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Terms of reference and discursive representations: A case study with Saddam Hussein in the 1991 Gulf War

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates connections between terms of reference and discursive frames using U.S. newspaper reports on the 1991 Gulf War and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein as a case study. Combining results from a quantitative and qualitative analysis of different terms of reference, three discursive frames were identified: The Statesman, The Madman and Our Saddam. The most common discursive frame was of a foreign head of state. Newspapers also included representations that both demonized Saddam Hussein and discussed him in the context of Middle Eastern in-groups. Previous research has highlighted the demonization of Saddam Hussein in news reports during the war, but the findings of this study suggest that an overtly demonizing discursive frame was a minority view. However, its use nonetheless showed lasting impact beyond the end of the military operation. Press reports thus showed more varied and ambivalent representations than previous analyses may have suggested.

Keywords: term of reference, naming, corpus, Persian Gulf War, Saddam Hussein.

1. Introduction

For many decades, Iraq and its then-leader President Saddam Hussein represented a controversial topic in U.S. foreign policy discussions. The United States, leading a coalition of other nations, fought wars against Iraq both in the 1990s and the 2000s. Saddam Hussein was a central figure in each of these conflicts. This study focuses on the Persian Gulf War as a case study to investigate the variety and prevalence of discursive representations for an enemy 'Other'. While now several decades past, this conflict continues

to serve as a case study for the examination of media manipulation and propaganda. Researchers have highlighted the media's role in amplifying negative representations of Saddam Hussein and Iraq in both the Persian Gulf and Iraq Wars (presented in sections 2 and 3). Using a sizable corpus of news reports from during and after the U.S.-led military operation against Iraq in 1991, this study investigates different terms of reference and discursive representations for Saddam Hussein as well as their prevalence and continuation after the war itself. Did press reports in fact offer a full-throated support for the demonization of Saddam Hussein during the war? Did these demonizing or other representations remain in use after the military operation?

Specifically, this study investigates contemporary U.S. newspaper reports for diachronic changes in the use of specific types of terms of reference for Saddam Hussein as well as whether – and the extent to which – these terms of reference can be associated with specific discursive representations. To accomplish this, the analysis uses a corpus of U.S. newspaper reports from January to July 1991. Corpus analytical tools are utilized to investigate the use of different terms of reference and changes over time, while a systemic-functional study of a smaller sample of examples expands the analysis into categories that implicate specific kinds of processes and participants. Findings from the analysis are drawn together in discursive frames that show different representations for Saddam Hussein, associated with certain terms of reference and systemic-functional categories.

The analysis identifies distinct discursive frames used for the Iraqi president in newspaper reports. These discursive frames are titled *The Statesman*, *The Madman*, and *Our Saddam*, depicting Saddam Hussein as, respectively, the legitimate though not always benevolent leader of a nation, a dangerous and volatile individual, and the man represented in the words and views of Iraqi and other regional voices. Of the three discursive frames, *The Statesman* is the most common. The analyzed newspapers showed clear differences in their use of various terms of reference and the identified discursive frames could also be associated with specific terms of reference. The term “Saddam” in particular was associated with two somewhat contradictory frames, *Our Saddam* and *The Madman*.

The analysis ultimately presents an ambivalent and conflicting picture of press reporting. The comparatively lower frequency of *The Madman* discursive frame suggests that the demonization of Saddam Hussein in the media, which has been highlighted in previous research, was not a dominant practice in contemporary press reports. However, while used at a lower rate of frequency, *The Madman* discursive frame was nonetheless maintained

and even somewhat strengthened during the aftermath of the war. This suggests that this frame had a lasting effect in the way Saddam Hussein was represented in U.S. media, which may well have also carried over into the later Iraq War.

2. Historical context

In August 1990, following a period of escalating tensions over oil drilling rights, Iraq invaded the small neighboring state of Kuwait. Following the invasion, throughout the fall of 1990, international leaders attempted to mediate the situation with Iraq while the UN Security Council passed several resolutions condemning the invasion. In the United States, both the administration of President H.W. Bush and wealthy Kuwaiti interest groups undertook a campaign to sway American public opinion in favor of a U.S. military operation against Iraq (Kellner 2004: 137-144). The Bush administration sought to cast Saddam Hussein as the villain in a struggle between the forces of good and evil (Peer – Chestnut 1995: 89-91).

The UN Security Council ultimately set the deadline of January 15, 1990, for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait. When that deadline passed, an international coalition led by the United States launched Operation Desert Storm to drive Iraq out of Kuwait. The five-week operation resulted in the removal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait but did not oust Saddam Hussein as Iraq's leader (Mazarr et al. 1993.) In addition to a military confrontation, however, the operation was a carefully planned media spectacle: “[w]hen the US began military action against Iraq on January 16, 1991,” Kellner (2004: 144) writes, “the mainstream media became a conduit for Bush administration and Pentagon policies”, framing the war as an exciting adventure and shunning dissenting opinions.

