N., they also do not highlight the controversy of a nation acting outside the accordance of international law. Specifically, McQuillaan and Benedetto do
not challenge the Bush Doctrine by describing the attack on Iraq as one on a sovereign nation that had not acted aggressively towards the U.S. Instead they quote Bush’s phrase “targets of American justice,” which performs the function of a euphemism by disguising an act of aggression as an act of delivering justice.

In the very next paragraph after mentioning the Bush Doctrine, the authors go on to state that “An official declaration [of an end to war] would trigger international laws that, among other things, bar killing a nation’s leader.” The effect of this arrangement of composition is that it serves to remind the readers that the U.S. is a nation that respects and adheres to international law rather than a rogue state that acts outside of the law. This is also an example of positive self-representation in the tradition of American exceptionalism – essentially an argument that the U.S. has a uniqueness amongst nations that justifies its acts of exceptionalism in history (also see Chapter Two, p. 75).

Another example of legitimating Bush’s pre-emptive war policy is by presenting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as successes. McQuillaan and Benedetto write: “[a]fter successes in Iraq and Afghanistan, Bush said, ending the strife between Israel and Palestinians is his next goal. Just this week, his administration outlined a "road map" for peace in the Middle East.” The implication here is that Bush’s policies are well-intentioned and to be trusted because they have been successful in Iraq and Afghanistan already, and because the President is ready to work towards peace in the long-standing Israel-Palestine conflict. The Orwellian logic behind the notion that a policy of pre-emptive war is the solution to obtain peace is striking. Another effect of this is to consign the events of Iraq to history by emphasizing the beginning of a new international effort towards peace in the Middle-East, thus, adding to a sense of conclusion in Iraq.
Ideological Standpoints

Many of the same issues regarding the workings of ideology highlighted in the analyses of the NYT, WP and WSJ are also present in this USA Today article. For instance, the incompleteness of information on the present situation in Iraq and the absence of alternative discourses when discussing the ‘ending’ results in silencing and marginalizing alternative representations of reality. As Foucault (1972) highlights, hegemonic discourses formulate by limiting the range of discursive possibilities leading to a discursive formation which becomes evident when there is a discernable regularity to the discourse. This curtailment of discursive possibilities is vividly evidenced by McQuillan and Benedetto’s reliance on and deference to President Bush’s perspective. Even though the authors may not be politically behind Bush, a textual analysis of their article reveals a reproduction of the dominant discourses, and therefore acts as a vehicle to ‘distribute’ the ideology of the administration in the form of news.

The dependence on President Bush’s discursive formations such as the ‘War on Terror’ and ‘Bush Doctrine’ results in a naturalization of the beliefs, rationales and values of the Bush administration. McQuillan and Benedetto’s (and the USA Today editor/s) thus provide an arena for the Bush administration’s policies to be broadcast to the wider public and possibly influence readers which results in support for and materialization of policies.

5.9 Summary

In brief, the contextual analysis of the 158 articles from 2003 has provided a useful overview of the broader characterizations of the ending of the war. As mentioned
earlier, the outcomes of the war referred to the goals set out by the Bush administration in relation to the war in Iraq, specifically to disarm Hussein’s regime of its WMD and to eradicate the terrorist threat posed by Iraq. The consequences of the war referred to what transpired as a result of the war, most of which were concerned with the negative consequences such as the destruction of civilian infrastructure or civilian deaths. The final component of the discursively constructed ‘ending’ of the Iraq War in the news focused on how responsibility for the consequences of the war were assigned (or not). The analysis underscored how multiple discourses continue to operate across the coverage of a newspaper but that certain discourses gained prominence over others.

The broader discourses revealed in the contextual analysis, such as the representation of the war as a success and situating the war within the War on Terror construct, were also confirmed by the findings of the detailed textual analysis. In the ending of the war announced in 2003, the (positive) outcomes of the war received far greater attention in the coverage of the NYT, WSJ, and to a lesser degree the WP than the (negative) consequences of the war. USA Today was an exception in this regard, in that it offered more balanced coverage, which was especially evident in how much of the blame for the negative consequences of the war was not apportioned solely to Iraqis or the former regime but frequently to U.S. policies as well.

The textual analysis of the individual articles also yielded similar findings, which shed light on the micro-level of how dominance of macro-level discourses was discursively achieved through analysis of key components of discourse. The nationalism and patriotism evident through the attribution of responsibility in the contextual analysis was also confirmed when examining the presentation of certain social actors in the
detailed textual analysis that was conducted in much of the coverage. This was evident across all four newspapers, even within *USA Today*, which did provide more balanced coverage than the other newspapers selected in this study. How this was achieved was discussed for each newspaper individually but what was revealed was the role that language and rhetoric play, for instance, through the reliance on specific nationalistic viewpoints that are presented through a Manichean lens and were illuminated through the presence of van Dijk’s (1998) ideological square.
CHAPTER 6
DECEMBER 2011: FORMAL END OF WAR IN IRAQ

This chapter presents the findings from the contextual and textual analyses of newspaper articles published in December 2011 reporting the formal ending of the Iraq War. This chapter is organized in much the same way as the previous one, beginning with a presentation of the results of the coding analysis of 61 newspaper articles analyzed using NVivo 11 Pro – a qualitative data analysis software. The discussion that proceeds summarizes what the dominant discourses were concerning the outcomes, consequences and attribution of responsibility in the construction of the war’s ending. Prominence of a discourse was determined by the number of selected articles from a given newspaper that contained a particular discourse; a percentage was then calculated in order to aid the visual presentation of the coding. (See Appendix B for NVivo coding summaries of outcomes, consequences and responsibility and rankings of discourses). Next, I present the findings and discussion of the textual analysis of selected articles which is based on Carvalho’s (2008) model of analysis outlined in Chapter Four. Both sections incorporate elements of the comparative-synchronic analysis where the focus remains on demonstrating how the ending of the war was discursively constructed at a specific point in time across the four newspapers selected in this study. For a brief overview of data and comparison of front page headlines between 2003 and 2011 refer to section 5.1 in Chapter 5.
6.1 Contextual Analysis: Outcomes

6.1.1 War as a Success

The withdrawal of troops in 2011 marked the end of the American combat mission in Iraq. The characterization of the war as a success featured as a pre-eminent outcome for all four newspapers. The discursive construction of success, that is the constitutive elements in the constitution of ‘success’ had some differences across newspapers; in addition, although the representation of war as a success was prominent in the NYT and WP, these newspapers also emphasized the war’s failures. It is also worth re-stating that multiple discourses, such as those that highlight failures of the war, were also simultaneously part of the war discourse across all four newspapers. The percentage of articles which constructed the discourse of success for each newspaper was as follows: USA Today (100 percent), NYT (68 percent), WP (62 percent) and the WSJ (56 percent). The discourse of success drew from the positive outcomes of the war such as the liberation of Iraqis from Saddam Hussein’s government, the potential for positive impact in the wider Middle East region, and stressing the progress that was being made. USA Today and WSJ had the least amount of alternative narratives to the war as a success discourse and were the most likely to have a strong positive-self representation leaning (that is, a pro-American leaning).

6.1.2 Removal of Dictatorship

Referring to the toppling of Saddam Hussein’s regime was a dominant discursive construct in presenting the outcomes of the war; results revealed the WP (62 percent, ranked first), USA Today (78 percent, ranked third) and NYT (27 percent, ranked fourth)
all cited this as a major outcome of the war, whereas the *WSJ* (56 percent, ranked joint first) leaned its coverage on the existence of democracy in Iraq. This discourse emphasized the liberation of Iraqis from Hussein’s regime, often with reminders of how evil Saddam Hussein was, and underscored the values of democracy and freedom that had come to dominate the discourse once the arguments about Iraq’s WMD and links to terrorism threat had lost credibility.

Closely related to this discourse was the discourse on improvements in Iraqis lives after the invasion which featured heavily in the coverage of *USA Today* (89 percent, ranked second). This discourse often overlaps with the discourse on removing Hussein from power and the consequences of regime change, in that it paved the way for Iraqis to live better lives. The discourse focused on the state of democracy, the growing economic opportunities available to Iraqis, and the increased freedoms now available. Often the themes of this discourse ran through some of the coverage in the other newspapers but it was a dominant feature of *USA Today*’s coverage and constituted a distinct discourse separate from the discourse on democracy. The reality being constructed by *USA Today* was congruent with its major discourse of the war as a success. In the *NYT* and *WP* the war as a success narrative, although present, co-existed alongside competing discourses that highlighted the challenges and failures as well.

6.1.3 War as a Failure

The reporting of the war’s failures was also a prominent feature in the coverage of the *NYT* (68 percent, ranked joint first with ‘war as a success’), the *WP* (57 percent, ranked third) and to a lesser extent in *USA Today* (44 percent, ranked joint fifth).
However, this discourse did not necessarily require the newspaper coverage to explicitly call the wall a failure or draw attention to the failure of finding WMD or proving definitively a connection between Iraq and al-Qaeda. Instead, the presentation was not of the war as a total failure but honed in on several of the war’s negative outcomes, principally concerning the ongoing difficulties to stop atrocities from being committed, the sectarianism, and questions over the war’s overall legacy. The WSJ did not emphasize the war’s failures and these did not form a distinctive discourse in its construction of the war’s ending. In fact, most of the WSJ’s coverage was critical of the ending of the war and stressed the need for a continued American occupation of Iraq to ensure the “gains” were not lost. Furthermore, as can be seen from the coding sheet for the outcomes of the war in the USA Today’s coverage, the discourse of failure competed with numerous discourses of success (see Table B.2, Appendix B). Overall, the WP and to a lesser extent the NYT were the two newspapers that highlighted the war’s failings without “drowning out” the message with coverage about the successes.

6.1.4 Reconstruction of Iraq

This discourse was constituted by coverage that emphasized the U.S. role in rebuilding and positively transforming Iraq; with numerous news items on the newly forged U.S. – Iraqi economic partnership that would seek to build close ties in order to help Iraq develop its oil industry, as well as further enhance economic and educational ties between the countries. This discourse brought a sense of normalizing relations between the countries and also demonstrated how the U.S. was helping to get Iraq on its feet. Inevitably, wherever such news surfaced, there was often the absence of the
discourse on the cause of Iraq’s economic problems. Problems such as lack of modern equipment and supplies, and lack of expertise were presented as though they had always existed without the presentation of the context i.e., the sanctions on Iraq or the aerial bombardment of Iraq and the devastating effects of such events on educational infrastructure. This emphasis on Iraq’s recovery was most prominent in *USA Today* (56 percent, ranked fourth) and the *WSJ* (44 percent, ranked third), but also made up a significant proportion of coverage for the *NYT* (23 percent, ranked fifth) and the *WP* (24 percent, ranked fifth). This discourse propelled the notion of a compassionate U.S. policy of self-less interest and was often accompanied by news items about how much money the U.S. was pouring into reconstructing Iraq.

### 6.1.5 Uncertainty over Iraq’s Future

Equally prominent across the four newspapers was the expression of uncertainty concerning Iraq’s future but this was not necessarily characterized by critical coverage. How each newspaper presented the uncertainty depended on the other discourses it was situated within. In general, the discourse of an uncertain future emphasized the questions over whether Iraq’s fragile government and security forces would be able to retain control and order, especially over the competing groups that were not part of or represented by the Maliki government. Prominence of the uncertainty discourse in terms of a percentage of the selected articles for each newspaper was: *USA Today* (44 percent, ranked joint fifth), *WP* (38 percent, ranked fourth), and *WSJ* (33 percent, ranked fourth). The *NYT* expressed the precarious future of Iraq differently, expressing more concern about the outcomes not being what the U.S. wanted (41 percent, ranked third). This
discourse pointed to undesirable outcomes such as the increasingly uncompliant Maliki government, the increasing sectarianism of the Maliki government, and the lack of progress in the oil sector as causes for U.S. concern. Such outcomes of the war were not necessarily indicative of opposition to the war, indeed, these concerns often surfaced when arguments for extending the U.S. troop presence in Iraq were presented. This was especially the case in the *WSJ* but also represented the dominant Republican position that found its way into the news discourse of the *WP, NYT* and *USA Today* as well.

6.1.6 Summary of Outcomes

The 61 newspaper articles selected from December 2011 following the announcement of the final troop withdrawal from Iraq are revealing about the news media’s overall characterization of the main outcomes of the war. Taking into account the overwhelming desire of the American public for U.S. forces to exit from Iraq, as well as President’s Obama’s promise to ensure troop withdrawal based on the timetable for withdrawal agreed by Bush in 2008, it was unsurprising to see several lengthy articles that focused on the legacy of Iraq with titles such as “What we left behind in Iraq” or “What Obama’s leaving behind” and “End of an era.” In such articles, it was necessary to reflect on the outcomes of the war but the positive presentation of the war as a success enshrouded the true nature of the reality in Iraq. Like in 2003, positive self-representation was a characteristic feature of much of the coverage across all four newspapers, and this was evident in the discursive constructions of the outcomes of the war. The *WP* followed by the *NYT* was perhaps the most measured in counter-balancing the successful outcomes discourse with news stories about the ongoing problems in Iraq. *USA Today* offered the
least critical coverage and the most brazen examples of (mis)representing the state of affairs in Iraq; the *WSJ* reminded its readers of the ongoing problems in Iraq in a way that was intertwined with its endorsement of Republican policies of aiming to secure an extension of the U.S. presence in Iraq coupled with direct critical attacks on President Obama’s decision to withdraw troops. The coding analysis of the outcomes should be interpreted in conjunction with the discourses on consequences and apportioning of responsibility, as well as with the textual analysis to ascertain a clearer idea of how competing discourses fared.

6.2 Contextual Analysis: Consequences

6.2.1 Iraq Faces Precarious Security Situation

Given the daily news reports of bombings, kidnappings, and assassinations in Iraq, it is not surprising to find that much of the focus of the four newspapers cited the ongoing level of violence as a consequence of the war. The discourse of this consequence focused on the threat posed by Shiite militias and terrorists, the state of lawlessness and inability of the Maliki government to secure Iraq. Prominence of this consequence in terms of a percentage of the selected articles in which it featured was: *WSJ* (67 percent, ranked first), *NYT* (50 percent, ranked first), *USA Today* (33 percent, ranked first), and *WP* (38 percent, ranked joint fourth). Similar to its coverage of the uncertainty faced by Iraq, the *WSJ* presented the security risks in a way that advocated retaining U.S. troops in Iraq beyond 2011. The issue of responsibility for the ongoing violence is addressed below however the context in which the discourse about security was situated rarely explicitly linked the state of violence to the U.S. led invasion and occupation of Iraq. Nevertheless,
the fact that this issue was discussed in the context of the withdrawal of U.S. troops adds to the presentation of the Americans as a force for good that were keeping peace in Iraq.

6.2.2 Political Stalemate

The focus of this discourse was on political instability, problems with the Maliki government (from a U.S. government perspective), sectarian divisions, and the lack of political solutions. Prominence of this consequence in terms of a percentage of the selected articles in which it featured was: WP (43 percent, ranked joint first), NYT (46 percent, ranked second), USA Today (22 percent, ranked joint second), and WSJ (33 percent, ranked joint third). There was a great deal of uniformity in the discursive construction of this discourse across the four newspapers. For example, there was a general consensus that ethnic and religious loyalties were fueling sectarian politics and were a stumbling block for various parties reaching political consensus. Despite the news media’s focus on the political quagmire in Iraq, this did not overshadow the overall characterization of the war as a success in the coverage of the WSJ and USA Today. Both newspapers continued to highlight the formation of Maliki’s government as a positive outcome of the war. In the coverage of the NYT and WP, it was often difficult to parse the extent to which the political divisions were intended to be represented as a direct consequence of the war or pre-dating the U.S. led invasion in 2003, thus, illustrating the intertwined nature of how multiple discourses on the same issue operated within both texts. Furthermore, the WP and NYT were more likely to voice concerns about the growing sectarian and authoritarian tendencies of Maliki and his aides.
6.2.3 Growing Iranian Influence in Iraq

One of the preeminent consequences that emerged from the news coverage in three of the four newspapers was the increase of Iran’s power in Iraq and the wider region. This consequence was characterized by expressions of “Iran’s meddling,” references to “Iranian-backed Shiite militias,” and warnings about the growing danger posed by Iran. Prominence of this consequence as a percentage in which it appeared in the selected articles for each newspaper was: *WP* (43 percent, ranked joint first), *WSJ* (33 percent, ranked joint third), and *NYT* (32 percent, ranked fourth). It is perhaps not surprising that this discourse on Iran did not feature continuously and extensively in the coverage of *USA Today* as it would run contrary to its characterization of the war as resounding success but it did appear in the newspaper’s longest article on the end of the war. The *WP* referred to Iran as emerging from the war as a “winner” and therefore as an undesirable consequence of the war. The emergence of the Iran discourse is critical in the construction of meaning to the war’s end as it offers readers an explanation and perhaps even an excuse for the difficulties faced by the Americans in trying to “liberate” Iraq. The discursive effect of this strategy is to not only absolve the U.S. of blame for the situation in Iraq but to simultaneously contribute to the existing discourse on Iran as an enemy of the U.S. and rogue state.

6.2.4 Growing anti-American Sentiment and Loss of American Influence

Related to the growing influence of Iran discourse, were the discourses on increasing anti-American sentiments and the subsequent loss of American influence in the region. The discourse on anti-Americanism featured coverage of news which
contained voices of opposition to the U.S. in Iraq, a mistrust of American intentions, as well a sense of the enormous injustice the Iraqis felt against the U.S. for what transpired in Iraq after the invasion. Such voices only appeared in the form of quotations or paraphrased opinions from Iraqis rather than as the dominant views expressed by American journalists. Prominence of this consequence as a percentage in which it appeared in the selected articles for each newspaper was: *WP* (38 percent, ranked joint fourth) and *NYT* (36 percent, ranked third). The suggestion that there was an immense anti-American sentiment in Iraq did not find hegemony in the discourses of the *WSJ* or *USA Today* but for different reasons. As aforementioned, *USA Today* predominantly characterized Iraq as a success, without relying on celebratory language of military victory, but by focusing on positive outcomes. Stressing the anti-American sentiments many people in Iraq felt would also run contrary to the narrative of the U.S. troops being liberators; ultimately, the discourse remained on the periphery of its coverage. In the case of the *WSJ*, there were numerous expressions of quite the opposite view, that Iraqis wanted the U.S. to remain in order to ensure security. Inevitably there were isolated examples where Iraqi citizens might be quoted blaming Americans but in general, these did not dislodge the dominant agenda of the *WSJ*, which was to oppose Obama’s withdrawal of troops and stress the need for the U.S. to remain in Iraq. In addition, it is also worth stating that the mere presence of quotations of Iraqis that opposed the American presence in their country does not necessarily reflect a fair presentation of the viewpoints, as who these voices are and how they have been previously represented would also add or detract from their legitimacy. It is for this reason a closer textual
analysis that examines how actors and identities of groups and individuals have been developed is particularly useful.

The need for the U.S. to remain in Iraq also found expression in the *WSJ* by the presence of a closely related discourse that was the loss of American influence in Iraq. This discourse was salient in the *WSJ* and featured in 33 percent (ranked joint third) of the selected articles; it was also the most dominant in the *WP*’s coverage, with 43 percent (ranked joint first) of articles highlighting the loss of the U.S. strategic foothold in Iraq, and a failed consequence of the war to secure U.S. interests. Compared with the *WSJ* the *WP*’s coverage seemed a less partisan assessment of the sober reality of the growing differences between the Maliki government and the Americans, often citing the unreliability of the Maliki government in remaining loyal to the American’s geopolitical aims in the region. By highlighting this consequence of the war in this way, the *WP* was again proving itself to provide the most critical and balanced coverage out of the four newspapers.

6.2.5 U.S. Military Personnel Deaths

The mention of military deaths from the invasion found its way into the discourse of the ending in all four newspapers. Prominence of references to military deaths were as follows: *WSJ* (44 percent, ranked second), *WP* (29 percent, ranked sixth), *NYT* (27 percent, ranked fifth) and *USA Today* (22 percent, ranked joint second). This consequence of the Iraq War did not dominate the discourse in any of the newspapers, but numerous references to the military sacrifices and lives lost shaped the overall construction of meaning to the ending of the war differently for each newspaper. The
sacrosanct position of the military was reflected by President Obama addressing the troops at Fort Bragg, N.C. days before the final troops left Iraq, calling it “the most respected institution in our land.” (Obama, 2011b). Therefore, even though this was an obviously negative consequence of the war, the concept of sacrifices was frequently cited alongside the ‘legacy of liberation’ that the American troops were leaving behind and in which they could take pride. The WSJ highlighted the military deaths in order to make the case for not losing the ‘gains’ of the previous eight years. USA Today quoted President Obama and Secretary of Defense Panetta in thanking the troops for their service, and also cited the successes of the American troops in deposing Hussein and “beat[ing] down an insurgency backed by al-Qaeda terrorists.” (Brook, 2011, p. A6). The WP drew attention to issues facing returning veterans such as re-adjusting and challenges in finding employment in a weak economy. The NYT was perhaps the most critical of the war when mentioning military deaths as the discourse surfaced most prominently around criticisms of the rationale for war, and specifically of the Bush administration in leading the nation into an unnecessary war. Overall, the military deaths discourse was utilized not only to celebrate the war’s achievements but also to criticize the decision to go to war; thus, illustrating how the same topic can reflect very different ideological and political positions.

6.2.6 Civilian Deaths

A final consequence that featured in the discourse of the ending of the war in three of the four newspapers was civilian deaths as a result of the invasion and occupation. Prominence of this consequence as a percentage in which it appeared in the
selected articles for each newspaper was: *USA Today* (22 per cent, ranked joint second), *WP* (19 percent, ranked seventh), and *NYT* (18 percent, ranked joint sixth). This discourse did not feature significantly in the coverage of the *WSJ*. That this discourse appeared so low down in terms of prominence across the four newspapers is revealing of the low priority attached to the issue by the news media; by downplaying the importance of civilian deaths as a consequence of the war the positive self-representation of the U.S. remained intact. Furthermore where civilian deaths were mentioned, it was usually in conjunction with other costs of the war such as U.S. military lives lost and the financial cost of $1 trillion. The effect of this was to mitigate the heavy costs of war endured by the Iraqi people for an outcome that did not bring about a great deal of improvement to their lives. Reporting civilian deaths alongside U.S. military deaths presented a sense of unified purpose amongst Americans and Iraqis, as well as mutual sacrifice. When in reality, the devastating loss of civilian lives reflected the disparity between the Iraqi people’s desire to free themselves from a foreign occupying power and the geopolitical aims of successive U.S. administrations to extend its influence in the Middle East.

6.2.7 Summary of Consequences

One of the aims of CDA is to utilize different types of analysis in order to establish patterns in the text that are revealing of how power and ideology operate to propel a certain discourse; that is, one version of reality over another. CDA scholars are interested in interpreting the collective meanings and impact of these multiple discourses that appear across different texts. What emerges from this comparative-synchronic analysis of newspaper stories about the ending of the Iraq War is the illumination of a
framework within which these stories operate. Or put another way, it is the narrowly confined parameters within which the information presented is contextualized that shapes the construction of reality.

These parameters of discourse could be conceptualized in terms of coverage that broadly favors positive self-representation and a nationalistic-patriotic ideology. Within these parameters there were slight variations between the different newspapers, representing perhaps the Republican-Democratic leaning of the journalist or editor/s. The coverage of the consequences of the war in *USA Today* was the most unabashedly patriotic, providing little scope for critical coverage of the war itself. Even after public opinion had turned against the war, and it was no longer politically fatal to express opposition to the war (as it was during the run up to the war in the climate of the post-September 11 attacks and the launching of the War on Terror by President Bush), *USA Today* downplayed the negative consequences and devoted more of its coverage by presenting the positive outcomes of the war such as an emerging democracy and Iraqi freedom, without critically examining the nature of the democracy and failure of the Iraqi leadership to form an inclusive and representative government.

The *WSJ*’s coverage stood out for casting many of the negative consequences of the war through a Republican Party rendering, specifically referring to the loss of American hegemony in Iraq as a result of President Obama and the Democratic Party’s policies in Iraq. For example, in an article entitled “What Obama Left Behind in Iraq”, Ajami of the *WSJ* reported:

A president who understood the stakes would have had no difficulty justifying a residual American presence in Iraq. But not this president. At
the core of Mr. Obama's worldview lies a pessimism about America and
the power of its ideals and reach in the world.

The one exception to this strategic timidity is the pride Mr. Obama
takes in prosecuting the war against terrorists. In a moment evocative of
George W. Bush, Mr. Obama last week swatted away the charge that he
had been appeasing America's enemies abroad: "Ask Osama bin Laden
and the 22 out of 30 top Al Qaeda leaders who've been taken off the field
whether I engage in appeasement." Fair enough. But the world demands
more than that, it begs for a larger strategic reading of things. (Ajami,

Such a viewpoint was typical of the political stance of the WSJ adopted towards the exit
from Iraq, through, which runs a strong inclination of the ideology of American
exceptionalism and global leadership. Nearly, all the consequences discussed above were
interpreted within such a discourse. Overall, the WSJ's focus was more on the
consequences of the exit for American power, than it was about the consequences of the
Iraq War itself. Hence, the marginalization of the discourse on Iraqi suffering through
death, displacement, injury, destruction of civilian infrastructure, or any such negative
outcomes. Another effect of such a construction of reality is that it reduces the suffering
and human costs of war to geo-political and economic agendas.

Of the newspapers selected in this study, the NYT and the WP offered the most
extensive commentary on the consequences of the war, but also operated within the same
framework of positive self-representation. The result of deploying such an underlying
framework meant the coverage emphasized Iraq’s problems without dwelling on these as
a direct consequence of the American-led invasion, or overlooked the negative consequences all together. For example, the issue of lack of electricity and failure of the American occupation to get services up and running even after eight years hardly received any attention. Yet, the coverage spoke of the newly acquired freedoms Iraqis enjoyed and the improvements in their lives. Even a brief glance at the rankings of the dominant discourse on the consequences of the war reveals that civilian deaths, destruction of Iraq’s infrastructure and lack of services did not dominate the NYT or WP’s coverage as doing so would portray the U.S. in a negative light (see Appendix B for further details on rankings of dominant discourses).

6.3 Contextual Analysis: Responsibility

One of the aims of CDA is to expose the workings of ideology or politicization in a text; the discursive features and arrangement of a text can enable the removal or masking of agency, which makes ascertaining the attribution of responsibility particularly difficult. When examining multiple texts, there are not always enough instances where a consequence or indeed attribution of responsibility is deemed dominant enough to be considered significant across coverage. The results presented here prioritize those consequences, which surfaced in multiple newspaper articles, and then only those where there was a significant attribution of responsibility. So, for example, if only one out of the nine USA Today articles selected for analysis discussed security concerns in Iraq, then it was not considered a dominant discourse in the USA Today’s representation of its coverage of the war. One of the most striking features of the results for the 2011 ‘ending’ was how infrequently the topic of responsibility surfaced. Another important factor to
bear in mind is that a principle aim of this contextual analysis and CDA is to interpret overall discourse structures and trends across texts rather than rendering a quantitative assessment of the data.

6.3.1 Responsibility for Political Situation

Figure 6.1 shows the attribution of responsibility for the political problems that Iraq faced. USA Today and WSJ both had only two articles each where responsibility was addressed, and both also cited the sectarian tendencies of Iraqis as the root of the political instability. When it did assign blame, the USA Today blamed the Maliki government, a government that frequently faced accusations of favoring the Shiite majority at the expense of Sunnis. Even though the political disagreements amongst Shiites and Sunnis was a reality that confronted Iraq, USA Today did not assign responsibility to the U.S. policy of De-Ba’athification which was later adopted by the Maliki government to further crackdown on Sunnis accused of being Ba’ath party conspirators or Islamist terrorists. This policy had caused a great deal of resentment amongst Sunnis as they faced a crackdown in the aftermath of the invasion where many were arrested, held in detention centers, and sometimes tortured by U.S. forces.

In the case of the WSJ assigning blame to the U.S., this needs to be put into context with the rest of its coverage that assigned blame specifically to the Obama administration for what it deemed an early withdrawal from Iraq based on political expediency rather than careful planning. In other words, it was not a case of critical commentary on U.S. involvement in Iraq but politically motivated criticism of Obama’s decision to withdraw. Figure 6.1 also shows the NYT directed most blame at the Maliki
government, but also raised concerns about sectarianism as well as the influence of Iran. There was a significant apportioning of responsibility (in 30 percent of articles) to the U.S. for a lack of clear post-war planning. Like the other newspapers the \textit{WP} cited sectarianism as the cause of the political problems; in addition, blame was also assigned to Shiite Islamists for exacerbating sectarian tensions. Again, this was not free from ideological or political biases, as the potential for a close alliance to emerge between Iraq and Iran (also a Shia majority country) was something that concerned the U.S. government.

