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NEWS MEDIA FRAMING OF THE IRAQ ISSUE IN THE  
2004 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

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**NEWS MEDIA FRAMING OF THE IRAQ ISSUE IN THE 2004 U.S.  
PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN**

**By**

**Arvind Diddi**

**A DISSERTATION**

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## ABSTRACT

### NEWS MEDIA FRAMING OF THE IRAQ ISSUE IN THE 2004 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

By

Arvind Diddi

This study content analyzed 445 stories from three networks and three cable channels to examine the news media framing of the Iraq issue in the 2004 U.S. presidential campaign. In order to examine how various factors influence the structural qualities of news in terms of framing, this study assessed the influence of nature of medium (networks vs. cable), nature of journalists (race and gender) and nature of sources (partisans vs. non-partisans) on the Iraq issue frames. Derived from the past literature, twelve frames were defined apriori for this study.

The data of the study revealed that the news media largely emphasized negative frames sponsored by Bush and Kerry partisans. Overall, stories with dominant frames were more likely to favor Kerry than Bush. Journalists usually linked candidate partisan frames with a political fight frame, which emphasized the “horse race” and how candidates were using the Iraq issue for electoral gain.

The hierarchical model used in this study was robust in predicting the influence of partisan sources on news media framing of the Iraq issue. It was moderately successful in showing framing differences based on medium and journalist gender (but not race) on the Iraq issue frames. It replicated past work showing the influence of partisans not only broadly on the news, but specifically on public policy issue framing.

To resolve the theoretical debate on generic versus issue-specific frames, this study suggests that issue-specific frames should be anchored in generic frames such as conflict, responsibility, and human interest, etc. Anchoring issue specific frames into generic frames would facilitate cross-issue generalizability, thereby making framing studies more robust in their prediction, explanation, and control of a phenomenon in mass communication.

**Dedicated to My Parents**

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## **CHAPTER 1: Framing and The Gulf War**

### **Introduction**

This study examines the framing of the Iraq issue in television news during the 2004 U.S. presidential campaign. Framing literature in mass communication and political communication emphasizes that it is not only the issues of the day (McCombs, Shaw, & Weaver, 1997; Wanta, 1997), but how those issues have been covered (i.e., framed) in mass media that play a crucial role in influencing public opinion (e.g., Dimitrova, Kaid, Williams, & Trammell, 2005; Entman, 1991, 1993; Gitlin, 1980; Iyengar, 1991; Luther & Miller, 2005; Rhee, 1997; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Some scholars (e.g., McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, & Rey, 1997; Ghanem, 1997) argue that framing is an extension of agenda-setting theory and refer to framing as second-level agenda setting. They suggest that attribute salience or media frames of issues or events are transferred from the media agenda to the public agenda (but see Scheufele [2000] for a contrary view).

The way an issue is covered by the mass media may sway public opinion in favor or against that issue and important people associated with it. Framing of issues by the mass media in general and news media in particular attains a greater significance during presidential campaigns as rival political parties and candidates use them to sponsor their issue positions (frames) in order to garner public support (e.g., Allen, O'Loughlin, Jasperson, & Sullivan, 1994).

Framing is inherent to journalism because journalists gather, organize, and present news in a simple and comprehensible form to their mass audiences

(D'Angelo, 2002; Scheufele, 1999; Valkenburg, Semetko, & de Vreese, 1999). The way a news story is presented, or in other words framed, by a journalist depends on several factors such as sources, news media routines, the nature of the outlet, organizational pressures, and journalists' ideology (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). However, this does not mean that news media are the sole players in influencing public opinion on some issue. Instead they are the key players among other channels such as political ads, and public debates (Holbert, Benoit, Hansen, & Wen, 2002).

### Focus of the Study

This study examines framing of the Iraq issue in the 2004 U.S. presidential campaign between Labor Day (September 6, 2004) and the day of election (November 2, 2004) for several reasons. Theoretically, this study examines the process of the formation of news media frames. In other words, it assesses the influence of communication variables such as the nature of the medium, sources, and journalists, on the formation of news media frames. As Scheufele (1999) argues, previous research has examined the process of creation of news (Gans, 1980; Tuchman, 1978), and similar studies in framing are needed to understand the process of creation of news media frames, which are often a product of a complex interaction between the journalists and factors such as nature of the medium, sources, news media routines, and organizational pressures (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

Framing analysis allows a deeper and broader understanding of an issue and also gives insight into the power play in the prevailing socio-political

environment. This news media framing study examines the practice of journalism in America, which according to some scholars (Aday, Livingston, & Hebert, 2005; Entman, 2004; Hutcheson, Domke, Billeaudeaux, & Garland, 2004; Norris, Kern, & Just, 2003; Ross & Bantimaroudis, 2006; Scheufele, Nisbet, & Ostman, 2005; Williams, 2003; Zelizer & Allan, 2002) has undergone noticeable change after the September 11, 2001 attacks. For instance, Entman (2004) argues that through 1980s American journalists used to operate under a Cold War paradigm, which disappeared after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. According to Entman (2004), the September 11 attacks provide a broader context to understand the role of the media. Thus, this study examines the Iraq issue in the context of a presidential election campaign, in which other institutions deliberately seek to influence media coverage for policy and political ends. This study, therefore, has a different focus from others that have analyzed the Iraq issue in the context of the war itself (e.g., Aday, Livingston, & Hebert, 2005; Allen et al., 1994; Dimitrova et al., 2005; Fico, Ku, & Soffin, 1994; Hiebert, 2003; Luther & Miller, 2005; Reese & Buckalew, 1995).

Substantively, the Iraq issue was chosen because it emerged as one of the most important issues during the presidential campaign (Patterson, 2004; Pew, 2004), and has major socio-political implications for America. The Iraq issue has several potential dimensions to its framing, including the threat of weapons of mass destruction, war on terrorism, establishing democracy in Iraq, civil liberties in America and prisoner-abuse abroad, the implications of withdrawal of American troops, American foreign policy, and economic costs of the war. Also,

there is a fundamental difference between the first and second Gulf wars. Among other political reasons, the 1991 Persian Gulf War was prompted by the initiative to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation. The 2003 Iraq war was primarily fought in the background of the September 11 attacks, but soon acquired an even broader, historical context. Literature suggests that after the 1960s, whenever America got involved in a conflict requiring deployment of its troops abroad for a longer duration, it raised the question of ‘whether this will be another Vietnam?’ (e.g., Entman, 2004; Gartner, Segura, & Wilkening, 1997; Muller, 1973).

While the Iraq issue is multidimensional and has policy implications beyond elections, this study focuses on the way this issue was covered by the American television news—ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN, FOX, and MSNBC—during the presidential campaign. The Iraq issue was crucial for voters’ decisions on whether to continue with the presidency of George W. Bush or elect his Democratic Party opponent, John Kerry. The Iraq issue gave ample opportunity to both the contenders to take specific positions and promote their stand through news media and other avenues such as political ads, political debates, and public meetings. Therefore, this study assesses the news media’s role in covering the Iraq issue in the presidential campaign and examines the influence of various communication variables on the creation of news media frames. A free and fair news media is essential for a democracy to function, and mass media scholars perform their own watchdog function on news media performance through critical, theoretical and empirical studies of media coverage.

### The Iraq War and the 2004 Presidential Race

Before delving into theoretical aspects of this study, a brief background on the Iraq war and the run-up to presidential race can provide context for the importance of such scholarly attention. The day after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on American soil, President George W. Bush addressed the nation and called for people to unite against the war on terror (Entman, 2004). In about a month, U.S. troops led a coalition to dismantle the Taliban regime in Afghanistan for sheltering Osama bin Laden, the leader of Al Qaeda, and mastermind of September 11 attacks.

The next step in the war against terror saw Iraq identified as one of the “axis of evil” nations. The Bush administration argued that there was a connection between Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden, and the September 11 attacks. The Bush administration also argued that there was an immediate need to remove Saddam Hussein from power because he possessed weapons of mass destruction and constituted a potential threat to American security (Danchev & MacMillan, 2005). President Bush sought Congressional approval to invade Iraq and was successful in getting the resolution passed in October 2002. The Senate gave approval by 77 to 23 and the House by 296 to 133. Republicans overwhelmingly supported Bush (48-1 in the Senate and 215-6 in the House), while Democrats were more divided in their support (29-22 in the Senate), or even opposed (81-127 in the House) (Congressional Quarterly, 2003). This congressional approval for invading Iraq was greater in the second Gulf War when compared to the first

Persian Gulf War in 1991, when the Senate voted 52 to 47 in favor, and the House 250 to 183 (Aday, Cluverius, & Livingston, 2005).

President Bush on March 17, 2003 gave an ultimatum to Saddam Hussein to leave Iraq within 48 hours. After the March 19 announcement by Bush that troops were engaged in Iraq, the Senate (unanimously) and the House (392-11) passed resolutions backing the commander-in-chief (Dumbrell, 2005). The “coalition of willing” of about forty nations led by the U.S. troops launched “Operation Iraqi Freedom” on March 19, 2003. The war lasted for more than a month. The Iraqi military was defeated and Baghdad fell on April 9, 2003. President Bush on May 1, 2003 declared the end of major combat operations, and Coalition forces finally captured Saddam Hussein on December 13, 2003 (Aday, Cluverius, & Livingston, 2005; Denchev & MacMillan, 2005; Dimitrova et al., 2005).

However, all along there was some opposition to the war from Democrats and a few Republicans, who wanted emphasis on diplomatic and multilateral solutions rather than use of force. And congressional support eroded, especially among Democrats.

With regard to American public opinion on using force against Iraq, a Gallup poll released in middle of March 2003 indicated 88% of respondents firmly believing that Iraq backed terrorist organizations with plans to attack the United States. About 51% affirmed that Saddam Hussein was connected to 2001 attacks (Schneider, 2003). In general, polls consistently showed public support for Bush’s foreign policy. For instance, in a February 2003 Gallup poll 90% of

Americans saw Iraq as a threat to the United States, and in a CBS poll 66% favored military action (Schneider, 2003a).

However, a closer examination of the public opinion pointed at certain split in the support for war as people expressed concerns about going it alone in Iraq, and dangers in the aftermath of war. Polling showed sharp partisan division over the war in Iraq. For instance, in February 2003, a Gallup poll revealed that 29% of Democratic respondents opposed invasion of Iraq under any circumstances. Another *New York Times*/CBS poll carried out on the first day of the 2003 Iraq war revealed 93% of Republicans, but only 50% of Democrats, supporting President Bush's handling of the war. After President Bush announced the official end to the Iraq war on May 1, a *Newsweek* poll in June 2003 showed 38% of respondents criticizing the administration for 'purposely misleading' the public over weapons of mass destruction. Criticism of the war and its objectives increased, again very much in line with partisan ties, as the U.S. casualties increased (Dumbrell, 2005).

The mounting casualties of the U.S. troops and the increasing insurgency in Iraq prompted Senator Kerry to term the Iraq war as a 'wrong war, at a wrong place, at a wrong time,' a comment made earlier by Howard Dean during Democratic primaries. Republicans reacted to the Kerry criticism by saying that Senator Kerry lacked a consistent position on the Iraq issue and that he flagrantly pandered to the Democratic left when he borrowed lines from Howard Dean to criticize the Iraq policy.



President Bush ultimately won reelection largely on the strength of his national security and social issue positions. A post-election survey by Pew (2004) revealed that 25% of respondents singled out Iraq as the most important issue of the 2004 presidential race, while moral issues with 14% and economy/jobs with 12% took the place of second and third most important issues.

As the Iraq issue emerged as a complex and crucial issue influencing public opinion, it is interesting to examine how the news media covered this issue during an election, especially how it was framed in the media landscape by the news outlets, journalists, and partisan and non-partisan sources. A study from the mass media perspective is important because it has implications for public opinion. Certainly the terrorist attack on the U.S., the subsequent U.S. invasions and the rise of the Iraqi insurgency are objective facts that influence U.S. political leaders and the broader public. But the U.S. media were a prism through which these events were filtered. And the U.S. presidential race further intensified how those distant events influenced opinions and, ultimately, votes for President Bush or Senator Kerry. The framing of the Iraq issue was the means by which those distant events could ultimately be translated into opinions and then votes. Framing helped provide the mental categories by which citizens could think about problems, their causes, who was responsible, and what solutions could work to solve those problems. The purpose of this study, then, is to illuminate part of that conceptual process by identifying the framing of the Iraq issue frequently advanced in television news, the sources of those frames and their public policy content and implications.

## **CHAPTER 2: Types of Frames and Their Sources**

### **Theoretical Framework**

The empirical studies on framing can be broadly categorized into research focusing on *media* frames and studies examining *audience* frames (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; D'Angelo, 2002; de Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001; Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 1999). The emphasis of media frame research is on how issues are covered and presented in the news (e.g., Andsager & Powers, 1999; Callaghan & Schnell, 2001; de Vreese et al., 2001, Shah, Watts, Domke & Fan, 2002; Norris, 1995; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Audience frames research is primarily concerned with how individuals interpret, perceive, and organize events and issues (e.g., Brewer, 1992; de Vreese, 2004; Jacoby, 2000; Jasperson, Shah, Watts, Faber & Fan, 1998; Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997; Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1997; Rhee, 1997; Valkenburg, Semetko, & de Vreese, 1999). Some research has examined both frames in the news and the effects of these frames on audiences (e.g., Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; de Vreese, 2004; Iyengar, 1991; Neuman, Just, & Crigler, 1992).

Citing the work of Cappella & Jamieson (1997), de Vreese, Peter, and Semetko (2001) emphasize that to increase “our understanding of effects of frames, frames must have identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics and be commonly observed in journalistic practice,” (p. 108). Therefore, content analyses of news frames may be considered a crucial requirement prior to taking up the study of effects of news frames. It does not make enough sense to investigate the complex process of news consumption and framing effects with

frames that are “infrequent, insufficiently described or not a consistent component of the news environment,” (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997, p. 49).

Framing research in news has often been carried out in relation to a specific issue (e.g., Brewer, 2002; Callaghan & Schnell, 2001; Jasperson et al., 1998; Norris, 1995) or a specific event (e.g., Entman, 1991; McLeod & Detenber, 1999; Mendelsohn, 1993; Rhee, 1997). A few studies have attempted to compare the framing of certain issues or events across different media and news outlets (Martin & Oshagan, 1997; Neuman et al., 1992; Rhee, 1997; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Simon & Xenos, 2000). A few studies have examined how frames emerge and develop over time (e.g., Patterson, 1993), and some others have compared framing of different issues (e.g., Neuman et al., 1992).

Framing cannot be limited by a single definition, but all of its definitions underscore similar characteristics. According to Goffman (1974), the central purpose of frames is to help people “locate, perceive, identify, and label” the flow of information around them (p. 21). Tuchman (1978) argues that frames help to “narrow the available political alternatives” (p. 156). In their work, Neuman et al. (1992) argue that news frames are “conceptual tools which media and individuals rely on to convey, interpret and evaluate information,” (p. 60). Tuchman (1978) emphasized that they set parameters “in which citizens discuss public events” (p. iv). Frames are “persistent selection, emphasis, and exclusion” (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7). Framing is selecting “some aspects of a perceived reality in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation,” (Entman, 1993, p. 53).

In response to Entman's (1993) call for the establishment of a paradigm of news framing research, D'Angelo (2002) argues that there should be no single "mended" paradigm of framing research. The best way to benefit framing research is to use specific theories to progressively explicate a complex process. By construing news framing as a research program, it is possible to clarify both the practical conduct of scholarly inquiry and the real-life complexity of news framing.

Continuing with the research line examining framing of issues, this study attempts to analyze how the Iraq issue was framed in network and cable television news between Labor Day (September 6, 2004) and election day (November 2, 2004). Specifically, in line with Scheufele's (1999) argument, this study attempts to examine media frames as a dependent variable to assess the influence of factors extrinsic and intrinsic to media on the structural qualities of news in terms of framing. Scheufele (1999) argues that: "Although many researchers have examined extrinsic and intrinsic factors influencing the production and selection of news (e.g., Gans, 1979; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Tuchman, 1978), no evidence has yet been systematically collected about how various factors impact the structural qualities of news in terms of framing," (p. 109). He argued that Tuchman's (1978) work was more about the "'act of making news' (p. 12) rather than framing of reality...Tuchman's analysis revealed less about the relationship between news organizations or journalistic norms and framing than could be a more narrowly designed study," (p. 110). While several factors may influence news media frames, based on previous literature (e.g., Scheufele, 1999;

Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Tuchman, 1978) this study attempts to examine the influence of nature of the medium (network vs. cable), nature of the journalists (race and gender), and nature of the sources (partisan, nonpartisan, and the journalists themselves) on the framing of the Iraq issue in the 2004 presidential race.

### Literature Review on Issue Framing

Studies on media frames basically deal with how issues are covered and portrayed in the news (de Vreese et al. 2001; Entman, 1991; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). In terms of the cognitive approach, frames exist as prior knowledge, used by individuals to “efficiently” process information conveyed in news frames (e.g., de Vreese, 2004; Shen, 2004; Rhee, 1997). Individuals also discuss political issues using their mental frames about those issues (Gamson, 1992, 1996). In addition to the cognitive and interpersonal approach, frames operate within the routines and discourses of groups (Gitlin, 1980; Meyer, 1995).

Framing also shapes public opinion about political issues (D’Angelo, 2002). Framing researchers are also of the opinion that journalists self-consciously play a “conduit” role (see Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986) in which they make an attempt to “provide citizens with the information that will enable them to gain an adequate understanding of politics,” (Schudson, 1983, p. 15). Thus, framing researchers also monitor how well journalists perform this role (Hallin & Mancini, 1984, p. 834).

To increase their power in a conflict, all political players, interest groups, and politicians alike need the mass media to convey information to the general

public and to expand their visibility (Callaghan & Schnell, 2001; Cigler & Loomis, 1995). Unlike direct communication between political players and the citizens, information provided by the mass media is second-hand knowledge. For instance, as Walter Lippmann (1920) explained it, the “pseudo-environment of reports, rumors, and guesses,” (p.54). Therefore, the news media can have a significant influence over the flow and shape of policy and issue debates. The power to frame issues therefore may translate into the power to shape and win policy debates.

de Vreese et al. (2001) distinguished between issue-specific news frames and generic news frames. They argue issue-specific frames are applicable to specific topics or news events, whereas generic frames are broadly applicable to a range of different news topics, some even over time, and potentially, in different cultural contexts. An issue-specific news frame allows for investigation of the framing of particular events in greater detail. It may capture specific aspects of selection, organization, and elaboration that are present in news coverage and pertain specifically to a well-defined issue. However, the greater detail and issue-sensitivity renders issue specific analyses difficult to generalize, capture, and use as a base for general hypothesis and theory building (de Vreese et al., 2001). A few examples of issue-specific framing studies include news framing of the first Gulf War (Reese & Buckalew, 1995), an investigation of the U.S. press and television network coverage of two international airline accidents (Entman, 1991), an analysis of the coverage of the U.S. national budget deficit (Jasperson et al., 1998), and presence of frames in Canadian television news coverage of the 1988

national Canadian election (Mendelsohn, 1993). Issue-specific news frame studies are similar to an inductive approach involving analysis of a news story with an open view to attempt to reveal the array of possible frames, beginning with loosely defined preconceptions of these frames (see for example, Gamson, 1992).

On the other hand, generic frames provide little scope for analyzing the framing of an event or an issue in greater detail, but they facilitate comparisons between frames, topics, and framing practices within and between different media outlets (de Vreese et al., 2001). Several studies have recognized and underscored the significance of some frames in the news by focusing on their effect on people's interpretation of events and issues (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Graber, 1988, 1993; Iyengar, 1991; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Neuman et al., 1992; Norris, 1995; Patterson, 1993). These studies and related literature have provided important information about the occurrence or the effects of frames, and as of now attempts have been made to develop a standard set of content analytic indicators that can be used to reliably measure the prevalence of common frames in the news (see for example, de Vreese et al., 2001; Iyengar, 1991; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Shen, 2004; Valkenburg et al., 1999). "A reliable set of content analytic indicators is necessary for studying developments in the news over time and similarities and differences in the ways in which politics and other topics of national and international importance are framed" in different news outlets (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 24).

In order to find a common ground between issue-specific frames and generic frames, and devising a framing approach with cross-issue generalizability,

Chyi and McCombs (2004) proposed a frame measuring scheme based on space and time dimensions and referred to it as “frame-changing.” At the space dimension, they suggested five levels—individual, community, regional, societal, and international— which could be interpreted as intervals on a continuum. The idea here is to examine an issue-frame at each of these five levels. The second dimension, time, would enable to examine framing of an issue in the past and the present, and on that basis predict how it could be framed in the future (Chyi & McCombs, 2004).

Using this framing scheme across space and time dimensions, Chyi and McCombs’ (2004) research findings revealed that an issue like Columbine school shooting in 1999, at the space dimension, changed from being a individual-level frame to societal frame. At the time dimension, the “present frame” emerged as a dominant frame followed by “past” and “future” frames. In sum, they argued that using this frame measuring scheme would allow cross-issue generalizability (Chyi & McCombs, 2004).

All these framing approaches involve predefining certain frames as content analytic variables to assess the extent to which these frames occur in the news. In other words, “it is necessary to have a clear idea of the kinds of frames likely to be in the news, because the frames that are not defined apriori may risk being overlooked. This approach also makes it necessary to measure frames in a way that can be replicated, can cope with large samples, and can detect differences in framing between media,” (e.g., electronic vs. print media) “and



within media,” (e.g. cable vs. network news) (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 95).

Past research has identified a few frames that are commonly found in the news, though not necessarily at the same time. Framing research, in general has focused on the existence of one or more frames in the news and their implications for public opinion (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). The *conflict* frame, for example, has been extensively debated (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Patterson, 1993), so also attribution of responsibility in the news (Iyengar, 1991). Other studies by Neuman et al., (1992), Valkenburg et al., (1999), and Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) went a step further as these researchers identified four different frames that were common in U.S. news coverage of a range of issues, including conflict, economic consequences, human impact, and morality frames. Reese and Buckalew (1995), apart from the conflict frame, suggested the control frame and the consensus frame in their study of coverage of Persian Gulf War in local television. Their study suggested that conflict frame was used to emphasize dissent between two unlike groups in the story, control frame emphasized on story’s reliance of official sources, and consensus frame emphasized on community solidarity. In a study of framing of the 2004 senate races, Love and Fico (2006) examined newspaper coverage to identify the frames sponsored by the reporters, partisan and nonpartisan sources. Citing previous literature (Kerbel, Apee, & Ross, 2000; Rosen & Taylor, 1992; Trimble & Sampert, 2004), they argued the importance of generic frames, especially the strategic frame in election coverage. The strategic frame, tying into objectivity, emphasizes ‘horse race’

coverage, i.e. who is winning and losing, and reduces the chances of appearing biased. However, a downside to the strategic frame is that it overlooks specific issue positions and downplays how political players stake out clear issue positions (Love & Fico, 2006).