During Operation Desert Storm, this framing was aided by strict controls imposed on the press coverage of the Gulf War (Nohrstedt 1992: 119-120), including limited access to the conflict area, placements in so-called pools that offered access to the war front and troops, and censorship of reports. Journalists who did not follow these guidelines risked being deported from the conflict area. A comparison of television broadcasts and newspaper reporting prior to the U.S. military operation found that newspaper reports on the conflict were comparatively more critical (Peer – Chestnut 1995). The coverage of the military operation itself, to audiences both in the United States (Kellner 2004) and around the world (Mowlana et al. 1992), was dominated by Western and especially U.S. media. The media

coverage showed a U.S. high-tech war machine and sympathetic soldiers (Kellner 2004: 147-148) while demonizing Iraq and its leader through images, headlines, and even editorial cartoons (Artz – Pollock 1995). In an examination of newspaper editorials from the first weeks of the military operation, Hackett and Zhao (1994) found that anti-war voices were also represented to some extent, though editorials nonetheless emphasized viewpoints favorable to the Bush administration.

In mid-February 1990, while the U.S. military operation was still underway, U.S. President George Bush urged the Iraqi people to overthrow their leader. However, when Kurdish and Shi'ite insurrections in Northern and Southern Iraq, respectively, rose in response, the United States failed to provide support and the insurrections were crushed by Saddam Hussein, who was able to reassert his power over Iraq after the war (Kellner 2004: 150; Atkinson 1993: 488-489). Thus, while achieving his immediate objectives for the war, President Bush's framing of the conflict as a "moral crusade" ultimately left the struggle unresolved and the villain in power (Atkinson 1993: 497).

It has now been several decades since the Persian Gulf War, and the United States has since engaged in other more recent wars, including another war against Iraq in 2003. However, the Persian Gulf War was chosen here as a case study for several reasons. Firstly, the conflict has been extensively investigated, so it offers a baseline for further investigation and indeed continues to serve as a relevant example (for another recent study, see, for example, Oddo 2018). Secondly, unlike in the later Iraq War, the United States did not have a pre-established hostile relationship with Saddam Hussein prior to the Persian Gulf conflict; the two were rather uneasy allies in their opposition to Iran (Oddo 2018: 41-42). Examinations of the Iraq War have revealed the presence of pre-established frames of a rogue country and its leader (see, for example, Abid – Manan 2016; Oddo 2011), at least some of which can be assumed to have originated from the Persian Gulf War. Thirdly and finally, this case study can broaden our understanding of journalistic practices and press reactions in times of conflict and war.

3. Theoretical and methodological frameworks

3.1 Theoretical framework

The focus of this study is the language of the media, and specifically newspaper articles. For written or printed media discourse, its interactional nature is less obvious than in face-to-face communication. In written discourse, "shared

meanings, knowledge of the language, knowledge of the world, and other beliefs must be taken into account in such a characterization of discourse meaning" (Van Dijk 1988: 9). While the traditional model of communication involves a speaker or sender, a message, and the hearer or receiver, an actual newspaper article is handled by multiple individuals and undergoes many edits before finally being put into print (Bell 1991: 34-35).

Characteristics of news reports and quality press include long, complex sentences, many nominalizations ('disruption' instead of 'they disrupted'), formal jargon borrowed from sources such as officials and policymakers, and syntactic structures that are rare in other discourse forms (such as the inverted declarative sentence structure: 'something happened, someone declared') (Van Dijk 1988: 10-11). Due to journalists' reliance on both spoken and written second-hand sources, the news story can be viewed as a layered whole of embedded texts within texts (Bell 1991: 50-51). Sourcing and constructions of news items is often closely linked to the actions and opinions of powerful social groups, as items are also selected and composed based on a conception of the intended target audience (Richardson 2007: 1).

This study examines terms of reference – essentially practices of naming – for Saddam Hussein in newspaper reports. In previous studies, naming has been examined in the context of public discourses such as news as well as elsewhere, including in the context of sexist discourses (see, for example, Page 2003; Mills 2003). Naming is a powerful ideological choice (Clark 1992: 209). Expressions used to refer to a participant are intertwined with social values, but the connection between the chosen expression and the intended meaning is also context-dependant (Fowler 1991: 99). Clayman (2010) examined the strategic use of address terms in news broadcast interviews and found that address terms were used as a strategic tool to signal actions such as soliciting attention or to cast the interview in certain ways. Page (2003) showed that the patterns of naming choices for the same individual can be linked to different and even contradictory ways of discursive representation and that these representations can be explored through the naming practices used in newspaper reports.

Journalism is a tool and channel for societal influence (Richardson 2007: 180). The media can have profound impact on how certain actors and events are represented through the compounding effects of repetition of images and concepts (Gerbner et al. 1986). To investigate these compounding representations, extensive corpora of media texts have been used to examine the representation of actors and events in newspaper reports. Baker et al. (2013), for example, studied British newspaper reports to investigate representations of Muslims and Islam and found that while newspapers

did to some degree contribute to negative stereotypes, they offered varied and often ambivalent representations. Branum and Charteris-Black (2015) compared different representations of the Edward Snowden affair in the British press and found clear differences in both ideological position and style among newspapers, including in naming strategies.