![Figure 6.1 Attributed responsibility for political situation](image)

6.3.2 Responsibility for Destruction

As pointed out in the section on Consequences, there was not a great deal of newspaper coverage on the destruction caused by the war to Iraq’s civilian infrastructure, cultural heritage sites, schools, or hospitals, for example (only a total of 8 articles of the 61 analyzed addressed this consequence). The issue did surface as a consequence of the
war in the NYT, USA Today and to a lesser extent, in the WP; often, the discourse on destruction took the form of references to the poor state of Iraq’s industries and their need for improvement as well as general state of disrepair in the country as a whole. Figure 6.2 shows that the WP assigned responsibility equally between the Hussein regime for poor maintenance, insurgents for looting and other damage since the invasion, and to the U.S. for its policies of De-Ba’athification and lack of troop presence. So, it was not attributing blame to the U.S. for the destruction caused by the aerial bombardment of Iraq or conducting military operations in Iraq.

In two articles that addressed destruction in the WSJ, one charged the Hussein regime for the conditions of Iraq’s infrastructure (without citing the U.N. sanctions which were responsible for much of the destruction of Iraq’s once-impressive achievements in education and civilian infrastructure) (Dagher, 2011), and the other blamed the U.S. but it was in fact only through a quotation from Moqtada al-Sadr so not representative of the WSJ’s position (Barnes, Dagher, & Hodge, 2011). USA Today only assigned responsibility for destruction once and it was to insurgents that were blamed for vandalizing electrical substations (Michaels, 2011). The NYT also assigned responsibility for the destruction and alluded to the poor performance of oil and energy sectors as the fault of religious extremists and Hussein. There were frequent examples in the NYT of removing U.S. culpability. Recounting the killings of four Blackwater contractors, the NYT reported: “[i]nsurgents killed four contractors in 2004, and a cheering mob dragged their charred bodies through the streets. In the battles that followed, hundreds died and much of the city was destroyed by bombs and airstrikes.” (Healy, 2011, p. A16). The sentence begins by clearly assigning responsibility for the killings of the four contractors
to “insurgents;” however, it does not shed light on who was doing the destroying and whose bombs and air strikes were causing the damage to the city. The second sentence does not suggest the deaths of innocent civilians because it refers to “in the battles that followed,” thus, indicating that those who died, died in battle. Furthermore the actions of the insurgents are presented in a way that accentuates the barbarity of the insurgency as well as casting the Iraqis as medieval by referring to “a cheering mob” and “charred bodies.” There were never such descriptions of the Iraqi victims of aerial bombardments by U.S. planes which also left in their wake many charred dead bodies. Masking agency was not an unusual feature as exemplified by the following excerpt from the NYT describing the city of Fallujah:

Calls to prayer ring out from minarets where insurgent snipers once perched. In restaurants once obliterated by mortars and airstrikes, waiters skate from table to table with trays of lamb kebabs and fire-roasted tomatoes. Opulent houses rise from fields of rubble, built by sheiks, contractors and anyone else who benefited, illicitly or not, from the vast sums of American money that poured into Iraq during the war. (Healy, 2011, p. A16).

The above excerpt does not state that the city was reduced to rubble by American mortars and airstrikes; instead the composition of the paragraph creates the impression that it is only the “insurgent snipers” responsible for the destruction, and the mention of “American money” pouring in conforms to the characterization of the U.S. as nation builders. Ultimately, a pattern of absolving the U.S. of blame for the destructiveness reflects a clear pro-American bias in the coverage of all four newspapers, as well as an
adherence to a Manichean presentation of world events in which the U.S. is always on the side of righteousness. This type of characterization demonstrated the presence of nationalism in news discourse and confirmed the position held by many critical scholars (see Chapter 2) regarding the difficulty (indeed, impossibility) for journalists to provide objective, balanced coverage which is free from ideological commitment. This is not necessarily a problem unique to American journalism (or the profession of journalism) but it is still useful for highlighting the political nature of all representation and discourses.

![Figure 6.2 Attribution of responsibility for destruction](image)

6.3.3 Responsibility for Precarious Security Situation

As highlighted above, the ongoing security problems faced by Iraq appeared as one of the most dominant consequences of the war across all four newspapers; yet, the attribution of responsibility fixated on current causes of insecurity rather than seeking to attribute responsibility for the security that resulted from the invasion and occupation. As can be seen from Figure 6.3, it is only the NYT, which attributes responsibility for the security problems on to the U.S. but in both of the articles it did this, it was criticism.
levelled at President Obama for his exit strategy and leaving former allies in a state of limbo in Iraq rather than taking up opposition to U.S. foreign policy. The state of insecurity was blamed on sectarianism and the violence perpetuated by Shiite Militias, unidentified ‘insurgents’, and ex-Ba’ath party members. It was clear to those following events closely in Iraq that an alliance between Iraqi Shiites and Iran was seen as an undesirable outcome for the Americans, not least because the Shiites were amongst the most vocal opposition groups to the Americans, especially those identifying with Moqtada al-Sadr’s Sadrist movement. Furthermore, the increasing Sunni alienation from Maliki’s government due to its crack down on former Ba’ath party members, including prominent Sunni leaders, also led to anti-government and anti-occupation militias.

The weakness of Iraq’s security forces was also a reason for the problematic security situation, especially highlighted by the *WSJ*, which had opposed Obama’s policy to remove the troops. The *WSJ* characterized the withdrawal as contrary to what most Iraqis wanted, stating “[t]his wasn't something the people of that region pined for. These are lands that crave the protection of a dominant foreign power as they feign outrage at its exercise.” (Ajami, 2011, p. A15). The underlying presumption here contrasted the Bush administration’s rationale for bringing ‘freedom’ to the Iraqis by the overthrow of Hussein’s government in 2003 (after the WMD and terror links were disproved); it was ironic *WSJ* was now making the argument that the Iraqis pined for domination from a foreign power. It was surprising to find no commentary attributing blame for the loss of security on the policies of the Bush administration and initial decision to go to war, especially as the American war was drawing to a close.
6.3.4 Responsibility for Civilian Deaths

The *WP* was the only newspaper that significantly apportioned responsibility for civilian deaths in its discourse on the ending of the war. Figure 6.4 shows how this responsibility was distributed between sectarian militias (40 percent), the U.S. (20 percent), and Hussein loyalists (20 percent). By far the most significant finding was the removal of agency for who was responsible for civilian deaths when they did occur; this happened in 80 percent of the *WP* articles on this topic. Another reason for this was that, the coverage merely mentioned that “tens of thousands” had died in the conflict but it was never the case that the responsibility for these deaths was levelled at those that launched the war or even the way the U.S. military conducted it. One article in the *WP* claimed, that “[e]ven taking into account the far larger number of civilians killed, injured or displaced, Iraq trails well behind the really big wars of the modern era. Not casualties but consequences define the significance of this lamentable episode.” (Bacevich, 2011, p. 20)
B1). Downplaying the civilian deaths was a general theme in the news discourse across all four newspapers; and the removal of agency simply naturalized these as ‘collateral damage’ or the inevitable price of a greater good.

Figure 6.4 Attribution of responsibility for civilian deaths

6.3.5 Summary of Attributing Responsibility

The attribution of responsibility or blame is one of the simplest ways to discern the ideological leaning in news items. This analysis revealed that there was consistently a pattern of omitting responsibility for negative consequences of the war. This was especially problematic because all four newspapers featured prominent front page stories offering an assessment of the war’s successes and failings, and yet did not offer critiques of U.S. foreign policy objectives or consistently highlight the flawed rationale for the war. For consequences such as the growing anti-Americanism in Iraq or civilian deaths featured, there was a tendency across all four newspapers to deflect responsibility away from the U.S., whether it was criticism of the foreign policies of the Bush or Obama administrations. As shown above, the *WSJ* was the most critical of the withdrawal, not because it took a stance of opposition to the war but because it advocated for keeping an
American presence in Iraq and holding on to apparent ‘gains’ made over the years. The 
*WP* offered the most diverse opinions on the topics, followed by the *NYT*.

Generally, the *WSJ* and *USA Today*’s coverage were overtly dominated by a pro-
American perspective that permeated much of the commentary on the withdrawal of 
troops. Thus, frequent characterizations of the war as a success by focusing exclusively 
on positive outcomes such as the liberation of the Iraqi people was common in both these 
newspapers. Comparatively the *NYT* and *WP* contained more critical coverage of the war 
but both papers also contained patriotic undertones to their coverage and displayed a 
tendency to gloss over the negative consequences of U.S. actions in Iraq.

This first stage of analysis provided a glimpse of the ending of the war by 
establishing what the overarching outcomes, consequences and responsibility for these 
were. It also provides the necessary context that aids a more granular analysis of selected 
texts as it is important to be aware of the broader corpus of newspapers’ coverage on an 
issue when examining a specific text.

6.4 Textual Analysis: *The New York Times*

Arango, Tim. U.S. Marks End to a Long War for an Uncertain Iraq. *NYT*, Friday 
December 16, 2011, A, C0, p. 1. (1965 words). [Reporting was contributed by 
Jack Healy, Michael S. Schmidt, Andrew E. Kramer, Duraid Adnan, Omar al-
Jawoeshy and an employee of *The New York Times*]

Layout and Structural Organization

This was the *NYT*’s leading cover story on the ending of the war during this 
period, dominating the page above the fold with a large photograph showing an orderly 
convoy of armored American military vehicles arriving in Kuwait, the serene background 
and night sky conveying a sense of calm as well as symbolizing the formal withdrawal of
American troops. Arango’s article was also chosen because the story provided extensive analysis and commentary on the American legacy in Iraq, being nearly 2000 words long and nearly 900 words longer than the next longest article. The headline not only conveyed the prolonged state of war but also Iraq’s ominous future. The reference to Iraq as a “Long War” in the headline also resonated with the somberness and fatigue felt by the American public about the conflict which many had already begun to view as a mistake. As the headline can be indicative of the editor’s preferred reading of the text that follows, it is interesting that in it the U.S. is made to be the “active” agent which determined the ending of the war. Conversely, Iraq is passivized through the use of the phrase “Uncertain Iraq” which connotes a kind of helplessness or feebleness. The effect of this syntactical arrangement of the sentence is that the criticism of the U.S. is deflected and responsibility for the problems in Iraq partially shifted on to Iraq itself. The reporter Tim Arango is cited as the author, but an additional six reporters are also identified as contributors, which complicates being able to distinguish Arango’s voice from the others. The implications of this collective authorship and its impact on the discourse are addressed in detail in the section on Actors below.

Objects

There are a number of important discourse objects that are established in the article. However, the focus of the analysis will remain on those objects that are most directly concerned with the representation of the ending of the war, and specifically the discursive construction of the outcomes, consequences and issue of responsibility. The
pertinent discourse objects that are textually constructed are as follows: 1) Iraq faces huge problems; 2) Iraq is a fractured society; and 3) the American legacy in Iraq.

Arango’s article does not exude a celebratory tone for the ending of the war or one of an American victory. There is instead a significant focus on the ongoing security problems with the author describing Iraq as “a shattered country marred by violence and political dysfunction” and “an extremely dangerous place…. [where] there were 500 to 750 attacks a month this year, including bombings, rocket attacks and assassinations.” Throughout the article there are instances of vivid descriptions of life in Iraq, for example:

Aesthetically, Baghdad is still a war zone of checkpoints, blast walls and coils of razor wire, where buildings sit partially destroyed from the first wave of bombings that President George W. Bush called "shock and awe." At entrances to the garrisoned heart of the central government, the Green Zone, vehicles on the way in are searched for bombs, and on the way out for kidnapping victims. And most Iraqis still receive only a few hours of electricity a day, forcing many to sleep on their rooftops during sweltering summer nights.

The excerpt above gives readers a sense of the colossal failure to bring security and peace to Iraq; the reference to the electricity shortages in the country after nearly 9 years of war only serves to accentuate the sense of failure of the reconstruction mission.

Iraq is presented as a country with a fractured society, with multiple references to the ethnic and religious divisions and phrases such as “failed reconciliation,” “political dysfunction,” “standstill” and “paralyzed” to describe the situation of political disunity.
One of the effects of this is to present the current crisis in Iraq as pre-dating the U.S. led invasion. There is some truth to this thesis but experts were well aware of the ethnic and religious diversity of Iraq prior to the invasion; much was already known about the frustrations and grievances of the majority Shia population at the hands of a Ba’athist government, which was largely perceived to favor the Sunni minority; and much was also known about the Iraqi government’s harsh suppression of the political will of the Kurdish minority in the north during the 1980s and 1990s. Therefore, the U.S. government’s decision to enact regime change without adequate preparation for the unleashing of violent forces after years of resentment and frustration in the population is overlooked.

The absolving of U.S. responsibility for the violence in Iraq is exemplified in the following sentence describing its benign efforts: “Iraq faces a multiple of vexing problems the Americans tried and failed to resolve.” The article also speaks of a “generational divide that splits older Iraqis…from younger ones, who are more drawn to the culture and ideas the Americans tried to import here.” Such sentiments contain an Orientalist discourse as the article is suggestive of the idea that the Americans invaded to ‘import ideas’ to Iraqis in order to show them how to be free and liberated; that the Iraqi people were unable to understand these ideas is not the fault of the Americans.

This point segues into the discourse object of the American legacy in Iraq which is another important theme running throughout the article. The author states “the war leaves an uncertain legacy as Americans weigh what may have been accomplished against the price paid, with so many dead and wounded.” Arango highlights the destructive consequences of the war citing “about 4,500 American fatalities” and “more than 100,000” Iraqi civilian deaths, and makes numerous other references to violence and
instability. Furthermore, Arango mentions the failure to find illicit weapons as undermining the original rationale for war. As mentioned above, the political instability, ongoing violence, and regional instability which has resulted from the invasion is also discussed. One particularly critical passage on the legacy of the American invasion reads:

In Falluja, where years of block-to-block urban combat left behind a city that its Sunni residents refer to as Iraq's Hiroshima, residents celebrated the withdrawal with a day of public demonstrations, angry speeches, the burning of American flags and a gallery exhibition of photos of mangled children, destroyed homes and other signposts of what residents call the bitter legacy of the American invasion.

Arango’s reference to Hiroshima and the anti-American sentiment resulting from the devastation caused by the invasion leaves the reader with a sense of failure that countered the more upbeat tone of President Obama in his speech at Fort Bragg just two days earlier declaring the American legacy in Iraq as an “extraordinary achievement” and calling the country a “sovereign, stable and self-reliant Iraq.” (2011b). Despite the negative consequences and legacy being salient in the article, these points are also counteracted with passages that are at times incongruent with the rest of Arango’s piece. For example:

Iraq has improved in some respects. Life in Baghdad has blossomed in recent years -- street life has returned, markets are bustling, a new amusement park is opening and even the circus came to town this year. The government of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, while hamstrung by sectarian infighting, was chosen in elections last year that international monitors declared as free.
And:

The war opened Iraq to the outside world. For the first time, Iraqis had easy access to satellite television and the Internet. This allowed the pop singer known as Dali, who left Iraq in the 1990s as a child and became famous in the Arab world, to become a star in her own country. She recently returned for the first time since the war began, to perform and film a music video.

Such passages are frequent throughout the article; the contrast of celebrating access to satellite television alongside Arango’s descriptions of “mangled children” and “destroyed homes” seems beyond absurd. The impact of such passages will be examined in more detail in the section on actors below. Here, the point has been to highlight that the legacy of the war seems to oscillate between negative and positive.

Actors

At the time of publishing, the author Tim Arango was reporting from Iraq and held the position of Baghdad bureau chief for The New York Times. He has gone on record on numerous occasions citing the negatives of the American legacy in Iraq, particularly emphasizing the rise of ISIS as a consequence of American policies in Iraq, such as selection of the Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki (whose policies were considered divisive and alienated many Sunnis); the de-Baathification policy and decision to dismantle the Iraqi army and other state apparatus; and the indiscriminate arrests of young Sunni men by the U.S. and the al-Maliki government. Arango as author is obviously a key figure however, as mentioned above there are passages that seem
incongruent in the article, which appear to have the effect of trying to “balance” the coverage – specifically the bad news with some good news. The extent to which these moments of “good” news are representative of Arango’s voice is questionable as they do not seem congruent with the vivid language used to describe the dire state of the country and his comments elsewhere on the American legacy in Iraq. This illustrates the editorial influence on the reporting, as there seems to be two very different discourses at work about the American legacy.

Other than the journalists responsible for the article, the voice of a number of Iraqis is prominent throughout with several quotations included in the text. For example, Muhammed Ali, a merchant who lost two brothers during the conflict, when talking about a market in Baghdad is quoted as saying “[t]his will be an easy target for car bombs….People will die here.” Emad Risn, an Iraqi columnist is quoted as saying that the war’s end “is the end for the Americans only….Nobody knows if the war will end for Iraqis, too.” A Shiite politician laments “[w]e are going from bad to worse.” And elsewhere another civilian speaks of his joy at the American departure, saying “[i]t’s a huge happiness that the Americans are getting out…Hopefully, we are all going to be fine, we Iraqis. We were doing fine before 2003.” These voices convey the uncertainty felt by Iraqis due to the widespread violence and volatility in the country as well as show the hostility felt by many towards the U.S.

The Iraqi voices do not dominate the entire discourse however, as often there is commentary interspersed throughout the article that resorts back to describing the crimes of Saddam Hussein and his regime, almost as if reminding readers of the good that the United States was trying to achieve. In one instance, a passage from the article states:
Experts estimate that the remains of 250,000 to one million Iraqis lie in mass graves around the country, victims of the Hussein government. Not a single victim has been identified by DNA analysis, partly because various government ministries and the two factions with the greatest claims of victimhood -- the Kurds and Shiites -- have been unable to agree on how to proceed. The lack of a painful but cathartic process of reckoning with its history -- as South Africa and other countries have done -- has stymied Iraqi society's ability to vanquish the ghosts of its past.

The first line resembles the type of news reporting that was so widespread in justifying the invasion in 2003, especially by Bush administration officials after the failure to locate illicit weapons. Also evident is apportioning the blame and responsibility for Iraq’s current problems onto Iraqis themselves; thus, deflecting and mitigating American culpability in the devastation. As identified above, this narrative is the essence of the discourse object that presents Iraq as a fractured society. This is indicative of the power of journalists to construct a discourse – in this case, the discourse of Iraqi incompetence.

The identity of Iraqis that is constructed in the discourse is one of a helpless people; they are passivized to the point of impotence, including most of those that are given voice in the article. For example, the quotes from Muhammed Ali and Emad Risn above have an air of inevitability and despair. Elsewhere the report mentions the low levels of Iraq’s oil output, whilst another Iraqi is quoted saying about the political situation: “[w]e are in a standstill and things are paralyzed.” This sense of impotence is summed up in a passage that reports that “for better or worse, [Iraq] is now in the hands of its people.” This commentary contributes to the discourse of Iraqi incompetence and
overlooks the very real problems Iraqis face as a consequence of the invasion. Such problems include massive civilian deaths, economic losses, infrastructure destruction, and a civil war that will take decades to recover from.

There are many different actors and groups talked about in the text, such as Sunnis, Shias, Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia, Shiite militias, and other regional powers such as Iran, Syria and Turkey. What is particularly remarkable about this article is the absence of quotations and commentary of President Obama, White House officials, or other American officials. It is perhaps indicative of a rejection of the positive take on Iraq that President Obama spoke of only days earlier, as well as a rejection of the voices of prominent figures in the previous administration, many of whom continued to insist that invading Iraq was the right decision. This lack of subservience to the Obama endgame narrative was also found in the research of King (2014) and Feldman, Huddy and Marcus’ (2015); with King arguing that the WP and NYT departed significantly from the official White House narrative.

Language, Grammar and Rhetoric

The article highlights the “menacing role of Iranian-backed militias, which …killed many American soldiers” when describing the instability and violence. It does not contextualize the rise of the militias as a consequence of the invasion and subsequent breakdown in law and order, as well as due to the inability of the Iraqi army or indeed the coalition forces to protect Iraqi civilians. The use of the term “Iranian-backed” to describe these groups also resonates with the American public’s image of Iran as a familiar enemy and rogue nation in recent history. The vocabulary used to describe
Moktada al-Sadr, an influential and widely respected Shiite cleric in Iraq known outside of Iraq for his opposition to the American occupation, indicates the discursive construction of a negative identity for his movement. According to the report the U.S. withdrawal means that American diplomats are now considered “fair game for his militiamen.” The use of the term “militiamen” has implications of operating outside of law as does mentioned to in close proximity to al-Qaeda, which has the effect of de-legitimizing the Sadrist movement.

There are numerous examples of presupposition that sustain different discourses in the article. For example, speaking of Iraq as needing to “manage its rivalry with Iran” assumes there is a rivalry, and connotes strained relations between the two countries. Close observers would see the reality as quite different. However, even in the article it is reported that “close political ties” between Iraq’s Shiite leadership and Shia-majority Iran are a worry for Americans. This sustains the discourse of Iran’s meddling in Iraq, which had pervaded media discourse for many years.

An interesting and potent metaphor that emerges from the construction of the collective identity of Iraq is one of a patient suffering incapacitating mental illness. The metaphor surfaces at various key points in the article. The lead paragraph sets the stage as follows:

At a crowded market in the city center here, the flotsam of the war is for sale. Ripped Fuel workout supplement. Ready-to-eat meals, macaroni and cheese "Mexican style." Pistol holsters. Nothing seems off limits to the merchants out for a quick dinar, not even a bottle of prescription pills from a pharmacy in Waco, Tex., probably tossed out by a departing soldier.
These deranged Iraqis scramble for survival selling the “flotsam” – the unwanted and useless leftovers from war, presumably to equally deranged buyers, including bizarrely a bottle of prescription pills ironically from a place named Waco, which one would be forgiven for mispronouncing as “wacko.” The discourse of a fractured society of Iraq is continued with the mental illness metaphor: Iraq, with its many religious and ethnic sects, its political infighting and perpetuation of sectarian violence suffers from a form of dissociative identity disorder, where the multiple personalities cause internal conflict and suffering. The article informs the reader that the “dictatorship inflicted deep wounds to the collective psyche, which partially explains why the American invasion unleashed so many unforeseen consequences, from sectarian violence to a winner-take all political culture.” Thus, Iraq resembles a mentally ill patient suffering from past trauma and a madness that was always latent beneath the surface and could not have been foreseen by the Americans.

The “winner-take-all political culture” reflects a psychopathic entity acting without conscience or awareness of its impact on wider society. Furthermore, Iraqis that are suspicious of the American exit are said to suffer from “a conspiratorial mind-set developed over years of living under the violent and repressive dictatorship” and are deluded by “other perceived injustices at the hands of the West.” As Gill and Whedbee (1997) point out about the metaphoric process, “the mind grasps an unfamiliar idea only by comparison to or in terms of something already known.” (p. 173). Whether or not the usage of the metaphor is intentional, its rhetorical presence emerges, and has the effect of comparing the foreignness of Iraq with popular perceptions of some traits of mental illness resulting in a dismissal of the Iraqi point of view.
Discursive Strategies

The vocabulary used to describe civilian deaths is vivid, the author does not attempt to use euphemistic language to replace words like “killing” and “assassination” or avoid mentioning “more than 100,000” civilian deaths. However, throughout the piece there is a masking of agency for the responsibility for the destruction of infrastructure and the death toll. It is not explicitly stated that the heavy American bombardment of the country contributed to the destruction or left many civilians dead. This has the effect of diminishing U.S. responsibility for the present problems faced by Iraq.

Another way in which U.S. responsibility is negated is that when mentioning al-Qaeda, the report overlooks that that group did not exist in Iraq prior to the invasion and emerged as a consequence of the invasion in response to the failure of the occupying forces and newly installed Shiite-dominated Iraqi government to protect the disempowered Sunni minority. In fact, the removal of the context in which al-Qaeda obtained a foothold in Iraq is suggestive of the Iraqi propensity for religious extremism, exemplified by the use of the term “homegrown” to describe Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia. The normalization of al-Qaeda’s presence through omission of context is also evident in the description of a part of Baghdad: “His neighborhood is no longer a bloody battleground controlled by Al Qaeda.” This is followed up immediately with commentary that states “The War opened Iraq to the outside world.” The arrangement of propositions in this segment aid the construction of a discourse that implies that al-Qaeda were operating in Iraq until the war; and because of war, Iraqis benefitted from the positive outcome of having the “outside world” opened up for them. The accumulative effect of
this discourse constitutes a manipulation of discursive reality and serves the functions of justifying and legitimating the war.

Ideological Standpoints

The article does not discursively constitute an extreme polarization of actors as in van Dijk’s (1998) ‘ideological square.’ Yet, some of the discursive strategies outlined above do reveal an ideological leaning that stresses a belief in the inherent goodness of the U.S.’s intentions in Iraq. This perspective is forwarded subtly but its presence is observed through close attention to the accumulative effects of the numerous features outlined already. To begin with, the opening few paragraphs inform readers of American sacrifices and the costs of the war for the U.S (4,500 American fatalities and a cost of $1 trillion), and they describe the American perspective of a “lengthy conflict and repeated deployments [that] strained the country and its resources.” Underlining American sacrifices sets up the discourse of the well-intentioned American invasion but despite America’s honest efforts to resolve Iraq’s problems, the Iraqis express ingratitude by “public demonstrations, angry speeches, the burning of American flags.”

Although Arango’s article highlights many of the negative consequences of the war, responsibility for these are almost never attributed to American policies in Iraq. Coupled with highlighting the discourse of American sacrifices, one is left with the impression that the Americans are on the right side of history. There is little discussion of failed American policies and the integrity of the U.S. foreign policy is not questioned. U.S. integrity is cemented in one paragraph citing the American invasion of Iraq as the reason for opening up Iraq’s oil reserves to foreign investment. The report highlights that
“American companies did poorly in the postwar auctions” for lucrative contracts to exploit Iraq’s oil fields and concludes that this helps “defuse criticism that the United States invaded Iraq for its oil.” This is yet another example of manipulative discourse as the inference to be made is that the failure to win contracts proves the claim that the decision to invade Iraq was not about oil. However, according to Greg Muttitt, a senior adviser to Oil Change International, an energy research organization, “[t]he most important strategic interest [for the U.S.] lay in expanding global energy supplies, through foreign investment, in some of the world's largest oil reserves – in particular Iraq.” (cited in Ahmed, 2014). In other words, increasing global oil supplies would ensure the stability of oil prices, hence the need to make Iraq a reliable oil exporter, which it was not under the leadership of Saddam Hussein. Furthermore, there are still industries that profit from the war. For instance, companies that secure contracts for the re-building of Iraqi infrastructure, the supplying of military equipment to allied forces, the manufacturing of expensive weaponry including thousands of ‘precision’ bombs, etc. The point is that, U.S. companies not securing oil contracts does not necessarily discredit voices in the anti-war movement that highlighted the war as immoral and unjustified.

Another ideological standpoint naturalized in the article is the vilification of Iran. Iran is portrayed as a vulture, preying on the weakness of Iraq to expand its own influence. The discursive impact of the construction of the identity of Iran as having a destabilizing effect in the region, shifts responsibility for the regional instability caused by the invasion and its aftermath from the Americans onto a country already deemed an ‘enemy’ of the U.S. The wider context of the vilification of Iran and strained U.S. – Iranian relations in recent decades is not an unfamiliar discourse in American media
coverage and therefore, blaming Iran for many of Iraq’s problems aides the anti-Iranian discourse and is perhaps designed to obtain public approval for continued hostile U.S. policy towards that country. When discussing the Iranian influence, the spectrum of tolerated opinion, or range of possibilities within the dominant discourse on Iran does not entertain the possible justification for Iran – a neighboring country, sharing a great deal of commonality with Iraqis in terms of culture, heritage, religions etc., and with vital security interests at stake – to be involved (along with other regional powers) to aid a diplomatic and military efforts to the end the crisis. Thus, illustrating the confined boundaries of discourse that are aired in this article.

In summary, this NYT article was quite representative of the subtle ways in which the discourse of American exceptionalism and an ideology of a pro-American leaning can remain embedded within a text despite the author/s raising several criticisms of the American legacy in Iraq. In this way, the article can appear to provide a fair and balanced perspective but ultimately remains deeply ideological and political.

6.5 Textual Analysis: The Washington Post


Layout and Structural Organization

This article was the lead story on the front page and included a large photograph of U.S. soldiers walking through a sandy base with bags packed. There had been fairly extensive coverage of the exit from Iraq in the WP in this period (with 22 articles appearing between December 11-19). The selected article was also the longest and most prominent one on Iraq featured in the December 16 issue. The sub-headline was “Muted
farewell reflects lingering worries about nation’s security, politics,” which conveyed a sense of uncertainty for Iraq’s future and also a somber rather than a celebratory tone.