### Iraq Issue Framing

Among several issues such as economy/jobs, health care, social security and taxes, the Iraq issue along with moral values emerged as one of the top concerns among voters in 2004 U.S. presidential race (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2004; Patterson 2004). Between Labor Day (September 6, 2004) and the day of election (November 2, 2004), the Iraq issue was one of the prominent election topics covered in the news media. There was a considerable political tension and also lack of consensus in public opinion on the way things were going in Iraq. There were heated political debates on failure of intelligence agencies in finding weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The Democratic party and its supporters were highly critical of the Bush administration's handling of reconstruction of Iraq and conducting elections in that volatile region, which was witnessing frequent conflicts between U.S. armed forces and local insurgents and terrorists. Some voters with their relatives and friends serving in Iraq, anti-war coalitions, the Democratic party, as well as those who strongly supported President Bush, made Iraq a contentious issue during the election period. And news media are known to cover contentious issues during final stages of campaign (Esser & D'Angelo, 2003). Thus, among other political issues, the Iraq issue emerged as a top contender for news media coverage.

The assessment of Iraq War framing in the 2004 presidential election can draw on a rich set of news content studies. Some of these studies focus on military aspects of the first Gulf War in 1991 and others on the 2003 war. Other studies focus on the policy conflict that accompanied both wars. An examination of this literature is crucial for determining the frames appropriately studied in this research, and helps this research to appropriately replicate and extend past research.

*Gulf War Report Studies: The Military Emphasis*

Several studies have analyzed the Persian Gulf War in 1991 in the context of armed conflict and source dominance (e.g., Allen et al., 1994; Fico, Ku, & Soffin, 1994; Reese & Buckalew, 1995). Allen et al., (1994) in their study of the first Gulf War found that media not only served as conduits to military information, but also framed and primed opinions of dissent, patriotism, technology and elite consensus in way that subdued dissent and affected citizens' evaluations of military actions. Reese and Buckalew (1995) examined local television coverage of the Persian Gulf War and found that it linked the war coverage to the media routines of television newswork, indicating how they act as coherent frames supportive of Gulf policy. Their *conflict frame* projected anti-war protest as being in opposition to patriotism. The *control frame* highlighted protest as a threat to social order. And the *consensual frame* linked Gulf Policy to patriotism and 'the troops,'(p.40). In a content study of newspaper coverage of the United States in Gulf War, Fico, Ku, and Soffin (1994) examined how well the press adheres to a socially responsible performance. Their study discovered anti-

war advocates being favored with more than six in ten stories overall dominated by their assertions.

Studies on military and sourcing aspects of the second Gulf war focused on the initial coverage of the conflict (e.g., Aday, Cluverius, & Livingston, 2005; Aday, Livingston, & Hebert, 2005; Dimitrova et al., 2005). In their framing analysis, Dimitrova et al., (2005) argued that the online news played a major role during the 2003 Gulf war. Their study focused on the first night of the war on March 19, 2003, and found that U.S. news sites relied more heavily on the military conflict, human interest, and media self-coverage frames, while the responsibility frame was found to be more common among the international sites. The study concluded that “media are influenced by the overall political environment in which they exist,” (p. 35). Another study by Aday, Cluverius, and Livingston (2005) examined the cable news coverage of toppling of Saddam Hussein’s statue during the Iraq war in 2003. Their study found that the *victory* frame dramatically dominated the amount of battle-related stories. Their definition of the *victory* frame is that the United States has won the war, as opposed to information that would include alternative frames, such as battle images that gives the impression that the war continues. In a cross-cultural analysis of news media coverage of the 2003 Iraq war, Aday, Livingston, and Hebert (2005) found that although majority of stories on American network and cable television were objective, they were dominated by episodic battle coverage, “thereby crowding out other important aspects of the war,” (p. 18). Their study supported the *episodic frames* propounded by Iyengar (1991). Their data indicated that

twenty-four-hour cable channels—CNN and Fox—used more *strategic* and *tactical frames* when compared to the three traditional broadcast networks or Arab satellite channel Al Jazeera. The study found that the American television paid little attention to dissent in the United States or abroad on the Iraq war, and international diplomacy involving the United Nations. They concluded that the American viewers got a sanitized version of the war “free of bloodshed, dissent, and diplomacy, but full of exciting weaponry, splashy graphics, and heroic soldiers,” (p. 8).

*Studies on the Policy Conflict Over the Iraq War:*

Both, the first and second Gulf Wars have been studied in the context of policy (e.g., Edelman, 1993; Entman, 2004; Hiebert, 2003; Luther & Miller, 2005; Peer & Chestnut, 1995). Edelman’s (1993) work on government policies and public opinion argued that the 1991 Persian Gulf War was framed as a military and foreign policy concern by the political elites, which in turn obscured most of the consequences of the war. The labeling the Gulf War as a military and foreign policy issue blurred the focus on war causalities and how “the political and economic benefits that flowed to some from the preparations for war in the Gulf region,” (p. 233). His study concluded that: “The social world is a kaleidoscope of potential realities, which can be readily evoked by altering the ways in which observations are framed and categorized. Classifications schemes are therefore central to political maneuver and political persuasion. Typically, they are driven by the dominant elite’s ideology and prejudice rather than by rigorous analysis or the aspiration to solve social problems,” (p. 231). According to some scholars

(Bennett, 1994; Entman & Page, 1994), when it comes to foreign policy and war coverage, the government elites, such as the White House, have been shown to play a privileged role in shaping the news. Bennett and Manheim (1993) analyzed the first Gulf War stories in the *New York Times* and found that the range of in-depth views presented was quite narrow. Their study also revealed that media frames throughout the crisis reflected those projected by the administration and its supporters. They came to a conclusion that the readers lacked reasonable access to a sufficiently wide range of information and opinion to make informed judgments about the rationale of administration policy. In an analysis of media coverage of levels of support or criticism accorded to President Bush's Persian Gulf War policy in 1991, Peer and Chestnut (1995) found that television news tended to support the official line more than the newspapers. The thematic nature of television news forces the broadcast reporters to repeat or cue into what their sources have said or going to say, whereas newspaper reporters are not constrained to repeat their sources verbatim.

Entman (2004) examined the coverage of elites' policy debate on the first Gulf war. He found that the news media coverage of the debate overall appeared objective, but criticism of the Bush administration was slightly more frequent. Most of the relevant critical information tended to be displayed less prominently than support. He argued that much of the criticism was procedural than substantive. The news media provided basic criticisms of the government's problem definition, "which meant discussion of remedies was limited to just the choice of war or sanctions (Entman, 2004, p. 78).

In a preliminary analysis of the government's handling of the Iraq war, Hiebert (2003) argues that the use of various techniques of public relations and propaganda were essential on the part of the U.S. government to handle the 2003 Iraq war. His study suggests that American government initially framed the Iraq issue as *self-defense story*, and later changed the frame to *rescue story*. The self-defense frame emphasized Saddam Hussein's connection to Al Qaeda, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. The rescue frame focused on saving the Iraqi people and bringing democracy to the region. He argued that both these frames also worked for senior George Bush in the Persian Gulf War (Hiebert, 2003). While commenting on the government and the role of the media he wrote: "The government will frame the issues, story line, slogans and catch phrases to serve its purposes. Only an independent, alert, and responsible press, together with a concerned citizenry, can force the government to be more honest and forthright," (p. 254).

In a study of framing of the 2003 U.S.–Iraq war demonstrations before and during the war, Luther and Miller (2005) found the existence of partisan master frames in texts by pro– and anti–war groups. They argued that frames sponsored by anti-war groups were more apparent than frames projected by pro-war groups. The news stories about each group reflected the frames of the group in question more so than the opposing group's frames. Their pro–war frames included *fighting for freedom and democracy*, and *threat from weapons of mass destruction*. The anti–war frames were *anti-war protest efforts*, and *global resistance against the U.S. 'empire.'*

### Relevant Iraq War Frames in the 2004 Presidential Race

The framing of the Iraq war can be studied from an inductive approach involving analyses of news stories with a view to examine possible frames that may exist. This approach can point at several possible ways in which an issue such as the Iraq war can be framed. However, this method can be cumbersome, often based on small sample, and can be hard to replicate (for a similar argument see Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000)

Another approach is predefining certain frames as content analytic variables to examine the extent to which they occur in the news. According to this approach, it is “necessary to have a clear idea of the kinds of frames likely to be in the news, because the frames that are not defined a priori may be overlooked,” (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000: p. 95). The advantage of this approach is that it can be replicated, “can cope with large samples, and can detect differences in framing between media and within media,” (p. 95).

Therefore, under this approach the framing of the Iraq issue can be studied in several ways, pointed to by past research, such as strategy and issue frames (Rhee, 1997), episodic and thematic frames (Iyengar, 1991), and human interest, economic consequence, and morality frames (e.g., Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). However, some of these frames are more appropriate than others for a single policy issue study. The strategy frame approach, for example, is not suitable for this study as only a single issue is being analyzed in-depth. On the other hand, the morality frames can be seen as a dimension of a responsibility frame for the purpose of this study because this research is examining the Iraq issue in the



context of election. Specifically the Democratic challenger could attribute moral responsibility for the Iraq war to President Bush and his administration. Research on campaign coverage (Esser & D'Angelo, 2003) also points that proposed reforms of the McGovern-Fraser Commission resulted in a shift from party-centered to candidate-centered elections. Candidate-centered campaigns are organized through the "news media and are characterized by ever-evolving rules or engagement between candidates and the press corps called media politics," (p. 618). In these candidate-centered campaigns it is normal to see challengers framing each other as competent or incompetent in handling of a specific issue. In the 2004 presidential race Bush and Kerry framed each other as competent and incompetent in handling the Iraq issue.

Therefore, this study specifically investigates the following twelve news frames that have been identified in earlier studies that are especially relevant for this research: fight against terrorism frame, and fighting for freedom and democracy frame (e.g., Heibert, 2003; Luther & Miller, 2005), Kerry incompetence frame, and Bush competence frame (e.g., Esser & D'Angelo, 2003), conflict frame (e.g., Dimitrova et al., 2005; Reese & Buckalew, 1995), political fight frame (Patterson & Donsbach, 1996), consensus frame (e.g., Reese & Buckalew, 1995), policy failure/responsibility frame (e.g., Dimitrova et al., 2005; Edelman, 1993; Entman, 2004; Entman & Rojecki, 1993), economic consequence frame (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000), Bush incompetence frame, and Kerry competence frame (Esser & D'Angelo, 2003), and other frame (frames not falling into any of the above mentioned categories).

These frames are especially suitable to examine news media's role in context of the political power play during the 2004 presidential race. According to previous research (Fico, Clogston, & Pizante, 1988; Fico & Cote, 2002) at higher-level campaigns challengers have a good chance of getting more coverage than the incumbent, but the 2004 campaign was different because of the ongoing conflict in Iraq, which meant consistent coverage to the Bush administration that could have been either positive or negative. As the leader of the nation and commander in chief of the U.S. armed forces, President Bush was faced with election even as the American troops were stationed in Iraq.

The Bush administration was aware of the fact that Democratic Party would attack his Iraq war policy as several questions remained on the rationale of going to the war and no clear plan on troop withdrawal. Therefore, President Bush and his campaign emphasized that the Iraq war was not just an aggression on another nation, but was in fact a fight against terrorism. President Bush maintained that the world was better off by removing Saddam Hussein from power as he had links with terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda. He also asserted that Iraqi people were liberated from the tyrannical rule of Saddam and that a stable, democratic government there would serve the end of world peace.

On the other hand, his Democratic challenger, Senator Kerry, left no opportunity to attack President Bush, holding him responsible for the mess in Iraq and tying it to a failed Vietnam War policy. Kerry and his supporters kept attacking President Bush, saying that his administration's Iraq policy was even making things worse in Iraq and displacing attention and resources from the War

on Terror. Although, the Iraq issue was a point of conflict for these two candidates, an occasional consensus was seen between them, such as their reactions following the release of Bin Laden tapes threatening elections and American freedom. They both affirmed that the nation is united against terrorism and that the nation is not Republican or Democratic when it came to fighting terrorism.

This study proposes to examine these twelve news media frames in coverage of the Iraq issue in the context of whether particular frames most benefited President George Bush or the U.S. Senator John Kerry. The assumption is that both political parties were aware of the frames that most beneficially shaped debate, and actually attempted to place those frames into news coverage. Obviously too, however, journalists are themselves gatekeepers and, as such, their decisions to give access to sources and their frames matter in the policy debate. Moreover, the journalists themselves are frame providers, and those frames may themselves benefit one or the other side.

Based on the above rationale and previous studies (Dimitrova et al., 2005; Esser & D'Angelo, 2003; Hiebert, 2003; Luther & Miller, 2005; Patterson & Donsbach, 1996; Reese & Buckalew, 1995; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000) following frames are developed for this study:

*Pro-Bush Frames:*

**Fight Against Terrorism Frame:** The focus is on equating Iraq war with fight against terrorism. Bush administration's emphasis that the world is better off with the ouster of Saddam Hussein.

**Fighting for Freedom and Democracy Frame:** The focus is on bringing democracy to the world in general and to Iraq in particular.

**Kerry Incompetence Frame:** The focus is on Kerry being a flip-flopper and unfit to lead the nation in its fight against terrorism and the war in Iraq.

**Bush Competence Frame:** The focus is on Bush being capable of leading the nation successfully against its fight on terrorism and the war in Iraq.

*Neutral Frames:*

**Conflict Frame:** The focus is on claims by Bush or Kerry that they would make American safer from Islamic terrorists, or win the war in Iraq.

**Political Fight Frame:** Here sources explicitly identify that one or both sides, Republicans and Democrats, are using the Iraq issue to secure some political or electoral gain, as a tactical strategy.

**Consensus Frame:** The focus is on Bush and Kerry agreeing on some aspect of the Iraq issue. For instance, they agreed that Bin Laden tape released during campaign will not deter them from their fight against terrorism.

*Pro-Kerry Frames:*

**Policy Failure/Responsibility Frame:** The focus is that the Iraq issue is a policy failure that squanders international goodwill. It emphasizes that the Bush administration is responsible for the Iraq war and its problems including military difficulties, civilian casualties and prisoner abuse. Here, the focus is on Bush administration rather than President Bush as an individual.

**Economic Consequence Frame:** The focus is on economic burden being caused at the domestic front due to the war in Iraq.

**Bush Incompetence Frame:** The focus is on Bush as a headstrong and arrogant individual who is unfit to lead the nation in its fight against terrorism and the war in Iraq. Here, the focus is on President Bush as an individual.

**Kerry Competence Frame:** The focus is that Kerry will keep focus on terrorism, not on Iraq. Kerry will be smarter than Bush. Kerry will get allies, and world support to hunt down and kill terrorists.

Overall, then, the rationale of this study is that President Bush and his supporters framed the Iraq issue as war against terrorism and that only the Bush administration could ensure a secure and safe America. On the other hand, Democratic Senator Kerry and his supporters framed the Iraq issue as a failure attributable to the Bush administration that only a change in administration could correct. Assessing the news media frames promoting these views therefore illuminates the power play between political parties reflected in the mass media. This study will also help understand whether the news media tilted coverage to favor the frames of one or the other side, or provided other frames that were more neutral.

#### Factors Influencing News Media Iraq Issue Frames

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) suggest that various factors intrinsic and extrinsic to the media organizations influence mass media content (also see, Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978). They argue that from an organizational routines approach, media content is influenced by the way journalists and their news companies organize work (e.g., Johnson, Braima, & Sothirajah, 2000; Peer & Chestnut, 1995). This study builds on this hierarchical model, and examines the influence of

intrinsic media factors such as nature of the medium (cable vs. network channels), and race and gender of journalists, and an extrinsic media factor, political and non-political sources, on news media framing of the Iraq issue. Specifically, this study contributes to knowledge in this area by developing a model that takes account of medium, journalist, and source influence on framing in a policy conflict context.

Certainly there will be a difference between the way network news channels and twenty-four hour cable news channels organize their work and thereby differently influence their media content. In other words, there will be differences based on the priorities and goals of the news channel managers who set priorities, allocate resources and establish acceptable news processing routines. With regard to the influence of individual journalists on the media content, Shoemaker and Reese (1996) argue that media's practices and routines will suppress such effects on the content. However, recent research (e.g., Craft & Wanta, 2004; Fico & Freedman, 2001; Freedman & Fico, 2005; Gidengil & Everitt, 2003; Sutcliffe, Lee, & Soderlund, 2005; Zeldes & Fico, 2005) suggests influence of journalists race and gender on the news content. Finally, Shoemaker and Reese (1996) point at several factors extrinsic to the media organizations that influence the media content, and prominent among these kinds of factors are sources. Sources can be political, economic and social elites, interest groups, and ordinary people.

The theoretical premise of this study is that cable and broadcast network news may differ in their framing of news because of the differences in the amount

of time they can devote to stories and in the interest of their targeted audiences in news. For instance, Bae (2000) found that due to time differentiation there were significant differences in the percentage of unique stories between the cable and broadcast network newscasts. Other literature suggests that the Fox News cable channel has a conservative bias while a network channel like CBS has a liberal bias (e.g., Aday, Livingston, & Hebert, 2005; Katovsky & Carlson, 2003; McChesney, 2002). While comparing the difference between broadcast and print medium coverage of Persian Gulf War policy debate, Peer and Chestnut (1995) found that television news tends to support the government more than the newspapers, and attributed this feature to the structural makeup of the respective media.

On the influence of journalists' demographics on news frames, it has been argued that the race and gender of journalists will have minimum effect on the news content (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986). However, some studies (Aday, Livingston, & Hebert, 2005; Armstrong, Wood, & Nelson, 2006; Rodgers & Thorson, 2003; Norris et al., 2003; Zelizer & Allan, 2002) posit that the nature of American journalism shifted after September 11 in ways that affect the influence of journalists' race and gender on news frames (e.g., Gidengil & Everitt, 2003; Sutcliffe, Lee, & Soderlund, 2005; Freedman & Fico, 2005). In a study of female news professionals in local and national broadcast news during the buildup of the Iraq War, Armstrong et al. (2006), for example, found gender to be more a key factor in the national news content than in local news. They argue that post-September 11<sup>th</sup> world is dominated by stories of war, globalization, foreign

policy, and the opportunity of reporting at national level does not look promising for female journalists. This is evident by the fact that male reporters and anchors were shown often in the coverage of the Iraq war, and that less than 10% of journalists embedded with troops were women (Armstrong et al., 2006). Rodgers and Thorson (2003), in a study of print news professionals, based on a gender model, suggested that differences in socialization might be the reason for difference in the news coverage by male and female print journalists. However, they also qualify this, asserting, “Newsroom norms and practices may operate as a conformity mechanism that socializes all reporters, regardless of gender, to maintain the male-dominated power structure of larger news organizations,” (p.673).

Finally, news sources have been always a point of interest for mass media scholars examining how news content is influenced by political and social elites, who are often used as sources by the journalists (e.g., Allen et al., 1994; Entman, 1989). Such sources are given more or less scope in stories both to set the issue agenda and to frame particular issue. In a policy conflict, the access given to contending sources to do this relates to fairness and balance in journalism.

Research relating to these types of influence is discussed more thoroughly below.

#### *Nature of the Medium:*

Mass communication and political literature suggests that the nature of the medium influences media content including frames (Benson, 2004; D'Alessio & Allen, 2000; Johnson, Braima, & Sothirajah, 2000; Peer & Chestnut, 1995;



Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Wicks & Walker, 1993). Some scholars argue that studies of the nature of medium are usually limited to one kind of medium such as newspapers or television (D' Alessio & Allen, 2000). In a meta-analysis of media bias they argued that "[news media] are perceived as a monolithic block. Critics discuss 'the media' ...as a unitary whole and not as a set of not only different companies but even drastically different media," (p. 137). Therefore, their study concluded that media analysis should be a 'gross-level examination,' (p. 137). In another study, Benson (2004) argues that more studies are required to understand the influence of structural characteristics of media systems to the production of journalistic discourse about politics.

There are some studies which indicated the influence of nature of the medium on media content. For example, Aday, Livingston, & Hebert, (2005) in their analysis of coverage of the Iraq war observed that twenty-four-hour cable channels use more *strategic* and *tactical* frames when compared to traditional broadcast networks. This may be because cable channels have longer newscasts and can devote more time to specific issues or events. Iyengar (1991) suggested that television news tends to use more *episodic* frames compared to print medium. In a content study of framing of European politics, it was found that sober and serious newspapers and television news programs more often used *responsibility* and *conflict* frames, whereas sensationalist outlets often used the *human interest* frame (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). A product differentiation study of cable and broadcast networks (Bae, 2000) found that cable newscasts covered

proportionally more government, politics, human interest, feature stories, whereas broadcast networks reported more health and welfare stories.

A few studies found the Fox News Channel coverage of Iraq war to be more jingoistic and pro-administration when compared to other cable channels and networks (Aday, Livingston, & Hebert, 2005; Katovsky & Carlson, 2003). Citing a survey, Aday, Livingston, & Hebert, (2005) wrote: "FNC (Fox News Channel) was founded in response to what many conservatives in America felt to be a liberal bias in the mainstream media and currently attracts an audience more heavily made up of Republicans than other networks' audiences," (p. 6). In another study the Project for Excellence in Journalism (2002) examined news coverage soon after the September 11 attacks and found Fox News Channel to be more favorable to the administration than other networks. However, the Center for Media and Public Affairs (CMPA, 2003) studied the coverage of the Iraq war and found that Fox News Channel did not carry substantively more positive stories than the three broadcast networks (Aday, Livingston, & Hebert, 2005).

Other studies suggest that while Fox News Channel may have a conservative bias, a network channel like CBS has a liberal bias (e.g., Aday, Livingston, & Hebert, 2005; D' Alessio & Allen, 2000; Katovsky & Carlson, 2003; Lowry & Shidler, 1995, 1998; McChesney, 2002). Specifically, in a meta-analysis of media studies of presidential elections, D' Alessio and Allen (2000) found that television network news had a pro-Democratic Party bias. Their data indicated that about 52.7 percent of airtime went to Democrats, while Republicans got roughly 47.3 percent of airtime. Based on these finding they reasoned: "This

is not a large difference, although it is larger than some would like,” (p. 149). While emphasizing the importance of presidential campaigns, D'Alessio and Allen (2000), argued that ideally unbiased media should cover Republican and Democrat sides equally. They pointed out that “the winners achieve enormous power for themselves and their parties...The potential consequences of media bias, particularly if it can be shown to have influenced the campaign (as is so often the claim), are therefore similarly enormous,” (p. 138). In a study of 1992 presidential campaign, Lowry and Shilder (1995) discovered that broadcast networks were fair in giving equal time to Republican and Democratic candidates, but the overall sound bites of noncandidates revealed a liberal news bias. In another longitudinal study of 1992 and 1996 presidential campaigns, Lowry and Shidler (1998), while emphasizing the importance of analyzing sound bites by noncandidates and candidates in broadcast network news, argued that “Republicans tend to be negatively bitten more often than Democrats,” (p. 277).

Bae (2000) in his study emphasized that among cable channels, Fox News Channel and MSNBC started out to be different from CNN. Fox News Channel is considered to have a conservative slant because of the political personalities of Rupert Murdoch and Roger Ailes. MSNBC promoted itself as futuristic, technology-oriented cable channel by linking its television news program with the Web site. It also attempted to differentiate from CNN both in news coverage and target audience (Bae, 2000).

An earlier Stempel (1988) study comparing news on CNN primetime, PBS (MacNeil Lehrer News Hour), and three traditional evening network newscasts on

ABC, CBS, and NBC, concluded that broadcast newscasts, CNN, and PBS did not offer the same news. On 14 topic categories, the study found some differences along with moderate correlation between CNN and three broadcast networks on the news topics covered. The study also found that CNN heavily emphasized popular amusements, was less dependent on news from New York and Washington D.C. and reported more international stories.