Because of its role in shaping societal discourses, in times of societal tension such as war, journalism is both vulnerable to and the target of external influence (Richardson 2007: 185-186). The Gulf War is one example of a conflict where media coverage of a war not only echoed an administration's (Bush's) positions but also demonized an enemy in both domestic (U.S.) press reports (Artz – Pollock 1995) and elsewhere (see, for example, Martín Rojo 1995). In the run-up to the war, changes in press reporting extended also to terms of reference in news articles, which changed to highlight the prestige of President Bush and the delegitimacy of Saddam Hussein (Kuosmanen 2019). Both in text and image, Iraqi interests were attributed to the individual ambitions of Saddam Hussein, who in turn was portrayed as a dangerous, uncivilized, and irrational individual (Artz – Pollock 1995). Similar patterns were later found in the Iraq War (see, for example, Lule 2004; Steuter – Wills 2010; Popp – Mendelson 2010). The perspectives of Iraqi civilians have often been neglected (for one perspective on Iraqi women in particular, see Al-Ali 2011).

In both wars, the president and the White House made great efforts to demonize the Iraqi president in their appeals to the media and the public (Oddo 2011; Abid – Manan 2016; Oddo 2018). Hart and Fuoli (2020), however, also found that in order to be effective, political leaders have to supplement their pro-war appeals with cited evidence or design their message to address existing favorable attitudes among the public. Thus, as one example of such supportive messaging, Oddo (2018) traced the fabrication of a story of atrocities by Iraqi soldiers that was shared extensively in the media with the aid of the White House.

3.2 Methodological framework

To investigate newspaper reports, this study uses two analytical tools: corpus methodology and systemic-functional analysis. This section will present these two tools and discuss some analytical challenges arising from applying these tools to newspaper reports.

Discourse analysis has been increasingly combined with corpus methodology in a variety of different approaches. Baker (2006) and Mautner

(2009) among others have discussed the benefits and limitations of using corpus linguistics as an analytical tool in discourse analysis. Branum and Charteris-Black (2015) and Baker et al. (2013) are among those who have used a combination of discourse analysis and corpus methodology to study the representation of actors and events in newspaper reporting, conducting comparative as well as diachronic analysis.

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) provides an additional layer of both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Based on the work of Michael Halliday (see, for example, Halliday – Matthiessen 2004), the systemic-functional analysis used in this study focuses on experiential meaning. Experiential meaning is explored through a system called Transitivity that centers on a process type, participants associated with that process, and additional circumstantial information. There are multiple process types, each with associated participant categories: material, mental, behavioral, and existential processes (for one overview of Transitivity and its grammatical categories, see Eggins 2004: 206-253). In addition, the material process, for example, identifies participants that are implicated by the process. In the subsequent analysis, terms referring to categories of systemic functional grammar will be capitalized to denote the use of these terms in their systemic-functional meaning.

Transitivity has been presented as an analytical tool for discourse analysis by Fowler (1991: 70-76), for example, and used by, among others, Clark (1992) and Page (2003) in their studies of sexist naming practices in British press reports. Its value is in its “facility to analyse the same event in different ways” and to link discursive choices to ideological significance (Fowler 1991: 71). The specific methods of analysis and materials used in this study are described in more detail in the following section.

4. Material

The material used in the study consists of a corpus of U.S. newspaper articles on the Gulf War conflict compiled from January-July 1991. The corpus has been divided into sub-corpora, one for each month of articles included. Table 1 shows the detailed composition of the corpus, including the number of articles, word types (unique words) and word tokens (number of overall words) for the whole corpus and each sub-corpus. As Table 1 shows, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* together represent over 80% of the total material in the corpus, while *The Wall Street Journal* makes up a smaller

portion of the overall corpus. Numbers for word types and word tokens were obtained using AntConc (Anthony 2011). Table 1 shows the composition of the corpus in total and for each sub-corpus per number of newspaper articles included, word types (unique word tokens) and total word tokens (total number of words). Table 2 shows the overall composition of the corpus divided by newspaper.

Table 1. Composition of the corpus per sub-corpus

| Sub-corpus | Articles | Word types | Word tokens |
|---------------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| Jan-91 | 1,085 | 34,278 | 1,083,690 |
| Feb-91 | 734 | 25,325 | 690,110 |
| Mar-91 | 515 | 25,021 | 497,440 |
| Apr-91 | 350 | 19,218 | 339,620 |
| May-91 | 202 | 15,560 | 201,446 |
| Jun-91 | 119 | 11,114 | 102,081 |
| Jul-91 | 114 | 10,299 | 106,882 |
| Corpus total | 3,119 | 54,803 | 3,021,269 |

Table 2. Composition of the corpus per newspaper

| Newspaper | Articles | Word types | Word tokens |
|--------------------------------------|----------|------------|-------------|
| <i>The New York Times (NYT)</i> | 1,385 | 33,614 | 1,256,689 |
| <i>The Washington Post (WP)</i> | 1,193 | 36,786 | 1,219,413 |
| <i>The Wall Street Journal (WSJ)</i> | 541 | 25,644 | 545,167 |

The articles included in the corpus were retrieved from the Proquest Database of Historical Newspapers using the search words “Iraq” and “Kuwait” for articles published between January 1 and July 31, 1991. Search results were limited to articles, and other newspaper genres such as editorials and advertisements were excluded. The articles, which are stored in the database as scanned pdf files of newspaper clippings, were processed using an optical recognition program and saved as text files. All articles retrieved by the search that referenced the ongoing conflict were included in the corpus. The number of articles and words is thus also representative of the volume of reporting on the Gulf War in these newspapers between January and July 1991.