Objects

The principle discourse objects are centered on the event of the ceremony itself which marked the end of the war and American troop withdrawal from Iraq. Firstly, the ceremony is constructed in the text as an underwhelming and insignificant event but nevertheless as an event that reveals a great deal about the uneasy relationship between the U.S. and Iraq; secondly, the text constructs the object of the Iraqi population’s desire for the Americans to leave. There is limited reflection on the outcomes of the war and it is neither presented as a success or victory, nor a disastrous mistake based on illegitimate premises. However, for a center piece article on the conclusion of the war, the focus on the ceremony itself diverts attention from the wider debate about the consequences of the American invasion and the American legacy in Iraq.

The “simple ceremony held on the edge of Baghdad’s international airport” marked an “unspectacular end” to the war. Sly and Whitlock report that there were “[n]o pronouncements of victory, no cheers or jubilation” and that “[n]o senior Iraqi government officials showed up for the event” dampening the “American hopes that they might.” The broader issues this represented were the disagreements between the Americans and Iraqis about the U.S. government’s desire to extend U.S. troop presence in Iraq beyond 2011 and the Iraqis’ insistence that U.S. military personnel be subject to Iraqi law if they stayed beyond 2011. The ceremony is presented as a hollow event, for example, when reporting the American Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III’s speech about
“opportunities” the Americans had created for the Iraqis, he is described as having little confidence that the Iraqis will take advantage of the ‘opportunities.’ The specter of looming violence in Iraq, but also at the ceremony itself is conveyed throughout the report. For example:

The persistent dangers were underscored by the strict security measures surrounding the U.S. ceremony in Baghdad and the small scale of the farewell pageantry. Visitors' badges carried numbers identifying which bunkers they should access in the event of a rocket attack. The date was kept secret for months to prevent insurgents from targeting the site.

Sly and Whitlock convey the present state of danger in Iraq without trying to glorify American achievements in the war; there is an evident sense of the fragility of the situation in Iraq.

A second object that is constructed is that of the Iraqi people’s desire for the Americans to leave. “On the streets of Baghdad, an overwhelming number of residents said they were glad the U.S. troops were going home.” Sly and Whitlock report, quoting one Iraqi who says “I’m happy they’re leaving because they are occupiers.” The report also acknowledges that there is an awareness amongst Iraqis that violence could erupt again after the withdrawal but that most Iraqis do not feel the Americans have a constructive role to play. The primary reason for the exit from Iraq is “because [italics added] most Iraqis want them to go.” In this regard, the Americans are portrayed as humbling themselves to the Iraqi will, in high contrast to the manner in which the invasion of the country was orchestrated by the Bush administration, without any consultation with the will of the Iraqi people.
Actors

The U.S. as a key actor in this article is represented through military leadership and a single quotation from the Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta. There are no references to President Obama or other senior White House officials. In an article about the war’s ending, the absence of any historical dimension of the war through mentioning the cheerleaders for the war in the Bush Administration is also noticeable. The U.S.’s involvement in Iraq is still portrayed as honorable as it exits Iraq by obliging to the will of the Iraqi people. The lack of pomp and ceremony underlines American humility and dignity, contrasted with the deplorable legacy of torture and indiscriminate killings of Iraqi civilians, the most notorious being the Abu Ghraib scandal and Haditha massacre respectively. Furthermore, when Iraqi civilian deaths are mentioned, the U.S. role in the killings through aerial bombardment and military operations on the ground are omitted. The U.S. is portrayed as a peripheral figure acting only as an advisor and consultant to the Iraqis; for instance, despite “U.S. commanders [urging] Iraqi leaders to extend American military presence…so that they could continue to train the Iraqi security forces” the Iraqis’ refusal to accept these terms is presented as a sign of their freedom and the Americans’ respect for a nation’s sovereignty.

Although there is not an overtly negative characterization of Iraq and its leaders, the article gives the impression of Iraqi resentment towards Americans firstly, by the non-show of its leaders to the ceremony, and secondly by stating how most Iraqis want the U.S. out. The authors do, however, point out that for many Iraqis “the upheaval of the last eight years…has transformed their country beyond recognition without…significantly improving their lives.” However, once again there is an omission of U.S. responsibility in
this upheaval and a removal of the context for why there is so much resentment towards the Americans, for example, the numerous failures to bring to justice U.S. military personnel for crimes committed against civilian populations in Iraq. One of the effects of this presentation of Iraqis is to put them in an unfavorable light, at least to American audiences, as they are shown to be ungrateful or unappreciative of American sacrifices. The effects of such a discourse are that it may perpetuate negative sentiments about Iraq and generate a public mood that justifies ‘abandoning’ Iraq.

Language, Grammar and Rhetoric

The following sentence captures how different meanings can be constructed depending on word choices: “the upheaval of the last eight years…has transformed their country beyond recognition.” The words “upheaval” and “transformed” are euphemisms for war and destroyed respectively. Their usage negates the negativity attributable to the U.S’s actions in Iraq. The vocabulary and writing style of the article also mirror the somber tone established by the “small scale of the farewell pageantry” of the ceremony; thus, matching the reference to the war in Iraq drawing “to a quiet close” in the headline. As Carvalho (2008) points out these dimensions of discourse impact the constitution of meanings (p. 168). Adjectives such as “unspectacular” and “ambivalent conclusion” to the war, add to the sense of sombreness and quiet reflection rather than creating an impression of victorious celebrations. The authors are also careful to highlight that the “American war in Iraq” has ended, not that the war in Iraq has ended because of the ongoing state of violence in Iraq. In this way, the WP’s coverage diverged from Obama’s positive rhetoric about “a sovereign, stable and self-reliant Iraq.” (Obama, 2011b).
Discursive Strategies

As was the case in the NYT article discussed above, this WP article did not revert to the discourse presented by Obama about the War in Iraq nor did it contain a congratulatory tone about the achievement of the U.S. in Iraq. Instead, the authors understate the role of the U.S. in Iraq, presenting the Americans as peacekeepers, there to provide training to the Iraqis security forces. The article does not dwell on the realities of life for Iraqis such as the damage to infrastructure, lack of civilian health, educational or energy facilities, the everyday hardships Iraqis now face, or the burdens of dealing with the traumas of injuries and deaths of loved ones. No summary or overview of America’s contribution to the war in Iraq is provided. It is almost as if the war is presented as having existed before the Americans arrived in 2003, and now that “the American part draws to a close” the war will go on. For example, the authors write that the departure of the soldiers could “rekindle latent power struggles,” which suggests that the stability in the region only exists as a result of the American presence. This normalizes the state of violence in Iraq as though it preceded the American invasion. Elsewhere, the expression that the U.S. wanted to stay in Iraq to help “build the country’s almost non-existent conventional defenses” implies that such conventional defenses have never existed. Such a positive representation of the U.S. role in Iraq ignores the fact that the security apparatus of Iraq was deliberately dismantled by the American policy of “De-Ba’athification” following the invasion in 2003. These discursive strategies function to remove American agency from many of the problems Iraq faces.

The authors do give voice to the perspective of a majority of Iraqis who want the Americans to leave, but there is no commentary included by Iraqis about how the
American invasion and American involvement has impacted their lives. In other words what the American legacy in Iraq is, according to Iraqis. One can only speculate on the reasons for the exclusion of this from an article that is about the war’s conclusion, but if opinion polls of how Iraqis feel about American involvement in their country are anything to go by, it is unlikely most of them would have positive words to say. The absence of such commentary is juxtaposed by the paraphrased words of Gen. Austin who spoke of opportunities “U.S. troops had created for the Iraqis to live freely and prosper.” The built-in assumption here being that without American involvement in Iraq, Iraqis could not be free or prosper.

Ideological Standpoints

As pointed out above, the omission of many of the details of the negative consequences of the war point to a discursive intervention that is designed to construct a “reality” of the war that mitigates the U.S.’s contribution to the aforementioned destruction of Iraq’s civilian infrastructure. The decision to include certain details such as the number of deaths but remove American agency in those deaths has the effect of appearing to be neutral or balanced, when in fact, the authors are still coming from a certain, perhaps patriotic, ideological perspective that compels them to present a positive image of the U.S. The authors of the article do not parrot the rhetoric of the Obama administration or try to present the war as a success; yet, they also fail to offer more balanced commentary on the widely acknowledged negative impact of the war, not only for Iraq but also on the image of the U.S.
Trying to ascertain the dominant ideological perspective through van Dijk’s schema (2009a), enables us to deduce that ultimately, it is the U.S. perspective that dominates the article. The authors and quoted sources report on selected American actions in the war as well as explicating the reasons for those actions. None of these are challenged by opposition voices, for example, critical Shia or Sunni voices from within Iraq, or even the opinions of U.S.-based critics of the war. The relations with other groups are also defined by the American voices, particularly through statements about the American commitment to Iraq expressed by Panetta who said “the U.S. will stand by the Iraqi people” and an earlier statement in the article about “promises that the United States would not abandon Iraq.” The journalists’ ability to dominate the public discourse allows the U.S. to be characterized as loyal and honorable. In this regard, there is still some level of congruence between the message of the White House about the success of the U.S. troops in Iraq and the perspective of the WP encapsulated in this article and elsewhere.

6.6 Textual Analysis: The Wall Street Journal


Layout and Structural Organization

The front page of the WSJ contained a brief news bulletin announcing the troop withdrawal and formal end to the war; the bulletin was located at the top of the daily ‘What’s News’ section; also published on the front page was the leading image drawing
readers’ attention to the caption which read “End of an Era: U.S. Marks the Conclusion of the War in Iraq.” Readers were then directed to the article by Barnes, Dagher and Hodge which appeared on page A6. The front page placement of the Iraq War news indicated the high priority attached to the story by the WSJ. The brief bulletin was only 71 words and also directed readers to page A6 for the full story about the withdrawal. The headline to the page A6 article alludes to several key events in the narrative of the withdrawal; one key element is the reference to the “uncertain note” on which the Americans are leaving followed up by “as Tensions Rise Between Shiites, Sunnis.” In other words, the main emphasis of the headline is on the ongoing instability in Iraq, which is accurate and reflective of the situation in the country at the time.

Objects

In the news bulletin, the principle discourse object of interest is the reference to “the end of a nearly nine-year conflict.” This, as well as the caption accompanying the photograph remarking on the “End of an Era” create a sense of conclusion and finality to the war. This construct of the war’s end is continued in the Barnes, Dagher and Hodge article, which also makes reference to the mission’s end as well as containing a cautionary note on the uncertainty of Iraq’s future. The principle discourse objects established in the context of the ending are: 1) the American sacrifices to free Iraq; and 2) the uncertainty over the future of Iraq.

The war is presented as a war of liberation, with the Americans sacrificing 4,487 lives and spending “more than $800 billion” in order to free Iraq. The authors paraphrase the words of Mr. Panetta, writing that “American services members have given Iraqis the
opportunity to make their own future. The hardships and losses endured by America’s military, he said, weren’t in vain because they led to a free Iraq.” Panetta is quoted as saying to the American troops at the ceremony: “You leave with great pride…secure knowing that your sacrifice has helped the Iraqi people begin a new chapter in history.”

The authors ignore the sacrifices of the Iraqis and make no mention of the hardships that they have endured, and will continue to endure for many years to come because of the invasion. There is one mention of “tens of thousands of Iraqi and American casualties” in the lead of the article but the figures of deaths are considerably lower than many estimates of civilian deaths. In addition, the mention of American deaths alongside the deaths of Iraqi civilians downplays the disproportionate suffering of the civilian population of Iraq.

The presentation of the uncertain future Iraq faces is also a running theme in this article. Consider the following excerpts, which establish Iraq both as an object and actor:

But as the last units were departing, tensions flared up among Iraqis, and unresolved issues -- over regional efforts for greater autonomy, dividing the country's oil wealth and establishing an impartial judicial system among them -- were clear.

And:

The dual-dynamic underscored the uncertainty and anxiety about the U.S. pullout in both nations and pointed to the array of political and security challenges that now confront Iraq's leaders.

The premise of the first paragraph contains what is known in the pragmatics branch of linguistics as an implicature; that is, the first part of the sentence refers to the troop
withdrawal and the second part to the flaring up of tensions, leaving the reader with the impression that tensions flared up because of the troop withdrawal, even though that is not explicitly stated. The effect of this is to add weight to the perception of Iraq needing the U.S. military to ensure peace; and also adding to the positive self-image of Americans as peacekeepers rather than invaders. The second paragraph also contributes to the narrative that the Americans are needed by suggesting that there is anxiety in both Iraq and the U.S. about the security of Iraq.

Actors

The key social agents developed in the WSJ’s two articles can be divided into two broad categories, 1) the U.S. as represented by Panetta and military leaders; and 2) the Iraqis who are constituted by competing factions. Firstly, the social actors that represent the U.S. are afforded more framing power in determining the topics being discussed in the article. For example, the authors quote Army Gen. Lloyd Austin (the U.S. commander in Iraq), Army Gen. Martin Dempsey (the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) and the Defense Secretary Leon Panetta. The quotes from all three converge to amplify essentially the same message, namely, that the American troops served with moral courage, and sacrificed for Iraqis to be free. The narrow range of opinions enables the authors to keep the discourse centered on the principle objects of American sacrifices and challenges for Iraq.

Broadly speaking, the Iraqi actors in the text express a range of different opinions about different issues but the general identity of the Iraqis that is constructed in the text is that they are portrayed as ungrateful by expressing grievances or problems. Firstly, the
Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki’s office is mentioned issuing “a terse” statement about the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq (although no explicit reference to it is made). This sense of indifference to the American effort is carried through in the description of Sadr City where “most shopkeepers were busy watching a soccer match...and paid scant attention to the U.S. ceremony.” The WSJ also reports that there was no reaction from Moqtada al-Sadr to the withdrawal but he is quoted as criticizing al-Maliki’s visit to the U.S. for the “blood spilled on the homeland’s soil because of the occupation and its soldiers”. Another Iraqi is said to have declined an interview and elsewhere an Iraqi is quoted as saying “I think the withdrawal is a lie and the Americans are still present, their concrete walls are still here and so are their towers and communications wires.” There is less uniformity of opinion in the textual construction of the Iraqis but the authors should be praised for providing some space for dissenting Iraqi opinion in a piece that is otherwise bereft of critical commentary on the war’s legacy and the significant responsibility on the Americans for the destruction that ensued following the invasion and occupation for nearly nine years.

Language, Grammar and Rhetoric

Barnes, Dagher, and Hodge avoid the use of any overt literary tropes to shape the discourse of the war’s end in a particular way. Instead, it is the overall informational content of the article that is most revealing of the ideological perspective of the authors. The difficulty in detecting ideological biases and leanings based on the linguistic features of this text illustrates that an approach that relies purely on linguistic analysis of lexical or syntactical aspects is insufficient in extrapolating the workings of ideology.
The sense of an end to the American mission is reflected in the following excerpt from the article: “The job of assisting [Iraq’s leaders] will be left to a U.S. diplomatic mission that is the biggest in the world and includes thousands of private security contractors and other support personnel.” In this example, the syntax of the sentence has been arranged in a way that positions the Iraqi leaders at the beginning, and the U.S. diplomatic mission afterwards. In other words, the emphasis of the sentence in this arrangement is on the need of the Iraqi leaders for help from the Americans. Whereas, constructed differently, the sentence could read: “A U.S. diplomatic mission consisting of thousands of private security contractors and support personnel will remain to assist Iraq’s leaders.” The effect of this alternative syntactical arrangement is that it de-emphasizes the sense of American departure by activizing American involvement and therefore runs contrary to the notion of a free and stable Iraq.

Discursive Strategies

As Carvalho’s (2008) model highlights, a discursive intervention need not be illegitimate but is one that alters the type of reality that the discourse presents. There is little in the article about the consequences of the war and the American responsibility for the destruction that ensued in Iraq; instead the authors select American voices that glorify the American achievement in Iraq as one of selflessness and honor. The omission of responsibility is a discretionary choice to construct a certain version of reality. The article does allude to the uncertain future of Iraq with regards to the security situation but it does not address the reasons for this. Reasons such as the dismantling of the state apparatus of Iraq and failure to alleviate the poverty that resulted from the war are ignored. Failure to
address these points enables the authors to organize the discourse in a way that does not run contrary to the principle “achievement” and discursive construction of the article, which are the American sacrifices for Iraqi freedom. Thus, fitting in the positive self-representation that was also reflected strongly in the coverage of USA Today and to a lesser degree in the NYT and the WP.

The presentation of the Iraqis as fractious, complaining, paranoid, and ungrateful has the effect of undermining the criticisms of the Americans that do surface in the text. For example, mentioning Iraqi disbelief in the American military exit highlights the invalidity of their opinions when the article clearly presents an image of military departure. There is also an omission of the reasons for why Iraqis feel the way they do. For instance, by omitting the reasons for their mistrust or anger towards the Americans, Iraqis are presented as unreasonable; the effect of this strategy is it invalidates or delegitimizes their voice.

Ideological Standpoints

This article contains noticeable absences of reflection on the negative consequences of the war, especially for the Iraqi people, which effectively silences alternative discourses. The article’s pointed focus on the military sacrifices, which freed the Iraqi people, simplifies the conflict and existing state of affairs in Iraq. This simplification is perhaps best encapsulated in the resort to the theme of patriotism, which is familiar and comforting for many in the American audience.

An example of symbolic imagery that adds to the dominant U.S. narrative in the article of American military sacrifices to create a free Iraq, is evident in describing the
official closing ceremony. The authors describe how Gen. Austin “took down the flag that symbolized the American mission and soldiers prepared it for a journey home” and inform the reader that “[i]n the coming days, the last of the 4,000 U.S. military personnel still in Iraq will follow the flag and head home.” Speaking of preparing the flag for a “journey home” evokes varied imagery from American history, such as the long journey of the first settlers to America, and although the flag is not entirely personified, the act of preparing the flag and following it, gives it human-like qualities. The American flag is perhaps the most potent symbol of patriotism in the U.S. and to many Americans it symbolizes the freedoms protected by the U.S. constitution, American cultural values and the nation’s history amongst other things. The scene depicted above renders the completion of the job of establishing “freedom” in Iraq; now achieved, the loyal troops “follow their flag,” their leader, homewards. Coating the symbolism of the discourse of the ending with a glaze of patriotism makes the workings of ideology subtle but potent in generating images and the values of America.

6.7 Textual Analysis: USA Today

Brook, Tom V. Panetta: Iraq to ‘begin a new chapter in history’; U.S. Defense chief declares war over during ceremony, USA Today, Friday, December 16, 2011, NEWS Section, A, p.6A. (537 words).

Layout and Structural Organization

The headline “Panetta: A free Iraq was worth sacrifice” appeared prominently above the fold of the front page in the December 16 edition and directed readers to the article selected for analysis, which appeared on page A6. The front page headline appeared with a small photograph on the left side of the page showing U.S. soldiers
lowering the flag at the closing ceremony of the war. Although not the lead story, the front page location and inclusion of a photograph are indicative of the importance the USA Today attributed to the issue. The headline on the front page and the page A6 headline both alluded to Iraq’s new found freedom; thus, presenting the war as an overall success. The article was only 537 words but is not atypical of the USA Today’s coverage.

Objects

The main objects that are constructed regarding the Iraq War are: 1) the ending of the war; 2) a ‘free, democratic Iraq’; and 3) future U.S. policy. The headline and lead establish both the official end of the war as well as the proposition of a ‘free, democratic Iraq;’ thus, bringing about a positive conclusion to the lengthy conflict. The ending of the conflict is normalized by the lowering of the flag of the U.S. forces “for the last time” and numerous other references that assert the end to the war in Iraq such as “Panetta declared the war over” and speaking about the war in the past tense.

Secondly, the war is presented to have been a success due to the establishment of what Panetta is quoted as saying is an “independent, free and sovereign Iraq.” Brook refers to the war as having been won, and quotes sources that further the sense of progress in Iraq, such as the Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz) who refers to the “gains” made, and President Obama, who is quoted as saying Iraq was now able to “handle its security.”

Thirdly, Brook highlights the disagreement over future U.S. policy in Iraq between those like Sen. McCain who believe the U.S. should have extended its stay in Iraq, and those like Obama, who argued it was necessary to bring the troops back. This discourse object is the least developed in the article as the author does not offer any
commentary of his own on the direction future U.S. policy on Iraq should take. The effect of presenting just these two options in policy discounts examining the effects of preemptive war policy and the lengthy occupation of a country. Brook does not bring into question U.S. foreign policy, for example, in Afghanistan or for dealing with future wars.

Actors

This article, more so than any of the other articles examined for the 2011 ending, relied on official sources from the Obama administration as well as military leaders. For example, the U.S. perspective is represented predominantly by the Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, who made the main speech in the ceremony in Baghdad, but there are also quotations from President Obama, two military generals and Senator John McCain, Obama’s opposite number in the 2008 Presidential race. Other than a brief mention of a meeting between Obama and Maliki earlier in the week, the article contains no Iraqi representation or perspectives. The author also tiptoes around the issue of the disagreement at the time between the Democrats and Republicans about future U.S. policy in Iraq and keeps the focus primarily on representing the end of the war as a U.S. victory. The discourse within the text is dominated by Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, whose quotations are examples of political rhetoric designed to present the war as a success that is attributable to the sacrifices and professionalism of the U.S. armed services. Brook’s reliance on official voices results in the reproduction of the White House (elite) discourse of the war’s conclusion and renders the article largely devoid of insightful political commentary that illuminates accurately the present state of affairs in Iraq.
Language, Grammar and Rhetoric

Some of the authorial choices representing the war and celebrating its success have the overall impact of further solidifying the perspective of the government narrative; as many critical discourse analysts have shown the language that is adopted about an issue becomes constitutive of the discourse on the issue. The vocabulary in the article at times reflects the language of victory; for instance, referring to how the U.S. “deposed Saddam’s regime and beat down an insurgency backed by al-Qaeda terrorists and sectarian killings that threatened to destroy the country.” This listing of the achievements of the Americans represents the end of the war as a success using the ‘rule of three’ or what is sometimes referred to as ‘tripling’ in rhetoric to buttress the presentation of an argument. This is a well-known technique used in rhetoric and argumentation and surfaces in the quotation by Army Gen. Austin too, who states the war “tested our military’s strength and our ability to adapt and evolve” – again the triad of information aids in cementing the argument that the development of the “new counter insurgency doctrine that helped win the war and is being used in the Afghanistan War,” thus implying that it will also help win the war in Afghanistan.

Closely related to this ‘rule of three’ is Panetta’s reference to an “independent, free and sovereign” Iraq, which is an example of hendiatris – a figure of speech designed to add emphasis by using three different words to express a single idea. This also has a mnemonic quality making this professed outcome of the war easier to recall. In this way discourse is able to become part of our consciousness and political knowledge base.

There are also examples of grammatical choices that delete agency or mask responsibility for mistakes. For example, following the reference to the war being
launched because of the Hussein government’s refusal to allow U.N. inspectors access to sites (an inaccurate representation that is discussed in detail in the section on discursive strategies below), the sentence “None were found” concludes the paragraph. The author does not imply failure in this short sentence, and specifically not a U.S. failure which based the rationale for the war on the premise of illicit weapons. The removal of an agent in this sentence takes away American culpability, and perhaps more importantly the significance and wider consequences of this failure are not discussed further (e.g. the weakening of the United Nations as an organization that is responsible for helping settle international disputes).

One of the recurring patterns with regards to syntactical choices is in the presentation of propositions that are built into the declarative sentences, whether they are Brook’s own or quoted sources. When the author does state a negative proposition, which runs counter to the discursive reality being put forth, it is usually followed up with a positive one that acts to counter balance the earlier statement, thereby having the effect of reducing the importance attributed to the earlier part. The following excerpts from the text exemplify this point:

   The cost was high – in blood and treasure for the United States and also for the Iraqi people…But those lives have not been lost in vain. (Panetta)

And:

   The war tested “our military’s strength and our ability to adapt and evolve” but “the development of the new counterinsurgency doctrine helped win the war.”
In these ways, there was always a positive take on the negative aspects of the war, which fits into the “history as a story of progress” discourse that permeates many American cultural myths promoting the American dream or other notions of American exceptionalism.

Discursive Strategies

To begin with, the contextual information provided about the start of the war is misleading of the circumstances leading up to the conflict. Brook writes that “[t]he invasion was launched after Saddam Hussein refused to give U.N. inspectors access to sites suspected of having weapons of mass destruction.” However, this is completely in contrast to the views of Hans Blix, the U.N.’s chief weapons inspector between 2000 and 2003, who faulted the hastiness of the Bush administration and had stated on numerous occasions that the Hussein government had begun fully cooperating with inspectors in 2003. The effect of this is to justify the war and shift the blame for the destruction that followed on to Saddam Hussein rather than on the U.S.-led coalition for invading a country without the legal approval from the U.N.’s Security Council members. The fact that the author refers to the U.N. inspectors creates the impression as though the decision to invade was mandated by the U.N. but as stated, there was overwhelming opposition to the U.S.-led invasion amongst member states.

What is evident in Brook’s article is a pro-American bias and positive self-representation that is fostering the reality that the Iraq War was a righteous war, in which the U.S. military sacrificed for the humanitarian reason of liberating Iraqis. There are still the remnants of the Bush ‘War on Terror’ frame, which was largely abandoned by the
NYT, WP, and even WSJ by 2011. For example, Brook’s references to the Americans defeating “al-Qaeda terrorists” as one of the achievements of the war, excludes the key point that al-Qaeda terrorists were not present in Iraq at the time of the invasion. However, the article presents this outcome in order to further legitimate the war. Furthermore, the other reference to al-Qaeda is from Sen. McCain who warns that it is “still present” in Iraq; the effect of this is to normalize the presence of al-Qaeda in Iraq as though they were always there. This type of discursive distortion constructs a reality that does not have basis in truth or historical events.

Ideological Standpoints

It is surprising to find a headline story on the Iraq War in 2011 so adamantly defending the invasion and characterizing it as a success when the dominant public and media perspectives were starting to openly discuss the war’s failures, specifically in the faulty intelligence that led to the war; the bloody aftermath; and the failed mission to install a pliant Western-style democratic regime in Iraq. What runs through the coverage is what Herman and Chomsky (1988, p. 305) refer to as “elemental patriotism,” which refers to an overwhelming desire on the part of the journalist to think well of ‘our’ institutions and ‘our’ leaders. Brook’s dependence on and utilization of official sources to report on the ending of the war represent his adherence to a patriotic ideology in which the U.S. is always just. This is reflected by the exclusively positive presentation of the U.S. actions in Iraq and the complete omission of any negative actions, even the widely acknowledged ‘mistakes’ of torture, deliberate civilian killings, and much of the news media’s slavish support for the war in 2003 are overlooked.
6.8 Summary

Following the contextual analysis of the 61 articles addressing the ‘ending’ of the war in 2011, it was surprising to find that the war as a success discourse remained in place across the four newspapers. Given the course of the war and its growing unpopularity amongst the American public, it was surprising that American journalists in *USA Today* and *WSJ* had not severely criticized those who supported the war or the legacy of the war itself. This was especially surprising for *USA Today*, which had offered the most balanced coverage in 2003 of the newspapers selected in this study. The *NYT* and *WP* had become more critical since 2003 and had published some articles that condemned many of the failures of the war but also highlighted the war’s apparent successes, therefore keeping the ‘war as success’ discourse alive.

The contextual analysis also revealed that the consequences of the war in 2011 were discussed in the news in a more streamlined fashion. In other words, it was easier to code categories of consequences as the news discourse in general did not discuss as many or as diverse consequences as it had in 2003. That there were nearly sixty percent fewer articles published on the war’s ending in 2011 compared to the period analyzed in 2003 may have been a possible explanation for this, as well as specific consequences of the war (such as lack of security, the political stalemate, the destruction of Iraq’s infrastructure, and civilian deaths), which had become the most discussed in the news. The negative consequences of the war, such as Iraqi suffering through death, displacement, injury, and destruction of civilian infrastructure, hardly found their way into the news discourses of the *WSJ* and *USA Today*. These and other consequences did
surface in the *NYT* and *WP* but not always in the context of highlighting the Iraq War as an injustice or mistake.

Examining the 61 articles also showed that it was extremely rare across all four newspapers for responsibility for the negative consequences of the war to be assigned specifically to the U.S. Instead, the *NYT* and *WP*, which did offer more balanced and critical commentary on the legacy of the war, would apportion blame for negative consequences, such as the political stalemate in Iraq, to both the Americans and Iraqis. However, what was more revealing was that positive consequences of the war, such as the apparent improvement in Iraq’s economy, were almost always credited to the U.S. This was a pattern that was also prevalent in the coverage of the *WSJ* and *USA Today* (see above as well as Appendix B, specifically Tables B.9 to B.12).