The Media Institute (1983) in a comparison of newscast on broadcast networks and CNN found that CNN's business and economic news stories were more balanced and less sensational than those of the broadcast networks. CNN's reporting, however, was of less depth compared to network reporting, despite two-hour length of *Primenews*. There was no significant difference in the news priority of the networks and CNN. While examining a relationship between different broadcast types, Johnson et al., (2000) found that the different media reaches different audience and that the media are more powerful at the beginning of the campaign. In another study of media coverage of President Bush's Persian Gulf War policy in 1991, Peer and Chestnut (1995) found that television news tended to support the official line more than the newspapers. The thematic nature of television news forces the broadcast reporters to repeat or cue into what their sources have said or going to say, whereas newspaper reporters are not constrained to repeat their sources verbatim. In another study examining the difference in the live coverage of the Persian Gulf War in CNN and other broadcast networks, Wicks and Walker (1993) found that CNN's coverage was more event-oriented, while the other three networks provided more analysis.

### *Race and Gender of Journalist:*

Before discussing the influence of race and gender of journalists on media frames, it will be helpful to focus on journalists themselves serving as sources. Framing literature in political communication and mass communication emphasizes the role of journalists in presenting news on various issues and events (Callaghan & Schnell, 2001; Edelman, 1993; Entman, 1991, 1993; Gamson, 1992; Gitlin, 1980; Iyengar, 1991; Luther & Miller, 2005; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Valkenburg et al., 1999). These scholars assume that framing is inevitable in journalism and that journalists intentionally or unintentionally frame their representations of issues or events in order to make them accessible to a mass audience. Scholars have long argued that journalists have to narrate a story within a limited time or space. They employ certain frames to simplify and give meaning to the issues and events and to sustain audience interest (Ball-Rokeach & Rokeach, 1987; Jasperson et al., 1998; Valkenburg et al., 1999).

Even though journalists can use myriad ways to frame the news, the literature seems to suggest that there are at least four ways in which news is generally framed: *conflict frame*, *human interest frame*, *responsibility frame*, and *economic consequence frame* (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Valkenburg et al., 1999). According to some scholars (Callaghan & Schnell, 2001; D'Angelo, 2002), journalists play the dual role of serving as conduits for transmitting such frames sponsored by the political elites, and also select and simplify (i.e., frame) certain aspects of the stories in order to present them in interesting and comprehensible form to their audience. In a framing study of the gun control issue, for instance,

Callaghan and Schnell (2001) found that both politicians and interest groups employed several interpretive issue frames and keenly contested to put their preferred themes on the agenda. At times, however, journalists intervened in their framing process, especially as the debate matured.

With the growing emphasis on newsroom diversity and source diversity (Kerschbaumer, 2003; Monroe, 2003) this study explores whether the race and gender of journalists will have influence on framing of the Iraq issue. Although, Weaver and Wilhoit (1986) argue that demographics such as the race and gender of journalists will have minimum effect on the news content, recent mass communication research suggests other possibilities (e.g., Armstrong et al., 2006; Craft & Wanta, 2004; Freedman & Fico, 2005; Gidengil & Everitt, 2003; Richardson & Lancendorfer, 2004; Sutcliffe, Lee, & Soderlund, 2005; Zeldes & Fico, 2005). In a study combining content analysis and experiment, Gidengil and Everitt (2003) analyzed the television news coverage of women candidates in 1993 and 1997 Canadian elections. Based on gendered mediation thesis, they argued that conventional news frames construct politics in stereotypically masculine terms. While cautioning that the gender differences between female and male journalists should not be overstated, their study concluded that “female journalists may be more likely than male journalists to react critically to assertive and nonstereotypical behavior on the part of female leaders. It is also possible that the journalists’ choice of language reflects the constraints of the gendered context in which they work,” (p. 225). Quoting Ross and Sreberny (2000, p. 94) they wrote, “women journalists often resort to even more macho reporting styles than

their male colleagues as if to prove their *professional* mettle.” Their study also found that female reporters are more likely to use female sources, and male reporters have a tendency to use more male sources, which is similar to findings of other studies (e.g., Zeldes & Fico, 2005).

Craft and Wanta (2004) examined the influence of female editors and reporters on the news agenda and found that newspapers with female editors often had less negative content than those with male editors. A study by Rodgers and Thorson (2003) revealed that though male and female journalists often carry out reporting assignments differently, organizational variables including the circulation size and the ratio of male-to-female editors, mediated those differences. As argued by some scholars (Armstrong et al., 2006; Rodgers and Thorson 2003), the gender model suggests that males and females have different workplace roles and behaviors because they are socialized differently.

In an analysis of the U.S. network television news coverage of political crises in the Caribbean, Sutcliffe et al., (2005), discovered subtle differences in the way male and female reporters framed stories. Although, there was no dramatic difference between male and female reporters’ coverage of Caribbean political crises, the study did indicate that female reporters had a tendency to include more stories on social and economic concerns. Even though there was a broad consistency in male and female reporting, the study found that female reporters and anchors were slightly more likely to use female sources in their sources. In a content study of race and gender of reporters in the 2000 presidential campaign, Zeldes and Fico (2005) found that presence of women and minority

reporters led to more diverse source usage. Women and minority reporters were more likely to use and give time to women and minority noncandidate sources compared to male and white reporters. Women and minority reporters also gave more story time and attention to sources such as experts and ordinary people. Another study by Freedman and Fico (2005) found that female reporters have a greater tendency than their male colleagues to use female sources. "At newspapers where there is a 'critical mass' of minority journalists willing to argue for or against particular slants or frames being used with stories, the character of those stories should differ from those in newspaper with a less substantial minority presence," (Gandy, Kopp, Hands, Frazer, & Phillips, 1997, p. 165).

However, van Zoonen (1994) argues that it is not always clear that just by adding women to media organizations will transform media output. According to van Zoonen, there is no monolithic women's viewpoint. "Because all knowledge is socially situated, however, and because women's situations differ from those of men, the possibility exists that their reporting will differ from that of men," (p. 149). With regard to female news reporters, agenda setting suggests that an underrepresentation of women, and any resulting biases in the content of reporting, may feed back into both public perceptions and government policy (Sutcliffe et al., 2005). For instance, the overall number of women appearing as reporters and sources on the Iraq issue during presidential campaign, at some level, may translate into American public opinion on that particular issue.

Some scholars argue the possibility of male bias in news reporting affecting the content of that news story (e.g., Mills, 1997; Sutcliffe et al., 2005).



These scholars emphasize that the choice of news stories, how they are reported, and selection of sources, may be affected by those who are reporting the story. To underscore this point, Gallagher (2001) argues that “the power to define public and media agendas is mainly a male privilege,” (p.3). She asserts that media content “reflects a masculine vision of the world and of what is important,” (p. 7). A few scholars argue that women are underrepresented as journalists and this may create distortions in news reporting. Further, this underrepresentation of women may result in certain news stories, or attributes of news stories, being neglected (e.g., Sutcliffe et al., 2005).

*Partisan Balance of Stories:*

Previous studies have shown that media frames are influenced by sources (e.g., Allen et al., 1994; Callaghan & Schnell, 2001; Entman, & Page, 1994; Fico & Cote, 2002; Luther & Miller, 2001; Page, Shapiro, & Dempsey, 1987; Parmelee, 2002; Ryan, Carragee, & Meinhofer, 2001). According to these studies, sources can be broadly categorized into partisan political elites such as Republicans and Democrats, and nonpartisan sources such as experts, journalists and ordinary people (e.g., Carter, Fico, & McCabe, 2002; Fico & Balog, 2003; Fico & Freedman, 2001; Freedman & Fico, 2004, 2005). Some studies have emphasized that partisan elite sources and journalists control the media frames (e.g., Callaghan & Schnell, 2002; Fico & Cote, 2002; Fico & Freedman, 2001; Valkenburg et al., 1999). Therefore, this study argues that sources who get more prominence and attention in turn get more opportunity to set a story’s frame. For instance, in a study of newspaper coverage of controversial issues, Fico and

Soffin (1995) found that anti-war sources opposing the president's Persian Gulf war policy dominated the news, whereas major public opinion polls conducted during the study's sample period indicated about 70 percent support to the war. The findings of this study can be attributed to news media's power to select sources and frame stories. Another study by Fico and Freedman (2001) assessed the newspaper coverage of 1998 governor's race in Michigan and discovered that assertions of the candidates and their partisan supporters dominated the story leads compared to experts or other sources. They also found, however, that about 5 percent of the stories had leads containing reporters' own interpretations or conclusions that were not substantiated in the story, which indicates journalists' independent ability to influence the news content. Freedman and Fico (2004) assessed the use of expert sources in newspapers coverage of gubernatorial elections and found that more prominently displayed stories cited more experts than other stories, as did stories that were more balanced between electoral opponents. They argued that experts' observations could provide insights that might influence voters. Another study by Fico and Balog (2003) on local conflict reporting by Michigan newspapers revealed that though experts and nonpartisan sources appeared in almost half of stories, partisan opponents on the issues got more prominent and extensive coverage.

In a study of news media framing of collective action, for example, Ryan, Carragee, and Meinholder (2001) found that journalistic frames are affected by the frames sponsored by several social actors such as political elites and advocates. They argue that news stories become a platform for framing contests in

which these actors compete in promoting their definitions of political issues. In line with earlier studies (Entman & Page, 1994; Luther & Miller, 2005; Donohue, Tichenor, & Olien, 1995), they concluded that framing contests favor political and economic elites.

Some studies analyzed the difference between the media frames sponsored by the partisan sources such as Republicans and Democrats (e.g., Fico & Cote, 2002; Jacoby, 2000; Parmelee, 2002). In an analysis of 2000 presidential primary videocassettes Parmelee (2002) found that Democrats sponsored *values frame*, and *leadership and electability frame*, whereas Republicans projected *reclaim Regan's legacy frame*, and *change frame*. In a media bias study of 1998 governor's race in Michigan, Fico and Cote (2002) discovered that Republican John Engler emphasized an education issue agenda, whereas his Democratic challenger, Geoffrey Fieger, indulging in insulting campaign comments personally attacking Engler, managed instead to frame himself as an issue. Jacoby (2000) examined the framing of government spending and found that "Republicans focus on broad, general appeals (e.g., 'government spending must be cut!'), while Democrats aim at more specific forms of programmatic outlays (e.g., 'It is important to fund medical care for the elderly!'), (p. 750). Citing the works of Sears (1993), Allen et al. (1994) argued that conservative Republicans usually discuss an issue or event in terms of 'welfare,' while a liberal Democrat may discuss the identical issue or event as 'helping the needy.' Morreale (1991) conducted a textual frame analysis of Ronald Reagan's 1984 presidential campaign film, *A New Beginning*, which was aired on television nationwide. She

argued that the Republicans used *ideological*, *mythic*, and *rebirth frames* in the film to create a 'reality.' In a content study of the meta-coverage of 2000 presidential campaign Esser and D'Angelo (2003) found that Republican candidates, Bush and Cheney used a *strategy public frame* to deal with their negative coverage about their pasts.

Although the above mentioned studies have emphasized that political elites and journalists dominate the media with their frames; it is also true that American news media reflect frames supplied by others, including experts and ordinary citizens. For example, stories may focus on an individual, or emphasize human emotions (human interest frame) (McLeod & Hertog, 1992; Valkenburg et al., 1999).

In sum, this study argues that partisan sources such as Republicans and Democrats, and nonpartisan sources such as experts, ordinary people and journalists will influence the news media framing of the Iraq issue. However, not all such sources will be equal in their power to do this, and will certainly be different in the frames they advance in an intense and consequential policy conflict.

### **CHAPTER 3: Linkages of Frames to Sources**

#### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The goal of this study is to examine framing of the Iraq issue in television news. The idea is to study the extent to which *fight against terrorism, fighting for freedom and democracy, Kerry incompetence, Bush competence, conflict, political fight, consensus, policy failure/responsibility, economic consequence, bush incompetence, Kerry competence, and other frames* were found in the news framing of the Iraq issue during election coverage between Labor Day and election day. These frames are worth exploring because the Bush administration was trying to frame the Iraq issue as fight against terrorism, fighting for freedom and democracy (e.g., Hiebert, 2003; Luther & Miller, 2005), Kerry is incompetent to deal with the Iraq issue, and that Bush is competent to lead the nation in fight against terrorism and solving the Iraq issue. On the other hand, Kerry was trying to attack his Republican opponent by framing the Iraq issue as policy failure of Bush administration, that it was responsible for creating the whole Iraq issue (e.g., Iyengar, 1991; Entman, 1991), which is causing huge economic burden on the U.S. domestic front, and that Bush is incompetent to lead the nation against war on terrorism, and Kerry is a better leader to solve the mess in Iraq. The news media is known to make stories interesting and easy to understand by highlighting the conflict element in the story, especially during presidential race they tend to pitch each campaign story as intense political fight, and, however, when some accord is reached between the contending sides journalists underscore the

consensus aspect (e.g., Reese & Buckalew, 1995; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Valkenburg et al., 1999).

There was a considerable political debate and sharp divide in public opinion over the question of war in Iraq. Therefore, the Iraq issue got increased news media coverage. The objective of this study is to gain more insight into national news coverage framing by examining journalistic news production processes in a political conflict context (see Gamson, 1992; Neuman et al., 1992; Callaghan & Schnell, 2001). Such a perspective enriches the understanding of news frames and acknowledges that frames are the result of interactions between journalists, sources, and the broader political and media system context (Pan & Kosicki, 1993; de Vreese et al., 2001)

In line with previous research (Esser & D'Angelo, 2003; de Vreese et al., 2001; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000) this study first explores how the Iraq issue was framed in the news media. Therefore, first research question is:

RQ1: What kinds of frames emerged most frequently in the coverage of the Iraq issue during the 2004 presidential campaign?

Another theoretical interest is to compare the use of frames between network and cable news and to consider whether there are important differences among different news outlets. Previous studies (e.g., Bae, 2000; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000) have argued that there are significant differences between cable and broadcast networks in the way they cover issues and events. CNN's reporting, for example, was of less depth compared to network reporting (Media Institute, 1983; Wicks & Walker, 1993). Also, Stempel (1988) concluded that

CNN and broadcast networks did not offer the same news. Bae (2000) suggested that cable news would differ from network news as the former is of longer duration. Thus, based on the same rationale it can be assumed that cable and network channels will differ in their framing of the Iraq issue. Therefore, following hypothesis is posited:

H1: Network and cable newscasts differed in the framing of the Iraq issue.

The literature (Aday, Livingston, & Hebert, 2005; Bae, 2000; Center for Media and Public Affairs, 2003; Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2002) has argued that Fox News Channel with a conservative slant will be more pro-administration when Republicans are in power. These studies emphasize that Fox News Coverage will be different from other cable and network channels. Also, the literature suggests that while the Fox News cable channel has a conservative bias (e.g., Aday, Livingston, & Hebert, 2005), and a network channel like CBS has a liberal bias (e.g., Katovsky & Carlson, 2003; McChesney, 2002).

Therefore, on the basis of this rationale it can be argued that Fox News Channel will use more pro-administration frames such as fight against terrorism, and fighting for freedom and democracy while covering the Iraq issue. And CBS will use more anti-administration frames such as responsibility, and policy failure. Thus, this study posits following hypotheses:

H2: Fox News Channel used more pro-Bush frames compared to other cable and network channels.

H3: CBS News used more pro-Kerry frames compared to other cable and network channels.

Previous studies have suggested that journalists play up conflict element in the story to make it appealing for audience (e.g., Semetko & Valkeburg, 2000; Valkenburg et al., 1999). This argument allows to ask following research question and hypothesis:

RQ2: What kinds of frames were most frequently used by journalists to cover the Iraq issue?

H4: Journalists most often used the political fight frame over other frames while covering the Iraq issue.

To assess the influence of race and gender of journalists on frames (e.g., Richardson & Lancendorfer, 2004; Sutcliffe et al., 2005) the following research question is posed:

RQ3: Did race and gender of a journalist affect framing?

Specifically, Gedengil and Everitt (2003) argue that female journalists are likely to use more aggressive verbs while reporting on certain events such as speech of female leaders. Sutcliffe et al. (2005) suggested that there are subtle differences in the news frames used by male and female reporters. Therefore, the following hypothesis is posited:

H5: Women journalists were more likely to use pro-Kerry frames while covering the Iraq issue.

Literature points at the influence of partisan balance of stories on news media content (e.g., Fico & Soffin, 1995; Fico & Cote, 2002; Jacoby, 2000; Parmelee, 2002). Thus, following hypotheses are proposed:



H6: Stories with greater Republican partisan balance used more pro-Bush frames.

H7: Stories with greater Democratic partisan balance used more pro-Kerry frames.

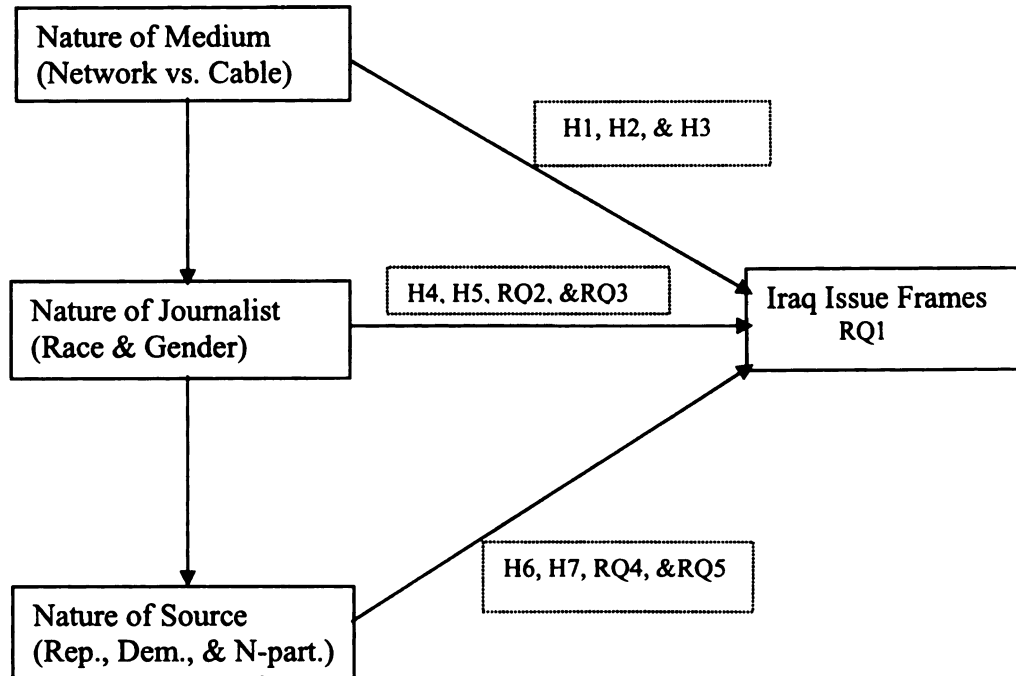
RQ4: Were Republican or Democratic sourced frames more likely to be found in the coverage?

Several studies have suggested the influence of experts and nonpartisan sources on news content (e.g., Carter, Fico, & McCabe, 2002; Fico & Balog, 2003; Freedman & Fico, 2004, 2005).

RQ5: What kind of frames were most frequently used by expert and Nonpartisan sources to describe the Iraq issue?

## A Model of Influences on Framing

Overall then, this study explores the following model:



**Figure 1:** A Model of Influences on Framing: Model explicating the influence of communication variables on the Iraq issue framing. Dotted boxes include hypotheses and research questions of this study.

Following the hierarchical model set out by Shoemaker and Reese (1996) , this model assumes that news organization leaders are key in recruiting and shaping the conduct of media journalists, and that those journalists themselves are key gate keepers for news sources and the frames they set in the news. A content study by itself cannot test the linkages by which managers select and train reporters, or the considerations reporters bring to their selection of sources. A content study can, however, examine differences in frames and their frequencies

that are associated with differences in medium (networks vs. cable), journalist characteristics (male vs. female, and white vs. non-white) and source type (political partisans, journalists and other non-partisan sources). More pointedly, this study assesses whether these differences in medium, journalist characteristics and source type have predictive power in identifying frames used or not used in this issue.

This study can also assess the relative influences of these factors on framing. If these factors demonstrate framing influence in this empirical study, they can be retained in larger, more elaborate and refined models. Empirical testing is necessary, of course, because however plausible and “obvious” a relationship might be, life is frequently more complicated, especially political life.

## **CHAPTER 4: Content Analyzing Iraq War Frames**

### **Method**

In this digital age there are more avenues for getting news, but for most Americans, television news is still the most common source of information about developments in the country (Bae, 2000; PEJ 2006). A recent study on state of the American news media by the Project for Excellence in Journalism revealed that more than 27 million people still rely on network television for news. Another study by the Pew research center (2004a) suggests that people are still getting their presidential campaign news from cable channels. For instance, cable channels such as FOX and CNN have registered a 4 percentage point growth (from 34% to 38%) as source for campaign news. Therefore, this study carried out a quantitative content analysis of evening newscast of three networks ABC, CBS, and NBC; and the three cable-TV channels, CNN, MSNBC, and FOX.

### **Sample**

The period of study was between Labor Day (September 6, 2004) and the day of election (November 2, 2004). According to the literature (e.g., Esser & D'Angelo, 2003), this time period during the presidential race is important because presidential candidates, political parties, interest groups, media, and voters tend to focus more on crucial issues a few months before the election day. For the three network news channels, ABC, CBS, and NBC, all the evening newscasts between 6:30 and 7 p.m. were videotaped for this time period. Similarly, for cable-TV—CNN evening newscast by Wolf Blitzer, MSNBC evening newscast by Keith Olbermann, and FOX evening newscast by Shepard

Smith – were videotaped for the time period. These cable newscasts were chosen because they included stories of daylong events and in comparison came close to the evening newscasts of the traditional broadcast networks.

The Iraq issue coverage in the context of the presidential campaign was signaled by explicit station graphics and verbal transitions by anchors. Daily Iraq issue coverage could consist of stories running in isolation or grouped into election segments. The content analysis emphasized stories containing assertions from Bush or Kerry partisans, reflecting the campaigns' direct attempts to sway voters, from non-partisans, and from journalists themselves.

#### Coding Procedure

A two-member team of coders was trained and supervised at a large Midwestern university. The unit of analysis was stories, coded for the number of seconds devoted to total time and time on the Iraq issue. A news story on Iraq issue is a story that covers Iraq issue in the context of 2004 U.S. presidential election. Iraq issue (in the election context) can be any story involving search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, conflict between the U.S. forces and insurgents/terrorists in Iraq, efforts to reconstruct Iraq and bringing democracy to the region, government facing criticism on its Iraq policy and other similar news stories related to Iraq. Stories totally on war events, however, were not coded absent an explicit reference to the 2004 election.

To carry out the quantitative content analysis of television news a coding protocol was developed. Questions were resolved at regular meetings. After repeated pretesting of the codebook, Iraq news stories were coded.

Appendix I includes the final code sheet and protocol for the study.

*Measures:*

For the purpose of this study, framing definitions are drawn from the works of Entman (1993), Gitlin (1980), and Gamson and Modigliani (1987). Moreover, Iraq war stories were observed for frames that were different or more ambiguous than those suggested by the framing literature.