As mentioned above, the study involves a quantitative analysis of concordances and frequencies for specific terms of reference for Saddam

Hussein. For the systemic functional analysis, a sample of 20 random concordances from each sub-corpus was selected, resulting in a total of 140 concordances for SFL analysis. For each concordance, the entire sentence within which the searched term of reference was located was retrieved for scrutiny. Concordances were distributed among different categories of terms of reference as well as newspapers based on the frequencies to ensure a balanced representation for each sub-corpus, newspaper, and term of reference. Table 3 shows the overall number of concordances per term of reference and newspaper; detailed frequencies per term of reference and newspaper based on which this distribution was done are presented later in Table 4 in the Analysis section.

Table 3. Distribution of concordances chosen for systemic-functional analysis

| Concordances per term of reference | Honorific + Hussein | Saddam Hussein | Saddam | Concordances Total |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|--------|--------------------|
| | 28 | 58 | 54 | 140 |
| Concordance per newspaper | NYT | WP | WSJ | |
| | 60 | 60 | 20 | |

The specific concordances were selected from each sub-corpus using a random number generator, based on which the corresponding number was selected from the list of AntConc concordance search results. Thus, while concordances for each newspaper and term of reference were allocated based on frequencies in the corpus, the specific concordances themselves were randomized. A systemic-functional analysis of these concordances was completed using Transitivity.

The news texts included in the analysis are both syntactically complex and, due to the types of topics covered here, full of figurative expressions describing societal and political events that are both abstract and complicated. Thus, analyzing the samples chosen for the systemic functional analysis poses several challenges. Firstly, the types of processes described in press reports can be difficult to categorize according to the various Process Types. Example 1 demonstrates that the categorization of Processes can sometimes offer multiple options and interpretations:

- (1) [President Saddam Hussein's army]^{Actor/Sayer} [threatened to attack]
 Process:Material/Verbal [with chemical and biological weapons]^{Circumstance}...
 (NYT, 17 July 1991)

The Process can be categorized as either a Material (acting in a threatening manner) or Verbal (issuing a threatening statement) Process. Neither the immediate context of the clause nor the rest of the paragraph provide additional clues, so either interpretation can be considered equally valid.

Secondly, the same elements and clauses can be implicated in multiple layers of Processes and Participant roles. As demonstrated in example 2, the same actor ("President Hussein") can be implicated in multiple layers of Processes; as the Participant (Actor) in a Material Process that is at the same time a Participant (Phenomenon) for a Mental Process that in turn is a Participant (Verbiage) for a Verbal Process.

- (2) [Mr. Vorontsov, the Soviet representative]Sayer, [said]Process:Verbal
 [[Moscow]Senser [had "reason to believe"]Process:Mental [[President
 Hussein]Actor [was ready to withdraw]Process:Material [unconditionally]
 Circumstance [in a very short time frame.]Circumstance]Phenomenon]Verbiage
 (NYT, 26 February 1991)

5. Analysis

This section presents the results of the analysis and proceeds in two steps. First, as a starting point, a corpus analysis presents the concordances and frequencies for different terms of reference for Saddam Hussein. Second, a qualitative analysis using the systemic-functional framework of Transitivity is conducted on 140 sample concordances.

5.1 Corpus analysis

The first step in the analysis was to complete a concordance search for three identified types of term of reference for Saddam Hussein. These three types were: an honorific (*President* or *Mr.* combined as *Honorific + Hussein*) accompanied by the surname *Hussein*; a reference with a first name and last name (*Saddam Hussein*); and a reference with the first name only (*Saddam*). Some concordances for *Saddam Hussein* also have a pre- or post-modifying "President [Saddam Hussein] of Iraq" or "President of Iraq [Saddam Hussein]". These were included in the *Saddam Hussein* category as such instances typically served an identifying or introductory function when Hussein was first mentioned in the articles. While this is not an exhaustive

list of terms used to refer to Saddam Hussein, these were identified as most frequently used based on a sample reading of the newspaper articles¹.

The concordance for each term of reference as well as its normalized frequencies are included in Table 4. Additionally, percentages are provided for each newspaper to show how these three terms of reference are distributed within concordances for that specific newspaper.

Table 4. Frequencies and newspaper distribution for terms of reference for Saddam Hussein

| Sub-corpus | Honorific + Hussein | Saddam Hussein | Saddam | Freq* |
|------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Jan-91 | 2.87 (N=311) | 11.99 (N=1,299) | 12.56 (N=1,361) | Sub-corpus |
| | 30.13% (N=307) | 58.68% (N=598) | 11.19% (N=114) | NYT |
| | 0.06% (N=1) | 30.43% (N=471) | 69.51% (N=1,076) | WP |
| | 0.74% (N=3) | 56.93% (N=230) | 42.33% (N=171) | WSJ |
| Feb-91 | 3.65 (N=252) | 13.81 (N=953) | 12.59 (N=869) | Sub-corpus |
| | 31.81% (N=251) | 56.27% (N=444) | 11.91% (N=94) | NYT |
| | 0.10% (N=1) | 30.95% (N=303) | 68.95% (N=675) | WP |
| | 0.00% (N=0) | 67.32% (N=206) | 32.68% (N=100) | WSJ |
| Mar-91 | 3.22 (N=160) | 9.67 (N=481) | 10.61 (N=528) | Sub-corpus |
| | 37.21% (N=160) | 49.30% (N=212) | 13.49% (N=58) | NYT |
| | 0.00% (N=0) | 28.89% (N=154) | 71.11% (N=379) | WP |
| | 0.00% (N=0) | 55.83% (N=115) | 44.17% (N=91) | WSJ |
| Apr-91 | 5.54 (N=188) | 13.34 (N=453) | 10.19 (N=346) | Sub-corpus |
| | 38.09% (N=187) | 50.10% (N=246) | 11.81% (N=58) | NYT |
| | 0.24% (N=1) | 34.15% (N=140) | 65.61% (N=269) | WP |
| | 0.00% (N=0) | 77.91% (N=67) | 22.09% (N=19) | WSJ |
| May-91 | 2.13 (N=43) | 9.03 (N=182) | 10.18 (N=205) | Sub-corpus |
| | 29.25% (N=43) | 62.59% (N=92) | 8.16% (N=12) | NYT |
| | 0.00% (N=0) | 29.85% (N=80) | 70.15% (N=188) | WP |
| | 0.00% (N=0) | 66.67% (N=10) | 33.33% (N=5) | WSJ |