The textual analysis of the selected articles complemented the results of the contextual analysis, as these detailed micro-level examinations demonstrated exactly how specific discourses on the outcomes, consequences, and responsibility were being constructed within each newspaper. The results provided valuable insights in that they showed how patriotism and nationalism influenced news commentary on the legacy of the Iraq War. There were varying degrees to which different articles in different newspapers adopted a pro-American perspective, but a commonality that ran through the selected articles of the *NYT*, *WP*, and *USA Today* was the removal of U.S. responsibility for many of the negative consequences. The *WSJ* articles also did this but levelled numerous criticisms of the Obama administration’s handling of the exit from Iraq, as its position had been to support a continued presence in Iraq.
As the principle actors also changed over the course of the war, an examination of
the representation of different actors in the textual analysis also highlighted the
emergence of Iran and a discourse surrounding Iran’s negative meddling in Iraq. This
discourse surfaced predominantly in the WSJ but also found its way into the coverage of
the WP and NYT. There was a consistent characterization of Iran as having a negative
influence and undermining the U.S. efforts in Iraq through its alleged support of Shiite
militias as well as forming close ties with some in the Maliki government. The findings
of the textual analysis also mirrored some of the findings of the contextual analysis: for
instance, the omission of U.S. responsibility for the negative consequences in the news
coverage and, instead, the attribution of blame on others such as the Maliki government,
Iran, or Iraq’s diversity (characterized as sectarian differences) for the country’s ongoing
problems. One of the effects of this collective discourse was a construction of reality that
downplayed problems with American foreign policy in Iraq and around the world
generally. In addition, the news discourse also marginalized the reality of the resentment
many in the Middle East region felt towards the U.S. for its role Iraq. In doing so, the
news discourse was able to present a positive and pro-American perspective to the
American public that reinforced existing positive myths of American exceptionalism and
the notion of the United States as a force of good around the world.
CHAPTER 7
HISTORICAL-DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS

7.1 Outline

The historical-diachronic analysis is a vital component to the CDA approach adopted in this study as it seeks to address the diachronic dimension of the news discourse as it evolved from 2003 to 2011. Examining this aspect of the Iraq War is necessary to ascertain how dominant or embedded certain discourses and representations become in the news. Carvalho’s (2008) method has been adapted in a way that enables a focus on the representations of reality of the war’s ending that news discourse engendered. This chapter is therefore organized in a way to facilitate comparison between coverage of different news media from the two periods, with sections 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 addressing outcomes, consequences and responsibility respectively. The historical-diachronic analysis is based on both the findings from the contextual analysis as well as the textual analysis presented in Chapters Five and Six. Furthermore, it draws on some of the existing historiography and other secondary sources on the Iraq War that were summarized in the literature review presented in Chapter Two. Finally, Section 7.5 sets out to provide a summary of the key points from the historical-diachronic analysis.

7.2 Outcomes

As outlined earlier in Chapter One, the discourses that surfaced regarding the outcomes of the war were determined in relation to the war aims set out by the Bush
administration, which were to find banned WMD; uncover evidence linking Iraq and al-Qaeda; to overthrow the Hussein government; initiate a policy of De-Ba’athification of society; and install a democratic government that would improve the lives of Iraqis as well as maintain strong ties to the U.S. Therefore, it was not surprising that a great deal of the newspapers’ coverage addressed similar outcomes of the war in 2003 and in 2011.

In 2003, all four newspapers overwhelmingly characterized the war as a success by focusing the discourse of the war’s ending on the military victory in Iraq, the toppling of the Hussein government, and the progress being made towards the other war aims such as quelling the remaining loyalists of the Hussein government, and working towards the improvement in the lives of ordinary Iraqis. The overall sequencing of events in this way presented the mission as clearly defined, as though progress was being made as planned.

Discourses that countered this narrative of success did not emerge strongly in 2003 in the NYT and WSJ, but did so in the coverage of USA Today (and less so in the WP), which more frequently drew attention to the ongoing challenges and consequences of the war. At the time of the American withdrawal of troops marking the official ending of the war in 2011, the “war as a success” discourse remained in-tact and retained similar constitutive elements as the 2003 news discourse on the ending of the war. These elements included the removal of Hussein’s government and discussions about ‘progress’ with regards to the setting up of a democratic government and plans for helping Iraq get back on its feet. Whereas in 2003, USA Today had offered numerous counter narratives to the “war as a success” discourse, in 2011, this was not the case as the discourse of success was by far the most hegemonic in its coverage. It was not because USA Today included a lot of different elements to convey the notion of success in Iraq, but rather due
to the lack of emphasis on the war’s failings. *USA Today* did not draw readers’ attention to the problems that Iraq faced to the same degree that it had done so in 2003.

Furthermore, the coverage emphasized the upbeat sections of President Obama’s speeches on Iraq that conveyed the U.S. having met its principle goals. For example:

President Obama hailed Iraq on Monday as a nation that will be seen as a beacon of democracy in the Middle East and vowed an enduring partnership with the nation as the last U.S. troops are set to leave Iraq this month. "Our goal is simply to make sure that Iraq succeeds," Obama said at a joint news conference with Iraq's Prime Minister, Nouri al-Maliki, about the two countries' future relationship. "We think a successful and democratic Iraq could be a model for the entire region." (Madhani & Jackson, 2011, p. A2)

The tone of the excerpt is positive, forward looking, and stressing the unselfishness of the U.S. in wanting to see a successful Iraq. This was characteristic of much of *USA Today*’s discourse on the ending of the Iraq War. This positive tone was amplified because of the relative absence of counter-discourses that highlighted the problems Iraq still faced. This representation of reality ignored the force of anti-American feeling as well as fueling of sectarian violence between mostly Shiite militias that opposed the American presence and Sunni militias (some of which later became affiliates of al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia, and some eventually ISIS), some of whose members had been first brutalized by the American occupation (through arrests, detentions, torture and abuse, and then later by the Iraqi security forces of a predominantly Shiite make up).
It is only possible to speculate on the reasons for why there was such a dramatic change in the coverage of *USA Today* when comparing 2003 to 2011. The newspaper’s coverage had seemed to become more patriotic and nationalistic, and was also more positive about the outcomes of the war. One possible explanation could be the political allegiance of the editors of the newspaper. For instance, in 2003, *USA Today* provided a fair amount of criticism of the Bush administration’s decision to go to war which could have been motivated by a liberal or pro-Democratic bias. By 2011, a Democrat president was in office, and therefore the newspaper was more likely to follow President Obama’s lead and offer less criticism of his policies. Another explanation could be that adopting a stance that is deemed too critical of U.S. policy would not be welcomed by a generally patriotic public that often views the American role in world affairs as positive. Therefore, adopting such an anti-American position could potentially have jeopardized its sales as well as long term standing in the news media marketplace.

Compared to 2003, the collective coverage of the *NYT* and *WP* in 2011 included more direct criticism of the decision to invade Iraq as well as more commentary on the challenges that lay ahead for Iraq. Therefore, both papers did not allow the “war as a success” discourse to entirely dominate their coverage. At first glance, the findings seem to correspond closely with those of King (2014) who examined the *NYT* and *WP* coverage up until the announcement of the end of the combat mission by Obama in August 2010. King found that the *NYT* and *WP* both diverged from the President’s framing narrative, and cast the war in a negative light. She says of the coverage:

> [e]ven as Obama attempted to achieve closure with a unifying and uplifting narrative of success, the media refused to follow his framing
lead, first constructing a far less positive tale of war’s end and then
virtually banishing the subject from their reportage. (King, 2014, p. 187)

It was true for the coverage in 2011 that the *NYT* and *WP* did forge their own frames as well as offer more balanced coverage than was the case in 2003; however, both newspapers did not completely abandon the “war as a success” discourse either. Importantly, in the articles selected for this study, there was very little introspection and reflection from the *NYT* or *WP* on their own roles in supporting and endorsing the invasion in the first place. Although some journalists in both newspapers had issued apologies for supporting the war or had changed positions by now viewing the war as a mistake, there was no news coverage about the media role itself.

From a CDA perspective, this may suggest that the overtly celebratory newspaper representations of the war in 2003 impacted the adumbrated versions of “success” that appeared in 2011 for the *NYT* and *WP*. This is an example of how discursive representations of realities can impact later representations. The more balanced coverage of 2011 may have been a result of the heavy criticism the U.S. media received (particularly the *NYT*) for its failure in questioning or scrutinizing the Bush administration’s policies after 9/11. It was also evident that President Obama was careful to avoid the same type of victorious rhetoric that followed President Bush’s declaration of victory on May 1, 2003, frequently remembered as the “Mission Accomplished” speech. Once again illustrating how discourse can not only alter future discursive constructions but also have material effects, encapsulated by Obama’s relatively low-key exit from Iraq that emphasized the return of American troops and prioritized the domestic agenda rather than dwelling on the triumphs of the war.
The *WSJ*'s 2011 coverage of the outcomes differed from 2003, in the sense of alarm and opposition the newspaper expressed towards President Obama’s adherence to the timetable of withdrawal. Whilst still hailing the achievements of the U.S. forces in Iraq, an editorial titled “Iraq after America,” stated:

Iraq may be the country most Americans would prefer to forget…Yet U.S. interests in consolidating an alliance with Iraq have never been greater.

With that alliance, the U.S. may find a pillar for its position in the Middle East, especially if Egypt abandons that role. Without the alliance, Iraq is likelier to fall prey to Tehran's encroachments, or collapse into sectarian violence, or again become a haven for a re-constituted al Qaeda. (Iraq after America, 2011, p. A22)

In the assessment of the *WSJ*, Iraq had been liberated, but it was vulnerable to the alleged threats from Iran or al-Qaeda. This excerpt is also typical of the characterization of U.S. troops as a force of good ensuring the security of the country in a peacekeeping capacity rather than as occupiers.

One of the key differences therefore between the characterization of the outcomes of the war in 2003 and 2011 was the stronger presence of alternative discourses in 2011 that highlighted the war’s failings. This was predominantly the case for the *NYT* and *WP* unlike the *WSJ* and *USA Today*, which hardly contested the “war as a success” discourse or drew attention to the problems or questioned the war’s justification. For example, the *WSJ*’s coverage rarely brought up the faulty rationale for war, and as pointed out above, when concerns about Iraq’s precarious security were raised these were done so in the
context of extending U.S. presence in Iraq, not in the context of it being the legacy of the war or the consequence of failed U.S. policy in Iraq.

In December 2011, the NYT coverage contained plenty of scathing criticism about the war, referring to the war as “misguided” and success as “a long shot” and blaming the Bush administration for starting the war on “manipulated intelligence.” It was not difficult to find criticisms of the Bush administration for the war but even within the criticism, the fundamental discourse of a War on Terror, or the U.S. policy of unilateral military action as a response to 9/11 was rarely, if ever, brought into question. The discourse within the NYT (or any of the other newspapers) did not contest the illegality of the war and illegitimacy of the U.S.’s aims to invade a sovereign state based on a premise that was highly dubious even at the time of the invasion. The WP also highlighted many of the failings and problems facing Iraq which contradicted President Obama’s message of a “stable and self-reliant” Iraq as the troops prepared to exit. Throughout, the news coverage the ongoing security problems of Iraq were a prominent feature. Such information countered the notion of a “success” but did not necessarily attribute blame to the U.S. or bring U.S. foreign policy into question.

Across all four newspapers in 2003, the removal of Hussein from power was celebrated as a key event in the beginnings of liberty and democracy for the Iraqi people. However, in 2011, especially in the WP and the NYT, criticisms of Maliki’s government were growing. The WP reported “Maliki has pursued a sectarian agenda focused on consolidating power and monopolizing control of the state and security forces under his Dawa Party.” (Kagen & Kagen, 2011, p. A21). This type of criticism of Maliki was frequent in the WP and NYT; but the USA Today and WSJ focused less on these areas, as
these ran counter to claims of a successful U.S. mission and a liberated and democratic Iraq.

The discourse of “uncertainty” facing Iraq was present throughout the coverage in 2003 and 2011. In 2003, it was USA Today that mostly emphasized the challenges that Iraq faced. Six day’s following Bush’s “end of major combat” announcement, USA Today reported in a front page story:

Having easily won the war for Iraq, the United States has yet to win the peace. Iraqis say they view the U.S. military occupation with suspicion, anger and frustration. Many even say life was in some ways better under the regime of Saddam Hussein: The streets, they say, were safer, jobs more secure, food more plentiful and electricity and water supplies reliable….[Ret. Lieutenant] Garner's administration hasn't made much of an impact yet. A new Iraqi government seems a distant dream. As a result, many Iraqis feel they are adrift, their destination uncertain and their future bleak. (Wiseman & Walt, 2003, p. A1).

In this excerpt, the discursive construction of uncertainty raised question marks over the actual benefits of the invasion for the Iraqi people, and brought attention to the ongoing hardships faced by Iraqis due to the abrupt destruction of the government and police apparatus. By 2011, USA Today’s coverage still raised the issue of Iraq’s uncertain future but contestation of the discourse of “success” had become less pointed. For example, another front page story described the post-U.S. troop withdrawal situation as follows:

It would be a typical community meeting in much of the world, but in Anbar Province, which was among the deadliest regions during the Iraq
War, the meeting is a remarkable turnaround. Five years ago Anbar’s provincial capital of Ramadi was a war zone as U.S. Marines fought through rubble-strewn neighborhoods against a dug-in insurgency. Large sections were under the thumb of al-Qaeda, the terrorist group that had declared Ramadi its Iraqi capital. But the crushing of the insurgency here and in most other parts of Iraq following more than eight years of war has improved security and given rise to a rudimentary democracy and improving standard of living for many Iraqis.

What worries most Iraqis now is whether this transformation will survive the departure of the Americans. The gains that cost more than 4,000 American lives can be reversed in a country where old sectarian grudges simmer, Iran is aiding radical militias, al-Qaeda is still mounting attacks and the U.S. troops that helped keep a lid on it all will have left. (Michaels, 2011, p. 1A).

The war is described using the past tense, hence, signaling its end. Use of the words “transformation” and “turnaround” to describe the situation in Iraq convey a sense of great achievement and progress. Referencing the “crushing of the insurgency here and in most other parts of Iraq” by American Marines convey victory and American supremacy. Noticeably the Iraqis are left out of this narrative of success and it is only the “more than 4,000 American lives” that are mentioned in the sacrifice to achieve this success. The cost of the lives of Iraq’s security personnel, the lives of non-US coalition forces, the lives of the fighters of the Sunni Awakening militias who helped the Americans during the months of the troop surge, or the sacrifice of the Iraqi people are all omitted from this
discursive construction of American success. When uncertainty is mentioned, it is in the context of other groups that are to blame and it is not because of the invasion or the war itself that such uncertainty exists. The above excerpts represent the way in which *USA Today*’s coverage grew more patriotic and supportive of the war by 2011 than it had been in 2003.

Another indicator of how the endgame discourse changed was the newspapers’ discourse on the reconstruction of Iraq. In 2003, there had been more emphasis in the coverage of the *WSJ*, *NYT* and *WP* about the ways that the U.S. was going to be helping restore services, build industry partnerships, and modernize the oil sector to increase output. By 2011, as the American withdrawal drew closer, there was less optimism in this outcome in the coverage of the *NYT*, *WP* and also the *WSJ*. Responsibility for this was increasingly portrayed as a problem for Iraqis not one facing the Americans. It was clear that Iraq’s infrastructure had not recovered to pre-invasion levels, with sewage and electricity facilities still woefully inadequate in many parts of the country, and oil output still well-below the levels necessary to help kick start Iraq’s economic recovery. What had also become clear was that the U.S. was not able to resolve the ongoing security problems due to what were simultaneously a civil war as well as a war against a foreign-occupation. However, the newspapers did not dwell on the lack of recovery of the country’s infrastructure as a failure of the American occupation but as a circumstance of the war, so it did not form a central part of the coverage of the *NYT* or the *WP*. *USA Today* continued the recovery and reconstruction discourse as it fit within the positive self-presentation that characterized the overarching discourse of the war as a success.
In summary, the discursive construction of the outcomes by all four newspapers legitimated the war in 2003 by crediting the Americans with apparent improvements and progress in Iraq, such as the removal of Hussein from power and initiating economic changes that were designed to help lift the standards of living in the country. In 2011, the coverage of the *WSJ* continued to represent the outcomes of the war as a success but also offered numerous direct criticisms of the Obama administration’s decision to withdraw. *USA Today* in 2003 had balanced the war as a success discourse by emphasizing the challenges and uncertainties of the outcomes as well. But, by 2011, its coverage had become more supportive and pro-American regarding the outcomes of the war. However, by 2011, the *NYT* and *WP* discourse had changed as it became increasingly clear that the outcomes of the war were not entirely successful. The discourse that emerged as a result of the failed outcomes sheds light on the shifting of responsibility and how the discourse on responsibility changed; in short, a great deal more of the blame and responsibility was directed on to the Iraqi government by suggesting that Iraq’s future was now in the hands of its own leaders. For example, the *WP* reported that:

[I]t will be Maliki… who will ultimately determine whether any of the goals of the war will be achieved. The U.S. presence in Iraq is ending on a note of uncertainty, with most of the fundamental issues thrown up by the 2003 invasion still unresolved and new sources of friction, such as the unrest in neighboring Syria, surfacing to create fresh tensions.” (Sly, 2011, p. A11)

Such perspectives of Maliki’s government presented the outcomes of the war as the responsibility of the Iraqi government in 2011, which in turn reinforced President
Obama’s message that Iraq was now a “sovereign, stable and self-sufficient,” country
(2011b). Once presented in these terms, it was easier to shift the blame for ongoing
problems faced by Iraq on to Maliki’s government and away from the U.S. decision to
invade the country in the first place.

7.3 Consequences

The focus of this section is on how the discursive construction of the
consequences of the war changed between 2003 and 2011; and how these different
representations privileged different meanings of the ending of the conflict. In the case of
discourses, the description and argumentation strategy employed to present a certain
consequence of the war reveals a great deal about the type of interpretation being
presented. Many of the same consequences of the war that appeared in news discourse in
2003 also remained in place in 2011. For example, consequences such as the worsening
security situation, the political problems, the growing anti-Americanism, and the number
of civilian deaths remained part of the discourse for all four newspapers but to varying
degrees. However, in 2011 consequences such as the growing threat from Iran and
consistent references to U.S. military deaths also became part of the discourse of the
war’s end. It was also evident that the context in which the consequences were being
presented, such as the apportioning of responsibility (or removing it) changed.

As Chapter Five showed, much of the discourse in 2003 on the war’s ending in
the NYT and WSJ (and to a slightly lesser degree in the WP) was positive, highlighting
the successes of the war and largely excluding from news reports the burden of suffering
that the Iraqis faced. Part of the reason for this was that all three newspapers were
strongly in favor of the war and followed President Bush’s lead in viewing Iraq as part of the War on Terror. The invasion had only taken place about six weeks before and the insurgency was still in its infancy. However, in 2011, the consequences of the war became a more prominent part of the discourse on the war’s ending for the NYT and WP; and the coverage of these two newspapers became more critical about the U.S.’s role in Iraq and the failures of the war in general. It was difficult for news outlets to ignore the ongoing security problems, or the inability of the American occupation and later Iraqi government to defeat the powerful militias that emerged because daily stories of bombings, kidnappings, and mass killings continued to be reported. By 2003, USA Today’s discourse on the ending constructed quite a different picture of the reality in Iraq, principally through omitting much of the negative news from Iraq, as this news would not concur with the narrative of a successful and worthwhile campaign that USA Today had carried through much of its coverage in 2011. The WSJ reported the consequence of the precarious situation only in the context of buttressing its argument in favor of a continued American troop presence in Iraq; thereby, constructing the U.S. as peacekeepers rather than occupiers.

In 2003, USA Today was the most likely to report on the anti-American sentiments of the Iraqi population that were growing as a result of the failure of the occupying powers to restore services or a functioning civilian infrastructure. Such coverage was almost absent in the NYT and WSJ. However, by 2011, USA Today barely featured any coverage that addressed the growth in anti-Americanism in Iraq as well as the wider region. This was congruent with the rest of its coverage which depicted the Americans as liberators and having made a positive impact and contribution on Iraq. The
NYT carried quite a different tone; for instance, highlighting the damage to the image of the U.S. following the Abu Ghraib abuse and torture scandal, as well as quoting Iraqis who expressed anti-American feelings:

[In Falluja]…[t]hey came on Wednesday to bury the war: clerics and sheikhs, children and widows from across this scarred city. In the shadow of an overpass, they waved banners, burned an American flag, displayed photos of their dead and shouted well-worn denunciations of departing American forces. (Healy, 2011, p. A16)

And:

BAGHDAD -- Almost nine years after the first American tanks began massing on the Iraq border, the Pentagon declared an official end to its mission here, closing a troubled conflict that helped reshape American politics and left a bitter legacy of anti-American sentiment across the Muslim world. (Shanker, Schmidt, & Worth, 2011, p. A19)

And:

“I just heard from you that they've withdrawn,”” Mustafa Younis, an auto mechanic in Mosul, said to a reporter. “We've been waiting for this day since 2003. When they invaded us, we carried our machine guns and went out to fight them. We decided to do suicide operations against them. They committed many crimes, and we lost a lot of things because of them.”

(Arango & Schmidt, 2011, p. 6)

One of the most striking differences of the NYT reporting in 2011 when reporting anti-Americanism in Iraq was the presence of the voice of Iraqis that expressed outrage at the
Americans, often quotes that conveyed the sense of injustice and anger felt towards the Americans. The above passages were not isolated examples but featured when discussions of the American legacy in Iraq surfaced. The *WP* also contained coverage that conveyed this sense of anti-Americanism which tainted the American legacy in Iraq but did not give as much prominence to Iraqi voices as the *NYT* did. The *WSJ* constructed a very different picture of Iraqi sentiments, often presenting arguments that suggested the Iraqis were desperate for the Americans to stay to ensure their security and using this as an indication of Obama’s flawed exit strategy.

The discourse on anti-Americanism as a consequence of the war did not necessarily suggest that the *NYT* or *WP* provided rationalizing explanations for why the Iraqis held such feelings. The fact that the discourse on Iraqi civilian deaths, which was probably the single biggest factor for the anti-American feelings amongst the Iraqi population, was not as salient in 2011 in the coverage of the *NYT* or *WP* illustrates how the sequencing of events in the reports can impact meaning. In 2011, the majority of the discourses on the legacy of the American invasion and occupation did not always preface the anti-Americanism within the context of the enormous amount of civilian deaths and civilian suffering brought upon by the invasion and occupation. Furthermore, even when civilian deaths were mentioned in 2003 and 2011, there was a removal of agency explaining how the deaths occurred. While it is difficult to ascertain how many civilians died at the hands of American airstrikes, at security checkpoints, or being caught in the crossfire of battles with insurgents, the omission of American responsibility naturalized the deaths as an inevitable consequence of the sectarian conflict rather than as a result of American actions.
The newspaper coverage of 2011 also differed from 2003 in the lack of visibility devoted to the issue of the destruction of Iraq’s civilian infrastructure. In 2003, the issue of civilian infrastructure destruction was fairly salient in the coverage of the NYT, WP and WSJ, but the responsibility for the problems with Iraq’s infrastructure were frequently blamed on the previous regime as highlighted in Chapter Five. Furthermore, these newspapers’ aided the construction of the identity of the Americans as do-gooders occupying Iraq in order to help re-build it. By 2011, these newspapers did not emphasize the destruction of Iraq as a consequence of the American invasion and occupation. Baker and Adriaensens (2012) demonstrated the destruction to Iraq’s educational institutions; Al Azawi (2016) reported on the tremendous environmental harm caused by intensive bombing; and there were already numerous reports in the media about the damage to Iraq’s cultural heritage sites. However, none of these issues about destruction were addressed by any of the four newspapers when examining the legacy of the War in Iraq in 2011. There were frequent references to the lack of electricity but rarely references to the fact that civilians had had electricity before the invasion, and that the failure to restore services was a consequence of the invasion and responsibility of the invading and occupying powers. Such items did not preface the discussions of anti-American sentiments highlighted above; the effect of this was to present the Iraqis as irrational for hating the Americans without sound reasoning. Furthermore, the American audiences were left with an incomplete picture of the negative impact of the U.S. forces on Iraq, and a misrepresentation of the harm caused by launching devastating bombing campaigns which were frequently referred to as “airstrikes” suggesting precision and targeted bombing.
In 2003, the discourse in *USA Today*, *WP* and to a lesser degree *NYT* had touched on several problems caused by the invasion and removal of the Hussein government such as unemployment and food shortages. These issues were not raised as part of the American legacy in Iraq. The reduction in visibility of such problems portrayed a version of reality to American audiences that did not convey the full extent of suffering inflicted upon the Iraqi people as a result of the invasion. There are numerous speculative interpretations of the impact these representations of war have, for example by occluding the reality of war American audiences are more likely to continue to support military operations in the future. Hence, reminding us of Baudrillard’s observation that “information is directly destructive of meaning and signification, or that it neutralizes them.” (1981/1994, p. 79). In this case, a loss of the true meaning of war (human suffering) as a result of the information or absence of information presented through the mass media.

Another widely acknowledged consequence of the war in both 2003 and 2011 was the political quagmire that emerged from the vacuum left by removing Hussein from power but also resulting from the policy of de-Ba’athification, which was initiated by the U.S. to prevent former members of the ruling Ba’ath Party from holding important positions in government or in the energy sector. The political situation in 2003 was entirely different and not really comparable to the situation in 2011 as the Coalition Provisional Authority was responsible for the country and no Iraqi government had yet been formed. By 2011, there had been several attempts at forming a representative government, holding elections, and reaching consensus on legislation. However, the news discourse about Iraqi politics was dominated across the four newspapers by highlighting
the mistrust between Shiites and Sunnis and the ongoing sectarian killings. This was presented in much of the Western media, included the four newspapers analyzed here as indicative of the inability of the Iraqis to reach compromises to settle differences. This was especially the case in the coverage of the WP and NYT in 2011, where the discourse focused on the political instability and the impact this would have on other areas such as security, the economy and rebuilding Iraq. The discourse of political instability, although acknowledged in USA Today and the WSJ, did not detract from their overall positive representation of U.S. policy in Iraq as successful.

As the circumstances changed in 2011 with the emergence of different actors, including a different U.S. administration, the Maliki government, Iran, and populist movements such as that of Moqtada al-Sadr as well as well-supported Sunni militias, it was no surprise that elements of the news discourse also changed. In 2011, one of the most highlighted negative consequences of the war was the growing influence of Iran in Iraq. The discursive effects of introducing Iran as an external ‘threat’ to U.S. interests in Iraq are discussed in section 7.4 below. Most of the continuity in this discourse was visible in the attribution of responsibility for the problems Iraq faced which more often than not deflected blame away from the U.S. (see section 7.4 below). From examining the discursive constructions of the consequences in the overall coverage across all four newspapers, what emerges is a pattern of information selection and control where the composition of descriptions and arguments presented, privilege a discourse that downplays the negative effects of the U.S. invasion on the lives of Iraqis. Such a discourse is not necessarily a result of the discursive intervention of any specific editor,
author or news outlet but rather the product of a much larger culture that is deeply patriotic and reverent towards the core doctrine of American exceptionalism.

7.4 Responsibility

It is the purpose of this section to demonstrate the ways in which the attribution of responsibility for the consequences of the war changed between 2003 and 2011. This analysis is not based on a comparison of quantitative data of the number of times responsibility was assigned to a particular actor in 2003 and 2011, but on the accumulative designation of responsibility. Beyond the changing of important ‘actors’ in the Iraq War that came with a change of U.S. government administration, the analysis here is concerned with understanding how the evolving representations of the war impacted the meaning of the war’s ending. In other words, it was not merely in documenting how responsibility was attributed differently in the news articles, but how assigning responsibility contributed to the overall meaning. Or in some cases, the non-attribution of responsibility was just as important, as it was not always that newspapers assigned responsibility for a consequence of the war which had the effect of masking agency by removing association between an actor and an outcome. The attribution of responsibility and blame are telling signs of beliefs, values and political positions on matters and therefore can be revealing of underlying ideological perspectives.