Framing is defined as the way sources or journalists describe or present the Iraq issue. Sources (partisan and nonpartisan) or journalists will select some aspect of the Iraq issue and make it more salient in the news story, “in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation,” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). The Iraq issue frames in general were identified by assessing what the sources emphasized about the issue in stories. In this study, journalists are considered as the framers of the story only when there are no sources or verbs of attribution such as said, felt, and hoped linked to sources in the story.

*Dependent Variable: Iraq Issue Frames*

For operationalization of the Iraq issue frames, this study largely drew from the measures developed by following studies: Dimitrova et al., (2005), Esser & D’Angelo (2003), Hiebert (2003), Luther & Miller (2005), Reese & Buckalew (1995), and Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). Each news story was examined for the frames projected by all sources including Republicans, Democrats, non-partisans, and journalists. It is possible that each source may be projecting multiple frames. Frames projected by each source category were timed. While all

the frames were timed and recorded, the frame getting the maximum airtime in seconds for each source category was considered the dominant frame. Specific frames were decided by the kind of assertions given by the source in the story.

A preliminary assessment of stories were made to illuminate relevant frames and their approximate frequency. In addition, observed frames were categorized as favoring Bush, Kerry or essentially neutral based on how they defined problems, attributed causes, identified those morally responsible, and pointed to possible solutions (e.g., Entman, 1994). Consequently, frame emphases were determined by the following definitions below:

Pro-Bush frames include:

Fighting against terrorism frame: Here the focus is on equating the Iraq war/issue with the fight against terrorism. The source (s) will explicitly emphasize that the Iraq war/issue is a fight against terrorism. For example, President Bush may emphasize that Iraq was axis an axis of evil nation under Saddam Hussein's regime and that world is better off without him being in power. Example of key words or phrases to help identify this frame are fight against terrorism, axis of evil, world better off without Saddam, supporting terrorists, weapons of mass destruction, and protecting America from terrorists.

Fighting for freedom and democracy frame: Here the focus is on equating the Iraq war/issue with bringing freedom and democracy to the Iraqi people. The source (s) will explicitly emphasize that the Iraqi people have been liberated from the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. Efforts are being made to establish a democratically elected government in Iraq. Example of key words of phrases to

help identify this frame are democracy, liberation, freedom, rescuing Iraqi people from tyranny of Saddam, and bringing freedom and democracy to Iraqi people.

Kerry incompetence frame: Here the focus is that Kerry is a flip-flopper. Source (s) would frame Kerry as indecisive and that he changes his issue position on the Iraq war, which makes him unfit to lead the nation, specifically on handling the Iraq issue. Example of key words or phrases to help identify this frame are flip-flopper, indecisive, and Kerry does not make a good leader, etc.

Bush competence frame: Here the focus is that Bush is a better commander-in-chief to lead the nation in right direction. Bush can do a better job than Kerry at the domestic front as well as in foreign policy such as the war in Iraq. Example of key words or phrases to help identify this frame are I will be a better leader, I will be a better commander-in-chief, and I can lead the nation in right direction, etc.

Neutral frames include:

Conflict frame: Here the focus is on Bush and Kerry claims in the context of the terrorism and Iraq issue that they would provide a safer America. To be considered a conflict story, sources should be explicitly referring to the broader conflict rather than to the election. The Republican and Democrat partisans will argue that they are committed to the fight to protect America. Example of key words or phrases to help identify this frame are I will make a better leader, I will handle Iraq situation better, and attack etc.

Political fight frame: Here sources explicitly identify that one or both sides, Republicans and Democrats, are using the Iraq issue to secure some



political or electoral gain, as a tactical move to win domestic electoral support. Example of key words or phrases to help identify this frame are shoring up support, wedge issue, political gain on support, winning voter strategy, Kerry attacked Bush, Bush attacked Kerry, and the presidential campaign is in a statistical dead-heat etc.

Consensus frame: Here the focus is on Bush and Kerry agreeing or expressing consensus on some aspect of the Iraq issue. For instance, when the Bin Laden tapes were released, Bush and Kerry agreed with each other that they will never give in to the demands of terrorists. In such situations Bush and Kerry emphasized that America remains united, and is not Republican or Democratic when it comes to tackling terrorism. Example of key words or phrases to help identify this frame are we are united to fight against terrorism, we will not give in to the threats of terrorists, and we are united and not Republican or Democrat when it comes to fighting terrorism etc.

Pro-Kerry frames include:

Policy failure/responsibility frame: Here the focus is that the Iraq issue reflects policy failure of the Bush administration. That the Bush administration is responsible for the Iraq issue. For instance, Kerry might argue that the Bush administration took a hasty decision of invading Iraq and it reflects a poor thinking and planning on the part of current government Kerry might allege that President Bush misled the country by claiming that Iraq stored weapons of mass destruction and took the nation to the war without taking the citizens into confidence. Example of some key words and phrases to help identify this frame

are policy failure, poor planning, hasty decision, responsible, misled, reason, and lied.

**Economic consequence frame:** Here the focus is on economic consequence of the Iraq war. For example, Kerry might point out that the ill-planned Iraq war has cost over \$200 billion, which could have been used for education and generating jobs. Example of some key words and phrases to help identify this frame are economic cost of the Iraq war, billions of dollars have been wasted on the war, war is causing economic burden on the country etc.

**Bush incompetence frame:** Here the focus is on Bush's incompetence to handle the Iraq issue. The focus is more on Bush as an individual. For instance, Kerry might allege that President Bush misled the country by claiming that Iraq stored weapons of mass destruction and took the nation to the war without taking the citizens into confidence. Example of some key words and phrases to help identify this frame are cannot handle the Iraq issue, misled, arrogant, and poor planning, etc.

**Kerry competence frame:** Frame projected here is that Kerry will keep focus on terrorism, not on Iraq. Kerry will be smarter than Bush. Kerry will get allies and world support to hunt down and kill terrorists. Example of some key words and phrases to help identify this frame are competence, allies, winning international supporters, global test etc.

**Other frame:** Use the other frame when the frames projected by the sources don't fall into any of the defined categories above, or when the projected frame (s) could not be clearly established.

Appendix II contains example passages for each of these frame measures taken from sample stories.

### Reliability and Validity

A two-person coder reliability test was conducted on about 10% of stories relevant for this study randomly sampled from the population of stories. Percentage of agreement for all the frame identification variables ranged from 89 % to 98%. Scott's Pi computations to correct for chance agreement ranged from .86 to .97. Those variables measured on ratio-level scales (seconds devoted to frames) were assessed for coder reliability using Pearson correlation coefficients, which ranged from .96 to 1.0 (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2005).

Measures used in this study to examine frames were based on past research, theory, and the logical assumption that the news media's framing of the issues depends upon various factors such as medium, the journalists themselves, and sources. Unfortunately, as Damore (2005) argues, it is difficult to find a statistical method to easily assess the validity of framing data. Therefore, alternative criteria should be used.

One appropriate and straightforward validity assessment is face validity. Face validity is established when the definitions of concepts used in a study have a straightforward correspondence to observed indicators of the concept. The frame definitions used in this study rely on words with manifest and denotative reference to concepts such as competence, costs, failure and democracy. In particular, then, the arguments partisans use to advance their causes rely on words whose meanings are common and explicit. Frames based on those words therefore

share the explicitness of the meanings of component words and are relatively less abstract or ambiguous compared to other concepts (e.g., news story “quality” or “bias”).

Other research has established the predictive validity of framing. Predictive validity can be established with reference to experimental framing research that links frame concepts to those established in the minds of those exposed to the frames. For instance, a study by Valkenburg, Semetko, and de Vreese (1999), revealed issue-specific framing effects. In an experiment they presented readers with two news stories, one crime and the other on economy, framed in terms of conflict, human interest, attribution of responsibility, and economic consequences. Their results revealed that the way in which news stories framed the issue had a significant effect on readers’ thoughts on both issues. Respondents who only read the story with the human interest frame emphasized more emotions and individual implications in their responses. Those who read stories with the conflict frame more often expressed thoughts that involved conflict. And the ones who read stories with the economic consequence frame thought more in terms of costs and financial implications (Valkenburg et al., 1999).

Another study by de Vreese (2004), showed that television news frames “have the ability to direct viewers’ thoughts when conceiving of a contemporary political issue,” (p. 45). His study found that respondents who watched a news story framed in terms of conflict or economic consequences expressed thoughts about the issue that was in line with how the news was framed.

### Independent Variable Measures

Independent variables in the study, pointed to by theory and past research, are the nature of the medium, the nature of journalists, and the nature of sources.

The nature of the medium for this study is broadcast network versus cable news programs. The broadcast networks include ABC, CBS, and NBC. The networks channels have been covering presidential campaigns roughly for more than seven decades and are known to uphold the traditional journalistic values without being very sensationalistic in their approach to cover the news. On the other hand, the cable channels like CNN, Fox News Channel, and MSNBC are comparatively a recent phenomenon. Structurally, cable news channels are different from the traditional broadcast news networks as cable channels operate on a twenty-four hour cycle. The cable news channels have more newshole to fill and were basically launched to provide something more and different, in terms of news coverage, to their audience.

Literature has pointed out that journalists not only serve merely as conduits for information, but also influence the information as gatekeepers. They have the power of selecting news and making certain attributes more salient than others. In other words, journalists can put their own spin on the news that they cover. In this study, the journalists' role as story sources was examined and an assessment made about whether their race and gender in any way influence the framing of media content. It is possible that the journalists can themselves sponsor any of the frames being examined in this study through their own assertions (i.e., assertions not explicitly attributed to identified sources).

The third independent variable in this study is source. For the purpose of this study, sources are categorized as partisan sources (Republicans, Democrats) and, non-partisan sources (anyone who, doesn't explicitly assert a Republican or Democrat leaning), and journalists themselves (when they do not attribute information to any source). A partisan source may be the candidate, staff, family or party supporters, or simply a citizen who supports one of the candidates for president. A single partisan assertion establishes the partisanship of the source for all election coverage. A source who has not made a partisan assertion in any story is considered a non-partisan source. Assertions lacking any attribution to a source are considered the journalist's.

Two other variables were constructed for this study because of their potential influence on viewer exposure to candidate frames. One variable assessed the dominant source in the story. The other assessed the story's overall partisan balance (i.e., did the story "favor" Bush or Kerry).

The source in each of the four independent variable categories who gets maximum airtime in a story was considered to have set the dominant frame in that story. For example, in a story running 45 seconds, if a Republican source got 20 seconds for the frame, a Democratic source got 15 seconds to set the frame, a non-partisan source got 5 seconds, and the news reporter got another 5 seconds for the frame, then in this case the dominant frame is being set by a Republican, which is most likely to be one of the frames supporting the president's reelection. Specific pre-defined frames in this study will be linked to specific sources by the story emphasis given by the sources.

Finally, the partisan balance of each story was assessed following procedures used in a series of broadcast studies by (e.g., Carter, Fico, & McCabe, 2002; Fico, Zeldes, & Diddi, 2004). These procedures assess which candidate obtained more story prominence based on position in the story, total air time for assertions, presence in visuals and on-air quotation. Assessing story partisan balance this way therefore illuminates frames given more story prominence and, potentially, frames getting more audience attention.

### **Data Analysis**

All election-related Iraq stories aired between Labor Day and the day of election by the six stations were analyzed for the presence of frames. In other words, the study data come from the universe of coverage, not from a random sample. The unit of analysis here was the story and story time devoted to the Iraq issue. In each story, frames projected by the Republicans, Democrats, experts, ordinary citizens and journalists were identified and timed in seconds. The source getting the maximum airtime for her or his frame was considered to be setting the dominant story frame, but multiple frames could be coded for each story.

Data were analyzed from three perspectives. First, entire stories were assessed for the presence of the dependent variable frames that were dominant in the stories. Second, total seconds were calculated for the Iraq war stories (including multiple frames) and the kinds of sources setting these frames. Finally, the framing seconds themselves were calculated for each frame by each source in each story.

This study especially compares frame frequencies in both total story seconds and in framing seconds. Total story seconds devoted to frames is necessary to assess because frames may be more or less important based on a story's total time and the proportion of the time devoted to framing. In other words, total story seconds relates to the probability of a viewer's exposure to any frames. Attention to framing seconds, on the other hand, permits an assessment of who was most favored in frame attention compared to the opponent, an assessment related to journalistic fairness and balance.

#### Rules for Assessing Research Questions and Hypotheses

The assessment of important differences in framing was made in three ways. The first looked at the partisan balance of pro-Bush and pro-Kerry frames in stories, in total seconds and in framing seconds. Obviously this relates to the potential influence of imbalance on public opinion, as well as the journalistic norm of fairness and balance. Second, particular attention was paid to important differences in use of specific frames. In particular, did different frames emerge most frequently based on medium, journalist characteristics or source type? Finally, neutral frame usage was assessed in order to illuminate differences attributable to differences in medium, journalists, and types of source. In other words, for example, were 'non-partisan' sources actually neutral or balanced in their framing or were they facilitating (deliberately or inadvertently) a partisan agenda?

In studies relying on randomly sampled data, identification of generalizable differences is made by tests of statistical significance. However, that



is a less useful procedure for this study which analyzes the universe of data for a particular population and time period. Therefore, it is necessary, absent appropriate statistical tests, to identify how a hypothesis will be judged to be supported or not, or observed differences to be considered significant or not.

Consequently, this study sets an apriori rather than a strictly statistical standard for hypotheses testing and the assessment of research question findings. Given that most of the data for this study can be assessed in proportions, a difference of at least 10 percentage points is considered to be “important.” For example, if male journalists use the pro-Bush, Bush competence frame in 35% of their stories and female journalists use it in 45% of theirs, that will be considered an important difference in frame usage attributable to differences in gender.

The 10 percentage point criterion draws from the logic of statistical inference. A difference of proportions test in a random sample of about 350 cases would require a 10 percentage point difference for statistical significance. The present study, based on much larger numbers of stories and story seconds, therefore sets a higher bar for the identification of significant and important differences.

Moreover, for hypothesis testing, a hypothesis is considered fully supported only when all of the relevant assessments discussed above equal or exceed 10 percentage points. For example, a fully supported hypothesis that network and cable channels differ in their framing behaviors would require at least a 10 percentage point difference in their partisan imbalance (whether favoring Bush or Kerry), in their use of at least one specific frame, and in their

use of one or more of the neutral frames. Differences less than 10 percentage points in all of those assessments would signal complete non-support for a hypothesis. Differences equaling or exceeding 10 percentage points in some but not all relevant assessments would be considered partial support.

#### Rule Application to Research Questions and Hypotheses

Applying these rules, the first Research Question probing the kinds of frames emerging most frequently in the coverage of the Iraq issue was answered by comparing the percentage of time devoted to different frames. This was done by identifying the frame dominant in a story and by calculating multi-frame usage in total story seconds and total framing seconds.

Research Question 2 probing the kinds of frames frequently set by journalists was answered by computing the percentage of time journalists themselves devoted to different frames. Research Question 3 exploring the impact of race and gender of journalists was answered by computing partisan imbalance, differences in use of each frame and differences in use of the neutral frames. Each of these three assessments was done to compare white and non-white journalists, and male and female journalists.

Hypothesis 1 through 3 positing differences in the framing of the Iraq issue between the broadcast networks and cable newscasts was answered by computing the proportions of the frames used by each outlet. Cable and network differences were then assessed by calculating the relative overall attention in framing balance between pro-Bush and pro-Kerry frames, by assessing

differences in particular frames and by comparing the network and cable channels' use of the neutral frames.

Hypothesis 4 positing that journalists would primarily use political fight frame to cover the Iraq issue was answered by computing percentage of time devoted to different substantive frames and to the neutral frames.

Hypotheses 5 through 7 focusing on types of framing sources and Research Questions 4 and 5 were answered in similar way by computing relevant proportions. Republican and Democratic sources are explicitly assessed on the kind of substantive frames they used and how they differed in the frames emphasized. It is assumed that these sources are not likely to use neutral frames.

#### Assessing Relative Strength of Influences on Framing

Assessing the relative strength of influence of medium, journalistic characteristics and source type on framing is made in three ways. First, these influences are assessed by the degree to which relevant hypotheses were supported. A second assessment is made by considering the types of sources setting frames most frequently in the total framing seconds of all the stories.

However, an important political and journalistic question concerns the relative degree to which these factors produced imbalance in the use of pro-Bush or pro-Kerry frames in the news. This relates to the normative standard that news media should be "fair and balanced," as well as to possible charges of bias. Imbalance also relates, of course, to the partial shaping of public opinion through the partisan framing (whether Republican or Democrat) of an issue.

Consequently, a regression analysis was also run in which story was the unit of analysis and story partisan framing imbalance the dependent variable. This ratio level dependent variable was obtained by subtracting total pro-Kerry framing seconds in a story from total pro-Bush framing seconds, and then taking the absolute value of that result. The resulting scale, therefore, reflects imbalance in election framing, regardless of the candidate favored, and could run from 0 (Bush and Kerry seconds exactly equaled one another) to some positive number higher than 0 (depending on the size of the difference in Bush and Kerry framing seconds).

Independent variables in the regression were medium type (cable vs. network), journalist race (white vs. non-white), journalist gender (male vs. female), and source type (partisan vs. all others). These variables were coded so that the dichotomous values were given scores of 0 or 1.

Regression Beta weights were then used to assess the relative strength and direction of these influences. Given the way the specific variables were assigned values, a positive Beta would indicate that imbalances were produced by cable channels, by non-white reporters, by women reporters or by partisan frame sources. Beta sizes (whether positive or negative) illuminate the relative strength or importance of the variable on framing imbalance in stories.

## CHAPTER 5: Who Framed The War and How

### Results

#### Description of Data by the Number of Stories

In all, 445 Iraq issue news stories were analyzed for this study involving three networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC, and three cable channels, CNN, FOX, and MSNBC, during 2004 presidential campaign between Labor Day and the day of election. Table 1 summarizes number of stories by each television channel.

The Fox News Channel (FNC) produced largest number of stories with 24%, while MSNBC, which lagged significantly behind FOX, CNN, and NBC, produced the lowest with 8% (see Table 1). The three networks together produced about 47% of the stories, while the three cable channels together produced nearly 52% of Iraq stories.

**Table 1:** Percentage of the Iraq Issue Stories in Television Channels.

News channels	Percentage of stories
All networks	47%
ABC	17%
CBS	11%
NBC	19%
All cable channels	52%
CNN	20%
FOX	24%
MSNBC	8%
Total	100% (445)

(The sum of percentages may not exactly equal 100 due to rounding. Number in parenthesis indicates total number of stories).

The majority of the stories, about 52%, were reporter packages followed by anchor lead-ins with 22%, anchor vo/sots with 10%, and the remaining were other story types (see Table 2). Certainly the differences among these ways of reporting news is dramatic, with reporters carrying the major burden of reporting the Iraq election stories. All other anchor-related material still amounted to 47% of the total, but nearly half of that is made up of the anchor lead-ins, many of which merely introduced reporter packages and lacked substantive campaign information.

**Table 2: Percentages of Types of Stories.**

Story Type	Percentage
Reporter package	52%
Anchor lead-in	22%
Anchor vo/sot	10%
Anchor in-house interview	7%
Anchor voice over	6%
Anchor reader	2%
Reporter live	2%
Total	100% (445)

(Number in parenthesis represent number of stories. The sum of percentages may not exactly equal 100 due to rounding.).

The data indicate that networks and cable channels differ in important ways in how they cover stories. About 59% of network stories, but only 44% of cable ones, relied on reporter packages (see Table 3). Network anchor lead-ins

reported about 30% of their Iraq stories compared to 14% for cable channels. The cable channels differed from the networks by using more of anchor vo/sot with 17% to 3%, anchor in-house interview with 12% to 2%. This reflects a structural difference in news production and reporting between networks and cable channels, with cable channels placing more emphasis on their anchors, especially for interviewing news sources in studios or by live feeds. Although both networks and cable channels may attempt to “brand” their news offerings by their choice of anchors, cable anchors are not only more visible but also much more active in the on-air news process (for similar argument see Armstrong et al., 2006, p. 81).

**Table 3: Percentages of Story Types by Networks and Cable Channels.**

Story type	Networks %	Cable channels %
Reporter package	59	44
Anchor lead-in	30	14
Anchor vo/sot	3	17
Reporter live	3	1
Anchor reader	2	2
Anchor in-house interview	2	12
Anchor voice over	1	10
Total	100% (211)	100% (234)

(The sum of percentages may not exactly equal 100 due to rounding. Numbers in parenthesis represent number of stories.).

About 89% of the stories were reported by white journalists and 11% by non-whites (see Table 4). The data in Table 4 also reveal that 16% of the Iraq

issue stories were covered by female journalists and 84% by male reporters. These proportions are consistent with a number of other studies (e.g., Armstrong et al., 2006; Zeldes and Fico, 2005) that show overwhelmingly male and white presence among on-air reporters. Indeed almost every on-air anchor for these news programs was a white male during the period of this study. It was possible to see a female and non-white anchor for these news programs, but usually during weekend newscasts.

**Table 4: Race and Gender of Journalists and Story Percentages.**

	Race		Gender	
	White	Non-white	Male	Female
Story percentages	89%	11%	84%	16%

N = 445

When it came to using non-partisan sources, whether they set the dominant frame or not, MSNBC accounted for the highest proportion of them in its stories (32%) (see Table 5). NBC, ABC, and CNN used non-partisan sources almost half the time of that of MSNBC. FOX had least number of stories with non-partisan sources (3%). It should be noted, however, how few Iraq stories incorporated such sources during the 2004 election. In other words, the Iraq debate was carried on mostly by those whose vested interest was in winning the election.



**Table 5: Number of Stories with Non-partisan Sources.**

	MSNBC	NBC	ABC	CNN	CBS	FOX	Total
Stories	32%	18%	18%	16%	13%	3%	100% (38)

(The sum of percentages may not exactly equal 100 due to rounding. Numbers in parenthesis represent stories with non-partisan sources.).

**Description of Data by the Time Devoted to Stories and Frames**

The overall seconds total for the 445 stories was 24,539 seconds, including 16,759 (68%) framing seconds (see Table 6). CNN had largest share of both total story seconds (29%) and framing seconds (31%). CBS had the least of both, 10% story seconds and 9% framing seconds. Indeed, the correlation between story seconds and framing seconds is nearly perfect.

**Table 6: Percentages of Story and Framing Seconds.**

News channels	Story seconds	Framing seconds
CNN	29%	31%
NBC	19%	18%
FOX	16%	19%
ABC	14%	14%
MSNBC	11%	10%
CBS	10%	9%
Total	100% (24,539)	100% (16,759)

(The sum of percentages may not exactly equal 100 due to rounding. Numbers in parenthesis represent total number of story seconds and framing seconds.).

For all the story types, the percentages of story seconds is also similar to the percentages of framing seconds (see Table 7). The reporter package, with more than 60% of all seconds, was the dominant story type used by the television news, while the anchor reader with 1% was used the least. Anchor in-house interviews were another frequently used technique for the reporting the Iraq issue, followed by anchor vo/sot stories. When story seconds are considered, it is clear that anchor lead-ins played a minor role in substantive reporting on Iraq.