¹ One example of a term of reference not included was the use of last name only ("Hussein"). This term of reference was excluded because of its comparative rarity (0,74 per 10,000 words, N = 225), and because of the challenge in identifying instances referring specifically to Saddam Hussein rather than to other similarly named individuals, such as King Hussein of Jordan.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Jun-91 | 0.78 (N=8) | 6.96 (N=71) | 6.17 (N=63) | Sub-corpus |
| | 26.67% (N=8) | 60.00% (N=18) | 13.33% (N=4) | NYT |
| | 0.00% (N=0) | 41.00% (N=42) | 58.00% (N=58) | WP |
| | 0.00% (N=0) | 91.67% (N=11) | 8.33% (N=1) | WSJ |
| Jul-91 | 0.94 (N=10) | 8.33 (N=89) | 14.97 (N=160) | Sub-corpus |
| | 13.16% (N=10) | 46.05% (N=35) | 40.79% (N=31) | NYT |
| | 0.00% (N=0) | 24.71% (N=42) | 75.29% (N=128) | WP |
| | 0.00% (N=0) | 92.31% (N=12) | 7.69% (N=1) | WSJ |
| Total Corpus | 3.22 (N=972) | 11.68 (N=3,528) | 11.69 (N=3,532) | Corpus |
| | 32.39% (N=659) | 55.16% (N=1,645) | 12.44% (N=371) | NYT |
| | 0.07% (N=3) | 30.74% (N=1,232) | 69.19% (N=2,773) | WP |
| | 0.29% (N=3) | 62.48% (N=651) | 37.24% (N=388) | WSJ |

* Frequencies reported per 10,000 words (raw frequencies in parentheses). Percentages for each newspaper represent the distribution of terms of reference within concordances for that newspaper.

As Table 4 shows, *Saddam* and *Saddam Hussein* are the two most common terms of reference while the honorific term of reference is used for the most part only by the *NYT*. *Saddam Hussein* is most common in January 1991, during the run-up to and the commencement of Operation Desert Storm, and in April 1991, when terms for Iraq's future were being negotiated in the aftermath of the military operation and when the honorific term of reference was also most frequent. Combined, these normalized frequencies suggest that the focus on Saddam Hussein was particularly high in January, April, and June; waning in February and May; and at its lowest in June. There is a comparative rise in normalized frequencies for the July sub-corpus after a downward trend. A reading of the sample concordances selected for systemic-functional analysis suggests that in July, the focus of the newspaper reporting had moved partly from reporting current developments to re-examination and re-evaluation of the events of the past 12 months. This may have also prompted a renewed focus on Saddam Hussein and his actions.

It is noteworthy that a foreign head of state is referred to by his first name only consistently and frequently in all three newspapers. The *WP* uses *Saddam* most frequently, while the *NYT* and the *WSJ* generally show a stronger preference for *Saddam Hussein*, and *Honorific + Hussein* is almost exclusively used by the *NYT*. However, the *NYT* also abruptly increases its use of *Saddam* in July 1991. Different newspapers have different guidelines on how to use terms of reference: the *NYT*, for example, explicitly advises

the use of “courtesy titles”, with a main title for government officials when first introduced and a Mr., Mrs., or Miss for the following references (Siegal – Connolly 2015: 79). Thus, some differences in the types of references used can be explained by editorial practices.

Occasionally, different types of terms of reference are mixed even within the same clause, as shown in example (3). This example uses the first name only reference *Saddam* for the Iraqi President but an honorific for his U.S. counterpart. This type of reference shows an evaluation of prestige for these two national leaders through an implicit juxtaposition. In other cases, some concordances contain two types of terms of reference for Saddam Hussein within the same clause, as in example (4).

- (3) Mr. Bush will struggle to keep the two subjects separate by stressing the extent and gravity of Saddam’s cheating. (*NYT*, 31 July 1991)
- (4) Like Saddam Hussein it seems to believe that an open Israel-Iraq confrontation will wreck the coalition; that by involving the hated Israelis, Saddam will succeed in separating the Arab partners from their American and European allies... (*WSJ*, 21 January 1991)

Step two of the analysis examines three discursive frames, discussed in connection with different terms of reference and the systemic-functional analysis of the sample concordances.