The newspaper coverage for 2003 and 2011 was remarkable for the absence of designating responsibility to the U.S. for launching the invasion and conducting a bombing campaign which led to the destruction of so much of Iraq’s society. Across all four newspapers, the destruction of Iraq’s civilian infrastructure or cultural heritage was
rarely portrayed as a consequence of American actions in Iraq. As was highlighted in Chapter Five, most of the responsibility for the destruction was placed on Hussein’s regime or looters or other criminal elements. In 2011, it was not sustainable to suggest that Saddam’s forces were still in place, fighting the Americans and trying to undermine the American operation in Iraq, so the agency for destruction was shifted by utilizing nominalizations such as “the battle against the insurgency” or the “near civil war,” as the causes of the destruction. For instance, in 2011 *USA Today* reported:

   But Saddam's end only opened the door to more years of conflict as Iraq was plunged into a vicious sectarian war between its Shiite and Sunni Arab communities. The near civil war devastated the country, and its legacy includes thousands of widows and orphans, a people deeply divided along sectarian lines and infrastructure that remains largely in ruins. (The Associated Press, 2011, p. A6)

In the excerpt above, while some of the consequences of the war are vividly described, U.S. involvement in describing the process of how “Iraq was plunged into vicious sectarian war” is entirely absent, and so is any sense of American responsibility for why Iraq’s infrastructure is described to be “in ruins.” Instead, the agency is attributed to the processes of “Saddam’s end,” and “near civil war” which in essence functions like a nominalization. As highlighted in Chapters Five and Six such a presentation of reality was a regular feature of the coverage. Removing agency and causality in the way described above had an impact on the version of ‘self,’ that is the U.S. identity that the text projected. In essence, it was a version that projected a positive self-image by removing negative information about the U.S.
The removal of American responsibility was also aided in 2011 by emphasizing the shifting role of Americans as helping to rebuild Iraq. In, 2011 for example, it was reported in the NYT that even after the withdrawal, “a few hundred military personnel and Pentagon civilians will remain, working within the American Embassy as part of an Office of Security Cooperation to assist in arms sales and training to the Iraqis.” (Shanker, Schmidt, & Worth, 2011, p. A19). In the discourse, the role of the Americans was changed from an invading force to one that was responsible for nation building and ensuring the peace by improving security.

Another critical aspect of the war that caused a great deal of controversy was the civilian death toll. Of all the newspapers the WP was the most consistent from 2003 and 2011 in mentioning U.S. culpability when the issue of civilian deaths was raised in a report. The coverage of the NYT, USA Today, and WSJ in 2003 and 2011 were remarkable for consistently avoiding the designation of blame or highlighting causality for how civilians died. On the surface, a possible explanation is because civilian deaths have always been understood to be an unfortunate byproduct of any war. However, such omission of responsibility is not consistently the case when it comes to the U.S. media’s reporting of wars in general. For example, in recent cases such as the Syrian Civil War (2012- present) the American media were quick to report on the alleged atrocities committed by Assad’s forces against civilians, but less inclined to report the allegations about those committed by insurgents or “rebels” against Assad’s supporters. This process of vilification of the perceived enemy is quite typical of politicized media discourse and is an example of the type of ‘binarism’ that differentiates ‘us’ from the enemy (Lazar &
Lazar, 2004). It also illustrates how the deletion of agency creates a ‘silence’ which is an effective discursive strategy that curtails the parameters of debate.

Whilst the above examples focus on removing U.S. association with the negative outcomes of the war; another important discursive strategy that reflects the workings of an ‘ideological square’ (van Dijk, 1998) are the process of positive self-representation. In this regard, the newspapers did follow the lead of President Obama in his praise for American troops for bringing democracy and stability to Iraq. In both 2003 and 2011, an overwhelming majority of the coverage across all four newspapers, when addressing the positive outcomes of the war, credited the U.S. with responsibility for these rather than the Iraqis. In 2003, the Americans received much of this praise for the removal of Hussein’s government and enabling the prospects of democracy, as well as for assisting Iraq’s recovery and reconstruction. In 2011, it was essentially the same message of removing Hussein from power and liberating Iraqis that Americans were credited with. This narrative does not take into account the opinions of Iraqis who lost family members and livelihoods, and now lived in a situation where the risk of dying a violent death was far higher than under the Hussein government.

The way in which the discourse of the exit in 2011 was constructed also effectively shifted responsibility for the future of Iraq on to Iraqis. There were numerous reports in 2011 that conveyed this message, following the lead of White House who in official statements since 2010 had stressed that the U.S. had fulfilled its obligations to Iraq (King, 2014, p. 128). For example, USA Today reported: “U.S. officials say, America has set the conditions for success. Now it is up to the Iraqis.” (Michaels, 2011, p. A1). And going on to quote Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Buchanan, the top U.S. military
spokesperson, who stated “My greatest hope is they take advantage of all the
opportunities they have.” (Michaels, 2011, p. A1). The NYT reported “After so much pain
and sacrifice, Iraqis now have the responsibility for making their own better future” but
acknowledged that the U.S. still “has a major role to play: encouraging, supporting and
goading Iraq's leaders to make the long-delayed political compromises that are their only
hope for building a stable democracy.” (A formal end, 2011, p. A42 ). The same message
in the WP was reiterated by Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,
who spoke of the “enormous opportunity” the Americans had given the Iraqis. (Jaffe,
2011, p. A19). One of the aims of CDA in textual discourse is that it seeks to highlight
what parts of media discourse are emphasized more than others; in much of the coverage
in 2011, it was increasingly stressed that the Iraqis were now responsible for their own
destiny. Such a discourse gave the impression of Iraqi sovereignty, democracy and the
leaders having actual choices; but, it overlooked the reality of the dysfunctional state that
the Americans were not only leaving behind but responsible for creating. This discourse
on Iraq’s new found sovereignty and responsibility for its destiny echoed the fundamental
values of the American dream, that if one works hard and makes the right choices, one
would be able to achieve the full potential of the possibilities available. By placing Iraqis
in such a position after the trauma of a war that was ongoing, this ignored the reality of
the daily challenges faced by Iraq and its leaders. In some ways, such an argument would
be equivalent to characterizing recently-freed slaves during the American Reconstruction
Era as having all of the necessary means for success, despite the terrible conditions they
faced. One of the effects of characterizing the predicament of Iraq in this way is that it
absolved the U.S. of responsibility for any future disasters that Iraq would encounter by advancing the notion of an independent Iraq in the present.

Security problems remained a concern in Iraq from the time of the invasion until the U.S. troop withdrawal in December 2011. In 2003, much of the responsibility for the problems with violence was placed on Hussein loyalists or sometimes unidentified extremists. This was inevitable as there had not been enough time for an insurgency or resistance to the invaders to emerge. As the occupation wore on and a power struggle erupted from the vacuum left by Hussein’s removal from power, sectarianism became the principle reason reported in the news discourse for the ongoing violence. This was not particularly controversial or necessarily a misrepresentation of reality as most of the violence was being committed between different political factions usually drawn along ethnic and religious lines. However, at the time of the withdrawal, the news discourse rarely addressed the American policy of De-Ba’athification and how the dismantling of the Iraqi security apparatus in 2003 had created the conditions for the lawlessness and violence which ensued. Although such criticism of the U.S. may have surfaced sporadically, much of the security discourse remained fixated on the threat posed by insurgents and militias in the wake of an American withdrawal rather than on policy failures that had caused the conditions for sectarian violence. For example, the WP reported that the war had removed Hussein from power “but also set in motion a sectarian conflict suppressed for decades by his brutal rule.” (Wilson & Nakamura, 2011, p. A3). Similarly the NYT stated that Iraq was a “land defined on sectarian lines” (Arango, 2011, p. A1) with the implication being that sectarian violence was inevitable; thus, creating the impression that the conflicts between Shiites and Sunnis were age-old.

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However, this ignored the resentment the Sunnis felt towards the Americans at the time of the invasion, for the arrests and detainments of thousands of young men for interrogations about links to terrorism or knowledge of the alleged Iraqi WMD program. Such policies were later adopted by the Maliki’s government under the guise of fighting ‘terrorists.’ It is not the purpose here to suggest that the NYT or WP did not at all criticize U.S. policy as there were a few occasions in these two newspapers were the U.S. was directly blamed for problems in Iraq. However, such criticisms did not come to dominate the discourse about the ongoing security problems and were marginalized in comparison to discussions about Iraq’s age old tribal or sectarian differences.

It is worth re-visiting one of the key findings from the analysis of the coverage in 2003 that showed that USA Today did cite failed American policies for the post-war political problems, especially the lack of planning on behalf of the Bush administration. It also did not blame Iraqis or insinuate Iraqi responsibility for the political strife that emerged from the overthrow of the Hussein government. However, by 2011 the discourse in USA Today was radically different and more likely to follow the official lead, which in essence presented the political quagmire as a consequence of the Maliki government and sectarian divisions rather than the result of American policy failures. The NYT offered far more balanced coverage in 2011 than it did in 2003, with numerous articles highlighting the failure of American planning and preparation for the aftermath of the invasion.

Discourses are sites of constant struggle and contestation, one of the ways in which a historical-diachronic analysis can be helpful is by examining how a change in the circumstances of an event such as the emergence of a new social agent impacts the existing discourse. In May 2003, the four newspapers did not report on the ‘threat’ Iran
posed to the stability of Iraq. However, by 2011, Iran was referenced consistently across the coverage of the NYT, WP and WSJ, principally as a de-stabilizing force that was “preying” on a vulnerable Iraq. In U.S. political and media discourses, Iran had historically been labelled a rogue state that was considered a threat to peace in the region (especially for its strong pro-Palestine stance and outspoken rhetoric on Israel). So, when Iran was mentioned in the news discourse, it was mentioned in the context of its pre-existing relationship to the U.S., as an adversary and characterized in a negative light. As pointed out in Chapter Six, the emergence of Iran, and consistent references to Iranian meddling and support for Shiite militias, offered a new scapegoat to blame for Iraq’s security and political problems and deflected attention away from the failures of U.S. policies.

7.5 Summary

From a CDA perspective, it is not single instances of masking agency in the case of civilian deaths or the destruction of infrastructure that is of particular interest; rather, it is the repeated patterns of discourse which can help investigate the overall effects of such discursive representations on the construction of meaning and identity. What emerges from this historical-diachronic analysis is a pattern of media discourse strategies amongst the WSJ, NYT and to a lesser degree the WP that, in 2003 tended to highlight the positive outcomes of the war and support the American military operation in Iraq. When negative consequences of the war were highlighted, these were backgrounded or drowned out by the presence of contrastive news and the strong emphasis on the pro-war position. The CDA was most revealing when it came to examining how responsibility was attributed
for the negative consequences. Usually, U.S. culpability was overlooked or downplayed. In the few occasions that civilian deaths were raised, there was a tendency (except for in *USA Today*) to justify or explain the circumstances in a way that would negate American responsibility. Consider the following examples from the same article in the *NYT*:

In Tikrit, the birthplace of Mr. Hussein and the nation's stronghold for his Baath Party, the American military conducted a raid in which it arrested 20 people. One Iraqi was killed after he reportedly tried to grab a rifle away from an American soldier, the military said.

And:

There were, however, no new demonstrations in the city of Falluja, where local residents have said that American soldiers killed 18 Iraqis this week in two anti-American protests. The military reported in both cases that soldiers were fired on by demonstrators, though residents said the marches were peaceful. (Fisher, 2003, p. 10)

In both excerpts, U.S. military actions are explained with information that helps remove American responsibility. In the first, the circumstances are hardly investigated or questioned; the close proximity of the mention of Hussein and the Ba’ath Party further legitimize the raid and death of a civilian. In the second, the facticity of the claim that 18 Iraqis were killed by Americans is brought into question because it was reported by local residents who are mentioned in the same sentence as “anti-American” protests which again has a de-legitimizing effect. Furthermore, the deaths are justified because “soldiers were fired on.” It was in such ways that reporting the war’s ending in 2003 was pro-American and supportive of U.S. actions. As concluded in Chapter Five, such a discourse
amounted to a Manichean discourse which sought to win the U.S. public’s approval for the invasion.

Compared to 2003, by 2011 the news discourse in the NYT and WP had become more balanced and showed a greater tendency to critique the outcomes of the war. The coverage of USA Today showed the most dramatic change from 2003, in that the reality it conveyed to its readers about the situation in Iraq was more upbeat and tended to follow the White House’s line of assessment. For example, it reproduced President Obama’s discourse that emphasized the removal of Hussein from power, and the prospects for democracy that had only become possible thanks to the sacrifices of American troops and their families. The WSJ remained consistently hawkish in both 2003 and 2011, reflecting its strong Republican ideological leaning by echoing prominent Republican criticisms of Obama’s policy of withdrawal, favoring instead a continued presence of American troops in Iraq but under the pretense of the apparent desire of Iraqis for a continued American presence in order to secure them from al-Qaeda as well as ‘Iranian- Shiite militias.’

King (2014) in her analysis of several media outlets including the NYT and WP found that President Obama’s endgame narrative was contested by the NYT and WP. The historical-diachronic analysis here would concur that in 2011 these elite press organs did not simply reproduce exactly the same discourse and did challenge it at times. However, this did not mean that some of the themes that King identified from Obama’s rhetoric on the ending of the war were not present in the NYT or WP’s coverage. King highlights five interrelated themes in Obama’s narrative on Iraq since he took office, these were:

1) the U.S. fulfilled its responsibilities and met its commitments in Iraq; 2) U.S. troops served with honor and met success; 3) the war’s benefits
outweighed the costs; 4) America must refocus on the real security threat; and 5) Iraq could now achieve a democratic destiny. (2014, p. 128)

From the analysis in this study, the NYT and WP’s discourses on the ending still contained themes 1, 2 and 5 fairly consistently.

To sum up, the principle conclusion to be drawn from the historical –diachronic analysis is that the news coverage across the four newspapers over time is inherently ideological. It is reflective of the dominant cultural values and mainstream perspectives such as patriotism and a nationalistic outlook that are widespread in American society which view the U.S. as a force of good in the world. Despite the overwhelming evidence of the destructiveness of the war, and rampant anti-American sentiment in the Middle East, the news media discourse never brought the fundamental values of American foreign policy into question. In this sense, despite the professional values of practicing fairness or balance “journalists typically agree that patriotism is a good thing…On this matter, they are openly political, yet see no conflict between this and an obviously contradictory claim to neutrality.” (Jensen, 2005, p. 80). This chapter has sought to underline how the packaging of information is culturally conditioned and how the final information product, that is news is not independent to the effects of this process. The theoretical implications of this for LIS are addressed in the concluding chapter.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

8.1 Discussion

In bringing this study to a close, it is important to draw attention once again to the aims of this study before addressing the specific questions that guided this research. The aims were to (1) to shed light on the dominant discourses that are embedded in news coverage of the ending of the Iraq War in four major national newspapers (The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, The Washington Post and USA Today); (2) to demonstrate using CDA how meaning of the ending of the war was discursively constructed in 2003 and 2011; and (3) to illustrate how news is an informational product that is not free of ideology by discerning patterns and thematic structures of discourses within the coverage that either discursively reproduce or challenge the injustices of the Iraq War. In addition to these specific aims, there are the broader aims of CDA such as to bring to light discourse formations and other properties of text that facilitate the reproduction or reification of the dominant discourses, thereby illustrating how these can become hegemonic. These hegemonic discourses have material consequences such as the shaping of public debate by impacting public perceptions (values, beliefs and opinions); through information control (the quality and accuracy of information people have access to); and, ultimately on government policy, legitimated through public approval or support for elected leaders. Thus, CDA scholars seek to question and criticize discourses in order to highlight illegitimate power relations and the boundaries of what can and
cannot be said; thereby, contributing to the resolution of injustice and giving voice to victims. In this light, it has been the aim of this study to contest and interrupt the dominance of media discourses on the ‘ending’ and legacy of the Iraq War.

This study found that interest in the Iraq War declined over time judging by the number of articles published in newspapers about the ending which went down from 158 in 2003 to 61 in 2011. In part, this was because the Obama administration sought to refocus attention from Iraq to the War in Afghanistan, where the U.S. since 2009, had been escalating the war against the Taliban and its supporters. Since before taking office, President Obama had maintained that Iraq was not the key arena for the War on Terror, once referring to it as a “dumb war” but he later advocated approval for a gradual drawdown of U.S. troops. In addition, President Obama and his administration wanted to move on from what was a costly and unpopular war at a time when the domestic agenda, especially in light of the ongoing global financial crisis was beginning to take center stage. These arguments would indicate the extent of the power of the White House to set the political agenda for media organizations. Another, possible explanation for the fall in media interest is that news organizations driven by the need to make profit, seek to offer an informational product (news) that is ‘new.’ But, the American public had apparently grown tired or lost interest because Iraq was an ‘old’ story where the same issues of sectarian violence and political in-fighting had remained constant throughout the war; thus, making a narrative of progress and success difficult to believe. Finally, the financial incentives and needs of news media organizations to be profit-oriented and publish stories that are palatable to their commercial clients (responsible for a much larger
portion of their revenue through advertising than readers’ subscriptions) could also have been a factor in the drop in media interest.

From the analyses conducted in this study, the sustained discourses that appeared in multiple texts over the two different periods were brought to light. In the context of the ending of the war in 2003, these culminated in a representation of reality that suggested the war was an overwhelming success, especially in the _WSJ_ and _NYT_ coverage, and less so in the _WP_ and _USA Today_. The ‘war as a success’ discourse naturalized the war’s ‘ending’ with coverage celebrating its triumphs such as the removal of the Hussein government, the swiftness of military victory, or citing the capitulation of the Iraqi state security and armed forces. Equally important to this construction of the ending of the war was the role of the pre-existing War on Terror discourse that the Bush administration and subsequently the mass media, had contextualized Iraq as a part of. The War on Terror discourse that had defined the U.S. foreign policy response since 9/11 had established Iraq as a threat because of its alleged WMD and links to al-Qaeda. Once both of these accusations were proven to be baseless, the discourses of liberation and democracy in Iraq were addressed extensively and formed a central part of the outcomes of the war in all four newspapers. However, _USA Today_ also contained significant alternative discourses that challenged the success narrative, this was achieved by focusing on the challenges that Iraq was facing as well as by attributing responsibility for some of the problems of American policies in Iraq.

There was a great degree of congruence between the findings from the contextual analysis and the textual analysis, with the latter providing clear examples of _how_ discourses are constructed and _how_ they function in texts. The dominant discourses to
emerge in the 2011 ‘ending’ of the war were very similar to those in 2003, suggesting there had not been a dramatic change in the representation of the war in the four newspapers. The success narrative remained intact in 2011, and indeed gained momentum in the coverage of USA Today. However, the ending of the war in 2011 was no longer exclusively portrayed as a ‘success’ and there were competing discourses that also highlighted the war’s failures, especially in the coverage of the WP and NYT. In addition, there was less reliance by the news media on the War on Terror discourse that had been so predominant during the Bush Presidency; perhaps this was influenced by the Obama Administration’s wish to move away from the association with President Bush’s foreign policy and legacy, especially in Iraq.

In 2011, similar discourse themes on the outcomes and consequences emerged, although varying in degrees of emphasis by newspaper. The changes in the dominant discourses from 2003 to 2011 in the WP and NYT could possibly be explained by the widespread criticism these media outlets received for backing the war in 2003 without thoroughly questioning the Bush administration’s rationale for war. Therefore, these newspapers attempted to restore their reputations as stalwarts of the American news media. However, the change in the NYT and WP’s reporting could also have been because of the change in American public opinion about the war which increasingly mirrored the deterioration of conditions on the ground in Iraq (Holsti, 2011, p. 74). For example, the results of a Pew Research Center (2011) poll showed that the number of Americans who felt taking military action against Iraq was the right decision had fallen from 73 percent in 2003 to 48 percent in 2011 (it had remained below 40 percent until the 2011 survey). It
is difficult to gauge whether newspapers were influencing or influenced by public opinion on the war by 2011.

The collective picture that emerged from the four newspapers in 2011 (that was also consistent with the coverage in 2003) was a tendency to employ a pro-American leaning and what neatly fit van Dijk’s (1998) description of the ideological square. That is, the dominant discourses contained an ‘us vs. them’ frame, whereby the news reports emphasized actions or outcomes that cast the Americans in a favorable light squared against the negative properties and actions of the ‘other.’ Furthermore, there was extensive textual evidence from the newspapers that demonstrated mitigation of the negative actions of the U.S. This was discursively achieved through a variety of argumentation strategies that involved but were not limited to, omission of U.S. agency and responsibility; downplaying the negative actions of the U.S. whether it was those of its military or U.S. government’s policies; and offering explanatory reasoning for negative U.S. actions, for example, if civilians died during protests, casting demonstrators as aggressive and provocative. Finally, the ‘ideological square’ was completed by the mitigation of the positive actions of the ‘other.’ Over the course of the War, the identity of the ‘other’ was constituted by different actors (that is individuals, groups, organizations, governments) depending on the news story. The ‘other’ in 2003 was constituted mostly by the enemy, either those cast as Hussein loyalists, terrorists, criminals, or extremists. By 2011, the ‘other’ included the Iraqi government, Shia and Sunni militias, outside actors such as Syria and Iran, as well as the aforementioned constituents. In the news reports on the legacy of the conflict, there was a dearth of praise for the Iraqi government, Iraq’s security forces, and the Sunni Awakening groups that
had helped the Americans in 2007 and 2008, which fit within the expectations of the ideological square of downplaying the good actions of ‘them.’

As the ideological square revealed, there was a strong pro-American bias that permeated the news discourse in both 2003 and 2011 which, has implications for the democratic and educational function of news as an informational product. The presence of this patriotic perspective is most revealingly illustrated in the discourses on the attribution of responsibility for the negative consequences of the war. As Chapters Five, Six and Seven showed, there was a tendency to blame the negative consequences of the war such as the precarious state of security and ongoing violence and political stalemate on ‘others,’ whether it was the Hussein loyalists and criminals in 2003, or terrorists or Iranian-backed Shia militias in 2011. In addition to articles actively assigning blame, one of the most effective strategies used was to shift blame, or anonymize responsibility for a negative action through the deletion of agency in sentences. Such omissions of responsibility were effective in disassociating the U.S. with the negative consequences of the war.

This leads to another major finding of this study, which was to bring to light the workings of “silence” in the news discourse. In essence, this is the absence of information, of alternative voices, explanations, or perspectives; it is the active removal of important features of the issue which enshrouds a truer picture and understanding of reality. There are many such silences that operate within texts; these are not only indicative of the boundaries of discourse, in other words, what is permissible to say but also work alongside and in conjunction with the what is said in the text (Foucault, 1978/1990). Examples of silences included, overlooking the causes of problems such as
civilian deaths or civilian infrastructure destruction and thereby treating these as though they just happened without any agent. Silences also influenced the discourse by the ways that framing was utilized either in terms of how an issue was presented, as well as by how much context was included as part of the background. In addition, the accumulative effects of presenting from pro-American and patriotic angles enabled such ideological standpoints to become pervasive and eventually hegemonic in the news discourse. The hegemony achieved by this discourse marginalized other discourses that occasionally sprouted in the news and these ended up being faded out as background noise due to their scarcity in the coverage.

As the textual analyses for each of the articles showed, the workings of language are not neutral but always reflect some kind of political position; in the articles examined in this study, this position, more often than not encapsulated a nationalistic and patriotic discourse. This explains the pro-Americanism, and the consistent positive self-representation that was a staple feature of much of the coverage across all four newspapers. Discursively this was achieved in numerous ways such as drawing from well-established American myths, symbols and histories that resonated culturally and psychologically with a majority of Americans. For instance, the reconstruction discourse following the toppling of the Hussein regime Iraq was presented as a story or progress and improvement, one that resonated with American historical narratives such as manifest destiny, the frontier, benevolent expansion and the notion of economic opportunities. Such myths had been called upon throughout American history in order to justify conquest, whether it was wars against Native American tribes or against Mexico following the annexation of Texas by the U.S in 1845. Such discourses are part of the
larger discourse of American exceptionalism which conveys the idea of the U.S. as a chosen nation that was righteous and Divinely ordained; “a worldview to which presidents from Washington to Obama have given full throated endorsement.” (King, 2014, p. 5).

Much of the reporting about the Iraq War in both 2003 and 2011 contained the American exceptionalism discourse which manifested in the positive self-representation that also portrayed the American involvement in Iraq as noble and righteous. In 2003 the NYT, WP, and WSJ strongly supported and adopted the War on Terror discourse and idea of fighting the enemy that was responsible for 9/11. By 2011, the American role in the war was cast in a different light; having now liberated the Iraqis and established democracy, the Americans pledged to offer training for Iraq’s military and assistance to the new government of Iraq. Hence, there was a shift in the media discourse across all four newspapers that recontextualized the Americans from defenders of freedom in 2003 (as opposed to invaders of the sovereign state of Iraq) to nation-builders and peacekeepers that respected the rule of international law, evidenced by numerous expressions of American concern for Iraq’s security.

News discourses conveyed American concern for Iraq’s security along with expressions of worry about the growing Iranian influence or meddling in Iraq. However, this was always through a perspective of American exceptionalism. For example, the on December 12, 2011 the WP reported the need to secure America’s “core interests in Iraq” which included: “[p]romoting an Iraq that abides by its international responsibilities; and [c]ontaining Iranian influences that are harmful to U.S. interests in Iraq and the region.” (Kagen & Kagen, 2011, p. A21). The report went on to stress that:
Iraq is a signatory to numerous treaties and a member of international organizations obliging it to respect human rights, ensure due process of law, and refrain from arbitrary or political detentions. Responsible nations should insist that Iraq demonstrate its commitment to those obligations. The president should tell Maliki in no uncertain terms that Washington will hold him to account in the international arena if Iraq does not. (Kagen & Kagen, 2011, p. A21)

In these examples, the expression of expectation that Iraq abides by its international obligations contains the implication that the U.S. also does, despite the Iraq War being launched by the U.S and its allies without a resolution from the U.N. Security Council authorizing war. The WP’s analysis here did not see any discord between presenting an argument stressing the requirements of Iraq to follow international law yet, overlooking the U.S. failure to do so in the case of launching the war. Thus, exemplifying the discourse of American exceptionalism within news discourse; this was not unique to the WP, as the NYT, WSJ and USA Today also adopted such positions without hesitation.

8.2 Limitations and Further Study

In addition to the limitations of the scope of this research, the critiques of CDA, and questions regarding reliability and validity which have all been addressed in Chapters One, Three and Four respectively, there are additional issues that come to light towards the conclusion of such research projects. Firstly, the research questions and the aims to examine how discourse changed over time required an analysis of a significant data set to conduct a meaningful contextual analysis that would offer valuable insights into the
outcomes, consequences and attribution of responsibility. This was a labor intensive and
time-consuming enterprise, even with the aid of data analysis software such as NVivo 11
Pro. What emerged from the analysis were broad patterns in the data which served the
purpose of illuminating context in the news coverage. However, this meant the number of
articles that were selected for detailed textual analysis had to be reduced in order to make
the study feasible. While examining fewer articles is not atypical of CDA studies, it
would be valuable to extend the detailed textual analysis to a larger sample of newspaper
articles as it would shed further light on whether the results from the contextual and
textual analyses would retain the same degree of congruence. Having said that, the
sample of 8 articles that were selected for detailed textual analysis is still considered quite
large for the type of detail that CDA seeks to obtain. As both the contextual and textual
analyses are highly interpretive processes, the researcher is required to prioritize some
elements of the text over others, which means that it is quite possible that other
discourses are also embedded in texts. In fact, the more an analyst engages with a text,
the greater the number of discursive features s/he is likely to become aware of, this is
especially the case where intertextuality is involved. CDA is a messy process and
imposing strict methods on how it is conducted are always at the expense of alternative
approaches.

Secondly, the Iraq War is still ongoing and as a result, there remains a scarcity of
historiography to draw upon, which is only likely to broaden and improve over the
coming years. As a result, many of the findings of this study, especially relating to the
historical-diachronic analysis could be enhanced by drawing from historical material that
gives further insights into the socio-political contexts that fueled the cultural and
informational output in present times. Compared to 2011, there is a greater body of scholarship available on the initial war period, including the memoirs of key figures such as members of governments, military generals, and press secretaries that expand and deepen our understanding of the workings of discourse in news. As key figures from the Obama administration release memoirs, and a greater amount of documentation is studied by scholars, the findings of this research could be further validated or challenged.

Thirdly, the focus of this research is on media representation of the ending of the Iraq War and therefore, gives only a partial picture of the strength of a discourse in society; as how a particular discourse formation manifests, i.e. impacts policy, public dialogue and the lives of those involved in the conflict requires additional engagement with important social actors such as government figures, humanitarian aid agencies, and those on all sides caught up in the crisis. Therefore, there is a tendency in CDA studies to point further research in this direction.