**Table 7: Type of Story and Percentage of Time.**

Story Type	Story seconds	Framing seconds
Reporter package	62%	60%
Anchor in-house interview	18%	18%
Anchor vo/sot	9%	10%
Anchor lead-in	6%	7%
Anchor voice over	2%	2%
Reporter live	2%	2%
Anchor reader	1%	1%
Total	100% (24,539)	100% (16,759)

(Numbers in parenthesis represent total story length and framing seconds.).

With regard to just framing seconds on the Iraq issue, 87% were reported by white journalists and 13% by non-whites (see table 8). About 20% of framing seconds on the Iraq issue stories were covered by women journalists and 80% by male reporters. An interesting observation is that non-white and women reporters had a slightly higher proportion of framing seconds compared to their

representation in total stories (see Table 4). However, white and male journalists were still overwhelmingly more likely to report stories in which the Iraq issue obtained one or more of the frames measured in this study.

**Table 8:** Race and Gender of Journalists and Framing Seconds Percentages .

	Race		Gender	
	White	Non-white	Male	Female
Framing seconds	87%	13%	80%	20%

N = 16,759

Non-partisan sources (non-journalists who made no statements explicitly supporting a candidate) accounted for 1,125 seconds in just 38 stories. MSNBC, with 53%, got most of these non-partisan framing seconds (see Table 9). Fox with 2% got the least proportion of non-partisan framing seconds. Data in Table 9 also indicate that ABC devoted the least time to the non-partisan sources (1%), even though they were included in 18% of its stories. These differences are partly accounted for by the news formats used in network and cable channels. MSNBC, for instance, used long in-house interviews conducted by the anchor.

**Table 9:** Non-partisan Framing Seconds and Stories.

Non-partisan	MSNBC	NBC	ABC	CNN	CBS	FOX	Total
Framing seconds	53%	16%	1%	26%	3%	2%	100% (1,125)
Stories	32%	18%	18%	16%	13%	3%	100% (38)

(The sum of percentages may not exactly equal 100 due to rounding. Numbers in parenthesis represent framing seconds and number of stories.).

## Research Questions and Hypotheses

### *Framing Patterns in Coverage*

The first Research Question probed the kinds of frames found most frequently in the television news coverage of the Iraq issue during 2004 presidential campaign.

While multiple frames were recorded for most of the stories, a dominant frame was determined for each story based on the simple majority of time that a particular frame received. An analysis of data to determine a dominant frame for each of the 445 stories revealed that pro-Kerry frames were dominant in 41%, 10 percentage points more than dominant pro-Bush frames (see Table 10). Moreover, dominant partisan frames far exceeded neutral ones, hardly a surprising finding in election coverage. Interestingly, few Iraq stories lacked any of the frames identified for this research, and only a few more Iraq stories contained dominant frames not defined for this study.

Among stories with dominant frames, the Kerry incompetence frame was the most frequent pro-Bush frame (see Table 10). The policy failure/responsibility was the most frequent pro-Kerry frame, followed by the Bush incompetence frame. All other dominant partisan frames were included in less than 10% of stories.

Among dominant neutral frames, the political fight frame was clearly the most frequent. Almost no dominant neutral frames emphasized the national conflict in the war on terror, or points of consensus or agreement among candidates on waging that war.

**Table 10: Dominant Frames in Stories.**

Frames	Frequency of frames in stories
All Pro-Bush	31% (140)
Fighting against terrorism	4%
Fighting for freedom/dem	2%
Kerry incompetence	20%
Bush competence	5%
All Neutral	21%(93)
Conflict	1%
Political fight	20%
Consensus	0%
All Pro-Kerry	41%(176)
Policy failure/ resp.	23%
Economic cons.	2%
Bush incomp.	12%
Kerry competence	4%
Other	5% (24)
No frame	3% (12)
Total	100%(445)

(The sum of percentages may not exactly equal 100 due to rounding. Numbers in parenthesis represent absolute numbers.)

Analyzing all the frames in stories revealed that pro-Kerry frames were present in 70%, 2 percentage points more than pro-Bush frames (see Table 11). Partisan frames exceed neutral ones, but by a much smaller margin than when dominant frames were considered.

The Kerry incompetence frame was the most frequent pro-Bush frame (38%). The policy failure/responsibility frame was the most frequent pro-Kerry frame (34%), followed by Bush incompetence frame (22%). All other partisan frames were included in less than 15% of stories (see Table 11).

Among the neutral frames, the political fight frame was clearly the most frequent (57%) in that category and among all frames overall. Moreover,

whatever substantive partisan frames a story might contain, they were frequently presented along with a political fight frame emphasizing how the issue helped or hurt the candidate's electoral campaign.

Again, the other neutral frames, emphasizing the common conflict of the U.S. with terrorists or points of agreement of Bush and Kerry, were nearly absent in coverage (see Table 11). This may reflect an acrimonious, highly partisan electoral battle which entirely focused on divisions. It may also reflect journalistic decisions that points of agreement between the two candidates were just not newsworthy.

**Table 11: Frames in News Stories.**

Frames	Frequency of frames in stories
All Pro-Bush	68% (297)
Fighting against terrorism	11%
Fighting for freedom/dem.	5%
Kerry incompetence	38%
Bush competence	14%
All Neutral	59% (264)
Conflict	1%
Political fight	57%
Consensus	1%
All Pro-Kerry	70% (315)
Policy failure/ resp.	34%
Economic cons.	5%
Bush incomp.	22%
Kerry competence	9%
Other	10% (43)
Total	(445)

(The sum of percentages exceed 100 due to the presence of multiple frames in stories. Numbers in parenthesis represent absolute numbers.)

Total story seconds devoted to frames in stories also is necessary to assess because frames may be more or less important based on a story's total time and the proportion of time devoted to frames. In other words, total story seconds relate to the probability of a viewer's exposure to any frames.

Considering total story seconds, pro-Bush and pro-Kerry frames amounted to just under 60% of the all story seconds (see first column in Table 12). About a third of total story seconds were used for non-framing purposes such as introducing reporter packages or providing accounts of campaign activities. Overall, then, viewers had a good chance of encountering some type of frame set by the Bush and Kerry partisans, although far less than a certain one.

Viewers had a better chance of encountering a Kerry frame than a Bush one, but not a much better chance. In total story seconds, pro-Kerry frames received the most seconds (29%) in the coverage of the Iraq issue, closely followed by pro-Bush seconds (25%) and neutral seconds (13%) (see Table 12). No-frame seconds made up 30% of the total.

With regard to individual frames in total seconds, the pro-Kerry policy failure/responsibility received the most seconds (16%), closely followed by pro-Bush Kerry incompetence (15%) and neutral political fight (11%) framing seconds (see Table 12). The Bush incompetence frame received about 8% of total seconds, whereas all the remaining framing seconds were less than 10%. Overall, then, even the three most frequently used partisan frames made up less than 40% of the total coverage, and the two most frequently used frames made up less than

a third of the total coverage. All other partisan frames could only rarely be encountered.

**Table 12: Percentages of Total Story Seconds and Framing Seconds.**

Frames	Total story seconds	Framing seconds
All Pro-Bush	25% (5,925)	36% (5,925)
Fighting against terrorism	3%	5%
Fighting for freedom/dem.	2%	3%
Kerry incompetence	15%	21%
Bush competence	5%	7%
All Neutral	13% (2,991)	19% (2,991)
Conflict	1%	1%
Political fight	11%	17%
Consensus	1%	1%
All Pro-Kerry	29% (7,064)	42% (7,064)
Policy failure/ resp.	16%	23%
Economic cons.	2%	2%
Bush incomp.	8%	12%
Kerry competence	3%	5%
Other	3% (779)	5% (779)
No-frame	30% (7,780)	0% (0)
Total	100% (24,539)	100% (16,759)

(The sum of percentages in columns may not exactly equal 100 due to rounding. Numbers in parenthesis represent total number of story seconds and framing seconds.).

Attention to framing seconds, permits a better assessment of who was most favored in frame attention compared to the opponent.

Considering the framing seconds on the Iraq issue, pro-Kerry frames with 42% of framing seconds were emphasized more than pro-Bush framing seconds, which made up 36% of the framing coverage, as indicated by the data in the last column of Table 12. With regard to individual frames measured, as reported in the



last column of Table 12, the pro-Kerry policy failure/responsibility frame (23%), closely followed by pro-Bush Kerry incompetence (21%) and the neutral political fight frames (17%) were most frequent in the overall coverage of the Iraq issue in television news. The pro-Kerry Bush incompetence (12%) and the pro-Bush Bush competence (7%) frames were also found to some extent in the coverage, whereas remaining frames obtained less than 5% of seconds each in the framing seconds coverage. When just framing seconds are considered Kerry's advantage increases to 6 percentage points compared to 4 percentage point advantage in total story seconds. Again, by the standards used in this study, the Kerry advantage is not considered to be significant.

This finding of a consistent Kerry advantage in stories, total seconds and in framing seconds, however, is consistent with research showing that the news media tend to give more coverage to a challenger during higher-level elections (e.g., Fico, Clogston, & Pizante, 1988; Fico & Cote, 2002). An explanation for challenger getting more time in news media coverage can be attributed to the objective norms of journalistic practices. In other words, Bush being the president would get media coverage while doing other activities such as calling on people affected by hurricane Jeanne in Florida amidst his presidential campaign in September 2004. On the other hand, challenger Kerry would only get coverage when he does something newsworthy such as addressing a public meeting. Therefore, news media might make a conscious effort to give more coverage to the challenger in order to bring him on par with the incumbent in terms of media exposure.

In the 2004 presidential campaign, these data suggest that Democrats, led by Senator Kerry, were successful in making Iraq a contentious issue by framing it as a failed policy of the Bush administration, claiming that an arrogant and shortsighted President Bush was incompetent to resolve the Iraq issue.

For instance, quoting Senator Kerry, NBC reported on September 20, 2004: "The president's policy in Iraq has not strengthened our national security; it has weakened it... We have traded a dictator for chaos that has left America less secure." An ABC report on October 18, 2004, cited Kerry saying, "Despite the president's arrogant boasting that he's done everything right in Iraq and that he's made no mistakes, the truth is beginning to come out, and it's beginning to catch up with him."

However, the data also show that the Bush camp countered by framing Kerry as a flip-flopper who kept changing his positions on resolving the Iraq issue, claiming that a leader who sends mixed messages cannot be a good commander in chief during testing times like the crisis in Iraq. For example, a CNN report on September 23, 2004, quoted President Bush's criticism of Kerry: "I believe a leader must be consistent and clear and not change positions when times get tough. And the times have been hard. These are hard times. But I understand what mixed messages do. You can embolden an enemy by sending mixed messages." Another report by ABC on October 18, 2004 quoted Bush: "Having gone back and forth so many times, the Senator from Massachusetts [Kerry] has now flip-flopped his way to a dangerous position. My opponent, my opponent finally has settled on a strategy, a strategy of retreat."

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Positive Republican framing portrayed Bush as determined to crush terrorism and stay on course till the Iraq issue was resolved, thereby making him a better leader. For instance, in an ABC report on October 18, 2004, Bush was quoted saying: “And in this time of choosing, I want all Americans to know you can count on me to fight our enemies and defend our freedom.”

Journalists played up the Iraq issue positions of President Bush and Senator Kerry and primarily framed it as political fight between the two, a pattern also found in past research (e.g., Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Valkenburg et al., 1999). For example, Tom Brokaw introduced a campaign story with the following lead: “President Bush and John Kerry are at war over the war in Iraq. And while the president ties it to terrorism, the issue that serves him best, Senator Kerry opened a new front today linking the war to the American economy and social issues,” (NBC, September 8, 2004).

Some stories did not fall into the apriori frames defined in this story and were, therefore, coded as “other frame.” An example of the other frame is the following news story by ABC’s reporter Terry Moran: “(Off Camera) In a statement, Bremer says he believes current troop levels are sufficient, and that his opinion that more were needed related only to the early stages of the occupation. He also says he strongly supports President Bush's reelection...” (ABC World News Tonight, October 5, 2004).

A close look at the data for individual channels’ framing of the Iraq issue reveal significant differences among them. CBS News devoted 42% framing seconds to pro-Kerry frames versus 25% to pro-Bush frames, a significant

difference of 17 percentage points in favor of Kerry (see data in bold in Table 13). These findings are consistent with previous studies, which attribute liberal bias to CBS news (e.g., Aday, Livingston, & Hebert, 2005). ABC and CNN's framing of the Iraq issue also significantly favored Kerry, as both these channels devoted 10 more percentage points each to the pro-Kerry frames than to the pro-Bush frames. By contrast, NBC's framing seemed to be the most evenhanded, as the difference between pro-Kerry and pro-Bush frames was only 2 percentage points, favoring Bush.

**Table 13: Percentages of Iraq Issue Framing Seconds in News Channels.**

Frames	ABC	CBS	NBC	CNN	FOX	MSNBC	All
Ft. terror	7%	5%	5%	3%	3%	9%	5%
Ft. freedom	4%	4%	2%	3%	1%	2%	3%
Kerry inco.	14%	12%	21%	20%	30%	29%	21%
Bush comp.	2%	4%	10%	12%	4%	3%	7%
<b>All pro-Bush</b>	<b>27% (625)</b>	<b>25% (589)</b>	<b>38% (1,103)</b>	<b>38% (1,903)</b>	<b>38% (1,211)</b>	<b>43% (694)</b>	<b>36% (5,925)</b>
Conflict	0%	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Political ft.	25%	25%	19%	13%	16%	5%	17%
Consensus	3%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
<b>All Neutral</b>	<b>28% (664)</b>	<b>28% (444)</b>	<b>21% (630)</b>	<b>13% (678)</b>	<b>16% (498)</b>	<b>5% (77)</b>	<b>19% (2,991)</b>
Policy fail	15%	17%	23%	26%	25%	26%	23%
Econ. cons.	1%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%
Bush inco.	15%	19%	5%	13%	14%	7%	12%
Kerry com.	6%	3%	5%	6%	3%	5%	5%
<b>All pro-Kerry</b>	<b>37% (834)</b>	<b>42% (647)</b>	<b>36% (1,061)</b>	<b>48% (2,452)</b>	<b>44% (1,384)</b>	<b>40% (636)</b>	<b>42% (7,064)</b>
Other	8%	6%	6%	2%	2%	13%	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100% (2,350)</b>	<b>100% (1,575)</b>	<b>100% (2,957)</b>	<b>100% (5,109)</b>	<b>100% (3,149)</b>	<b>100% (1,619)</b>	<b>100% (16,759)</b>

(Percentages are computed by columns. The sum of percentages may not exactly equal 100 due to rounding. Numbers in parenthesis represent total framing seconds. The columns give percentages of framing seconds by each channel and the last column gives framing seconds for each frame across all six channels.).

In all, then, pro-Bush frames ranged from a low of 25% (CBS) to a high of 43% (MSNBC), an 18 percentage point spread. Virtually all the news channels gave the most attention to the pro-Bush Kerry incompetence frame, which ranged from 12% (CBS) to 30% (Fox). All other pro-Bush frames were mostly under 10% of framing seconds (see Table 13), although CNN and NBC gave attention also to the Bush competence frame.

Less channel variance existed in use of pro-Kerry frames, which ranged from a low of 36 % (NBC) to a high of 48% (CNN), a 12 percentage point spread. The policy failure/responsibility and Bush incompetence frames were the most frequently used pro-Kerry frames. Use of policy failure/responsibility frame ranged from 15% (ABC) to 26% (CNN). Use of the Bush incompetence frame ranged from 5% (NBC) to 19% (CBS). Other pro-Kerry frames were used much less frequently, overall.

Interestingly, the networks were more likely to use the neutral frames, which ranged from (21%) (NBC) to 28% (ABC and CBS), compared to the cable channels which ranged from 5% (MSNBC) to 16% (Fox) in use of the neutral frames. ABC and CBS were significantly more likely to use the neutral frames compared to the cable channels, by the standards set for this study. MSNBC was significantly less likely than any other news program to use the neutral frames. One possible explanation for this is journalistic tradition in the networks emphasizing impartiality and objectivity. In other words, focusing on the “horse race” permits the news organization to “keep score” in a way that poses less possibility of slipping into partisanship.

### *Network and Cable TV Difference in Framing*

Hypothesis 1 posited that network and cable channels differed in the way they framed the Iraq issue. It obtained partial support, but in only one of the three assessments of framing seconds used. Both network and cable channels favored Kerry. The data reveal that the cable channels were more favorable to the pro-Kerry frames (46%) than the pro-Bush frames (39%) by 7 percentage points. The networks favored Kerry by 37% to Bush 31%, a framing difference of 6 percentage points (see Table 14). In terms of partisan balance, therefore, network and cable channels hardly differed.

Data on the neutral frames, however, reveal that networks gave significantly more time to the political fight frame (23%), used in only 13% of cable channel frames. Overall, the networks devoted 68% of their framing seconds to pro-Bush or pro-Kerry partisan frames and 25% to neutral frames compared to 85% of partisan frame time for the cable channels and 13% for neutral frame time.

This finding is in line with the argument that traditional broadcast networks with thirty minute newscasts rely more on story types such as reporter packages and anchor lead-ins to cover news (e.g., Wicks & Walker, 1993; also see Table 3), which therefore increases the possibility that journalists stay on safer ground by emphasizing horse race over issue coverage that may arouse partisan ire. Cable channels' newscasts are typically one hour long, which enables them to report in longer news formats such as anchor in-house interviews (see Table 3) thereby increasing the possibility of facilitating the frames promoted by various



sources who may have overt or covert partisan agendas. Indeed, cable devoted more framing time to the pro-Bush Kerry incompetence frame than did the networks (a 9 percentage point difference) and the pro-Kerry policy failure/responsibility frame than did the networks ( a 7 percentage point difference) (see Table 14).

**Table 14:** Percentages of Framing Seconds in Network and Cable Channels.

Frames	Networks	Cable channels
<b>All Pro-Bush</b>	<b>31% (2,117)</b>	<b>39% (3,808)</b>
Fighting against terrorism	6%	4%
Fighting for freedom/dem.	3%	2%
Kerry incompetence	16%	25%
Bush competence	6%	8%
<b>All Neutral</b>	<b>25% (1,738)</b>	<b>13% (1,253)</b>
Conflict	1%	0%
Political fight	23%	13%
Consensus	1%	0%
<b>All Pro-Kerry</b>	<b>37% (2,592)</b>	<b>46% (4,472)</b>
Policy failure/ resp.	19%	26%
Economic cons.	2%	2%
Bush incomp.	11%	13%
Kerry competence	5%	5%
<b>Other</b>	<b>6% (435)</b>	<b>4% (344)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100% (6,882)</b>	<b>100% (9,877)</b>

(The sum of percentages may not exactly equal 100 due to rounding. Numbers in parenthesis represent framing seconds.).

Therefore, no substantial differences emerged when individual partisan frames were examined. The networks and cable stations virtually paralleled each other in these emphases, but to different extents, in framing time.

Other frames frequently used by networks were the Kerry incompetence (16%), and Bush incompetence (11%) frames, while the cable channels also used the Bush incompetence frame (13%) (see Table 14).

Hypothesis 2 that predicted that the Fox News Channel (FNC) would be more pro-Bush than other channels was not supported in either of the two assessments of framing seconds used. The data in Table 13 reveal that FNC favored Kerry by 6 percentage points, a finding contrary to expectations. In fact, FNC lagged behind MSNBC in use of pro-Bush frames, and simply equaled pro-Bush frames used in NBC and CNN. FNC was even more likely to focus Kerry frames than Bush ones, which made up 44% of its framing seconds. The contrary findings for the FNC could account to the fact that this study was only examining a specific newscast of the channel wherein it was possible that the channel was focusing more on Kerry's record rather than Bush. On the whole, if all other news programs of FNC are considered then it might be possible to see more pro-Bush coverage of the channel.

However, the findings of Hypothesis 2 are consistent with the Iraq war study of Aday, Cluverius, & Livingston (2005), where they argued that FNC's coverage of the war was more in line with the three broadcast networks. Another interesting observation with regard to FNC's news coverage is that when it came to devoting time to individual frames, it gave its greatest attention to pro-Bush Kerry incompetence frame (30%) (see Table 13), significantly more time than given this frame by ABC, CBS, and CNN. However, both CNN (20%) and MSNBC (29%) also gave attention to this pro-Bush frame.

Hypothesis 3 that posited that the CBS news used more pro-Kerry frames compared to other channels was partially supported in one of the two assessments made of framing seconds, which is consistent with the findings of Katovsky & Carlson (2003), and Lowry and Shidler (1995) that CBS News has more liberal bias than other news channels. As noted earlier, CBS news devoted 42% framing seconds to the pro-Kerry frames versus 25% to the pro-Bush frames, a difference of 17 percentage points in favor of Kerry (see Table 13). No other channel had a gap that large. CBS News with 42% pro-Kerry frames was behind CNN (48%) and FOX (44%) in devoting more framing seconds to those frames. CBS News gave less attention to pro-Bush frames than did NBC, CNN, FOX, and MSNBC.

In terms of individual pro-Bush and pro-Kerry partisan frames, CBS was not distinguished by significant attention to particular frames. CBS made the least use of the pro-Bush Kerry incompetence frame (12%), but not significantly less so than did three other channels. Correspondingly, CBS made the most use of the pro-Kerry Bush incompetence frame (19%), but not significantly more so than did three other channels.

### *Journalists and Their Frames*

The second Research Question probed the kinds of frames journalists themselves used to cover the Iraq issue in statements they did not explicitly attribute to any source. As indicated by the last column of Table 15, and consistent with previous studies that journalists play up the political struggle implications in news stories to make them appealing to the audience interested in a fight (e.g., de Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001; Patterson & Donsbach, 1996;

Valkenburg et al., 1999), journalists overwhelmingly relied on the political fight frame (70%) to present the Iraq issue. For instance, ABC's correspondent, Terry Moran reported on October 7, 2004: "Peter, President Bush was on the defensive on this [Iraq] issue today, and Senator Kerry is now using the president's handling of Iraq as a primary reason to throw him out of office."

Journalists bound by professional and objective norms usually tend to project such conflict aspects to make stories interesting and to attract the attention of the audience. This may be the reason they framed the Iraq issue as a keenly contested political fight between the incumbent and the challenger. Moreover, journalists norms for objectivity and impartiality mean that they mostly control their own assertions and confine their use of more partisan frame to attributed sources.

**Table 15: Frequently Used Frames by Journalists.**

Frames	Network	Cable	All
All Pro-Bush	6% (136)	20% (339)	13% (475)
Ft. terrorism	0%	1%	1%
Ft. for freedom.	0%	0%	0%
Kerry incomp.	3%	16%	9%
Bush comp.	3%	3%	3%
All Neutral	73% (1,588)	69% (1,184)	71% (2,772)
Conflict	0%	0%	0%
Political fight	71%	68%	70%
Consensus	2%	1%	1%
All Pro-Kerry	17% (363)	11% (193)	14% (556)
Policy fail/resp.	7%	2%	4%
Eco.cons.	2%	1%	2%
Bush incomp.	5%	7%	6%
Kerry compe.	3%	1%	2%
Other	4% (96)	0% (4)	3% (100)
Total	100% (2,183)	100% (1,720)	100% (3,903)

(The sum of percentages may not exactly equal 100 due to rounding. Number in parenthesis represent journalistic framing seconds.).