5.2 Discursive frames

While the three types of terms of reference to some extent imply different levels of prestige and evaluation, a qualitative analysis of the ways in which they are used was also needed. For this purpose, the 140 concordances collected for systemic-functional analysis were also used to investigate the contexts in which these terms appear. The main results of this phase of the analysis are the three discursive frames: The Statesman, The Madman, and Our Saddam. This section focuses on discussing these three frames and their relationship to specific terms of reference and systemic-functional categories.

As Page (2003: 563) notes, the choice of names in news reports is not a simplistic measure but rather a starting point for closer examination. The selected concordances were categorized in terms of these three frames in two separate ways: first, with the term of reference for Saddam Hussein visible in each concordance; and second, a blind categorization of the

concordances with the terms of reference hidden from view (replaced by the word 'referent'). This two-stage analysis was made to ensure that the specific term of reference included in the concordance did not overdetermine the choice of discursive frame – assigning every instance of “Saddam” to The Madman frame, for example. In an otherwise similar sentence, the choice of a U.S. newspaper to use *Saddam* rather than *Saddam Hussein* or *President Hussein* can potentially already be a signal, particularly when this choice departs from the newspaper's editorial practices on naming.

Two of the discursive frames, The Statesman and The Madman, can be viewed as the opposing ends of the same spectrum and many concordances could be placed in a grey area between the two extremes. As the leader of the Republic of Iraq, Saddam Hussein has at his disposal the various powers of the state. What separates the discursive frames of The Statesman from The Madman is whether the Iraqi president's use of this power is represented as legitimate. Additionally, there is a subset of examples that represents Saddam Hussein through the words of Iraqi, Kuwaiti, and other Middle Eastern voices – these examples are discussed under the discursive frame of Our Saddam. As an indication of the frequency of these frames, approximately half of the analyzed concordances were categorized as belonging to The Statesman discursive frame, one quarter to The Madman frame, and one quarter to the Our Saddam frame. However, some concordances also overlapped into two categories.

5.2.1 The Statesman

The discursive frame of The Statesman contains instances where Saddam Hussein is represented as the leader of Iraq who, while not always engaged in positive or constructive actions, is afforded the legitimacy of head of state and military leader. However, as previously mentioned, the frames of The Statesman and The Madman represent a spectrum along which many concordances can be placed. The concordances included under The Statesman frame are most clearly associated with the *Honorific + Hussein* and *Saddam Hussein* terms of reference. However, in an analysis of the concordances in which the term of reference was masked as 'referent', the term of reference “Saddam” was also slightly more often included in this discursive frame.

Material Processes are found commonly across the discursive frames. However, what does vary are the types of actions represented. For this discursive frame, there are several examples where Saddam Hussein is portrayed as either attempting a diplomatic resolution or navigating the

boundaries of his situation, as in examples (5) and (6). In other cases, he is engaged in actions that may not be similarly constructive but are nonetheless the actions of a head of state, such as breaking diplomatic relations or refusing to comply with a U.N. resolution. Within this discursive frame, the Iraqi president also appears most often as a Participant in the Actor role, as the one engaged in and initiating actions, in comparison to any other discursive frame.

- (5) [Thus [in settling the Kuwait issue]Circumstance]Verbiage, [the sources]Sayer [say]Process:Verbal, [[Mr. Hussein]Actor [is seeking to make]Process:Material [the best deal he can...]Goal]Verbiage (NYT, 08 January 1991)
- (6) [Mr. Vorontsov, the Soviet representative]Sayer, [said]Process:Verbal [[Moscow]Senser [had "reason to believe"]Process:Mental [[President Hussein]Actor [was ready to withdraw]Process:Material [unconditionally in a very short time frame]Circumstance.]Phenomenon]Verbiage (NYT, 26 February 1991)

In connection with Verbal Processes, examples for this discursive frame are most likely to include the Iraqi president in a Participant role as the Sayer – the Participant saying or communicating. The Sayer role is most common in the concordances for the honorific term of reference, as in examples (7) and (8), though other terms of reference are also found in Sayer roles, as demonstrated by example (9). In some cases, as in example (10), Saddam Hussein is in a Sayer role while also being embedded within the Verbiage of another Verbal Process, meaning that his reported words are further reported by another source.

- (7) [In their 90-minute discussion]Circumstance [today]Circumstance, [Mr. Arafat and Mr. Hussein]Sayer [reportedly]Circumstance [touched on]Process:Verbal [the scheduled Friday meeting of European Community foreign ministers on the Gulf crisis]Verbiage... (NYT, 03 January 1991)
- (8) [In a televised pep talk he gave to a group of leading Mosul citizens on Saturday]Circumstance, [President Hussein]Sayer [seemed to concede]Process:Verbal [the sensitivity of the issue]Verbiage. (NYT, 07 May 1991)
- (9) [On Friday]Circumstance, [Saddam]Sayer [promised] [the United Nations]Receiver that [[he]Sayer [would permit]Process:Verbal [U.N. inspectors]

Receiver [“prompt and unimpeded access” to locations designated for inspection]^{Verbiage}Verbiage. (WP, 07 July 1991)

- (10) [U.S. reports]^{Sayer} [indicate]^{Process:Verbal} that [[Saddam Hussein]^{Sayer} [has ordered]^{Process:Verbal} [the killing of as many as 20 officers in the upper military hierarchy]^{Verbiage}.]^{Verbiage} (WSJ, 26 July 1991)

5.2.2 The Madman

The Madman discursive frame represents instances in which Saddam Hussein and his actions are represented as illegitimate – through the use of terms such as “dictator” or “regime” – or the Iraqi president personally and his actions as criminal and worthy of suspicion. In comparison to The Statesman discursive frame, this is the opposing end of a spectrum of legitimacy. Within The Madman discursive frame, terms of reference *Saddam* and *Saddam Hussein* are particularly prevalent. In addition, in the analysis of masked ‘referent’ concordances, a few examples of *Honorific + Hussein* were also included in this category, but they were nonetheless comparatively underrepresented in this discursive frame.