8.3 Contributions of the Study

One of the motivations for this study as stated in the introduction was to address the gap in LIS scholarship that sidestepped the politics of the Iraq War, specifically its consequences and injustices. This study acknowledges the inter-relatedness of political, media, and academic discourses; as such, it was the intention, as a CDA study, to interrupt and contest the dominant discourses, and the discursive treatment of the Iraq War in existing LIS scholarship by filling the political void in the literature. This study also addressed one of the least studied areas of the war; the ending of the war and its representation in media provides an excellent opportunity to demonstrate how discourses
(and realities) are socially constructed. Contrary to the positivist tradition that dominates LIS scholarship and its principle (cognitive) theories on what information is, what an information user is, and what information needs are, etc., this study draws attention to the “silences” that operate within informational texts and contexts. In other words, this research makes a compelling case illustrating that information extends beyond what is there in a text to include and consider what is not there. As what is excluded from the discourse on an issue has a critical impact on how that issue is portrayed and understood, in essence the ontology of information is altered by what is absent.

Another major contribution is that the interdisciplinary approach taken in this study demonstrates the advantages of utilizing the contributions from a variety of fields as it allows an expansion of the theoretical possibilities for LIS scholars to reach beyond research that is insular and confined to traditional subject boundaries. Inspired by the works of Budd (2006), Budd & Raber (1996), R. Day (2000, 2005), Frohmann (1992a, 1992b, 1994), and Radford (1992, 1998, 2003), this study has tackled a research problem that has fascinated scholars of a wide variety of disciplines, and by doing so it is hoped that it will demonstrate to those inside and outside LIS, the valuable contributions such research can make to the body of knowledge of important topics such as the Iraq War. In this way, LIS can join the wider conversation with media and communication scholars, historians, linguists, sociologists and political scientists and engage in debate about the Iraq War rather than remain on the periphery and anxious about a diffusion of the disciplinary identity of LIS.

Finally, this study underlines the need for critical information literacy programs as it has demonstrated how news discourse can be manipulated to construct knowledge and
social realities which end up reinforcing existing power structures rather than questioning or challenge these. Through deploying CDA, this study has demonstrated the process of how discourse is constructed in news media, and the role language plays in how information is packaged and presented. The full potential of information literacy or critical media literacy courses and programs in LIS remains confined until the discipline as a whole can embrace the theoretical challenges of poststructuralist thought by letting go of ideas of objectivity and neutrality when it comes to conceptualizing information.

8.4 Conclusion

One of the criteria for judging validity of a CDA study mentioned in Chapter Four was the sense of convergence and agreement that exists with other studies. This study found there to be a strong presence of nationalistic ideology that characterized the news discourse of all four newspapers in both 2003 and 2011. This concurs with the some of the important findings of King’s (2014) Obama, the media, and framing the U.S. exit from Iraq and Afghanistan which highlighted the American exceptionalism discourse that surfaced in both the Presidential rhetoric and in the news coverage of different media outlets. This study found there to be a great deal of uniformity in the coverage and adoption of dominant discourses across all four newspapers which diverged from the findings of studies such as that by Feldman, Huddy, and Marcus (2015) of media performance in the lead up to the Iraq War. They found there to be sufficient evidence of counter-narratives and counter-discourses that challenged the government’s perspective when it came to supporting the war. Similarly, King (2014) also found that the NYT and WP challenged Obama’s framing of the ending of the Iraq War. However, this study
found that while there were some challenges to the official rhetoric, these newspapers never questioned the underlying logic behind American foreign policy in the Middle East. The widespread presence of a Manichean discourse with patriotic sentiments revealed there was an inherent assumption in the goodness and righteousness of the American cause. Within this narrow confinement of discourse, there was an expression of divergent opinions, principally reflective of the conservative or liberal leaning of each newspaper.

As Fairclough argues, the more mechanical and automatic the functioning of an ideological assumption in discourse, the less likely its workings can be detected, and therefore the greater its security and strength (its hegemonic power) (1989, pp. 85-6). The presence of the nationalistic ideology is so pervasive in American culture that its discursive re-enactment in news media texts is rarely questioned or viewed as problematic. The effects of this on discourse are a promotion of patriotic values and symbols as a form of persuasion, designed to garner public support for specific government policies such as military action or all out wars. The presence of patriotic and nationalistic ideology is not necessarily unique to American media but highlighting its existence aids in questioning notions of journalistic neutrality, balance and objectivity. It is hoped that further studies like this can help to highlight the subtle workings of illegitimate power abuse and injustice as it manifests in news media discourse. This study has also advocated and made a case for a greater appreciation in the field of LIS for the role played by language and discourse in designating meaning to information.
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### APPENDIX A: 2003 NVIVO CODING SUMMARIES

Table A.1 *NYT, Summary of coding of discourses on outcomes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Discourse / Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Prominence</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>War as a success</td>
<td>Emphasis of military operation as a success; Iraq is now heading toward modernity; Iraq is now secure; a success for regional politics</td>
<td>“For now, though, the point was to declare an end to the combat phase of the war in Iraq…No fair-minded person would begrudge Mr. Bush …this celebratory moment. America's armed forces performed courageously in Iraq, dislodging a brutal dictatorship in a swift, decisive campaign. They deserve the nation's thanks and a warm welcome home.”</td>
<td>39 out of 56 articles (70%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Removal of dictatorship</td>
<td>Liberated Iraqis of Hussein’s dictatorship; democratization is underway; women’s liberation; justice for Iraqis by holding former regime officials to account</td>
<td>“… the Pentagon would like to see celebrations that emphasize the recognition of the troops' accomplishment in toppling a dictator, and is considering setting up a task force to help organize events.”</td>
<td>28 out of 56 articles (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Count of Articles (Percentage)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>U.S. reconstruction of Iraq</td>
<td>Emphasis on U.S. re-building and positively transforming Iraq; including such issues as improving Iraqi infrastructure and industries</td>
<td>“Civil affairs forces have been focusing on restoring essential services and helping Iraq get back on its feet. But they, too, have been targets.”</td>
<td>23 out of 56 articles (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Uncertainty over Iraq’s future</td>
<td>Coverage expresses uncertainty in terms of outcomes related to war aims (namely, WMD threat, removing terrorist threat, and establishing political stability through a democratic government)</td>
<td>“The situation in Iraq is now so uncertain that American forces plan to keep rules of engagement that allow them to initiate offensive operations even as they make the transition to &quot;peace enforcement.&quot;”</td>
<td>16 out of 56 articles (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Critical coverage questioning ‘success’ discourse</td>
<td>Questioning outcomes and failure to find WMD or find evidence linking Hussein to al-Qaeda; resulting negative impact on U.S. international relations</td>
<td>“ALL right, so weapons of mass destruction haven't yet been found in Iraq. And no firm link has been established between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda.”</td>
<td>16 out of 56 articles (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Removal of WMD and terror threat</td>
<td>Coverage expresses optimism in finding WMD, and emphasizes removal of WMD and terror threat</td>
<td>“One senses, though, that liberals so detest Mr. Bush that they refuse to acknowledge the simple good that has come from ending Saddam's tyranny -- good for Iraqis and good for America, because it will inhibit other terrorist-supporting regimes.”</td>
<td>9 out of 56 articles (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Discourse / Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>War as a success</td>
<td>Emphasis of military victory; positive coverage of preemptive war policy; stressing other successes of war</td>
<td>“Bush celebrated the swift success of U.S. and allied forces in the three-week conflict in Iraq but made clear that battles lie ahead as the United States roots out threats to its security.”</td>
<td>18 out of 27 articles (67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Uncertainty over Iraq’s future</td>
<td>Coverage expresses warning over risks and challenges facing U.S. military in Iraq; numerous discourses on political vacuum and hostility towards U.S. occupation</td>
<td>“The U.S. military -- and the civilian administration… have barely begun to fill the vacuum left by the collapse of Saddam's government….A new Iraqi government seems a distant dream. As a result, many Iraqis feel they are adrift, their destination uncertain and their future bleak.”</td>
<td>10 out of 27 articles (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=3</td>
<td>Critical coverage questioning ‘success’ discourse</td>
<td>Questioning outcomes and failure to find WMD or find evidence linking Hussein to al-Qaeda; stressing political failure of Iraq War; emphasis on ongoing violence as evidence of failure</td>
<td>“For while the Iraq War has been many things, it is not the ultimate endorsement for the policy of preemption that some conservative backers of the administration see. At least not so far. In spite of Bush's claim Thursday that &quot;we have removed an ally of al-Qaeda,&quot; the U.S. has yet to prove strong links between Saddam's regime and the terrorist group.”</td>
<td>9 out of 27 articles (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Removal of dictatorship</td>
<td>Liberated Iraqis of Hussein’s dictatorship; democratization is underway; discovering evidence of crimes of Hussein’s regime</td>
<td>“From start to finish, President Bush has led the United States and its coalition partners to the most important military victory since World War II. And like the allied victory over the axis powers, the liberation of Iraq is more than the end of a brutal dictatorship: It is the foundation for a decent, humane government that will represent all the people of Iraq.”</td>
<td>9 out of 27 articles (33%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>U.S. reconstruction of Iraq</td>
<td>Emphasis on U.S. re-building and positively transforming Iraq; U.S. is getting Iraqi economy back on its feet</td>
<td>“Companies that want work in the new Iraq swamped a sold-out reconstruction conference Monday, many grumbling they can't find anybody to listen to their business pitch. The U.S.-led Iraqi reconstruction effort is expected to be the largest, costliest exercise in nation-building since the Marshall Plan that followed World War II.”</td>
<td>7 out of 27 articles (26%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table A.3 2003, *WP*, Summary of coding of discourses on outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Discourse / Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Prominence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Removal of dictatorship</td>
<td>Iraqis are now free and better off; democratization is underway; justice for Iraqis by holding former regime officials to account</td>
<td>“Thanks to those who gathered on the carrier's deck and their comrades in arms, Saddam Hussein's homicidal hold on Iraq was broken in three weeks, with relatively small, if painful, losses of Iraqi and American lives. None of the disasters feared before the war has come to pass: neither burning oil fields nor bloody street-to-street battles; neither Arab revolutions nor armed interventions by Iraq's neighbors.”</td>
<td>26 out of 52 articles (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>War as success</td>
<td>Coverage focuses on successes such as favorable effect on regional politics, strengthening of U.S. global power, war being justified by history; emphasis on military victory; situation in Iraq is returning to normal</td>
<td>“Nor can there now be any doubt that most Iraqis welcomed the ouster of Saddam Hussein and the elimination of his apparatus of terror. When the horrors of the Baathist regime -- now being confirmed in terrible but necessary detail -- are set against even the destruction and deaths of the war, it's impossible not to conclude that the United States and its allies have performed a great service for Iraq's 23 million people.”</td>
<td>25 out of 52 articles (48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Critical coverage questioning outcomes</td>
<td>Coverage that may not explicitly refer to the war as a failure, but which questions the successes and rationale for war; coverage that highlights no WMD, and no terror-links</td>
<td>“There have been no confirmed findings of chemical, biological or nuclear weapons. Hussein and most of his top leadership remain unaccounted for. And celebrations among liberated Iraqis have turned into anti-American protests as the country's disparate groups begin to feud.”</td>
<td>19 out of 52 articles (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>U.S. reconstruction of Iraq</td>
<td>Emphasis on U.S. re-building and positively transforming Iraq; normalization of U.S. occupation and control of Iraqi oil and other infrastructure re-building projects</td>
<td>“The U.S. military is still trying to fully restore electricity, water and sewage. National treasures like libraries, museums and universities have been ransacked and burned, and many buildings will have to be razed and constructed anew.”</td>
<td>18 out of 52 articles (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Uncertainty over Iraq’s future</td>
<td>Coverage expresses uncertainty over outcomes and highlights challenges and problems for U.S. and Iraq; mention of desperate situation in Iraq; and questioning of the type of democracy that will emerge</td>
<td>“Nearly a month after the war ended in Iraq, the U.S.-British occupation in the south is defined mainly by absence: the absence of Saddam Hussein's ruthless government, but also the absence of authority, the absence of improvements, the absence of answers about what is coming next.”</td>
<td>16 out of 52 articles (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Removal of WMD and terror threat</td>
<td>Coverage expresses optimism in finding WMD, and emphasizes having eliminated terror threat that Iraq posed</td>
<td>“Bush said. &quot;We do not know the day of final victory, but we have seen the turning of the tide.&quot; Victory in Iraq, he said, was &quot;a crucial advance. . . . We've removed an ally of al Qaeda and cut off a source of terrorist funding.&quot;</td>
<td>10 out of 52 articles (19%)</td>
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Table A.4 2003, *WSJ, Summary of coding of discourses on outcomes*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Discourse / Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Prominence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>U.S. reconstruction of Iraq</td>
<td>Emphasis on: U.S. rebuilding and positively transforming Iraq; economic opportunities for U.S. firms and Iraq itself; plentiful coverage of U.S. role in reconstruction including business and industry assessments; naturalization of U.S. occupation and stressing Iraq’s economic recovery through privatization of Iraq’s large public sector</td>
<td>“U.S. officials insist their strategy is limited and clear: Help repair the country's existing oil infrastructure and turn it over to Iraqi management. Big decisions -- about foreign investment or membership in the OPEC oil cartel -- will be left to Iraqi officials and a new, freely elected government.”</td>
<td>14 out of 23 articles (61%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=2</td>
<td>War as success</td>
<td>Discourse emphasizes military victory; success of progress in Iraq and War on Terror; Iraq is heading towards modernity and many other positive outcomes for Iraq await</td>
<td>“In contrast with devastating American attacks on civilian populations during World War II, Mr. Bush noted the relatively light damage to Iraq in this battle. &quot;With new tactics and precision weapons, we can achieve military objectives without directing violence against civilians,&quot; he said.”</td>
<td>13 out of 23 articles (57%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Newsrooms Details</td>
<td>Supporting Newsrooms Details</td>
<td>Number of articles (%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Removal of dictatorship</td>
<td>Iraqis are now free and better off; justice for Iraqis by holding former regime officials to account; further emphasis on crimes of previous regime; emphasis on political progress and democratization</td>
<td>“The leaders are being questioned for information on weapons of mass destruction and terrorist links to the Saddam Hussein regime. Their fate beyond that is being pondered by government lawyers, who will determine whether to try them for war crimes, turn them over to the new Iraqi government for trial or release them, depending on each official's position and background.”</td>
<td>13 out of 23 articles (57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dealt with threat of WMD</td>
<td>Coverage focuses on having removed threat of Saddam Hussein and WMD as well as potential links between Hussein’s regime with terrorists</td>
<td>“I was one of too few French politicians who was actively involved in pushing for Saddam Hussein's removal. I supported American policies not for the sake of the war but in the hope of improving the fate of the Iraqis and the chances of peace in the Middle East. …I have known that the most formidable weapon of mass destruction threatening his own people and our democratic values was Saddam himself.”</td>
<td>4 out of 23 articles (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Questioning outcomes</td>
<td>Focus on no findings of WMD so far and no evidence linking Hussein to al-Qaeda or terrorism</td>
<td>“While Mr. Bush is riding a wave of public support fueled by war-time sentiment, even Iraq can pose complications for the president. Voters may judge him by what happens inside Iraq in the months ahead, by … how smoothly Iraq's transition to self-government goes, and whether the U.S. finds the weapons of mass destruction that Mr. Bush used to justify the invasion.”</td>
<td>4 out of 23 articles (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Uncertainty over Iraq’s future</td>
<td>Coverage emphasizes uncertainty of outcomes, risks and challenges facing U.S. military in Iraq</td>
<td>“But few companies [in the oil industry] have ever faced such formidable challenges. It isn't clear exactly who's in charge. The new management must pump up oil revenue to finance reconstruction of a land devastated by 22 years of isolation and war. The U.S. faces widespread suspicion that it invaded Iraq largely to grab its oil, despite Washington's denials.</td>
<td>3 out of 23 articles (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Discourse / Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>General positive consequences</td>
<td>Emphasis on positive outcomes of war such as Iraqi liberation, improvement in democratic prospects; coverage focusing on future improvements of public services as a consequence of U.S. occupation; modernization of Iraqi industries; etc.</td>
<td>“The swift demise of Saddam Hussein's government was cause for jubilation at financial institutions that hold Iraqi debt. After trading at less than 10 cents on the dollar before the war, it soared to 25 cents as the outcome became assured.”</td>
<td>17 out of 56 articles (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Worsening security situation in Iraq</td>
<td>Focus on increased lawlessness; greater threat of violence due to insecurity; mention of de-stabilization of Iraq; increased terrorist threat</td>
<td>“In the night, there is shooting. Sharp, sudden bursts of gunfire that keep Talib Juad and his family awake and afraid. Sometimes, he said, they find bodies in the morning. This is how it goes in many neighborhoods across Baghdad. The main war is over, but in the power vacuum of no police force and no government, the shooting continues.”</td>
<td>16 out of 56 articles (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Destruction of Iraq’s infrastructure</td>
<td>Coverage mentioning damage to public services such as schools, hospitals, or other civilian infrastructure</td>
<td>“Millions of Iraqis are facing a collapse of law and order and wrenching interruptions of vital services, including water, electricity and health care.”</td>
<td>15 out of 56 articles (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General negative consequences</td>
<td>Generalized critical coverage of negative outcomes of the war such as potential adverse impact on U.S. economy; focus on the costs of the war for the American taxpayer; reference to issues of insecurity, problems with infrastructure and industry, and challenges facing Iraq</td>
<td>“Mr. Ghadhban said his immediate challenge would be to increase oil production for domestic use, which so far remains a trickle. Iraqis need oil to run their power plants, and propane and kerosene for cooking. Several important pipelines linking oil fields and refineries were damaged during the war.”</td>
<td>13 out of 56 articles (23%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Civilian deaths</td>
<td>Explicit focus on civilian deaths as a consequence of war-related events in Iraq</td>
<td>“The attack followed several days of disturbances in which American soldiers exchanged fire with an unknown number of attackers as civilians demonstrated against the American presence. As many as 17 Iraqis -including civilians, according to local residents -- were killed. Angry crowds in Falluja today were clearly on the side of the attackers, not the troops…In response to these attacks, American commanders plan to seek out the former Baath Party officials they believe are behind the provocation.”</td>
<td>10 out of 56 articles (18%)</td>
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355

6

Worsening political
situation

Coverage focuses on
resulting political quagmire,
power vacuum; critique of
nation building as policy;
increased regional instability;
increased ethnic tensions

“In a virtual power vacuum, with the
relationship between American military
and civilian authority seeming ill
defined, new political parties, Kurds and
Shiite religious groups are asserting virtual
governmental authority in cities and
villages across the country, sometimes
right under the noses of American
soldiers.”

9 out of 56 articles
(16%)

7

Growing antiAmerican sentiment

Coverage mentioning
growing Iraqi suspicions of
U.S. intentions in Iraq;
coverage focusing on antiAmerican protests or Iraqi
frustrations with U.S.
occupation

“Back in Baghdad as of Thursday, she [an
Iraqi civilian] expressed frustration with
the United States, saying it has so far
mismanaged the postwar occupation and
has been too slow to restore public
services.”

7 out of 56 articles
(13%)


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<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Discourse / Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Prominence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Growing anti-American sentiment</td>
<td>Coverage mentioning growing Iraqi suspicions of U.S. intentions in Iraq; coverage focusing on anti-American protests or Iraqi frustrations with U.S. occupation</td>
<td>“As with the shootings on Tuesday, Iraqis gave a different version of the events. &quot;We were in front of the Americans' military base chanting: 'No to America! No to Saddam!' &quot; said Majid Khader Abbas, Al-Jumaili's younger brother, weeping as he stood next to the coffin. &quot;The soldiers started firing above our heads, and then they fired at the demonstrators.&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>7 out of 27 articles (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Civilian deaths</td>
<td>Explicit focus on civilian deaths as a consequence of war-related events in Iraq</td>
<td>“Two men had been killed by U.S. soldiers Wednesday, and the Iraqi mourners in one of the funeral processions were still seething eight hours later. The soldiers had fired on demonstrators after reportedly being targeted by gunmen. &quot;God is great!&quot; the mourners chanted. Several fired Kalashnikov rifles in the air to hail one of the dead men, who was lying in an open wooden coffin wrapped in the Iraqi flag.”</td>
<td>7 out of 27 articles (26%)</td>
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<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>Count of Articles (%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>General negative consequences</td>
<td>Generalized critical coverage of negative outcomes of the war such as potential adverse impact on U.S. economy; focus on the costs of the war for the American taxpayer; reference to issues of insecurity, problems with infrastructure and industry, and challenges facing Iraq</td>
<td>“Critics point out that a U.S military victory was never in doubt. And more than a few uncomfortable realities mar the prologue of this otherwise triumphant war narrative. Among them: delays in restoring electricity and other basic services, sporadic sniper attacks and protests against the U.S. occupation that have turned violent.”</td>
<td>5 out of 27 articles (19%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worsening political situation</td>
<td>Coverage emphasizing creation of power vacuum and political quagmire; coverage critiquing nation building and lack of democracy in Iraq</td>
<td>“Already, however, local Muslim clerics, tribal leaders and would-be politicians are assuming power across Iraq. The slow start of the post-war effort has allowed such power grabs in many towns -- and might be difficult to undo.”</td>
<td>5 out of 27 articles (19%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coalition forces deaths</td>
<td>Specific reference to and coverage of deaths of U.S. personnel or non-U.S. coalition forces</td>
<td>“The 43-day conflict has been a triumph of a determined superpower over a dangerous dictator without the massive loss of life many feared at the war's outset: 137 U.S. and 32 British troops died, along with several thousand Iraqi soldiers and civilians.”</td>
<td>4 out of 27 articles (15%)</td>
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<td>Topic</td>
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<td>Sample Text</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worsening security situation in Iraq</td>
<td>Focus on increased lawlessness; greater threat of violence due to insecurity; mention of de-stabilization of Iraq</td>
<td>“Having easily won the war for Iraq, the United States has yet to win the peace. Iraqis say they view the U.S. military occupation with suspicion, anger and frustration. Many even say life was in some ways better under the regime of Saddam Hussein: The streets, they say, were safer, jobs more secure, food more plentiful and electricity and water supplies reliable.”</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase in Iraqi suffering</td>
<td>Specific coverage that focuses on issues facing Iraqi civilians including unemployment, food shortages, poverty, and other general suffering</td>
<td>“Already, they've [an Iraqi family] sold furniture for money to live on. &quot;We hate Americans,&quot; Jasim says. &quot;We lost our living. They destroyed our life, our happiness. Saddam Hussein was an unjust man, but he never did this.&quot; Saddam's regime did provide basics: rations of rice, vegetable oil, tea, sugar and other necessities. His government dominated the economy, providing steady work (usually with miserly wages) to millions. It also policed the streets and kept traffic running smoothly.”</td>
<td>11%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destruction of Iraq’s infrastructure</td>
<td>Coverage mentioning damage to public services such as schools, hospitals, or other civilian infrastructure</td>
<td>“Many [Iraqis] even say life was in some ways better under the regime of Saddam Hussein: The streets, they say, were safer, jobs more secure, food more plentiful and electricity and water supplies reliable.”</td>
<td>11%</td>
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Table A.7 2003, WP, Summary of coding of discourses on consequences