Data in Table 15 also point at interesting differences in the kind of frames used by the network and cable channel journalists themselves to describe the Iraq election issue (as opposed to frames used in total coverage by all sources). The journalists of networks used more of pro-Kerry frames (17%) than pro-Bush frames (6%), which reflects a significant difference of 11 percentage points favoring Kerry in partisan balance. On the other hand, cable channel journalists used more of pro-Bush frames (20%) than pro-Kerry frames (11%), an almost significant difference of 9 percentage points favoring Bush. In other words, the partisan gap between network and cable journalists was 20 percentage points,

suggesting a significant difference in the political orientation of cable and network journalists. The network difference favoring Kerry, however, was significant by the standards used in this study, while the cable difference favoring Bush was not. More specifically on particular partisan frames, cable channel journalists used the pro-Bush Kerry incompetence frame (16%) more than did network journalists (3%), a significant 13 percentage point difference favoring Bush. Network and cable channel journalists also differed in the use of other individual frames, but the differences were not significant.

Findings showing the networks emphasizing more pro-Kerry frames is consistent with the argument that they show a liberal bias. And cable channels' favoring of pro-Bush frames may result from the presence of FNC, which according to researchers has a conservative bias. Therefore, this finding is consistent with other studies (e.g., Aday, Livingston, & Hebert, 2005; D'Alessio & Allen, 2000), which attribute liberal bias to networks and conservative bias to FNC. With regard to use of neutral frames, the networks' emphasis for these frames (73%) was only 4 percentage points more than cable channels (69%) (see Table 15).

Hypothesis 4 posited that journalists would primarily use political fight frame to cover the Iraq issue. This hypothesis was supported, as journalists overwhelmingly used the political fight frame (70%) while covering the Iraq issue (see last column in Table 15), consistent with the studies of Patterson and Donsbach (1996), and Valkenburg et al. (1999) and the discussion above.

Network journalists' use of political fight frame (71%) was only 3 percentage points more than that of cable reporters (68%) (see Table 15).

Research Question 3 explored whether race and gender of journalists predicted differences in their framing of the Iraq issue. The difference between white and non-white journalists was subtle when it came to framing of the Iraq issue (see Table 16), which is consistent with similar findings of Zeldes and Fico (2005). In terms of framing seconds, both white (70%) and non-white (66%) journalists emphasized political fight frame, but the former's framing seconds percentage was slightly higher than the latter's. Non-white journalists used slightly more of pro-Kerry (18%) and pro-Bush (16%) frames than did the white journalists (see Table 16), but not significantly so by the standards used in this study.

In terms of overall balance, then, professional norms for impartiality seemed to operate equally effectively for both white and non-white journalists. The difference between white journalists' use of the pro-Kerry frames (14%) with that of pro-Bush frames (12%) was 2 percentage points, and this difference between the pro-Kerry and the pro-Bush framing seconds is the same in the coverage of non-white journalists (see Table 16). Non-white journalists emphasized the pro-Kerry frames with 18% framing seconds and 16% to the pro-Bush framing seconds, but their use of these framing seconds was slightly higher than the white journalists.

An example of a white journalist's use of a balanced frame is CBS's Dan Rather's report on the Iraq issue: "Who should lead America, President Bush or

his Democratic challenger, Senator John Kerry? With security apparently the number-one issue for voters nationally, the presidential candidates argued long distance today over who would be a better commander in chief for the war on terror, who has the better plan for the war in Iraq and the hunt for the still missing Osama bin Laden. Thirteen days to go now, and we begin our coverage tonight with CBS News correspondent Jim Axelrod,” (CBS, October 20, 2004). An example of a non-white journalist’s use of political fight frame is CBS’s Byron Pitts, who is African-American, Iraq issue report aired on September 16, 2004: “While Senator Kerry sought to take political advantage of the president’s problems, President Bush ignored the intelligence report in his appearances today, but not his opponent’s own problems with Iraq.”



**Table 16: Journalists' Race and Framing Second.**

Frames	White journalists	Non-white journalists
All pro-Bush	12% (416)	16% (59)
Ft. against terrorism	1%	1 %
Ft. for freedom/dem.	0%	0%
Kerry incompetence	9%	5%
Bush competence	2%	10%
All neutral	71% (2,530)	66% (242)
Conflict	0%	0%
Political fight	70%	66%
Consensus	1%	0%
All pro-Kerry	14% (492)	18% (64)
Policy failure/resp.	3%	12%
Eco. cons.	2%	0%
Bush incompetence	6%	6%
Kerry competence	3%	0%
Other	3% (100)	0% (0)
Total	100% (3,538)	100% (365)

(Numbers in parenthesis represent framing seconds.).

With regard to individual frames, white journalists tended to use Kerry incompetence frame (9%) slightly more than non-white journalists (5%). Non-white journalists used policy failure/responsibility frame (12%) more than did the white journalists (3%). White and non-white journalists used same amount, 6% each, of the Bush incompetence frame seconds.

When compared to white journalists, non-white journalists did not use any of fighting for freedom and democracy, consensus, economic consequence, Kerry competence, and other frames (see Table 16). In line with Gandy et al.'s (1997) argument, the data here indicate that non-white journalists were willing to use frames different than did their white counterparts, thereby providing a different

angle or viewpoint in the Iraq issue. Non-white journalists, however, also did not use at all some of the frames used by white journalists. Again, however, these differences were not significant by the standards set for this research.

Hypothesis 5 predicting that women journalists would use more pro-Kerry frames was supported (see Table 17), consistent with a study of Gidengil and Everitt (2003). When it came to the partisan balance in their framing seconds, women journalists used more of pro-Kerry frames (27%) than the pro-Bush frames (17%), a significant difference favoring Kerry. For instance, NBC's Kelly O'Donnell while covering Kerry's campaign on September 8, 2004 said: "Tonight a more aggressive John Kerry is trying to reframe the discussion on the president's signature issue. Kerry's new buzzword, 'choices,' urging voters to see the costs of the war in Iraq differently." The data in Table 18 also reveal that male journalists emphasized equal amounts, 11% each, of the pro-Bush and the pro-Kerry framing seconds, compared to the 10 percentage point difference between the pro-Kerry (27%) and the pro-Bush (17%) framing seconds for the women journalists. For instance, while covering the Iraq issue on September 8, 2004, CBS's Jim Axelrod balanced the opposing partisan frames: "Eight weeks to Election Day, Iraq remained topic one in the race for the White House...While the president provided his latest rationale for the war, his challenger argued it's actually created more terrorists." Therefore, consistent with earlier studies (Gidengil & Everitt, 2003; Sutcliffe et al., 2005), use of more pro-Kerry frames by women journalists indicate that they were critical of the Bush administration's handling of the Iraq issue.

The data in Table 17 also answers a part of the third Research Question seeking to find the influence of gender difference on the framing of the Iraq issue. Keeping with journalistic norms, women reporters did primarily use neutral frames (57%) in the coverage of the Iraq issue. However, they used those frames significantly less than did their male colleagues.

One major difference between male and female journalists in the use of partisan frames was that the latter used the Bush incompetence frame (15%) significantly more than did men (4%) (see Table 17). Apart from this major difference in use of the Bush incompetence frame, both male and female journalists were similar in using remaining frames, which is consistent with the study of Sutcliffe et al. (2005), that the gender difference in the news coverage is subtle. Another difference was that female journalists made no use at all of two pro-Bush frames. In line with the arguments of Sutcliffe et al. (2005), and Gidengil and Everitt (2003), the data in Table 17 reveal that women reporters were more critical of the administration and expressed concern on the Iraq issue by using more of the Bush incompetence frame than their male counterparts.

It is unclear why there should be such a “gender gap” in Iraq war framing, especially in the light of the nearly equal attention given to the partisans by white and non-white journalists. This finding may reflect a gender-based partisanship that is present in newsrooms and that is becoming more visible as women enter more powerful management positions. Possibly, too, it may reflect more autonomy and less scrutiny given female journalists. Finally, such a finding could indicate that female journalists may be less experienced and have not been fully

socialized into occupational objectivity norms. Unfortunately, this study can only speculate on these possible explanations rather than establish a definitive one.

**Table 17: Journalists' Gender and Framing Seconds.**

Frames	Male journalists	Female journalists
All pro-Bush	11% (342)	17% (133)
Ft. against terrorism	1%	0%
Ft. for freedom/dem.	0%	0%
Kerry incompetence	8%	11%
Bush competence	2%	6%
All neutral	75% (2,317)	57%(455)
Conflict	0%	0%
Political fight	74%	55%
Consensus	1%	2%
All pro-Kerry	11% (339)	27% (217)
Policy failure/resp.	4%	5%
Eco. cons.	1%	5%
Bush incompetence	4%	15%
Kerry competence	2%	2%
Other	3% (100)	0% (0)
Total	100% (3,098)	100% (805)

(The sum of percentages in columns may not exactly equal 100 due to rounding. Numbers in parenthesis represent total framing seconds.).

### *Partisans and Framing*

Hypothesis 6 posited that stories with a greater Republican partisan balance would use more pro-Bush frames. Not surprisingly, this hypothesis was supported, consistent with the studies of Fico and Cote (2002), Jacoby (2000), and Parmelee (2002). The data in Table 18 reveal that stories favoring Bush (in other words, stories having a Republican partisan tilt), got a high percentage (63%) of

pro-Bush framing seconds, while the remaining pro-Kerry, neutral or other frames got less than 20% each. Therefore, consistent with earlier studies (Fico & Cote, 2002; Jacoby, 2000; Parmelee, 2002), the data in Table 18 also indicate that during election campaign stories favoring Republican sources with more prominent attention were dominated by the frames projected by them.

Hypothesis 7, correspondingly predicting that stories having greater Democratic balance would use more pro-Kerry frames was also supported (see Table 18), as expected. In the stories favoring Kerry, 69% pro-Kerry frames were found, while the remaining frames again were less than 20%. Again, this finding was consistent with the studies of Fico and Cote (2002), Jacoby (2000), and Parmelee (2002) that stories dominated by a particular partisan group, in this case Democrats, will have more of the frames projected by that partisan group.

Table 18 also, of course, illustrates what happens to stories that are not exacting in their standards of “fairness and balance.” Certainly, including even one source opposed to the others favoring a candidate will make a story more fair. Absent nearly an equal number of sources on both sides, however, the story will not be more even. Moreover, departures from even treatment in prominence given candidate frames predicts more of the same in the balance of the story.

**Table 18: Partisan Story Domination\* and Percentage of Frames.**

Frames	Stories favoring Bush	Stories favoring Kerry
Pro-Bush	63% (3,771)	15% (1,086)
Neutral	17% (993)	14% (987)
Pro-Kerry	17% (1,034)	69% (4,969)
Other	4% (221)	2% (157)
Total	100% (6,019)	100% (7,199)

\*Stories favoring Bush or Kerry sources could also have sources supporting the opponent included. (The sum of percentages may not exactly equal 100 due to rounding. Number in parenthesis represent Republican and Democratic partisan framing seconds.).

(Pro-Bush frames: fighting against terrorism, fighting for freedom and democracy, Kerry incompetence, and Bush competence; Pro-Kerry frames: Policy failure/responsibility, Economic consequence, Bush incompetence, Kerry competence; Neutral: conflict, political fight, and consensus; Other).

The related Research Question 4 sought to find out whether Republican or Democratic sourced frames were more likely to be found in the coverage. The data in Table 19 reveal that Democratic sourced pro-Kerry frames (94%) were slightly more dominant than the Republican-sourced pro-Bush (92%) frames. This finding suggests that the Republican and Democratic sources keenly contested with each other to project their frames on the Iraq issue in the news media. There were few “mavericks” in either party who criticized their party’s candidate or who failed to target the opponent. With regard to individual frames, the Republican-sourced Kerry incompetence frame (53%) and the Democratic-sourced policy failure/responsibility frame (51%) were most frequent frames in the coverage of the Iraq issue in the 2004 presidential race (see Table 19).

**Table 19: Percentages of Republican and Democratic Sourced Frames.**

Frames	Republican sources	Democratic sources
All pro-Bush	92% (4,994)	2% (136)
Ft. against terrorism	13%	1%
Ft. for freedom/dem.	8%	0%
Kerry incompetence	53%	1%
Bush competence	18%	0%
All neutral	2% (76)	2% (106)
Conflict	1% (41)	1%
Political fight	0%(9)	0%
Consensus	1% (26)	1%
All pro-Kerry	2% (113)	94% (5,913)
Policy failure/resp.	1%	51%
Eco. cons.	0%	5%
Bush incompetence	1%	27%
Kerry competence	0%	11%
Other	5% (264)	2% (132)
Total	100% (5,447)	100% (6,284)

(Frames with prefix All represent a sum of sub-frames mentioned under them in each row. The sum of percentages in columns may not exactly equal 100 due to rounding. Number in parenthesis represent Republican and Democratic sourced framing seconds.).

This reflects an astonishingly effective ability of both parties to stay “on message” during the campaign. For both campaigns, the most frequent framing was negative. However, the three other Bush frames, making up 39% of the Republican-sourced frames, can be interpreted as positive, emphasizing protection against terrorism, the fight for freedom and president’s competence. For the Kerry campaign, another 27% of the framing second also went negative, emphasizing the president’s alleged incompetence.

Overall, then, while both campaigns stressed negative aspects, the Bush campaign was more positive. Even when it came to the positive framing of the competence of their own candidate, Republicans were more likely to do that (18% of framing seconds) than were Democrats (11% of framing seconds) (see Table 19). Of course, it is also possible that journalists distort political reality by selectively using frames out of proportion to the candidates' use of them. This study, however, cannot address that possibility.

#### *Non-partisans and Framing*

Research Question 5 asked what kind of frames were most often used by experts and non-partisan sources. As indicated by Table 20, non-partisan sources hardly ever used the neutral frames. Although they were not nearly as partisan in their framing as declared Republican or Democratic sources, they could not be characterized as neutral.

Overall, non-partisans most frequently used pro-Kerry frames (43%) followed by pro-Bush frames (28%), a significant 15 percentage point difference between those frames. With regard to individual frames, the policy failure/responsibility frame (35%) was most frequently used, followed by Kerry incompetence frame (24%). For example, the pro-Kerry policy failure/responsibility frame was used by an expert on the Iraq issue, Bathsheba Crocker: "...Issues like security and governance and basic services. We found a fairly depressing picture across these range of issues, and we found that things are not really headed in the right direction yet [in Iraq]," (NBC, September 8, 2004)



As indicated by these results, non-partisan sources were primarily critical of the Bush administration's handling of the Iraq issue. So even though non-partisans did not clearly side either with Republicans or Democrats, the frames they tended to use more often supported Kerry's agenda. This may reflect "covert" partisanship on the part of these sources, or a failure of journalists to fully identify the partisan ties of these sources. Of course, this framing pattern may also reflect the expert assessments of genuinely non-partisan sources. Unfortunately, data from this research cannot determine which explanation fits best.

**Table 20:** Frames Used by Expert/Non-partisan Sources.

Frames	Percentages of frames
All Pro-Bush	28% (320)
Fighting against terrorism	0%
Fighting for freedom/dem.	0%
Kerry incompetence	24%
Bush competence	4%
All Neutral	4% (40)
Conflict	0%
Political fight	4%
Consensus	0%
All Pro-Kerry	43% (482)
Policy failure/ resp.	35%
Economic cons.	0%
Bush incompetence	5%
Kerry competence	3%
Other	25% (83)
Total	100% (1,125)

(The sum of percentages in columns may not exactly equal 100 due to rounding. Number in parenthesis represent total non-partisan framing seconds.).

## **Summary of Research Questions and Hypothesis Test Results**

For the purpose of this study, 445 news stories were analyzed from three networks and three cable channels. Stories with dominant frames were significantly more likely to favor Kerry than Bush. But when all story framing seconds were considered, that gap closed to a 6 percentage point difference.

A close look at the framing seconds of individual channels also revealed some significant differences among them. CBS devoted more framing seconds to pro-Kerry frames (42%) than pro-Bush frames (25%), leading all the channels. ABC and CNN were also significantly more likely to favor Kerry over Bush, according to the standards used in this study. No channel was significantly more likely to favor Bush in its Iraq war framing.

RQ1 asked about the relative frequency of frames in coverage. Overall, few frames exceeded 10 percent of stories on seconds. Focus was given largely to negative frames such as the pro-Bush Kerry incompetence frame, and pro-Kerry policy failure and Bush incompetence frames.

Hypothesis 1 was partially supported, finding that cable channels made more use of partisan than neutral frames in their coverage compared to the networks (see Table 15).

Hypothesis 2 that predicted that the Fox News Channel (FNC) would use more pro-Bush frames than other channels was not supported, as FNC's framing of the Iraq issue actually favored the pro-Kerry frames by 6 percentage points and did not differ significantly from other channels in their use of particular partisan frames.

Hypothesis 3 that posited that the CBS News used more pro-Kerry frames compared to other channels was partially supported. CBS News devoted 17 percentage points more to pro-Kerry frames than pro-Bush frames. Among all six channels, CBS news devoted less time to frames supporting Bush on the Iraq war, but not significantly so in all comparisons.

RQ 2 probed the kinds of frames used by the journalists in their own words to frame the Iraq issue. Journalists overwhelmingly used the political fight frame (70%). Their use of pro-Bush (13%) and pro-Kerry (14%) frames was almost equal. Network journalists used more pro-Kerry frames (17%) than pro-Bush frames (6%), whereas cable channel reporters used more pro-Bush frames (20%) than the pro-Kerry frames (11%). Cable and network journalists therefore differed in their political orientations, at least by the measures and standards used in this research.

Hypothesis 4, related to the second Research Question that posited that journalists would primarily use political fight frame, was supported as journalists overwhelmingly used that frame (70%).

RQ3 probed the influence of race and gender of journalists on the framing of the Iraq issue. Race was not significant, but gender was. Non-white journalists used slightly more of pro-Kerry (18%) and pro-Bush (16%) frames than the white journalists, but the race of journalists was associated with few and negligible differences. Female journalists, however, devoted more time to pro-Kerry frames (27%) than pro-Bush frames (17%), whereas male reporters devoted equal time (11% each) to pro-Bush and pro-Kerry frames. In other words, women journalists

were more partisan and Democratic in their political orientation, according to these data.

The related Hypothesis 5 that female journalists would use more pro-Kerry frames was therefore supported.

Hypothesis 6 and 7 that posited that Republicans and Democrat partisan sourced stories would be dominated by pro-Bush and pro-Kerry frames were also supported.

The related Research Question 4 sought to find out whether Republican or Democratic sourced frames were likely to be found in the coverage. Democratic sourced pro-Kerry frames (94%) were only slightly more dominant than the Republican-sourced pro-Bush (92%) frames.

Finally, Research Question 5 probed what kind of frames were most often used by experts and non-partisan sources. Non-partisans frequently used more pro-Kerry frames than pro-Bush frames.

#### Assessment of Relative Strength of Influences

Given these findings, an assessment can also be made about the relative power of various sources to set story frames. Certainly this is related to the numbers of sources of frames and the time given them in stories.

In sum, then, partisans were clearly the most important frame setters found in this study. They were the most numerous frame-setting sources. Not surprisingly, the frames they set favored the supported candidate, but with some important differences. Bush frames were more positive and Kerry frames more negative.

Next to partisans, channel type, a proxy for news management practices at network and cable channels, was the next most powerful influence. Specifically, the traditional networks were most likely to hold to their more neutral and impartial role, emphasizing political horse race coverage frames more than did their cable colleagues.

The gender of journalists had a much smaller but striking difference on frame setting. Certainly the size of their framing influence was severely limited by the fewness of their numbers, and, therefore, the relatively low frequency of their framing assertions. Nonetheless, women journalists were more likely to bias stories with frames more supportive of Kerry than Bush.

Non-partisan sources were least influential on frame setting, but only because so few of them were used relative to partisans and journalists. Like women journalists, however, their frame setting was more likely to facilitate the Kerry campaign than the Bush one.

The regression analysis mostly gave emphasis to these findings (see Table 21), but are specific to imbalance in attention to pro-Bush or pro-Kerry frames. The regression analysis therefore applies to a much narrower question about framing in election coverage.

The most important factor producing framing imbalance in stories was the use of partisan sources (compared to framing from journalists and non-partisan sources). As indicated by Table 21, the unstandardized coefficient for partisan vs. all other frame sources was 20.1. In other words, use of partisan sources increased story imbalance by an average of 20.1 seconds. While not a surprising

finding, this also suggests that stories including other sources depresses such imbalance.

Next in influence, stories produced by network news programs had more overall imbalance in partisan framing than did cable channels, even though study data show that networks used more neutral frames than cable channels. The data indicate that if the story is produced by networks then the story imbalance increases on an average by 5.8 seconds. This may be due, in part, to the greater emphasis network news placed on covering the presidential challenger compared to cable channels.

Reporter gender (.37) and race (1.5) produced much smaller influences on imbalance. Stories reported by women journalists were less imbalanced in their framing, even though study data show that the direct framing statements of women reporters tended to be more supportive of the Kerry campaign.

Overall, these four variables explained about 20% of the variance in framing imbalance, although source type and channel type accounted for much of that imbalance. Obviously a great many other factors not included in this study are also influential on such imbalance.

**Table 21:** Influence of Factors on Partisan Frame Imbalance. Coefficients are Betas. Numbers in parenthesis are unstandardized coefficients.

Level and types of influence	Iraq issue partisan frame imbalance
Network vs. cable news	-.13 (-5.8)
White vs. non-white journalists	.02 (1.5)
Male vs. female journalists	-.06 (-.37)
Partisan vs. all other frame sources	.40 (20.1)

$R^2 = .21$ ; Equation Significance = .000

Scaling of independent variables: networks = 1, cable channels = 0; white journalists = 1, non-white journalists = 0; male journalists = 1, female journalists = 0; partisan sources = 1, all other sources = 0.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study added specific knowledge to the framing literature by showing theoretical and empirical evidence of power of partisan sources to set frames for an issue like the Iraq conflict during presidential race. The data of the study also showed the difference in framing of stories by network and cable channels. Based on the past research and findings of this study, it is suggested that issue-specific frames should be anchored in generic frames such as conflict, responsibility, and human interest, etc. Anchoring issue specific frames into generic frames would facilitate cross-issue generalizability, thereby making framing studies more robust in their prediction, explanation, and control of a phenomenon in mass communication.

As noted earlier, this study examined the media framing of the Iraq issue because it was one of the top issues during the 2004 presidential campaign. Even almost two years after the election, the Iraq issue continues to be a thorn in the American polity. With the kind of uncertainty looming over the Iraq policy, it may not be a surprise to see this issue again on the ballot in the 2008 presidential election. How America as a nation was divided over this issue during the 2004 presidential race was evident from CNN's interview of Cindy Sheehan and Bill Buesing (CNN, 2004). Sheehan and Buesing had lost their sons in the Iraq war, but the latter supported the war while the former opposed it. The Iraq issue, with a nation sharply divided on it, from a mass communication perspective calls for



examining the news media's role in covering and framing of this issue as it had implications for public opinion beyond the presidential race.