Examples (11) and (12) represent instances categorized in The Statesman and The Madman discursive frames, respectively, and illustrate the basis on which certain concordances were placed in either category. The two statements share a clear similarity: in both cases, Saddam Hussein is breaking with an agreement or directive. However, in example (12), it is further implied that he is unreliable and unworthy of trust, and thus this example was categorized in The Madman frame.

- (11) And it can – if Saddam Hussein would simply comply unconditionally with all the resolutions of the United Nations. (NYT, 16 February 1991)
- (12) Since Saddam flouted the original agreement, it would be reckless to rely on his unsupported word. (WP, 05 May 1991)

Similarly to the concordances as a whole, The Madman discursive frame includes many Material Processes. However, in comparison to The Statesman, this particular frame is associated with immoral and even criminal activities such as massacring, flouting agreements, carrying out a genocide, attacking, getting away with murder, as well as with a variety of Participant Roles. These roles range from Actor (the participant completing the action) as in example (13), to Goal (the participant affected by the action) in example (14)

and Recipient or Beneficiary (the participant gaining or benefiting from the action). Goal Participant roles are found in connection with the terms of reference Saddam and Saddam Hussein both within The Statesman and The Madman frames, with many connected to how other events have acted upon the Iraqi leader to affect his fate and future specifically as the leader of Iraq.

- (13) [Worse still]^{Circumstance}, [Saddam]^{Actor} [has hidden away]^{Process:Material} [an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction as well as the missiles to deliver them]^{Goal...} (*NYT*, 31 July, 1991)
- (14) [Although [Saddam]^{Goal} [has]^{Process:Material} [clearly]^{Circumstance} [been weakened]^{Process:Material} by [the war]^{Actor}]^{Verbiage}, [the official]^{Sayer} [said]^{Process:Verbal}, ... (*WP*, 28 February 1991)

There are only a few Verbal Processes in this discursive frame, and in these concordances, Saddam Hussein is typically placed within the functional elements of Verbiage or the Target (the Participant of whom others are speaking). Notably, among the Verbal Processes there are several cases of President Bush specifically being quoted as describing his Iraqi counterpart in unflattering terms. Examples (15), (16), and (17) illustrate this:

- (15) [Mr. Bush]^{Sayer} [will struggle to keep]^{Process:Verbal} [the two subjects]^{Target} [separate]^{Verbiage} by [stressing the extent and gravity of Saddam's cheating]^{Verbiage}. (*NYT*, 31 July 1991)
- (16) [He]^{Actor/Sayer} [campaigns]^{Process:Material} [like Richard Nixon]^{Circumstance} and [talked]^{Process:Verbal} [like Lyndon Johnson]^{Circumstance}, [saying]^{Process:Verbal} [publicly]^{Circumstance} that [[Saddam Hussein]^{Carrier} [was]^{Process:Relational} ["worse than Hitler,"]^{Attribute}]^{Verbiage} ... (*NYT*, 16 June 1991)
- (17) ["Everyone knows that the man was cheating and lying,"]^{Verbiage} [Mr. Bush]^{Sayer} [said]^{Process:Verbal} [of Mr. Hussein's effort to conceal his nuclear abilities]^{Target}. (*NYT*, 02 July 1991)

In contrast to the sample concordances as a whole, there are more Mental Processes than Verbal Processes in the concordances categorized in The Madman discursive frame. In these instances, Saddam Hussein often

appears in the Participant role of a Phenomenon (the represented thought, perception or feeling). The Mental Processes in these instances serve a somewhat similar function to Verbal Processes, representing evaluations of Saddam Hussein by others who have then, in turn, relayed this evaluation to a third party such as a reporter. These evaluations are generally not positive, as they include unsettledness and mistrust, as in example (18), as well as predictions about the Iraqi president's future actions, as in example (19).

- (18) [MASSOUD BARZANI]^{Senser} ... [mistrusts]^{Process:Mental} [Saddam's pledges]^{Phenomenon} (WP 03 May 1991)
- (19) [The White House]^{Senser} [expects]^{Process:Mental} [Saddam to continue his cat-and-mouse game of divulging only as much as he thinks he must to avoid getting whacked by U.S. air power]^{Phenomenon}. (WP 14 July 1991)

Finally, it is worth noting that of the concordances categorized in The Madman discursive frame, slightly more than half were in the final three months of the corpus (May, June, and July) in comparison to the first four. What this shows is that at the very least this representation of Saddam Hussein was not overemphasized during the military operation – quite the opposite, in fact. The Madman discursive frame was maintained and possibly even strengthened after the military operation itself was concluded. The rise and subsequent oppression of the Shi'ite and Kurdish uprisings in Iraq may have also played a role. The selected concordances from the last three months of the corpus show that newspaper reports were as concerned with reviewing past events as with reporting current development.