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<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Discourse / Code</th>
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<th>Example</th>
<th>Prominence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Worsening security situation in Iraq</td>
<td>Focus on increased lawlessness; greater threat of violence due to insecurity; mention of de-stabilization of Iraq; increase in threat of Islamist terrorism</td>
<td>“A Halliburton spokeswoman in Kuwait City said that shortly after the exchange with Mohammed, unidentified Iraqis opened fire on a KBR team in front of the gas-oil separation plant. No one was hurt, but the team had to be &quot;escorted out by coalition forces,&quot; she said, adding that &quot;KBR will continue its mission, under the Corps' direction, to help the Iraqi people restore their oil production.&quot;”</td>
<td>17 out of 52 articles (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Growing anti-American sentiment</td>
<td>Coverage mentioning growing Iraqi suspicions of U.S. intentions in Iraq; coverage focusing on anti-American protests or Iraqi frustrations with U.S. occupation; loss of U.S. credibility</td>
<td>“&quot;We are confused now. We are suspicious. Why is there an absence of political control?&quot; asked Abbas Nema, 36, an unemployed resident of Amarah, where the electricity had been turned off for the previous two days. The Americans &quot;want a mess in the political situation so they can do what they have planned.&quot;”</td>
<td>16 out of 52 articles (31%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>General negative consequences</td>
<td>Generalized critical coverage of negative outcomes of the war such as problems with infrastructure and industry, and challenges facing U.S. in Iraq; focus on lack of progress or improvement; criticism of unilateralist policy</td>
<td>“The Hussein government has evaporated, but nothing has emerged yet to take its place, even in the part of Iraq most clearly pacified and ready for reconstruction. Makeshift city councils are being formed, yet Iraqis consider them a poor substitute for an established government.”</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Destruction of Iraq’s infrastructure</td>
<td>Coverage focusing on damage to public services such as schools, hospitals, or other civilian infrastructure, and lack of energy for civilian population</td>
<td>“But at the 500-bed Basra General Hospital, doctors told of a lack of security and a shortage of supplies. &quot;We have no drugs,&quot; said Alaa Hussein Farhan, a plastic surgeon, as Garner met with the hospital director. &quot;We have no antibiotics. We have no anesthesia. There is a crisis of gastroenteritis, because of the bad water in homes.”</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Increase in Iraqi suffering</td>
<td>Specific coverage that focuses on issues facing Iraqi civilians including unemployment, food shortages, poverty, and other general suffering</td>
<td>“The oil workers stood listlessly in front of the plant, hair blown brittle by a dusty wind, as they shared cigarettes and bitterness for lack of anything else to do. They complained about the looting that has left them without a chair to sit on, let alone a tool to wield. They worried about whether the state oil company can continue to pay them.”</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Worsening political situation</td>
<td>Coverage emphasizing creation of power vacuum and political quagmire; coverage critiquing nation building and lack of democracy in Iraq</td>
<td>“In cities across the Shiite-inhabited region stretching southward from Najaf to the Persian Gulf, business and personal affairs remain largely at a standstill. Iraqis say they are waiting, most of all, for someone to take charge.”</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Civilian deaths</td>
<td>Explicit focus on civilian deaths as a consequence of war-related events in Iraq</td>
<td>“Fallujah has been wracked by violent anti-American demonstrations since Monday, when shooting broke out as demonstrators converged on a school where soldiers from the Army's 82nd Airborne Division had set up camp. U.S. officers said the soldiers opened fire after several armed protesters shot at the school, but participants in the rally insisted they were unarmed. Local officials said 16 people were killed and more than 50 were wounded.”</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>General positive consequences</td>
<td>Emphasis on positive outcomes of war such as Iraqi liberation, improvement in democratic prospects; coverage focusing on future improvements of public services as a consequence of U.S. occupation; modernization of Iraqi industries; downplaying of civilian and U.S. deaths</td>
<td>8 out of 52</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>“Nor can there now be any doubt that most Iraqis welcomed the ouster of Saddam Hussein and the elimination of his apparatus of terror. When the horrors of the Baathist regime -- now being confirmed in terrible but necessary detail -- are set against even the destruction and deaths of the war, it's impossible not to conclude that the United States and its allies have performed a great service for Iraq's 23 million people.”</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Weakening of U.S.’s international relations</td>
<td>Coverages suggest damage to U.S. credibility and image; as well as weakening of U.N. as a result of unilateralist action</td>
<td>7 out of 52</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>“Leaders of France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg…agreed…to increase defense cooperation within Europe to reduce dependence on the United States.”</td>
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Table A.8 2003, *WSJ, Summary of coding of discourses on consequences*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Discourse / Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Prominence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>General positive consequences</td>
<td>Expression of positive sentiments about consequences with emphasis on Iraqi liberation, improvement in democratic prospects; coverage focusing on future improvements of public services as a consequence of U.S. occupation; modernization of Iraqi industries; etc.</td>
<td>“The hopes for an economic dividend from postwar Iraq go beyond reconstruction work. Talk of privatizing much of Iraq's economy could create chances for direct foreign investment by its neighbors.”</td>
<td>9 out of 23 articles (39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Challenges to reconstruction</td>
<td>Rather than emphasis on destruction of infrastructure, this discourse is concerned with problems the U.S. will face in rebuilding Iraq’s infrastructure</td>
<td>“Underscoring the problem, U.S. officials in charge of rebuilding Iraq's energy infrastructure were making plans yesterday to import gasoline and liquefied petroleum gas, or LPG, to meet domestic demand. The idea was floated weeks ago as a last-ditch measure to restore operations at Iraq's large southern refinery near Basra. Iraqi officials in the south said at the time it was unlikely they would need it.”</td>
<td>5 out of 23 articles (22%)</td>
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<td>Theme</td>
<td>Discourse Description</td>
<td>Quotes</td>
<td>Count of Articles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worsening political situation</td>
<td>Coverage emphasizing creation of power vacuum and political quagmire; focus on increase in religious leaders as a problem for democracy</td>
<td>“Tension persists, though. In the power vacuum that enveloped Iraq after the war, Mr. Leaby emerged as a force at South Oil. When he heard that American contractors were issuing new plastic photo-identification cards and handing out American dollars, he put the word out to workers that Iraqi executives -- not the Americans -- were still in charge.”</td>
<td>4 out of 23 articles (17%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Destruction of infrastructure</td>
<td>This discourse differs from others on infrastructure as the WSJ’s prominent focuses remains on fuel shortages the country’s lack of energy</td>
<td>“Electricity is another big headache at refineries. With key transmission lines down across the country, refineries haven't had enough dependable power to operate at higher capacity, even if they had room to store gasoline byproducts.”</td>
<td>3 out of 23 articles (13%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>General negative consequences</td>
<td>Some reflection on challenges facing U.S. military; and references to difficulties resulting from war</td>
<td>“But looters damaged the electronics controlling his pumps, and erratic power makes it impossible to stay open long. Security worries have also hampered operations. Before the war, Mr. Jaffer said, most gasoline stations were open 24 hours a day. Now, he opens at 7 a.m. and closes at 3 p.m., to allow time to drive home before dark.”</td>
<td>2 out of 23 articles (9%)</td>
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<td>Topic</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Articles (%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Civilian deaths</td>
<td>Explicit reference to civilian deaths as a consequence of war-related events in Iraq</td>
<td>“U.S. troops again fired on Iraqi protesters in Fallujah, killing two.”</td>
<td>2 out of 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Growing anti-American sentiment</td>
<td>Coverage mentioning growing Iraqi anger or frustration towards U.S. occupation; coverage focusing on anti-American protests</td>
<td>“In Fallujah last week, U.S. Army soldiers fired into a crowd of anti-American protesters, killing 18 people. A day later, in what appeared to be a direct response to the killings, someone tossed grenades into a compound controlled by the U.S., injuring seven American soldiers.”</td>
<td>2 out of 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>U.S. personnel injured</td>
<td>Coverage mentions incidents in which U.S. soldiers were injured (but no reference to deaths)</td>
<td>“In Iraq, seven soldiers were injured by grenades in Fallujah, site of recent fatal clashes with protesting Iraqis.”</td>
<td>2 out of 23</td>
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Table A.9 2003, *NYT*, Summary of coding of discourses on responsibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Discourse / Code (prominence)</th>
<th>Attribution of Responsibility</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Prominence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>General discourse on destruction caused by invasion – including destruction of civilian infrastructure as well cultural heritage destruction. (27 out of 56 articles, 48%)</td>
<td>Hussein or his regime</td>
<td>“Still, other members of the administration are clearly concerned that until Mr. Hussein is proved dead, his loyalists will still harass American occupation troops, setting off grenade attacks or car bombs.”</td>
<td>18 out of 27 articles (67%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Various extremist or criminal elements, or unidentified others</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Although some children here have started going to school again, many, particularly in the poorer sections of the city, returned to find no desks, no paper and no pens. Everything had been stolen by looters. So the children remain on the streets.”</td>
<td>12 out of 27 articles (44%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>U.S.</td>
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<td>“Iraqi oil workers are gradually returning to their jobs in the country's vast fields. But they have come back to see their pipelines damaged by allied bombing, and their local offices stripped bare by looters, making guidance and information from Baghdad, where American troops protected the oil ministry, all the more crucial.”</td>
<td>2 out of 27 articles (7%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>General discourse about various negative war-related outcomes (e.g. political situation, security situation, lack of civilian services etc.) (23 out of 56 articles, 41%)</td>
<td>Iraqis (including citing cultural and ethnic differences amongst Iraqis)</td>
<td>“Earlier this week, several hundred people stood outside a Baghdad social club that had been used only days before by Muhammad al-Zobeidi, a businessman who had proclaimed himself mayor. The Americans had arrested Mr. Zobeidi, and he and all of his men were gone. But still the crowd came, heeding his earlier promise to put Iraqis to work. The result was pandemonium, with hucksters selling bogus job applications and absconding with the cash.”</td>
<td>15 out of 23 articles (65%)</td>
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<td>“Mr. George said that a significant part of the looting was professionally organized by gangs with glass cutters and sets of keys. But the pillage might have been prevented, he said, with only a slightly more vigorous response from the American military. &quot;Moving a tank for 50 or 60 meters would have saved the museum,&quot; he said.”</td>
<td>11 out of 23 articles (48%)</td>
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<td>U.S.</td>
<td>United States officials have said they are stepping up efforts to stop Iranian agents from entering Iraq, but along this frontier it was clear why Mr. Hussein was never able to stop cross-border traffic.”</td>
<td>7 out of 23 articles (30%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>General discourse about various positive war-related outcomes (e.g. improvements in Iraq, improved security situation, helping Iraqi recovery). (16 out of 56 articles, 29%)</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>“Kanan Makiya, a professor who supports Mr. Chalabi's group, said that some 300 Iraqis who attended a meeting of Iraqi leaders on Monday overwhelmingly endorsed American efforts to &quot;de-Baathify&quot; Iraq.”</td>
<td>14 out of 16 articles (88%)</td>
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<td>Iraqis</td>
<td>“The appointment of the two Iraqis in particular was welcomed by oil experts, who noted that both men are respected within the Iraqi oil sector.”</td>
<td>3 out of 16 articles (19%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>General discourse on civilian deaths and state of violence. (13 out of 56 articles, 23%)</td>
<td>Hussein regime or Hussein loyalists</td>
<td>“&quot;We have difficult work to do in Iraq. We are bringing order to parts of that country that remain dangerous. We are pursuing and finding leaders of the old regime, who will be held account for their crimes.&quot;”</td>
<td>9 out of 13 articles (69%)</td>
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<td>U.S.</td>
<td>“But Iraqi civilian and military doctors said in interviews last week that they believed that roughly 80 civilians were killed and 400 wounded during the bombing…they said that since the two cities fell to the Americans, more than 130 civilians have died and nearly 600 people have been injured.”</td>
<td>3 out of 13 articles (23%)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Discourse on negative political situation, including difficulties in post-war Iraq and reaching political solutions. (11 out of 56 articles, 20%)</td>
<td>U.S. (e.g. lack of post-war planning; poor strategy)</td>
<td>“There is a growing sense among educated Iraqis eager for the American-led transformation of Iraq to work that the Americans may be losing the initiative, that the single-mindedness that won the war is slackening under the delicate task of transforming a military victory into political success. &quot;Real freedom is organized and productive,&quot; said S. S. Nadir, a prominent art critic in Baghdad.”</td>
<td>5 out of 11 articles (46%)</td>
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<td>Islam – i.e. discourse asserts incompatibility between Islam and democracy</td>
<td>“Some of the leading Iraqi clerics have issued proclamations expressing intense hostility toward the United States, viewed as an infidel power whose temptations will ultimately corrupt the kingdom of Islam.”</td>
<td>4 out of 11 articles (36%)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Iraqis</td>
<td>“Popular elections, however, would have required a thorough census and extensive organization that the city lacks…. A disgruntled Kurdish representative, Sadun Suleiman, said many of those elected were loyalists to the former government. The list, he said, included Mr. Hussein's personal pilot, and two men whose wives had been lovers of Mr. Hussein's.”</td>
<td>1 out of 11 articles (9%)</td>
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<td>Rank</td>
<td>Discourse / Code</td>
<td>Attribution of Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>General discourse on destruction caused by invasion – including destruction of civilian infrastructure (8 out of 27 articles, 30%)</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>“Jasim [an Iraqi civilian] wonders how they will support their two young boys. Already, they've sold furniture for money to live on. &quot;We hate Americans,&quot; Jasim says. &quot;We lost our living. They destroyed our life, our happiness. Saddam Hussein was an unjust man, but he never did this.&quot;”</td>
<td>1 out of 8 articles (13%)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Various extremist or criminal elements, or unidentified others</td>
<td>“Davis said the shootings in Fallujah played into the hands of Saddam loyalists, who might have infiltrated the demonstrations to provoke U.S. forces. Many armed militiamen or extremist Saddam supporters are believed to have fled Baghdad to places such as Fallujah, which is 30 miles west of the capital.”</td>
<td>1 out of 8 articles (13%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hussein regime or Hussein loyalists</td>
<td>“Davis said the shootings in Fallujah played into the hands of Saddam loyalists, who might have infiltrated the demonstrations to provoke U.S. forces. Many armed militiamen or extremist Saddam supporters are believed to have fled Baghdad to places such as Fallujah, which is 30 miles west of the capital.”</td>
<td>1 out of 8 articles (13%)</td>
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<td>#</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Coverage</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>General discourse on civilian deaths and state of violence.</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>“As the soldiers passed the protesters, &quot;someone in the crowd shot at them,&quot; Harris said. The soldiers in the vehicles returned fire and killed two men.”</td>
<td>5 out of 7 articles (71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hussein regime or Hussein loyalists</td>
<td>“Davis said the shootings in Fallujah played into the hands of Saddam loyalists, who might have infiltrated the demonstrations to provoke U.S. forces. Many armed militiamen or extremist Saddam supporters are believed to have fled Baghdad to places such as Fallujah, which is 30 miles west of the capital. The population here is made up of Sunni Muslims. For years, residents had supported Saddam, whose regime was dominated by Sunnis, and fed his Republican Guard soldiers.”</td>
<td>1 out of 7 articles (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>General discourse about various negative war-related outcomes (e.g. political situation, security situation, lack of civilian services etc.).</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>“&quot;I'm sitting here without money, without a job, without electrical power,&quot; says Hussein Mohammed Ali, 52 [an Iraqi civilian]…&quot;How can I believe in anything the USA tells me?&quot; &quot;The Americans made promises, but we have seen nothing,&quot; says Kamaran Abdullah, 35, a once-prosperous Kurdish merchant.”</td>
<td>4 out of 5 articles (80%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discourse on political situation, including difficulties in post-war Iraq and reaching political solutions. (4 out of 27 articles, 15%)</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>“In interviews, Baghdad residents say they regard the U.S. officials here as remote. The Americans -- military and civilian alike -- are barracked behind barbed wire inside Saddam's Republican Palace. About one mile inside the vast presidential compound, the Americans sleep on camp beds behind the palace's gold-plated doors. With Garner's operation inaccessible to almost all Iraqis, most people see only the military side of the U.S. occupation.”</td>
<td>3 out of 4 articles (75%)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>General discourse about various positive war-related outcomes (e.g. improvements in Iraq, improved security situation, helping Iraqi recovery). (3 out of 27 articles, 11%)</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>“&quot;Rebuilding a country is a fascinating story,&quot; Shapiro says. &quot;It has all sorts of aspects: political, economic, religious -and the best of U.S. intentions.&quot;”</td>
<td>2 out of 3 articles (67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iraqis</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Spears says. &quot;The [Iraqi] workers put in 12-hour shifts, six days a week. I'd take some of these guys back to Scotland with me.&quot;”</td>
<td>1 out of 3 articles (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Discourse / Code</td>
<td>Attribution of Responsibility</td>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Prominence</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>General discourse about various negative war-related outcomes (e.g. political situation, security situation, lack of civilian services etc.). (20 out of 52 articles, 39%)</td>
<td>U.S. (principally of Bush administration’s policies and lack of post-war planning)</td>
<td>“In reality, success in Iraq as well as in the war on terrorism will require considerable initiative on a front Mr. Bush hardly mentioned: alliances. The war on terrorism, as the president has frequently acknowledged, requires not just military operations but cooperation with many nations on intelligence, finance and police work. Yet the Iraq War has damaged U.S. ties with a number of states and weakened the United Nations.”</td>
<td>17 out of 20 articles (85%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iraqis</td>
<td></td>
<td>“In today's attack, Lt. Col. Tobin Green of the 3rd Armored Cavalry, which has assumed responsibility for the city from the 82nd Airborne, said a group of men approached the compound about 1 a.m. His soldiers did not fire, he said, citing concern over further inflaming tensions. But then the grenades were thrown into the compound, a former police station taken over by the U.S. military, and the soldiers fired back, he said. No one was believed to have been hit.”</td>
<td>4 out of 20 articles (20%)</td>
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<td>#</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Influences</td>
<td>Quote</td>
<td>Percent of Articles</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Iranians or other outside influences</td>
<td>“The Shiite demonstrators in Iraqi streets represent a highly organized minority, many of whom are affiliated with, infiltrated by and financed by Tehran, the headquarters for 20 years of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq.”</td>
<td>1 out of 20 articles (5%)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>General discourse on destruction caused by invasion – including destruction of civilian infrastructure as well cultural heritage destruction. (18 out of 52 articles, 35%)</td>
<td>Hussein regime or Hussein loyalists</td>
<td>“But as the military starts to rebuild institutions, offices and services that have been worn down from years of neglect and ravaged by war, the dilapidated zoo is finally getting some attention.”</td>
<td>8 out of 18 articles (44%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Various extremist or criminal elements</td>
<td>“In particular, they have criticized U.S. forces for doing too little to stop the widespread looting that erupted immediately after the defeat of Hussein's government and has continued sporadically since.”</td>
<td>5 out of 18 articles (28%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>“The headmaster, Mohammed Ahmed, said that before they left, U.S. soldiers had damaged furniture and classroom supplies and left offensive graffiti on the walls. In one classroom, &quot;I [love] pork,&quot; with the word love represented by a heart, was written on the blackboard…”</td>
<td>1 out of 18 articles (6%)</td>
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<td>Discordance Type</td>
<td>Focus Area</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Extracted Text</td>
<td>Count</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>General discourse on civilian deaths and state of violence. (10 out of 52 articles, 19%)</td>
<td>U.S. (or coalition forces)</td>
<td>“One Iraqi was killed during the raids when he attempted to grab a rifle from an American soldier, U.S. military officers said.”</td>
<td>8 out of 10 articles (80%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hussein regime or Hussein loyalists</td>
<td>“U.S. military officials contend the violence has been instigated by a small but fanatical group of Hussein loyalists seeking to draw U.S. forces into shooting civilians in an effort to whip up anti-American sentiment.”</td>
<td>4 out of 10 articles (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Discourse on political situation, including difficulties in post-war Iraq and reaching political solutions. (10 out of 52 articles, 19%)</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>“‘This is what happens when you have no government,' the chamber president, Abboud Tufaily, said ruefully. 'People were very happy about the fall of Saddam, but this happiness has been shrinking. The Americans should have had a prearranged program for the postwar period. Even the conflict between the Pentagon and the State Department makes the situation worse.'”</td>
<td>4 out of 10 articles (40%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Islam – i.e. discourse asserts incompatibility between Islam and democracy</td>
<td>“U.S. military commanders have done relatively little to crack down on the legions of religious clerics, tribal sheiks and once-exiled opposition leaders who have since grabbed power without permission in postwar Iraq.”</td>
<td>2 out of 10 articles (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Discourse on worsening security situation in Iraq. (10 out of 52 articles, 19%)</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>“The looting and the elimination of the political establishment without a ready replacement are causing major problems.”</td>
<td>6 out of 10 articles (60%)</td>
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<td>=3</td>
<td>Discourse on worsening security situation in Iraq. (10 out of 52 articles, 19%)</td>
<td>Hussein regime or Hussein loyalists</td>
<td>“In Baghdad's wealthy Mansour district, meanwhile, people believed by witnesses to be militiamen loyal to Hussein set fire to a commercial shopping center, sending billows of black smoke into a twilight sky.”</td>
<td>2 out of 10 articles (20%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shia militants</td>
<td>“The situation is made all the more volatile by the fact that the various components of Iraqi society are always on the brink of violence. Whether they are easily manipulated by the Iranian mullahs or not, the Shiites -- 65% of the population -- need to play a leading role in the coming government: it is the best way to prevent the real threat of an Islamic regime in Baghdad.”</td>
<td>2 out of 10 articles (20%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>General discourse about various positive war-related outcomes (e.g. improvements in Iraq, improved security situation, helping Iraqi recovery). (7 out of 52 articles, 14%)</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>“I supported the war and I like the outcome. I think there's a chance that Iraq will be democratized, that this will affect the entire Middle East (Syria is already behaving better) and that no matter what, it was good to get rid of the monstrous Saddam Hussein and free the Iraqi people. But more and more I am beginning to think we have fought a good war for the wrong reasons.”</td>
<td>7 out of 7 articles (100%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Discourse / Code</td>
<td>Attribution of Responsibility</td>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Prominence</td>
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<tr>
<td>=1</td>
<td>General discourse on destruction caused by invasion – including destruction of civilian infrastructure. (9 out of 23 articles, 39%)</td>
<td>Hussein regime or Hussein loyalists</td>
<td>“Unicef said cutting child mortality, which soared under anti-Hussein sanctions, will be a key indicator of success in rebuilding. The U.S. confirmed Qusay Hussein showed up at the central bank just before the war and took off with $1 billion.”</td>
<td>3 out of 9 articles (33%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looters / criminals</td>
<td></td>
<td>“South Oil's headquarters, a sprawling campus in Basra, was ransacked by looters after the British captured the city. A seven-story tower is charred from fire. The campus's courtyard is carpeted by papers flung from the windows: oil-field diagrams, computer spreadsheets and business contracts.”</td>
<td>2 out of 9 articles (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=1</td>
<td>Discourse on economic problems facing Iraq. (9 out of 23 articles, 39%)</td>
<td>Hussein regime’s legacy</td>
<td>“It's not just U.S. companies that stand to gain from rebuilding the Iraqi economy after war, crippling sanctions and Saddam Hussein's mismanagement.”</td>
<td>9 out of 9 articles (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General discourse about various negative war-related outcomes (e.g. economic/political/security situation, lack of civilian services etc.). (7 out of 23 articles, 30%)</td>
<td>Emphasis on negative outcomes pre-dating invasion – i.e. implicating previous regime/s</td>
<td>“The team [part of the Iraqi oil ministry] will oversee day-to-day management responsibilities for the country's massive but dilapidated oil industry, as well as its oil sales and marketing operations.”</td>
<td>7 out of 7 articles (100%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iraqis</td>
<td>“A day later, in what appeared to be a direct response to the killings, someone tossed grenades into a compound controlled by the U.S., injuring seven American soldiers. Though the events by themselves have little effect on the overall military mission, they illustrate the difficulty combat soldiers are having in restoring peace to Iraq, which continues to chafe under U.S. attempts to restore order.”</td>
<td>1 out of 7 articles (14%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>General discourse on civilian deaths and state of violence. (5 out of 23 articles, 22%)</td>
<td>Hussein regime or Hussein loyalists</td>
<td>[Re attack on ITN journalists] “The AKE report also speculated that the missing men might not have been in the SUV when it came under fire. It said the Iraqi fighters might have pulled the ITN pair out of their SUV and used it to attack the tanks. &quot;It seems clear that the answer to that lies with some of the Baath Party members who were there that day,&quot; says Andrew Kain, the managing director of AKE.”</td>
<td>2 out of 5 articles (40%)</td>
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<td>#</td>
<td>Discourse</td>
<td>Source(s)</td>
<td>Text</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>[Re attack on ITN Journalists] Later, an ITN reporter in Baghdad located the commander of the U.S. unit whose tanks fired in the incident. He said his men had seen the &quot;TV&quot; markings on the SUVs but concluded they contained Iraqi fighters on a suicide-bombing mission, ITN says, because the SUVs and the Iraqi pickup all were approaching simultaneously at high speed.</td>
<td>2 out of 5 articles (40%)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>U.S. (including 1 article specifically praising Bush regime)</td>
<td>&quot;In his first foray to the Middle East since the U.S. victory in Iraq, Secretary of State Colin Powell pressured Syria to abandon its support for radical militants and won assurances from Damascus that it has closed offices of some anti-Israel groups here.&quot;</td>
<td>5 out 5 articles (100%)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Islam – i.e. discourse asserts incompatibility between Islam and democracy</td>
<td>&quot;The situation is made all the more volatile by the fact that the various components of Iraqi society are always on the brink of violence. Whether... manipulated by the Iranian mullahs or not, the Shiites... need to play a leading role in the coming government: it is the best way to prevent the real threat of an Islamic regime in Baghdad.&quot;</td>
<td>1 out of 2 articles (50%)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>General discourse about various positive war-related outcomes (e.g. improvements in Iraq, improved security situation, helping Iraqi recovery). (5 out 23 articles, 22%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>General discourse about various positive war-related outcomes (e.g. improvements in Iraq, improved security situation, helping Iraqi recovery). (5 out 23 articles, 22%)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Discourse on political situation, including difficulties in post-war Iraq and reaching political solutions. (2 out of 23 articles, 9%)</td>
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# APPENDIX B: 2011 NVIVO CODING SUMMARIES

Table B.1 2011, NYT, *Summary of coding of discourses on outcomes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Discourse / Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Prominence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>=1</td>
<td>War as a success</td>
<td>Iraq has opportunity for democracy; U.S. and Iraq are now partners; Reconstruction initiatives are underway and will help release Iraq’s economic potential; situation in Iraq is returning to normal; U.S. military victory; success for regional politics; oil output is improving; U.S.is safer as a result of this war</td>
<td>“Calls to prayer ring out from minarets where insurgent snipers once perched. In restaurants once obliterated by mortars and airstrikes, waiters skate from table to table with trays of lamb kebabs and fire-roasted tomatoes. Opulent houses rise from fields of rubble, built by sheiks, contractors and anyone else who benefited, illicitly or not, from the vast sums of American money that poured into Iraq during the war.”</td>
<td>15 out of 22 articles (68%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=1</td>
<td>War as a failure</td>
<td>Coverage emphasized fragile security situation due to ongoing violence; uncertain future; ongoing sectarianism; no WMD found and no links to terrorism proven; negative impact on global perception of U.S.</td>
<td>“After so much pain and sacrifice, Iraqis now have the responsibility for making their own better future. The fighting is not over, and success is still a long shot. …the list of errors and horrors in this war is inexcusably long, starting with a rush to invasion based on manipulated intelligence.”</td>
<td>15 out of 22 articles (68%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outcomes not what U.S. wanted</td>
<td>Iraqi government not a reliable U.S. ally; Iraqi government is increasingly sectarian and unrepresentative; Iraq oil output is still slow</td>
<td>“As we get out… There are troubling signs that Maliki, who ordered troops to shoot at unarmed protesters in February, is turning into &quot;Saddam-lite,&quot; as The National Journal dubbed him. Authoritarian instincts there are still so strong, a political challenge can be seen as a coup attempt.”</td>
<td>9 out of 22 articles (41%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Removal of dictatorship</td>
<td>Liberated Iraqis of Hussein’s dictatorship; democratization is underway</td>
<td>“Iraq has improved in some respects. Life in Baghdad has blossomed in recent years -- street life has returned, markets are bustling, a new amusement park is opening and even the circus came to town this year. The government of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, while hamstrung by sectarian infighting, was chosen in elections last year that international monitors declared as free.”</td>
<td>6 out of 22 articles (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>U.S. reconstruction of Iraq</td>
<td>Emphasis on U.S. re-building and positively transforming Iraq; including such issues as improving Iraqi infrastructure and industries; U.S. paying for improvements</td>
<td>“After investing billions of dollars, the United States has had more success rebuilding Iraq's security forces.”</td>
<td>5 out of 22 articles (23%)</td>
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Table B.2 2011, USA Today, Summary of coding of discourses on outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Discourse / Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Prominence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>War as a success</td>
<td>Emphasis on positive outcomes such as removal of dictatorship; democratization; military victory; life returning to normal; success for region</td>
<td>&quot;The war in Iraq ended officially Thursday with a flag-lowering ceremony in which Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said a free, democratic Iraq was worth the sacrifice in American lives. &quot;The cost was high -- in blood and treasure for the United States and also for the Iraqi people,&quot; Panetta said. &quot;But those lives have not been lost in vain.&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>9 out of 9 articles (100%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Improvements in the lives of Iraqis</td>
<td>Iraqis are now better off; they are free; they have inclusive government and growing economic opportunities</td>
<td>“Ramadi streets are jammed with new cars. Cafes are open and people freely argue over matters of the day. &quot;Now we can have an open dialogue,&quot; said Hikmet Suleiman [an Iraqi civilian]”</td>
<td>8 out of 9 articles (89%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Removal of dictatorship</td>
<td>Liberated Iraqis of Hussein’s dictatorship; democratization is underway; Hussein was evil</td>
<td>[Iraq is]“undoubtedly freer than it was under dictator Saddam Hussein. Saddam's use of chemical weapons to kill his own people and fears that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction with which to menace other nations led to the war. Saddam was eventually captured and justly executed for his murderous acts, and today Iraq has far freer elections than it had under his rule.”</td>
<td>7 out of 9 articles (78%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>U.S. reconstruction of Iraq</td>
<td>Emphasis on U.S. re-building and positively transforming Iraq; U.S. is getting Iraqi economy back on its feet</td>
<td>“Some major U.S. hotel chains are planning to go into Iraq just as the last of U.S. troops are pulling out. Best Western recently broke ground on two hotels in Erbil, the capital city of Iraqi Kurdistan in the northern part of the country. Hilton Worldwide is set to open DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Erbil at the end of 2013. And Marriott International will open two properties there in 2014.”</td>
<td>5 out of 9 articles (56%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>=5</td>
<td>War as a failure</td>
<td>General emphasis on ongoing security issues, mention of damage to U.S. reputation</td>
<td>“The war in Iraq was used by terrorists worldwide to stoke hatred for our country and to recruit young people to their ranks. It sapped our country of trillions of dollars, stretched our military to the breaking point, caused popular support for America to plummet around the globe and dealt a powerful blow to America's moral authority.”</td>
<td>4 out 9 articles (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=5</td>
<td>Uncertainty over outcomes</td>
<td>News covering ongoing violence and sectarian problems; expressing uncertainty about future</td>
<td>“&quot;My greatest hope is they take advantage of all the opportunities they have,&quot; Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Buchanan, the top U.S. military spokesman said. &quot;I can't say for sure what its going to look like five years from now.&quot;”</td>
<td>4 out 9 articles (44%)</td>
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<td>Score</td>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Defeated insurgency</td>
<td>Reference to defeating insurgents</td>
<td>“The war &quot;tested our military's strength and our ability to adapt and evolve,&quot; he said, noting the development of the new counterinsurgency doctrine that helped win the war and is being used in the Afghanistan War.”</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table B.3 2011, WP, Summary of coding of discourses on outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Discourse / Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Prominence</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>=1</td>
<td>War as a success</td>
<td>Overall characterization of outcomes; emphasizing improvements in Iraqis lives as a result of removing Hussein from power</td>
<td>“On Monday, the president portrayed Iraq as a democracy and model for the Middle East whose economy is set to grow more rapidly than those of India or China.”</td>
<td>13 out of 21 articles (62%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=1</td>
<td>Removal of dictatorship</td>
<td>Iraqis are now free and better off; democratization is underway; U.S. has given Iraq opportunity</td>
<td>[Gen. Martin Dempsey] “I think we have given Iraq an enormous opportunity. We have built relationships with the Iraqi military that will persist well into the future,” he said. &quot;I am concerned, but I am also proud.&quot;”</td>
<td>13 out of 21 articles (62%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>War as a failure</td>
<td>Coverage focused on tainted U.S. legacy in Iraq, mentioning failures to find WMD, prove terror links; citing costs and other negatives</td>
<td>“Granted, Iraq was not involved in the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11. Hussein's regime had only the most negligible links to al-Qaeda. And, of course, Iraq's stockpile of nuclear and biological weapons turned out to be a figment of fevered imaginations.”</td>
<td>12 out of 21 articles (57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Uncertainty over Iraq’s future</td>
<td>Coverage expresses uncertainty over outcomes and highlights challenges and problems for U.S. and Iraq; mention of that war is not finished</td>
<td>“&quot;But the conflict is still happening for Iraqis and will continue for a very long time.&quot;” (An Iraqi enlisted in the U.S. Army).</td>
<td>8 out of 21 articles (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Iraq recovering</td>
<td>Emphasis on U.S.-Iraq partnership; rebuilding of Iraq’s oil industry and economy with U.S. help</td>
<td>[Obama:] “But what's absolutely clear is, as a consequence of the enormous sacrifices that have been made by American soldiers and civilians - American troops and civilians - as well as the courage of the Iraqi people, that what we have now achieved is an Iraq that is self-governing, that is inclusive and that has enormous potential,” he said.”</td>
<td>5 out of 21 articles (24%)</td>
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<td>Rank</td>
<td>Discourse / Code</td>
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<tr>
<td>=1</td>
<td>War as success</td>
<td>Discourse emphasizes success of progress; Iraq is heading towards modernity; U.S. removed threat</td>
<td>“Mr. Obama praised Iraq as a country &quot;that is self-governing, that is inclusive and that has enormous potential.&quot; Well said. So why does the Administration seem so intent on making the least of that potential? Iraq may be the country most Americans would prefer to forget, even if its remarkable quiescence during this season of Arab revolt is a testament to how much the U.S. achieved there.</td>
<td>5 out of 9 articles (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=1</td>
<td>Democracy in Iraq</td>
<td>Iraqis are now free and better off; democratization is happening; deposing Hussein; U.S. respecting Iraq’s sovereignty</td>
<td>“He [Obama] said the U.S. sacrifice in lives and money -- nearly $1 trillion has been spent -- demands that Americans continue their commitment to Iraq's success. And he echoed early arguments for the war by saying, &quot;We think a successful, democratic Iraq can be a model for the entire region,&quot; Mr. Obama said.”</td>
<td>5 out of 9 articles (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Reconstruction of Iraq</td>
<td>U.S. and Iraq are now partners to further economic relationship; U.S. is rebuilding and transforming Iraq</td>
<td>“…the State Department, which will lead a foreign mission of almost 16,000 people, including security contractors. U.S. officials say they will train police and armed forces while working to develop Iraq's financial institutions, its judiciary, its agriculture and more.”</td>
<td>4 out of 9 articles (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncertainty over Iraq’s future</td>
<td>Coverage emphasizes uncertainty of future, and challenges ahead</td>
<td>“With Iraq's democracy and institutions in their infancy, and major questions about the country's future and security unsettled, Mr. Obama was careful not to declare victory. Even now, Americans are pessimistic about Iraq's future, according to a Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll this month. Sixty percent of respondents now believe the withdrawal will lead to &quot;all-out civil war,&quot; compared with 54% in February 2009.”</td>
<td>3 out of 9 articles (33%)</td>
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Table B.5 2011, NYT, Summary of coding of discourses on consequences