From a journalism point of view, scholars (e.g., Aday, Livingston, & Hebert, 2005; Norris, Kern, & Just, 2003; Ross & Bantimaroudis, 2006) have argued that after the September 11 attacks American journalism has undergone noticeable change, claiming for instance, that the news media professionals are raising above objective norms to freely express patriotic fervor, and rally around government sources thereby projecting more of their frames on Middle East violence and terrorism. For instance, Aday, Livingston, & Hebert (2005) pointed out: "Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, journalistic objectivity has been a matter of frequent controversy...Everything from whether anchors should wear patriotic lapel pins to how much a network should show civilian casualties has been at issue. Not just administration officials but journalists themselves have berated news organizations deemed not patriotic enough, with some suggesting that there is no place for detachment in wartime," (p. 6). Moreover, according to Entman (2004), in this post-Cold War era the September 11 attacks provide a larger context to understand the role of the media. This also gives a reason to examine framing of the Iraq issue in the first presidential campaign after the September 11 attacks, and for assessing the theoretical and practical implications of such coverage. Specifically, what can be learned to better predict and explain a communication process? And how might journalism better fulfill its normative role?

### Implications for Theory

#### *Reassessing The Model of This Study*

From a theoretical perspective, this study examined the type and prevalence of media frames in television news with regard to the Iraq issue. This study analyzed how various communication variables influenced the framing of the Iraq issue in news media in the context of 2004 presidential campaign. The theoretical springboard for this study was provided by an argument made in Scheufele's (1999) widely cited work on framing effects. Citing Gans (1979), Shoemaker and Reese (1996), and Tuchman (1978), Scheufele (1999) argued that studies have been done in the past to examine the influence of extrinsic and intrinsic media factors on production and selection of news, while "evidence has yet to be systematically collected about how various factors impact the structural qualities of news in terms of framing," (p.109). Therefore, this study responded to that call by systematically examining how selected factors influenced the structural qualities of news framing. It adds to a growing literature exploring the influence of various communication variables on media frames. Identifying and studying media frames is important because they have implications for public opinion, especially during elections when candidates keenly contest on key issues.

Medium type, defined as network versus cable news outlets, was considered to assess whether they differed in their influence on the Iraq frames. The theoretical assumption here was that medium type would influence framing as cable channel newscasts are longer than networks', allowing them to cover and frame news differently. The study data suggested that the networks used more of

the political fight frame when compared to the cable channels, reflecting that the former emphasized more the traditional “horse race” coverage.

This study also took into account the race and gender of journalists to examine their influence on framing. The assumption here was that race and gender of a journalist would mediate their frames on the Iraq issue. According to the research findings of this study, gender did influence framing to some extent, but race did not.

Finally, sources, both partisans and non-partisans including journalists themselves were examined to see what kinds of frames they were sponsoring on the Iraq issue. The study data revealed that frames sponsored by partisans overwhelmingly dominated the Iraq issue.

This study organized these influences based on Shoemaker and Reese’s (1996) hierarchical model in which media factors such as nature of the medium (cable vs. network channels) influenced the race and gender of journalists working for news organizations which in turn influenced the use of partisan and non-partisan sources on news media framing of the Iraq issue. This study contributes to knowledge in this area by empirically testing a model that takes account of medium, journalist, and source influence on framing in a policy conflict context.

As noted earlier, this model was robust in showing strong influence of partisan sources on news media framing of the Iraq issue. It was moderately successful in showing the influence of medium and journalist gender (but not

race) on the Iraq frames. It replicated past work showing the influence of partisans not only broadly on the news, but specifically on public policy issue framing.

On the whole, this study found the hierarchical model of Shoemaker and Reese (1996) was helpful in exploring the influence of nature of medium, race and gender of journalists, and partisan and non-partisan sources (including journalists) on news media framing of the Iraq issue.

This model, however, could be strengthened by increasing the generality of the framing dependent variable. The model can also be improved by using variables with additional explanatory and predictive power. These modifications are discussed below. But before discussing the revised model, it would be helpful to first try to resolve the theoretical debate over generic versus issue-specific frames in the light of this study's approach.

#### *Using Generic and Issue Specific Frames*

While one should be cautious to generalize the results from a single issue study to a general theory of public policy debate formation, the issue-specific research findings of this study yielded rich details. Study data suggest that journalists primarily served as conduits for elite opinions and frames. Most of their Iraq issue coverage was sourced by partisan elite sources, while non-partisans such as experts and ordinary citizens were hardly used as sources. This is the reason partisan frames sponsored by pro-Bush and pro-Kerry sources dominated the Iraq issue stories. Moreover, the issue specific context for this study points to reasons for this pattern. An explanation justifying finding more partisan frames in the Iraq issue coverage is that during special events like

presidential race, news media tend to focus more on the presidential candidates and their issue positions. Further, as the Iraq issue was being covered in the election context, the journalists themselves framed this issue as a political fight between the rival presidential candidates.

However, this political fight frame itself was part of a larger generic, strategic frame used by the journalists to cover many issues applied to the Iraq issue, it allowed them to report objectively by emphasizing the “horse race.” In other words, the political fight frame allowed journalists to tell who was winning and losing without sounding or appearing biased.

In this study, the issue specific framing of the Iraq policy, examined in the presidential campaign context, helps contribute to the issue framing approach. In this research, it was appropriate to use the issue specific framing as it facilitated the investigation of the Iraq issue in a greater detail, which otherwise would not have been possible with the mere use of generic frames. This study attempted to capture specific aspects of selection, organization, and elaboration that were present in the coverage of the Iraq issue.

But it is also possible to see how this study fits into a generic frame context. This study used Entman’s (1993) definition that “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation,” (p. 53). For instance, the *fighting against terrorism* and the *fighting for freedom and democracy* frames used in this study are examples of how the Bush administration

was defining the Iraq issue problems and solutions. The Kerry camp's frames of *policy failure/responsibility*, and *economic consequence* are examples of causal interpretation and attributing responsibility to the Bush administration for creating a mess in Iraq. While the *Bush incompetence* and *Kerry incompetence frames* tie into the moral evaluation category, the *Bush competence* and *Kerry competence frames* are examples of solution recommendations for the Iraq issue. In general, therefore, this study has found these more generic categories of thought to be appropriate and important in the context of an intense political and public policy contest. Indeed, the frames found empirically in this research fit well into Entman's categories.

This raises the possibility that issue specific frames could and should be integrated into generic frames, thereby increasing overall the generality of framing research. For instance, de Vreese et al., (2001) argue that issue-specific frames are applicable to specific topics or news events, whereas generic frames are broadly applicable to a range of different news topics, some even over time, and potentially, in different cultural contexts. An issue-specific news frame allows for investigation of the framing of particular events in greater detail. It may capture specific aspects of selection, organization, and elaboration that are present in news coverage and pertain specifically to a well-defined issue. However, the greater detail and issue-sensitivity renders issue specific analyses difficult to generalize, capture, and use as a base for general hypothesis and theory building. On the other hand, generic frames offer less possibility for examining the framing of an event in greater detail, but they allow comparisons between frames, topics,

and framing practices within and between different media outlets (de Vreese et al., 2001).

This study acknowledges that the specific Iraq issue frames identified in this research are irrelevant to other issues. But the issue categories of this study, based on Entman's (1993) framing categories, can be applied to other issues to examine how they were framed. For instance, the empirical evidence of this study on the Iraq issue cannot be directly applied to an issue like abortion. However, Entman's (1993) framing categories, can be applied to both the abortion issue as well as others to examine the relative way in which issues are being categorized as problems, causally interpreted, morally evaluated, and solved. The two different issues—and others—can then be compared for variations in how these generic frames were used. Also, these generic frames enrich future studies of similar issues such as framing of the war on terrorism, ongoing debate on the Iraq issue or comparing media framing of the first and the second Gulf Wars.

Further, to increase cross-issue generalizability of the issue-specific frames even more, specific studies can be tied to broader generic frames that are replicable across studies, such as *conflict*, *human interest*, *responsibility*, *economic consequence*, and *morality*, which have been found to a great extent in the U.S. news media (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). For instance, the Iraq issue can be examined under a broader generic frame of conflict and then under a “middle level” set of generic frames such as those supplied by Entman (1993). Similarly, abortion can be studied under a broader frame like morality. Once

issues are linked to broader generic frames, then, by using Entman's (1993) framing categories, they can be examined across studies.

Thus, to develop a common theoretical frame, future studies should anchor specific issues in generic frames deliberately chosen to permit comparison across very different issues. And more issues should be examined, because, as argued by Bennett (1990), "only by exploring different cases can we see the general tendencies of press state relations and thus begin to profile the operations of U.S. democracy across different issue areas," (p. 20).

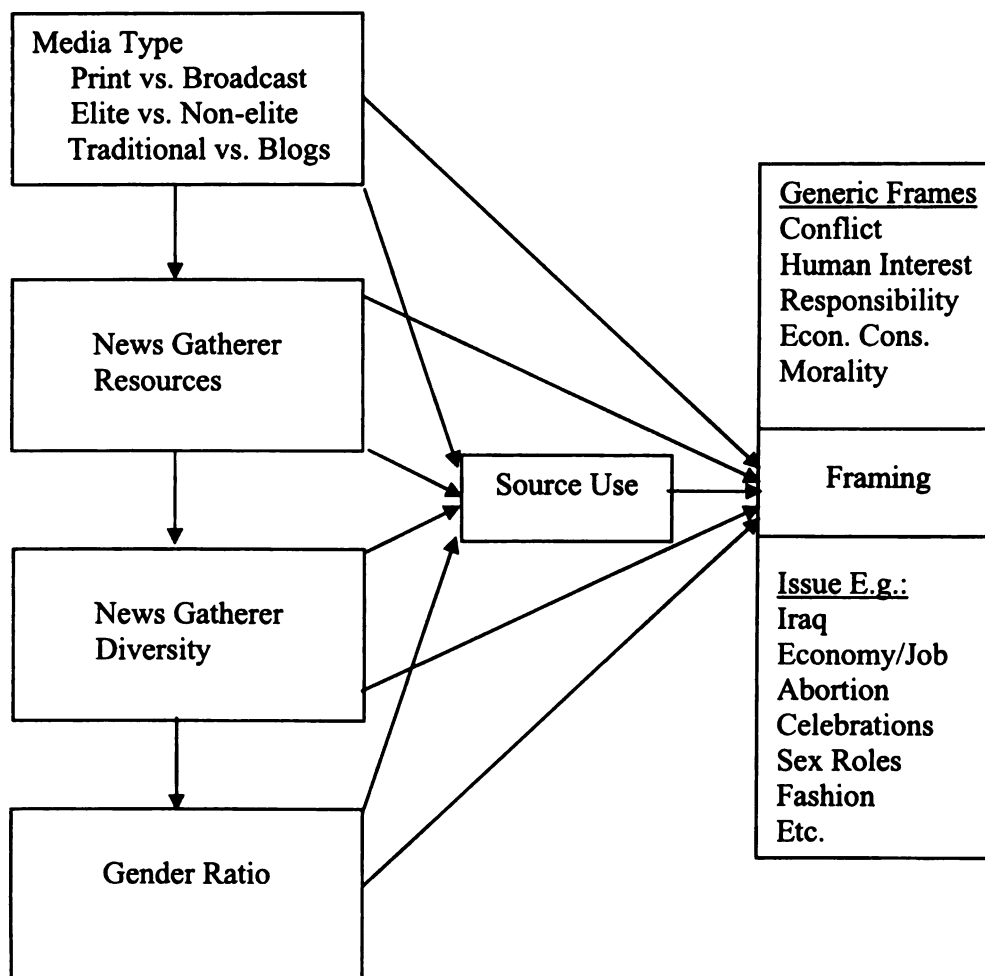
Specifically, then, the generic frames should be held constant across studies in a research program that varied in attention to specific issues and frames particular to them. Doing this gains generality at the generic level and detail at the issue-specific level. The dependent variable in the revised model below (see Figure 2) attempts to illustrate these two levels, emphasizing a limited number of generic frames useful across a wide range of studies dealing with the widest possible range of specific issues or events.

The revised model in this study (see Figure 2) proposes that future framing research should use the following five generic frames—conflict, human interest, responsibility, economic consequence, and morality. The reason for using these five frames is that past research has emphasized existence of these five frames in the news. The wide use of these five generic frames was also suggested by widely cited work of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). Moreover, for a scientific study, measures that can be generalized and replicated across issues and events are required to predict, explain and control phenomena. And these five frames have



been found to have cross-issue generalizability, as they have been applied to a variety of issues such as the Iraq war (Dimitrova et al., 2005; Luther & Miller, 2005), European politics (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000), international comparative studies (de Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001), political campaigns (Druckman, 2005), and even science related fields (Dahinden, 2002).

### Revised Model of Influences on Framing



**Figure 2: Revised Model of Influences on Framing:** Revised model explicating influence of communication variables on generic and issue specific frames mediated by source use.

For instance, if framing of an issue like economy/job is being examined, then the economic consequence frame might be “set” as generic frame for this issue. The researchers, then, could take a closer look at the messages on the economy/job to determine the issue specific frames. Such an approach permits an analysis of many issues (in this case, relating to economic topics) in many studies as they relate to direct generic frames, while permitting detailed study of issue specific frames.

Given that the goal of science is to predict, explain and control, this can be done at the level of generic framing. For instance, if Entman’s (1993) framing categories are considered for generic frames, then researchers can design a study which facilitates cross-issue generalizability and prediction about the kinds of issues likely to have particular distributions across the Entman categories. An example for such a study could be analyzing how issues of health care and gun control, under generic frames, were defined as problems, how responsibility was assigned for these problems, whether these issues were tied to a morality debate, and what solutions were prescribed for these issues. Thus, although these issues are not related, they can still be examined under generic frames that facilitate generalizability. And once these generic frames are established, then each of these issues can be examined in detail for frames specific to them.

#### Predictors of Media Framing

Clearly too, the independent variables in the model can be modified in the light of this study’s findings. In general, it is suggested that media type as an explanatory variable should be expanded in its values, while the journalistic

variables used in this study at the individual level should be redefined as newsroom factors. Moreover, given that framing involves a power play not only among political interests, but also between those interests and journalism institutions, a measure of news organization power should be added to the model. These modifications are discussed below.

As per the revised model (see Figure 2), new independent variables such as media type—elite versus non-elite, traditional versus blogs—could be added to assess their influence on the media frames. While these variables can have direct influence on the media frames, their influence can also be mediated through an intervening variable, source use. For instance, by adding elite media like the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* and non-elite media such as local newspapers, this model assumes that they would use different sources who would frame issues differently. The elite media might reflect the framing of the issues at a broader, national level, where as local newspapers would reflect issue framing in local communities. In some instances it is also a possible that both national and local media influence each others' frames.

The revised model (see Figure 2) suggested in this study to assess the effects of communication variables on media framing will face a bigger and complex challenge in near future with the advent of outlets like blogs. Blogs, on-line journals maintained by individuals, are not bound by traditional journalistic norms, and therefore they might not follow a set pattern in their online content. In other words, what it means is that these blogs might challenge the gate keeping function of traditional media, and refuse to conform with elite opinions (or

frames), which seem to be widespread in the mainstream media. For instance, a survey by Pew (2004a) during presidential campaign revealed that Democratic presidential aspirant Howard Dean was successful in employing the Internet as an effective campaign tool, and that a significant number of his supporters visited his campaign Web site and participated in on-line discussion on his political blog. Therefore, in the near future, inter-disciplinary research with other fields such as Information Technology might be necessitated to develop new theories to study mass communication.

News gatherer resources should be included as a variable that might influence frames. The assumption here is that when the newsroom has adequate editorial staff, then the reporters are under relatively less pressure to cover stories. And when they have more time to cover stories, then they may try to contact more sources for covering their stories, thereby bringing in a broader range of frames to their stories. On the other hand, fewer reporters in a newsroom would put additional pressure on the small pool of journalists, in turn forcing them to contact same sources again and again for sound bites and quotes, forcing them to take a routine, formulaic approach to framing stories. With the use of the same sources and a monotonous approach to their stories, journalists might end up projecting the same kind of frames in their news stories that sources need and want.

The data in this study yielded moderate findings for the influence of journalist gender on the framing of the Iraq issue. To gain a more elaborate insight into effect of journalists' gender on news framing, the revised model in

this study can be incorporated with in the gender model suggested by Rodgers and Thorson (2003). In short, the gender model posits that men and women have different workplace roles and behaviors because they are socialized differently (for similar argument see Armstrong et al., 2006). The utility of this gender model was established in Rodger and Thorson's (2003) study, where they found that while male and female journalists executed reporting tasks differently, organizational factors such as circulation size and ratio of male-to-female editors, mediated those differences. However, an early work by Breed (1955) on social control in newsroom suggested that journalists can "bypass" newsroom socialization by using their knowledge of specific beat or topic, by deciding whom to interview and whom to ignore, which items to feature in the story and which to bury, deciding on the tone of the story, and using their "star" status to transgress policy. Based on Rodger and Thorson's (2003) research findings in the print medium, it is possible that organizational differences may also play a role in gender representations of journalists in the electronic media (e.g., Armstrong et al., 2006). For instance, this study's data reflected that women journalists tend to use more pro-Kerry frames than their male counterparts. This finding might tie out to the theory that women and men are socialized differently.

The revised model (see Figure 2) therefore incorporates male-to-female ratio measure in the newsroom as it might reflect a significant influence on news media frames. In other words, a relatively larger representation of women as editors and reporters at news organizations might lead to framing issues and events differently. A study by Craft and Wanta (2005), for instance, revealed that

newspapers with female editors often had less negative content than those with male editors.

Similarly, to gain a deeper understanding of the influence of news gatherer diversity, journalist race, but broadened into newsroom diversity, can also be included in the revised model (see Figure 2). The data of this study, however, suggested that journalist race was not a big factor in influencing the Iraq issue frames. But, while considering news gatherer diversity, journalist race cannot be overlooked. For instance, as suggested by previous studies (e.g., Richardson & Lancendorfer, 2004; Zeldes & Fico, 2005) non-white reporters tend to use more non-white sources when compared to their white counterparts. Some studies have also linked newsroom diversity to diversity in news framing (e.g., Gandy et al., 1997). When compared with white journalists, non-white reporters might be able to identify more with the non-white sources thereby using them more in their stories. Therefore, by increasing diversity in sources non-white journalists might frame the stories differently their white counterparts. Such diversity can also be operationalized in newsroom and management ratios.

#### Framing Power of Journalists and Sources

A question that cannot be answered by the present study concerns who really set the frames—the journalists or the sources? In other words, did journalists simply select the sources and frames that fit their preconceived notions of how issues should be considered and the legitimacy of these sources and frames? To some extent, the answers to these questions might be explained by the early work of Gieber and Johnson (1961) wherein they suggest that sources and

journalists stimulate and get stimulated by each other, in other words, they share a symbiotic relationship. At the same time journalists themselves might influence each others' framing of stories, which stems from "pack journalism" (see Crouse, 1973).

Clearly, this relates to the relative power journalists have compared to their sources when it comes to making news. The revised model incorporates variables that relate to variation in power journalists and news organizations have compared to their sources. Certainly, too, the answer to this question relates to the media skill and focus of sources, and the monopoly they hold over information.

Journalists' framing of issues or events in news stories depends on several individual-level factors such as their background, socialization, mental maps of the world, and gender. But then, newsroom resources such as number of reporters, can also play a crucial role in how they exert their power in negotiating media frames. As noted above, if a newsroom has only a handful of reporters to cover a large community then it is quite possible that one reporter might be working on several stories in a day, placing that reporter more into the power of sources that have their own "framing agenda." And in the process of covering many stories in a day, the reporter might simply end up transferring the intended frame of sources. On the other hand, if a newsroom has adequate editorial staff with relatively less number of stories assigned to each reporter, then the chances of their stories being more analytical with diverse frames is more likely. This is because reporters will have more time to plan and work on their stories and contact diverse sources.

Having relatively more women and non-white reporters is also likely to be reflected in presence of diverse frames in the stories, whatever the pressure from sources. This is because women and non-white reporters are socialized differently and bring in their own unique perspectives to newsroom interactions of defining, sourcing and critiquing news stories. As women and non-white reporters are more likely to use women and non-white sources, it is, then, very possible for their stories to contain frames different than the stories covered by their white, male counterparts. Diversity in a newsroom, in other words, may lessen the chances that reporter and source agreement in framing goes without challenge or question.

Most of the times journalists have to rely on human sources and that reliance may be more or less great. Certainly too, sources may consciously attempt to sway media frames, and how they interact with media will influence their power to do so. Sources, especially skilled partisans, try to stay “on message” in order to promote their own agenda and frames. This study showed how disciplined such sources are at the national level in a high stakes election. Although journalists might initially try to get a different opinion or view from the source, when the source continues to reiterate the message, they too are forced to relay that particular message. For instance, as indicated by this study’s data, the Bush camp was successful in projecting Kerry as a flip-flopper who cannot lead the nation in its war against terror. On the other hand, the Kerry camp kept projecting the frame of Bush administration’s failure in handling the Iraq issue. While there were several deeper and complex dimensions tied to the Iraq issue, the media ended up projecting only a few of those frames sponsored by the



partisan sources. An explanation for such behavior of media is that journalists are bound by deadlines, and in the rush to meet deadline they find themselves vulnerable to source frames and in turn end up serving as mere conduits to those frames. At the same time, during events like Iraq war, they are influenced by powerful images. For instance when a nation is engaged on a war, the image of president might come to signify patriotic fervor, thereby making them to project that image as it is their news coverage. In sum, it is a fact that in the media arena there is a struggle for power between journalists and sources, and many a times it is difficult to decide a clear winner.

Moreover, it is also possible that journalists deliberately or inadvertently use their power to distort reality in their own selection of frames. As noted, this study found that substantive frames projected by partisans were frequently accompanied by the “political fight” frame. Such a frame may be inappropriately applied, debasing political debate and increasing public cynicism. Professional steps journalistic organizations might take to prevent or correct such distortions are discussed below.

#### Links Between Framing and Other Theoretical Approaches

More generally, in line with Hallahan’s (1999) argument, social scientists adopt a constructionist approach to emphasize that social issues are best understood as problems that are built by claim makers (Best, 1995; Schneider, 1985). Elites and special interest groups vie for publicity in mass media by generating support, forming coalitions, and using symbols to their advantage. In other words, they are involved in a process of agenda-building (Cobb & Elder,

1972), which media may facilitate or hinder. Agenda-building involves nudging issues from the public arena to the media arena and finally to the public policy arena, where issues can get an official nod and validation (Manheim, 1987). But then, only a few issues get public attention. Among variables that decide the success of issue visibility is the limited carrying capacity of the system (Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988), frame enterprise and the efficiency of frame promotion by issue stakeholders (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989). This process was conceptualized by Scheufele (2000) as frame building (Hallahan, 1999).

The present study did not make an attempt to examine the process of frame building, especially as it involved active cooperation and opposition by media. But future research can explicitly tie the framing theory with agenda-building theory in order to show influence on media frames. Further, framing plays a crucial role in the process of agenda-building as interest groups try to communicate with people either by directly or indirectly using the media. Thus, in the later situation, social identification theory posits that the objective is to signal uninvolved group members about how they should think or act in regard to an issue (Hallahan, 1999; Price, 1989).

For some time, researchers have called for examining the influence of frames on the news agenda (e.g., Aday, Cluverius, & Livingston, 2006). Linking framing theory with the news agenda is likely to have more explanatory power for assessing public opinion. Framing adds to the understanding of the relationship between framing and agenda setting by showing how the former can give dimensions and influence to the latter (for similar argument see Aday, Cluverius,

& Livingston, 2006). In other words, media frames are specific about what to think, not merely about what to think about, the basic power ascribed to traditional agenda setting.