5.2.3 Our Saddam

The third and final discursive frame discussed in this study is the Our Saddam frame. This discursive frame is closely connected with the term of reference "Saddam", and to a lesser extent with that of "Saddam Hussein". In comparison to The Madman frame, however, the Our Saddam frame is the representation of the Iraqi leader in the words of other regional actors. Some of these actors express views supportive of Saddam Hussein while others are critical or antagonistic, but overall this discursive frame is represented as a Middle-Eastern point of view that is separate from a U.S.-based perspective. Concordances included in the Our Saddam frame are distributed quite evenly among newspapers and months and include

mainly Material and Verbal Processes as well as some examples of Relational Processes. However, there is concentration of examples in May 1991, when there are multiple examples of this discursive frame, with several sources evaluating the future of Saddam Hussein as the leader of Iraq.

The first-name reference is used in both direct and indirect reported speech and by, among others, an Iraqi Shiite dissident, a Kurdish resident, and the Turkish president. Verbal Processes are connected with either man-on-the-street type interviews on the one hand or officials and political leaders on the other hand: in example (20), the Sayer is Iraqi foreign minister Tariq Aziz, while in example (21) it is a Palestinian merchant. The sole Kuwaiti voice is that of a soldier who after example (22) goes on to say that the Kuwaitis have “a bigger heart”.

- (20) [Aziz]Sayer [disputed]Process:Verbal [reports that the [raid]Actor [killed] Process:Material [some relatives and officials close to Saddam who may have taken refuge there]Goal.]Verbiage (WP, 08 May 1991)
- (21) [“[No one]Actor [forced]Process:Material [Saddam]Goal [to withdraw] Process:Material,”]Verbiage [said]Process:Verbal [George Thalji, a merchant]Sayer. (NYT, 04 March 1991)
- (22) [“[Saddam Hussein]Carrier [has]Process:Relational [a big army]Attribute,”] [says]Process:Verbal [Sgt Mohammed Rasheed]Sayer. (WSJ, 21 February 1991)

In comparison to The Madman and The Statesman discursive frames, here the usage of “Saddam” is by a perceived in-group – Middle Eastern voices, leaders and citizens, talking about one of their own, regardless of their approval of Saddam Hussein’s actions. This type of usage is also implicitly acknowledged in example (23) by a U.S. analyst discussing what could be said by people in the region and what by U.S. government actors:

- (23) [“[Some of the things we might like to say about Saddam]Carrier [were far better left]Process:Relational [to the Middle Easterners]Attribute,”]Verbiage [the analyst]Sayer [said]Process:Verbal. (WP, 09 April 1991)

Additionally, a specific sub-group in this discursive frame, including examples of Relational Processes, is connected to the Iraqi president’s familial and tribal ties, as in example (24):

- (24) [At odds with the Majids]^{Attribute} [are]^{Process:Relational} [Saddam's half-brothers, the Ibrahims]^{Carrier}, who [share]^{Process:Relational} [a common mother with Saddam]^{Attribute}. (WSJ, 01 March 1991)

The conclusion will draw together the findings from the analysis and discuss their implications.

6. Conclusion

The analysis identified three distinct discursive frames for Saddam Hussein: The Statesman, The Madman, and Our Saddam. The Statesman is the most common of these discursive frames, while The Madman and Our Saddam frames were comparatively rarer. While The Madman frame is closely associated with the *Saddam* term of reference, the same term is also used in connection with the Our Saddam discursive frame, demonstrating that the same term of reference can function in different and even contradictory ways depending on the specific context in which it is used. The three analyzed newspapers also show marked differences in their use of the different terms of address, each using a somewhat different distribution of the analyzed terms of reference.

The comparatively largest share of The Statesman discursive frame and the smaller share of The Madman frame suggests that while representations of Saddam Hussein as a dangerous individual were to some extent highlighted, this was not the dominant practice in news reports during the analyzed time period. While previous studies have emphasized the demonization of Saddam Hussein in the Persian Gulf conflict (see, for example, Artz – Pollock 1995; Martín Rojo 1995), the results of this study echo the findings by Baker et al. (2013: 225) in their examination of Muslims and Islam: that newspapers did not generally employ extreme negative and generalizing stereotypes but rather presented a more ambivalent and subtle image. The efforts of President George H.W. Bush in promoting military action is well documented in the case of the Persian Gulf War (Kellner 2004; Oddo 2018). However, the findings in this study may be evidence in support of Hart and Fuoli (2020), who found that political leaders' appeals for war may have a limited persuasive impact on the media and the public without cited evidence or supportive societal attitudes.

It is, however, also notable that instances of The Madman discursive frame were not limited to the active war operation in the early half of the analyzed timeframe. Rather, the discursive frame was maintained and even

strengthened after the end of Operation Desert Storm. This indicates that the delegitimizing effects of The Madman discursive frame had a lasting impact beyond the end of the military operation itself. Again, keeping in mind the findings of Hart and Fuoli (2020), the later arguments for military action against Saddam Hussein made by President George W. Bush in the build-up for the Iraq War (as explored by, among others, Oddo 2011; Abid – Manan 2016) would have benefited from the discursive frames established previously in the Persian Gulf War.

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