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<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Discourse / Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Iraq faces precarious security situation</td>
<td>References to ongoing violence; presence of militias and terrorists; state of lawlessness; Iraq is still dangerous</td>
<td>“Aesthetically, Baghdad is still a war zone of checkpoints, blast walls and coils of razor wire, where buildings sit partially destroyed from the first wave of bombings that President George W. Bush called &quot;shock and awe.&quot; At entrances to the garrisoned heart of the central government, the Green Zone, vehicles on the way in are searched for bombs, and on the way out for kidnapping victims.”</td>
<td>11 out of 22 articles (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Political divisions and sectarianism</td>
<td>Political quagmire; lack of political solutions; Maliki's government increasingly authoritarian; sectarian divisions more pronounced; increase in mistrust</td>
<td>“As for Iraq today, the authoritarian tendencies of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki are deeply troubling. A member of the Shiite majority that was badly persecuted under Saddam, he has been far more interested in payback than inclusion.”</td>
<td>10 out of 22 articles (46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Increase in Anti-Americanism in region</td>
<td>Iraqis increasingly opposed to U.S.; anti-Americanism is growing in region; damage to U.S. credibility</td>
<td>“America's reputation has yet to fully recover from the horrors of Abu Ghraib. The country is still paying a huge price for President George W. Bush's decision to shortchange the war in Afghanistan.”</td>
<td>8 out of 22 articles (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iran’s influence has increased.</td>
<td>Iran emboldened; Iran is meddling in Iraq; Shiite Islamism growing in power</td>
<td>“[Maliki] …as a Shiite leader who some say owes his current position to Iran's backing, he has not made clear if Washington, or Tehran, will wield more influence.”</td>
<td>7 out of 22 articles (32%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Deaths of U.S. military personnel</td>
<td>Emphasis on U.S. troops killed in since start of war</td>
<td>“We mourn the nearly 4,500 American troops and tens of thousands of Iraqis who lost their lives.”</td>
<td>6 out of 22 articles (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=6</td>
<td>Civilian deaths</td>
<td>Explicit focus on civilian deaths as a consequence of war-related events in Iraq</td>
<td>“We mourn the nearly 4,500 American troops and tens of thousands of Iraqis who lost their lives.”</td>
<td>4 out of 22 articles (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=6</td>
<td>Destruction of Iraq’s infrastructure</td>
<td>Coverage addresses lack of electricity; sewage facilities; and other infrastructure problems</td>
<td>“Iraq's oil production still has not rebounded, and basic services like electricity are still woefully inadequate.”</td>
<td>4 out of 22 articles (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Increase in Iraqi suffering</td>
<td>Specific coverage that focuses on issues facing Iraqi civilians including unemployment, food shortages, poverty, and general suffering</td>
<td>“‘We are full of pain,” said Turkiya Fehan [an Iraqi civilian]. She pointed at a photo of her son Mohammed, 19, who was killed in 2004.”</td>
<td>3 out of 22 articles (13%)</td>
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<td>Rank</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Insecurity</td>
<td>General references to precarious security situation</td>
<td>“Hotel executives acknowledge that, for now, the properties will appeal more to business travelers than to Western tourists because of occasional skirmishes with neighboring Turkey and questions about the rest of the country's stability after the U.S. pullout.”</td>
<td>3 out of 9 articles (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=2</td>
<td>Civilian deaths</td>
<td>Explicit focus on civilian deaths as a consequence of war-related events in Iraq</td>
<td>“Tens of thousands of Iraqis died, troops and civilians, as the U.S. deposed Saddam's regime and beat down an insurgency backed by al-Qaeda terrorists and sectarian revenge killings that threatened to destroy the country.”</td>
<td>2 out of 9 articles (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=2</td>
<td>Worsening political situation</td>
<td>Political quagmire and ongoing political problems in Iraq</td>
<td>“…the main Sunni-backed political bloc announced Sunday it was suspending its participation in parliament to protest the monopoly on government posts by Shiite allies of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.”</td>
<td>2 out of 9 articles (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=2</td>
<td>Destruction of Iraq’s infrastructure</td>
<td>References to damage to infrastructure facilities</td>
<td>“The near civil war devastated the country, and its legacy includes thousands of widows and orphans, a people deeply divided along sectarian lines and infrastructure that remains largely in ruins.”</td>
<td>2 out of 9 articles (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>U.S. military deaths</td>
<td>Specific reference to and coverage of deaths of U.S. personnel</td>
<td>“Nearly 4,500 U.S. service members were killed in more than eight years of war and about 30,000 wounded.”</td>
<td>2 out of 9 articles (22%)</td>
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<td>Rank</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Loss of American influence in Iraq</td>
<td>Loss of strategic position; Iraq is not a reliable ally; U.S. interests have not been secured; weakened U.S. position internationally</td>
<td>[Regarding U.S. role in Iraq after troop withdrawal]: “This vision of relations will seem palatable to Americans and Iraqis who want to believe that all will be well after the withdrawal of U.S. troops. But the image is a mirage. It rests on inaccurate portrayals of the situation in Iraq and Maliki's policies. It also lacks a strategy to secure vital U.S. interests in the region.”</td>
<td>9 out of 21 articles (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Undesirable political situation</td>
<td>Political instability; Maliki government is not representative; increasing sectarianism in politics leading to political stalemate</td>
<td>“Second, Iraq must preserve and solidify the multi-ethnic and cross-sectarian political accommodation that was established in 2008 and 2009 but that has been eroding since the formation of the current government.”</td>
<td>9 out of 21 articles (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Increasing Iranian influence</td>
<td>Iran has emerged from the War as a ‘winner’ and is viewed to be ‘meddling’ in Iraq</td>
<td>“Iran now can generally count on closer ties with a friendly Shiite government next door.”</td>
<td>9 out of 21 articles (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Worsening security situation in Iraq</td>
<td>Iraq has no ability to ensure security; state of lawlessness and violence</td>
<td>“…[the conflict] is greatly reduced but not over: Al-Qaeda continues to carry out terrorist attacks, Iranian-sponsored militias still operate”</td>
<td>8 out of 21 articles (38%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Growing anti-American sentiment</td>
<td>Coverage mentioning growing Iraqi suspicions of U.S. intentions in Iraq; Americans are viewed as occupiers, and most Iraqis want them out; loss of U.S. credibility in country</td>
<td>“Most Iraqis say they are glad the Americans are gone, if only out of bitterness for the bloodshed their presence helped cause.”</td>
<td>8 out of 21 articles (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Deaths of U.S. military personnel</td>
<td>Reference to loss of U.S. lives in conflict; also reference to military injuries and suffering of troops’ families</td>
<td>“More than 1.5 million U.S. troops served; 30,000 were wounded and 4,500 died, including 202 from Fort Bragg.”</td>
<td>6 out of 21 articles (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Civilian deaths</td>
<td>Explicit focus on civilian deaths as a consequence of war-related events in Iraq</td>
<td>“Even taking into account the far larger number of civilians killed, injured or displaced, Iraq trails well behind the really big wars of the modern era.”</td>
<td>4 out of 21 articles (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Destruction of infrastructure</td>
<td>Coverage addresses lack of electricity facilities; and other infrastructure-related problems</td>
<td>“In the trash-strewn streets of Baghdad's Sadr City, plagued by flickering electricity and unmet American promises, U.S. troops rained soccer balls and lollipops down on the ragtag children escorting their Humvees.”</td>
<td>3 out of 21 articles (14%)</td>
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Table B.8 2011, WSJ, Summary of coding of discourses on consequences

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<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Discourse / Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Prominence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Precarious security situation</td>
<td>Increased insecurity; Shia militias are a threat; Iraqis need Americans for security; Iraqis want Americans for security</td>
<td>“The U.S. Embassy has had a warning of a &quot;severe threat&quot; of kidnapping of American citizens in place since Dec. 3.”</td>
<td>6 out of 9 articles (67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>U.S. military deaths</td>
<td>Coverage mentions U.S. military lives lost</td>
<td>“At least 100,000 Iraqis and 4,474 American military personnel have died in the conflict, according to the Pentagon and military documents.”</td>
<td>4 out of 9 articles (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=3</td>
<td>Worsening political situation</td>
<td>Coverage emphasizing political instability and political quagmire; growing mistrust; Maliki becoming more authoritarian; religious and ethnic differences pronounced</td>
<td>“And the same senior Iraqi official who spoke about Mr. Maliki's &quot;commitment&quot; to Iran voiced his growing concern over the prime minister's &quot;authoritarian streak&quot; which he said was evident in the arrest of hundreds in October in connection with an alleged coup plot against his government.”</td>
<td>3 out of 9 articles (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=3</td>
<td>Increase in Iranian influence in Iraq</td>
<td>Iranians are meddling; Shiite militias are a threat</td>
<td>“A defiant Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki promised he would firmly confront any meddling by Iran after U.S. forces are gone, in an interview in which he said Iraqi interests were best served when nations stick to their own business.”</td>
<td>3 out of 9 articles (33%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial costs of war</td>
<td>Specific references to $1 trillion spent on Iraq War; references to U.S. spending money on Iraq</td>
<td>“The U.S. has spent nearly $1 trillion on the war.”</td>
<td>3 out of 9 articles (33%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>U.S. losing grip in Iraq</td>
<td>Coverage mentioning anti-Americanism; and loss of U.S. influence; coverage urging Obama to exercise greater American power to keep ‘gains’ made in Iraq</td>
<td>“…and for Americans who had opposed this war -- Iraq is destined to slip, nay it has already slipped, into the orbit of the Persian theocracy. The American war, with all its sacrifices, had simply created a &quot;sister republic&quot; of the Persian state, it is said.”</td>
<td>3 out of 9 articles (33%)</td>
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<td>Rank</td>
<td>Discourse / Code (prominence)</td>
<td>Attribution of Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>=1</td>
<td>Discourse on negative political situation (10 out of 22 articles, 46%)</td>
<td>Maliki and his supporters</td>
<td>“As for Iraq today, the authoritarian tendencies of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki are deeply troubling. A member of the Shiite majority that was badly persecuted under Saddam, he has been far more interested in payback than inclusion.”</td>
<td>6 out of 10 articles (60%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Iraqis (e.g. blame on sectarian tendencies of people)</td>
<td></td>
<td>[The U.S. government] “…can only pray that Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki keeps his promises about Iran. And that, before some firefight between rival groups spins out of control, the various Iraqi tribes consider the costs of pulling the plug.”</td>
<td>4 out of 10 articles (40%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>U.S. policies; U.S. responsible for lack of clear post-war planning</td>
<td></td>
<td>“…Washington was blind to what was going on. Instead of appreciating the intense struggle between the cleric Moktada al-Sadr's sectarian Shiite followers, and moderate Shiites who believed in a common Iraqi identity, the Obama administration remained steadfastly focused on the Sunni-Shiite-Kurdish trinity, thereby reinforcing sectarian tensions…”</td>
<td>3 out of 10 articles (30%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iran meddling in Iraq</td>
<td>“The main reason Mr. Maliki could not offer American forces guarantees for staying in the country beyond 2011 was that his premiership was clinched by pandering to sectarian Shiites. As a result, he has become a hostage to the impulses of pro-Iranian Islamists while most Sunnis and secularists in the government have been marginalized. His current cabinet is simply too big and weak to develop any coherent policies or keep Iranian influence at bay.”</td>
<td>2 out of 10 articles (20%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discourse on ongoing violence and lack of security (10 out of 22 articles, 46%)</td>
<td>Shiite militias and insurgents</td>
<td>“Meanwhile, the Iraqis who loyally served us are under threat. The extremist Shiite leader Moktada al-Sadr has declared the Iraqis who helped America &quot;outcasts.&quot; When Britain pulled out of Iraq a few years ago, there was a public execution of 17 such outcasts -- their bodies dumped in the streets of Basra as a warning.”</td>
<td>4 out of 10 articles (40%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discourse on ongoing violence and lack of security (10 out of 22 articles, 46%)</td>
<td>U.S. policy</td>
<td>“This Shiite Islamist government bodes ill for the country's future. And unfortunately, it is a direct product of America's misguided thinking about Iraq since the 2003 invasion -- an approach that stressed proportional sectarian representation rather than national unity and moderate Islamism.”</td>
<td>4 out of 10 articles (40%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ba’athists or Hussein loyalists</td>
<td>“Nearly nine years after the American invasion broke the Baath Party’s stranglehold on power, the specter of Baathism remains a ghost that Iraq cannot seem to exorcise. The Baath Party staged coups in 1963 and 1968 to seize power, and its persistent, if shadowy, presence in Sunni areas of the country offers a reminder that few Iraqi leaders leave office peacefully.”</td>
<td>2 out of 10 articles (20%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Iraq’s weak military</td>
<td>“After investing billions of dollars, the United States has had more success rebuilding Iraq's security forces. But Iraqi and American commanders say these forces are not ready to fully protect the country against insurgents or potentially hostile neighbors. There are critical weaknesses in intelligence, air defenses, artillery and logistics.”</td>
<td>2 out of 10 articles (20%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>=3</td>
<td>General discourse about various negative war-related outcomes (e.g. political situation, security situation, lack of civilian services etc.) (7 out of 22 articles, 32%)</td>
<td>U.S. government</td>
<td>“America’s reputation has yet to fully recover from the horrors of Abu Ghraib. The country is still paying a huge price for President George W. Bush's decision to shortchange the war in Afghanistan. American policy makers, for generations to come, must study these mistakes carefully and ensure that they are not repeated.”</td>
<td>3 out of 7 articles (43%)</td>
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<td>Article Category</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iraqis</td>
<td>Iraqis (including citing cultural and ethnic differences amongst Iraqis)</td>
<td>“While politics has broken out in Iraq, there are multiple flashpoints in the next year that, if not controlled, could blow up and bring down the precarious house of cards. They can only pray that Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki keeps his promises about Iran. And that, before some firefight between rival groups spins out of control, the various Iraqi tribes consider the costs of pulling the plug.”</td>
<td>2 out of 7 articles (29%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>=3</td>
<td>General discourse about various positive war-related outcomes (e.g. improvements in security and politics). (7 out of 22 articles, 32%)</td>
<td>U.S. (e.g. to Obama for exiting Iraq, and providing security)</td>
<td>“President Obama, who first ran for office campaigning against the war, has never wavered on his promise to bring the troops home.”</td>
<td>6 out of 7 articles (86%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Iraqis</td>
<td>“In the tradition of the endless negotiations, feints and shifting alliances of desert tribes, the Sunni chieftains in Anbar Province unexpectedly switched sides in 2006 and 2007, in perhaps the most important single step for establishing stability here after the war and the insurgency.”</td>
<td>1 out of 7 articles (14%)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>General discourse on destruction caused by war; including poor performance of infrastructure and facilities. (4 out of 22 articles, 18%)</td>
<td>Hussein or previous Iraqi governments</td>
<td>“The war opened Iraq's tremendous petroleum reserves to foreign investment for the first time since 1974, though American companies did poorly in the postwar auctions.”</td>
<td>1 out of 4 articles (25%)</td>
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<td>Extremists or insurgents</td>
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<td>“Oil production recovered after the initial fighting, but road security problems slowed exports from the south. Attacks on the pipeline from Kirkuk frequently interrupted exports from the north.”</td>
<td>1 out of 4 articles (25%)</td>
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Table B.10 2011, USA Today, Summary of coding of discourses on responsibility

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>General discourse about various positive war-related outcomes (e.g. improvements in Iraq, improved security situation, helping Iraqi recovery). (7 out of 9 articles, 78%)</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>“President Obama stopped short of calling the U.S. effort in Iraq a victory in an interview taped Thursday with ABC News' Barbara Walters. &quot;I would describe our troops as having succeeded in the mission of giving to the Iraqis their country in a way that gives them a chance for a successful future,&quot; Obama said.”</td>
<td>6 out of 7 articles (86%)</td>
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<td>Iraq</td>
<td>“Iraq's Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has earmarked $1 billion to be spent on education initiatives over the next several years and the Iraqi government will announce this week that it will fund scholarships for 2,500 students to attend U.S. universities in 2012 -- quadrupling enrollment of Iraqi students in American universities, said Abdul Hadi al-Khalili, the cultural attach at the Iraqi Embassy in Washington.”</td>
<td>1 out of 7 articles (14%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discourse on precarious security situation (3 out of 9 articles)</td>
<td>Insurgents or terrorists</td>
<td>“Al-Qaeda elements remain in the country and continue terror attacks. Bomb blasts ripped through crowds of Shiite religious pilgrims last week, killing 20 people. Muqtada al-Sadr, an anti-U.S. cleric, maintains a militia backed by Iran and said recently the U.S. embassy is an occupying force that must be resisted.”</td>
<td>1 out of 3 articles (33%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>=3</td>
<td>General discourse on destruction caused by war. (2 out of 9 articles, 22%)</td>
<td>Insurgents or terrorists</td>
<td>“The gathering was choked with smoke as the Iraqis debated several matters. …a council member, insisted on more security where insurgents had vandalized power substations.”</td>
<td>1 out of 2 articles (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=3</td>
<td>Discourse on political situation, and lack of political solutions. (2 out of 9 articles, 22%)</td>
<td>Iraqi sectarianism</td>
<td>“But the sectarian wounds remain unhealed. Even as U.S. troops were leaving, the main Sunni-backed political bloc announced Sunday it was suspending its participation in parliament to protest the monopoly on government posts by Shiite allies of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.”</td>
<td>2 out of 2 articles (100%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maliki’s government</td>
<td>Maliki’s government</td>
<td>“the main Sunni-backed political bloc announced Sunday it was suspending its participation in parliament to protest the monopoly on government posts by Shiite allies of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.”</td>
<td>1 out of 2 articles (50%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table B.11 2011, WP, Summary of coding of discourses on responsibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Discourse / Code</th>
<th>Attribution of Responsibility</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Prominence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Discourse on negative security situation in Iraq. (8 out of 21 articles, 38%)</td>
<td>Shiite militants (Including Iranian-backed)</td>
<td>“The conflict in their country, after all, is greatly reduced but not over: Al-Qaeda continues to carry out terrorist attacks, Iranian-sponsored militias still operate…”</td>
<td>4 out of 8 articles (50%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sectorianism</td>
<td>“More than 140,000 U.S. troops were unable to keep Iraqis from killing each other, and Bush, watching his gamble to build an Arab democracy fall into civil war…”</td>
<td>3 out of 8 articles (38%)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sunni extremist groups or affiliates of al-Qaeda</td>
<td>“Sunnis in the provinces say they fear persecution both by the Shiite government and Sunni extremists now that U.S. troops are no longer present.”</td>
<td>3 out of 8 articles (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hussein regime or Hussein loyalists</td>
<td>“”The Baath Party…believes in coups and conspiracies; indeed, these have been its modus operandi since the party's inception. The Baathists seek to destroy Iraq's democratic process.”</td>
<td>2 out of 8 articles (25%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weak Iraqi forces</td>
<td>“Despite enthusiastic rhetoric…Iraq is not able to defend its territory or airspace.”</td>
<td>2 out of 8 articles (25%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Articles Count</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside forces such as events in Syria and Iran</td>
<td>“The U.S. presence in Iraq is ending on a note of uncertainty, with most of the fundamental issues thrown up by the 2003 invasion still unresolved and new sources of friction, such as the unrest in neighboring Syria, surfacing to create fresh tensions.”</td>
<td>1 out of 8 articles (13%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>U.S. legacy in Iraq is tainted, (7 out of 21 articles, 33%)</td>
<td>Due to U.S. policies of De-Ba’athification; prisoner mistreatment and torture scandal; other offenses by troops</td>
<td>4 out of 7 articles (57%)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>“…by the haunting evidence of American-supervised humiliation and torture inside Abu Ghraib…”</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Obama’s exit strategy</td>
<td>“The president's political opponents have criticized him for his decision to remove the troops after he and Maliki failed to agree in October on a pact to leave some U.S. forces in the country for training and security.”</td>
<td>3 out of 7 articles (43%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>=3</td>
<td>General discourse about various negative war-related outcomes (e.g. lack of oil output, civilian hardships) (5 out of 21 articles, 24%)</td>
<td>Iraqis, either government, or general ethnic/sectarian loyalties</td>
<td>3 out of 5 articles (60%)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>“Sunnis in the provinces say they fear persecution both by the Shiite government and Sunni extremists now that U.S. troops are no longer present.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entity</td>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>U.S.</td>
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<td>&quot;&quot;&quot;The image of the American soldier is as a killer, not a defender. And how can you give a killer immunity?&quot; said Sami al-Askari, a lawmaker who is also a close aide to Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.&quot;</td>
<td>2 out of 5 articles (40%)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Hussein</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The neoconservatives at the Pentagon and in the West Wing argued that the invasion of Iraq was necessary. Hussein, the longtime U.S. nemesis who once tried to kill then-President Bush's father, was openly encouraging Palestinian militancy at a time when Hamas was blowing up cafes and pizzerias in Jerusalem.&quot;</td>
<td>1 out of 5 articles (20%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>=3 Civilian deaths, (5 out of 21 articles, 24%)</td>
<td>Sectarianism</td>
<td>&quot;The vast majority of civilian deaths were the result of Iraqis killing Iraqis, whether in bombings or the sectarian bloodletting that engulfed the country in 2005-07, said U.S. military spokesman Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Buchanan.&quot;</td>
<td>2 out of 5 articles (40%)</td>
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<td>U.S.</td>
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<td>&quot;Exactly how many Iraqis were killed by Americans may never be known.&quot;</td>
<td>1 out of 5 articles (20%)</td>
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<td>Count</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Percentages</td>
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<td>1 out of 5 articles (20%)</td>
<td>Hussein loyalists</td>
<td>“but I warned in a March 2003 column: &quot;A week into the war in Iraq, it's time to shelve the rosy scenarios and accept an unpleasant fact: The United States faces a long battle to defeat resistance fighters organized by the Baath Party and Saddam Hussein's secret police.&quot;”</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 out of 3 articles (67%)</td>
<td>General discourse on destruction– including destruction of civilian infrastructure as well cultural heritage destruction. (3 out of 21 articles, 14%)</td>
<td>U.S. policy of De-Ba’athification and lack of continuation of troop presence blamed</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 out of 3 articles (67%)</td>
<td>Hussein regime or loyalists.</td>
<td>“[Maliki] has retained the positions of defense and interior ministers for himself, and used the de-Baathification laws drawn up by the American occupation authority in 2003 to replace thousands of Sunni officers as well as independent Shiites with his own loyalists.”</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 out of 3 articles (67%)</td>
<td>Extremist or criminals</td>
<td>“The chaos also had sabotaged the slim faith Iraqis had in the American project to bring a new form of government to a nation traumatized by decades of dictatorship.”</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 out of 3 articles (67%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>“America's greatest mistake in Iraq wasn't toppling Saddam but detonating the infrastructure of the government, the army and the educational and social institutions that made civilized life possible. With no national army, there was nothing to check the Shiite looters or the Sunni insurgents.”</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<td>Issue</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Articles</td>
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<td>=5</td>
<td>Discourse on political situation, including difficulties in post-war Iraq and reaching political solutions. (3 out of 21 articles, 14%)</td>
<td>“Sunnis in the provinces say they fear persecution both by the Shiite government and Sunni extremists now that U.S. troops are no longer present.”</td>
<td>2 out of 3 articles (67%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sectarianism</td>
<td>“A deepening political crisis that pits the country's Shiite prime minister against some of his most outspoken Sunni coalition partners is raising fears that a brewing conflict could plunge the country into a new era of instability.”</td>
<td>1 out of 3 articles (33%)</td>
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<td>Rank</td>
<td>Discourse / Code</td>
<td>Attribution of Responsibility</td>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Prominence</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Precarious security situation</td>
<td>Weak Iraqi forces</td>
<td>“An Iraqi private at Sather said he would prefer that the Americans stayed, in part because they came so well-equipped, with gear such as night-vision goggles. &quot;We depended on the U.S. soldiers for a long time and now they are going to leave, it leaves an empty space,&quot; he said.”</td>
<td>3 out of 6 articles (50%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(6 out of 9 articles, 67%)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Sectarianism</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Sunni-Shiite divisions were evident in reactions to the official end of the U.S. mission.”</td>
<td>2 out of 6 articles (33%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Shiite militias (backed by Iran)</td>
<td></td>
<td>“U.S. military commander in Iraq, Gen. Lloyd Austin, warned last month that Iran is backing Shiite militias in Iraq to gain power in the same way that Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed organization, has achieved political dominance in Lebanon.”</td>
<td>1 out of 6 articles (17%)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Sunni extremists and al-Qaeda</td>
<td></td>
<td>“… militant groups affiliated with al Qaeda and die-hard Hussein regime loyalists will seek to increase their freedom to operate once the Americans are gone.”</td>
<td>1 out of 6 articles (17%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discourse</td>
<td>Entity</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Coverage</td>
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<td>Discourse on loss of American position and strong need for U.S. to remain (5 out of 9 articles, 56%)</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>“A U.S. presence would also go far to act as a bulwark against Tehran (particularly in the increasingly likely event that it acquires nuclear weapons) and therefore as a stabilizing force for the Gulf region.”</td>
<td>2 out of 5 articles (40%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obama’s policies</td>
<td></td>
<td>“A president who understood the stakes would have had no difficulty justifying a residual American presence in Iraq. But not this president. At the core of Mr. Obama's worldview lies a pessimism about America and the power of its ideals and reach in the world.”</td>
<td>2 out of 5 articles (40%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse on destruction; general poor state of Iraq; including civilian suffering (2 out of 9 articles, 22%)</td>
<td>Hussein regime</td>
<td>“Mr. Assad responded that he was ready to do so, said Mr. Maliki, who drew a parallel to the plight of Iraq under Hussein. &quot;We were of the opinion that the war that was waged against Iraq and these catastrophes and their consequences should not have occurred if Saddam had taken the course of reforms,&quot; added Mr. Maliki.”</td>
<td>1 out of 2 articles (50%)</td>
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<td>U.S.</td>
<td>This is a single reference (a quote from Moqtada al-Sadr): &quot;It's contrary to the blood that was spilled on the homeland's soil because of the occupation and its soldiers,&quot; wrote Mr. Sadr.</td>
<td>1 out of 2 articles (50%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse on political situation, including difficulties in post-war Iraq and reaching political solutions. (2 out of 9 articles, 22%)</td>
<td>Sectarianism</td>
<td>“Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's office issued a terse statement announcing his return to Baghdad from Washington on Thursday amid an intensifying crisis over a proposed move by some predominantly Sunni provinces to become semiautonomous regions.”</td>
<td>2 out of 2 articles (100%)</td>
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<td>U.S. blamed for causing sectarian divisions (a quote from an Iraqi civilian)</td>
<td>&quot;We started to know Sunni and Shiite only after the arrival of the Americans in our country,&quot; said Ali Mohammed, 23, a cellphone shop owner.”</td>
<td>1 out of 2 articles (50%)</td>
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