Moreover, as suggested by the first Gulf War study of Allen et al. (1994), combining the concept of priming and spiral of silence hypothesis with framing theory could help show media's role in making some opinions accepted and other not. In other words, combining these processes would help in explaining how media primed the Iraq issue to construct a reality that influenced the voters' evaluation of this issue and also shaped the public debate as well. And in the context of the spiral of silence, could media framing result in a prolonged domination of particular public opinion?

While this study is primarily based on framing definitions of Entman (1993), and Gamson and Modigliani (1987), the scope of future research on the Iraq issue framing can be broadened by borrowing from the framing definitions of social movement. For instance, motivational framing involves a call to action as well as the rationale for engaging in a corrective action. Frame alignment represents efforts by various groups to foster coalitions and build relationships (Snow, Rochford, Worden & Benford, 1986). Scholars of social movement organizations have identified four strategies, "*frame bridging* (the linkage of congruent with unconnected frames), *frame amplification* (clarification and crystallization of beliefs and values held by followers), *frame extension* (reaching out to include other constituencies), and *frame transformation* (in which frames are altered in the wake of changing conditions)," (Hallahan, 1999, p. 219). These

framing concepts can be applied to examine the Iraq issue in a broader context of American polity.

### Implications for Journalism

#### *Resource Commitment*

During a special and intense event like the presidential race, news outlets are stretched in their resources, especially reporters. In addition to covering the presidential race, the reporters are also expected to cover the routine news. If journalists are assigned more stories than they can handle, then the quality of their reporting suffers. In other words, they might just use a political fight frame to emphasize horse race, which in turn would mean a story lacking the substantive partisan frames that define a problem or give a solution to it. Therefore, the news organizations should increase their reporting staff in order to ensure that they are not overworked.

While journalists work under immense pressure and have stiff deadlines to meet, they can lessen this pressure by planning for their stories well in advance. Planning in advance would help them to see through the frames that their sources are trying to promote and then take an informed decision to select and present particular frames in their stories. The editors should encourage the reporters to diversify their source base so that stories could be covered from all possible angles and include frames that are considered important for shaping public opinion. The newsrooms should also equip themselves with current technology in order to increase efficiency and maintain quality in their news production process.

### *Journalists' Socialization and Training*

The data in this study suggest that the news media emphasized the horse race coverage of the Iraq issue during the 2004 presidential race, commonly linking it with substantive reporting. Journalists usually used the political fight frame as a prelude to the partisan frames. They would introduce a story by saying how either of the candidates attacked each other over the Iraq issue or were using the issue to some electoral advantage.

This kind of professional approach is disturbing, since by focusing more on the conflict aspect, journalists might be failing in presenting a complete picture of an issue or an event. Their efforts should be more on what sources have to say about solving an issue rather than projecting it primarily as a political fight. By using formulaic, horse race approach, especially to cover election stories, journalists might be doing a disservice to its audience. By focusing on the conflict element in a campaign story it is likely for them to overlook what problem definitions and solutions the presidential candidates have to offer.

This study found that some journalists at both networks and cable stations served manifestly as conduits for transferring partisan Iraq issue frames to the public. Specifically, women journalists appeared to favor more pro-Kerry frames than pro-Bush frames, which might be because women traditionally reflect a Democratic bias. One way to address this issue is training reporters to add their own analysis to news stories based on facts that they have gathered. And the other way to make their stories less slanted is by encouraging them to go beyond

officials sources by tapping into ordinary citizens in the community. Finally, some standard of fairness and balance might be established and rationales applied.

As noted earlier, and consistent with prior research findings on campaign coverage, television news served as conduits to the Iraq issue frames sponsored by the presidential candidates. One consequence of this is the minimal role accorded to non-partisans and other issue experts, who might have given broader context and credibility to the discussion of issues. However, television news cannot be totally blamed for this partisan focus on of the Iraq issue because, as explained by Peer and Chestnut (2005), the thematic nature of television news forces the broadcast reporters to repeat or cue into what their sources have said or are going to say. Certainly news organizations must pay attention to the partisans. But it is unclear why so little attention relatively is given to everyone else.

#### *Fairness and Balance*

With regard to fairness and balance in news, although most of the reporters and anchors followed objective norms of journalism, at times their biases for or against a particular presidential candidate would come through clearly in their coverage. This is yet another reason for them to examine their stories critically to see what kinds of frames are being conveyed through them. Because if a story's fairness and balance favors a particular partisan source, then the possibilities of finding that source's frames are higher, as also is indicated by this study's data. For instance, while covering an issue on which both the rival candidates have said something, the journalists might give prominence to one candidate over the other in their stories. Bias in a story's fairness and balance

translates into its frames, as this study has shown. Research on news media credibility (e.g., Fico, Richardson, & Edwards, 2004) has strongly suggested that fairness and balance in news are tied to the news media credibility. One way journalists could minimize bias in framing is by broadening their source base and as far as possible using a neutral language.

### *Quality Control and Accountability*

The professional world of journalism is a busy one, with reporters and editors living by deadlines. But, the social responsibility that journalists have might require editors taking that extra step to achieve and maintain high standards. To ensure that the stories are not slanted or distorted, the editors can check whether a reporter has used all possible sources necessary for the story and not just the official sources. This way, frames can be included not only from partisan sources but also from ordinary citizens. Editors can also seek participation from their own communities to give suggestions on the quality (or lack thereof ) of their news coverage. By encouraging this kind of citizen journalism, editors can improve their news coverage by getting helpful inputs from their own community. For instance, news media in the U.S. can form news councils similar to the ones in Mexico. The *El Norte* newspaper group of Mexico applied *Reforma* model since 1991 to increase community participation in editorial-decision making by forming news councils (Chavez, 2005). Socially active members of society and proactive readers such as those who write letters to the editor were included in these news councils to discuss important issues in the community and then help in the editorial-decision making process. Formation of

such news councils has improved the quality of news and credibility of news organizations in Mexico (Chavez, 2005).

Further, editors can look at alternate media like blogs to see what they are saying about various issues. There might still be an ongoing debate whether blogs constitute a part of the mainstream media, but there is no dispute that they have made their presence felt in the media landscape. Therefore, examining blogs for discussions and opinions on issues might give additional insight and story ideas to the editors. In sum, editors need to know whether stories are missing sources and the frames those sources project, whether or not stories are altered to accommodate them. But news managements must be committed to gathering such “alternate reality” information, at the least.

When it came to identifying non-partisan sources, this study questioned whether the broadcast news media did a satisfactory job. While using non-partisan sources, broadcast media usually failed to give their complete identification, thereby clouding source transparency. The mainstream media needs to emphasize source transparency for two reasons. One, the norm of source transparency ties into the concept of news media credibility. Second, in this digital age, with the advent of blogs, the mainstream media cannot afford to be sloppy with sources, as blogs not only identify sources but also provide hyperlinks to other sources for cross reference. The upper-level management in the newsrooms should take steps to maintain quality in their news production by maintaining adequate reporting staff, training them for generating quality news stories by maintaining high ethical



standards, and making them credible and accountable for their news stories by broadening their sources of information.

### Implications for Research

#### *Applying Generic/Issue Specific Frames*

Both the revised model discussed above and the professional implications of this study suggest directions for future research.

As the revised model suggests, future studies can examine the issue-specific frames by linking them to the generic frames, and then assessing findings across studies at the generic level. For example, a comparative study of the news coverage of the first and second Gulf wars can be studied under broader generic frame of conflict, and then the coverage of both the wars can be examined for issue specific frames. Designing a study by anchoring issue-specific frames to generic frames could facilitate cross-issue generalizations. In other words, any issue in news media such as economy/job, abortion, same-sex marriage, and health care can be selected and content analyzed for frames in terms of generic and issue-specific frames. For instance, abortion, and same-sex marriage can be examined under generic frames of morality and human interest, and then within those generic frames these issues can be analyzed for presence of specific frames. Once content analysis studies standardize generic media frames, then studies can actually add cumulatively to our knowledge.

#### *Varying Media Type and Frames*

One of the major limitations of this study is that only six television news channels were examined for media framing of the Iraq issue in 2004 presidential

race. Other important broadcast channels such as PBS were not included. PBS is an important national news channel, which is known for its in-depth coverage of issues and events. Therefore, future studies might include this channel.

A broader study including more media types such as elite vs. non-elite, and traditional vs. blogs would help in getting a broader and better picture of framing of the Iraq issue. This study looked at the national media, but a study of local media would help to understand how this issue was being framed at local level in different communities. Blogs have also made their presence felt in the media landscape, which demands a scholarly study of this medium.

#### *Varying News Gatherer Resources and Framing*

Newsroom resources such as number of reporters in a news outlet plays an important role in the quality of news coverage. If the newsroom has small number of reporters covering many stories, then the increasing workload on them could adversely affect their performance and in turn reflect framing in their news stories. On the other hand, newsrooms having adequate number of reporters might produce better stories as their editorial staff is relatively under less pressure. Therefore, future studies should consider newsroom resources as a variable to assess its influence on framing.

#### *Varying News Gatherer Diversity and Framing*

To assess whether framing of issues and events are influenced by newsroom diversity, studies should be conducted by considering journalist race as a factor. The assumption here is that non-white journalists identify themselves with non-white sources more than their white counterparts and tend to use them

more in their stories. So, to tease out the difference between white and non-white journalists in their framing of the news future studies should be conducted in that direction. Such studies are important because they have implications for maintaining diversity in the newsroom.

#### *Male/Female Ratio and Framing*

Male-to-female ratio in a newsroom could also influence media frames, therefore future studies should be conducted in this direction. The assumption here is that male and females are socialized differently and this can reflect in their coverage of news. Also, representation of women in higher level positions in newsroom is likely to influence how stories are covered and this can be another line of research in near future.

#### *Content Analysis and its Limitations in Framing Research*

The content analysis method has both promise and limitations in exploring the process by which frames enter the news. For example, it can be argued that journalists inadvertently but importantly set news frames by selectively giving attention to some sources and frames and ignoring others. An interesting study might focus, for instance, on frames set in candidate stump speeches and the degree to which story frames on those speeches mirror or distort those actually set by the source.

Certainly, the content analysis method reaches the end of its utility when trying to explain, for instance, why a male reporter might produce a story on a candidate speech that more closely mirrors the candidate's focus than did a story

covered by a female colleague. Here, interviews with the reporters and participant observation are needed to explain the observed behavior differences.

Most importantly, to assess the influence of frames, it must be asked whether the framing made a difference in voters' opinions and behaviors. Certainly, content analysis combined with controlled experiments could help illuminate any such influence. A good first step would be to take the actual frames found in this content study as the experimental manipulations exposed to subjects distinguished by factors such as partisanship, gender and race, and age and education.

#### *Socially Responsible Reporting and Scholarly Research*

For a strong democracy, a free, fearless and vibrant news media is a must. If news media merely tow the line of official and elite sources, they would be failing in the watchdog function and risk just being a mouthpiece of a powerful few, which is not desirable for a healthy democracy. If news media consistently distort reality or bias their coverage, it is likely that the public will make poorer public policy decisions.

In the present digital age, traditional journalism is facing interesting and critical challenges from new media formats such as blogs. Citizens now have 24/7 access to news from various media outlets. Therefore, traditional news media cannot take their role of informing people for granted.

One way to ensure credibility and audience loyalty is to maintain high professional standards, and being aware of pitfalls such as slanting news stories in favor of one or the other partisan group. This is the time when news organizations

have to do some soul searching to steer in a direction that ensures a well informed citizenry, which in turn could result in a better society.

The way issues are framed during an electoral contest may later inform the policies carried over into action. Scholarly research can assess how well news media reflect different ways of looking at issues, and whether media frames of issues are distorted by influential sources or journalistic biases. If good journalism is necessary for good political debate and public policy, then good media research is crucial for a good journalism.

Scholarly research can help media organizations to monitor and assess their performance as well as alerting the public to possible problems in media news coverage. Scholarly research must theoretically and empirically assess how journalism is projecting frames of thought in society. Continued scholarly examination of media framing of issues is, therefore, necessary, especially issue framing during special and crucial events like presidential election campaigns.

## APPENDIX I

### CONTENT ANALYSIS PROTOCOL—News Media Framing of the Iraq Issue in the 2004 U.S. Presidential Campaign Code Sheet

V1. Story Id. \_\_\_\_\_

V2. Station Id. \_\_\_\_\_

1=ABC      2=CBS      3=NBC      4=CNN      5=FOX  
6=MSNBC

V3. Story Date (mm/dd) \_\_\_\_\_

V4. Story Length (Seconds) \_\_\_\_\_

V5. Story Type \_\_\_\_\_

1=anchor lead-in      4=anchor vo/sot      5=anchor in-house  
interview  
2=anchor reader      6=reporter package  
3=anchor vo      7=reporter live

V6. Journalist Gender \_\_\_\_\_

1=man      2=woman

V7. Journalist Race \_\_\_\_\_

1= white      2= non-white (Identify specific \_\_\_\_\_)

	Source Number	Seconds Given
Bush Partisans	v 8. _____	v9. _____
Kerry Partisans	v10. _____	v11. _____

#### Partisan Story Domination

	Favors NA Republicans	Favors Democrats	Bal.
V12. Partisan Side Speaking First	1	2	
V13. Time Given Sides	1	2	3
V14. Visual	1	2	3
9			
V15. Direct Quotes	1	2	3
9			

V16. Partisan Domination

1

2

3

(v12-v15)

V 17. Non-frame story seconds

V18. Dominant Iraq Issue Frame set by the Republican(s)

Time in sec.

1= Fighting against terrorism frame

2= Fighting for freedom and democracy frame

3= Kerry incompetence frame

4= Bush competence frame

5= Conflict frame

6= Political fight frame

7= Consensus frame

8= Policy failure/responsibility frame

9= Economic consequence frame

10= Bush incompetence frame

11= Kerry competence frame

12= Other frame

V19. Dominant Iraq Issue Frame set by the Democrat(s)

Time in sec.

1= Fighting against terrorism frame

2= Fighting for freedom and democracy frame

3= Kerry incompetence frame

4= Bush competence frame

5= Conflict frame

6= Political fight frame

7= Consensus frame

8= Policy failure/responsibility frame

9= Economic consequence frame

10= Bush incompetence frame

11= Kerry competence frame

12= Other frame

#### NON-PARTISAN SOURCE DOMINATION

	Source Number	Seconds Given
Experts	v 20. _____	v21. _____
Ordinary Citizens	v22. _____	v23. _____

Journalists

v24. \_\_\_\_\_

v25. \_\_\_\_\_

V 26. Dominant Iraq Issue Frame set by non-partisan source(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Time in sec.

1= Fighting against terrorism frame

\_\_\_\_\_

2= Fighting for freedom and democracy frame

\_\_\_\_\_

3= Kerry incompetence frame

\_\_\_\_\_

4= Bush competence frame

\_\_\_\_\_

5= Conflict frame

\_\_\_\_\_

6= Political fight frame

\_\_\_\_\_

7= Consensus frame

\_\_\_\_\_

8= Policy failure/responsibility frame

\_\_\_\_\_

9= Economic consequence frame

\_\_\_\_\_

10= Bush incompetence frame

\_\_\_\_\_

11= Kerry competence frame

\_\_\_\_\_

12= Other frame

\_\_\_\_\_

V27. Dominant Iraq Issue Frame set by Journalists \_\_\_\_\_

Time in sec.

1= Fighting against terrorism frame

\_\_\_\_\_

2= Fighting for freedom and democracy frame

\_\_\_\_\_

3= Kerry incompetence frame

\_\_\_\_\_

4= Bush competence frame

\_\_\_\_\_

5= Conflict frame

\_\_\_\_\_

6= Political fight frame

\_\_\_\_\_

7= Consensus frame

\_\_\_\_\_

8= Policy failure/responsibility frame

\_\_\_\_\_

9= Economic consequence frame

\_\_\_\_\_

10= Bush incompetence frame

\_\_\_\_\_

11= Kerry competence frame

\_\_\_\_\_

12= Other frame

\_\_\_\_\_

V28. Overall Dominant Frame \_\_\_\_\_

V29. Sponsor of the frame (circle one answer below).

1. Republicans

2. Democrats

3. Non-partisan

4. Journalist



## **CODING PROTOCOL—News Media Framing of the Iraq Issue in the 2004 U.S. Presidential Campaign**

The main newscast of six network and cable channels will be taped from Labor Day to the election day. A researcher will review tapes and mark any Iraq issue story that is covered in the context of 2004 presidential race.

All marked stories will be numbered and coded by station, date, time and position in the tape. An Iraq issue story is one that has been covered in the context of the presidential race. Specifically, the story deals with the presidential candidates, their parties, supporters, and others debating, discussing, commenting and talking about the Iraq issue in the context of presidential election. Although, many political issues are covered by the news media during the study period, for the purpose of this study only the Iraq issue will be considered.

### **The Iraq Issue Stories:**

The Iraq issue stories must contain at least one assertion on the Iraq war/issue made in the context of election by a partisan or nonpartisan source or by the journalist. A partisan source may be the candidate, staff, family or party supporters, or simply a citizen who supports one of the candidates for president. A single partisan assertion establishes the partisanship of the source for **all** election coverage. A source who has not made a partisan assertion in **any** story is considered a non-partisan source. Assertions lacking any attribution to a source are considered the journalist's.

An assertion from one or more of these partisan sources may be quoted or paraphrased. It may be by a source on air or attributed to some source by the reporter or anchor. A sign of graphic **by itself** that appears in a story does not constitute such an assertion.

**An Iraq issue story in the context of election is a story whose topic is Iraq and issues related with Iraq. The transition from one Iraq issue story to another Iraq issue story is determined by change in election story topics. However, a change in stories is considered to have taken place when one journalist such as an anchor hands off a story to a reporter, even if the topic is the same.**

### **Protocol Definitions:**

V1. Story ID: Each story gets a unique identifying number

V2. Station ID: Each station gets a unique identifying number

V3. Story Date: Each story is dated by month and day

V4. Story Length: Story length is measured in seconds with a stop watch

## V5. Story Type

1= Anchor Lead-in: This type of story consists of an anchor's introduction to a Reporter

Package (see below) or a Reporter Live (see below) that follows immediately. The reporter MUST follow. If no Reporter Package or reporter Live follows, see codes 2-4 below.

2= Anchor Reader: This type of story consists TOTALLY of the anchor's own report. Any graphics or pictures in the studio are NOT considered visual material.

3= Anchor VO: This type of story consists of the anchor's own report ACCOMPANIED by visual material, but NOT by any other voices (voice that constitute background "noise" are not considered).

4= Anchor VO/SOT (and interview): This type of story consists of the anchor's own

report ACCOMPANIED by the visual material AND other voices. Includes sources interviewed in the studio by the anchor.

5= Anchor Interview: Includes interview along with NO video material

6= Reporter Package: This type of material consists of a reporter's own report that MUST BE accompanied by visual material and other voices. A change in reporters is considered to demark a NEW PACKAGE.

7= Reporter Live: The anchor will introduce a reporter "live" from the field. The anchor may interact with the reporter, or only the reporter will be seen or heard following the anchor's introduction. A Reporter Live ACCOMPANIED by taped or other material from that reporter is considered to be a Reporter Package (see 5 above).

V6. Journalist Gender: Record journalist's gender.

V7. Journalist Race: Record reporter race.

1= White

Skin color: pale reddish, white to olive brown

Hair color and texture: light blond to dark brown, and fine

2= Non-white sources

Skin color: saffron to yellow, or reddish brown to brown-black

Hair color and texture: dark, straight and coarse.

V8, V10. Determine how many Republican and Democratic sources make partisan Assertions

V9, V11. Determine how many total seconds Republicans and Democratic sources get.

- a. Candidate or partisan assertions are measured using a stopwatch.
- b. Assertions are indicated by the presence of a named partisan linked with a verb of attribution such as “said,” “asserted,” etc., or a verb denoting state of mind such as “feels,” believe,” etc.
- c. The total assertions times of opponents that are within three seconds of one another are considered to be identical in length. The recorded length will be the average of the assertions of the two sides.

V12: Partisan Side Speaking First: Identify the side speaking first in the election story

V13: Time Given Sides: Determine from V11 and V 13 what side time favors

V14: Visual: Identify if one or both sides appear in a visual of any kind in the news story

V15: Direct Quotes: Identify if one or both sides are directly quoted through voice broadcast

V16: Partisan Domination: Count the number of components in V12-V15 favoring Republicans and Democrats.

- a. If more of the relevant components favor the Republicans, score the story as favoring the Republicans
- b. If more of the relevant components favor the Democrats, score the story as favoring the Democrats
- c. If an equal number of components favor the Republicans and Democrats, score the story as Balanced.

V17. Non-frame story seconds: With a stop watch determine total number of seconds devoted to a non-framing material in a news story. Non-framing material includes straight/factual reporting such as news anchor reporting of a Bush trip to Ohio or Kerry in Florida. For example, a journalist may report that the Bin Laden tapes surfaced during the presidential campaign and both the candidates responded to the incident. Here the reporter is stating a fact and is not trying to frame how each of the presidential candidates is responding. In other words, non-framing seconds are wherein the content is factual and is not being framed in a specific way.

V18. Iraq Issue Frame set by the Republican(s) :

\_\_\_\_\_

Time in sec.

1= Fighting against terrorism frame

2= Fighting for freedom and democracy frame

3= Kerry incompetence frame

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 4= Bush competence frame \_\_\_\_\_
- 5= Conflict frame \_\_\_\_\_
- 6= Political fight frame \_\_\_\_\_
- 7= Consensus frame \_\_\_\_\_
- 8= Policy failure/responsibility frame \_\_\_\_\_
- 9= Economic consequence frame \_\_\_\_\_
- 10= Bush incompetence frame \_\_\_\_\_
- 11= Kerry competence frame \_\_\_\_\_
- 12= Other frame \_\_\_\_\_

## FRAMING OF THE IRAQ ISSUE (V18 to V19, V26 to V27)

**DEFINITION:** Framing is defined as the way sources or journalists describe or present the Iraq issue in a news story. Sources or journalists will select some aspect of the Iraq issue and make it more salient in the news story, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.

**Rule for Coders:** Journalists will be considered as the framers of the story **ONLY** when there are no sources or verb of attribution such as said, felt, and hoped to sources in what they say/report.

**CODING:** The coders should look for how the sources are framing (describing or presenting) the Iraq issue or people associated with the Iraq policy in a news story. For instance, President Bush may describe the Iraq war is an attempt to defeat terrorism, which indicates that the Iraq issue is being *framed as war against terrorism*. With a stop watch record the number of seconds being devoted to this frame (description).

A story might have multiple sources projecting multiple frames. In such a situation, record number of seconds devoted to each frame by different category of sources (Republicans, Democrats, Experts, and Journalists). Add up the total framing seconds and then within this framing time find out if any defined frame accounts for 50% of the frame material time to determine the Dominant Frame.

For instance, in a news story out of 60 seconds of framing material time if 30 seconds are devoted to Fighting for Freedom and Democracy Frame and 15 seconds each to Political Fight Frame, and Responsibility/Policy Failure Frame, then the Fighting for Freedom and Democracy Frame will be determined as dominant frame as it accounts for 50% of the total framing material time.

**Note for Coders:** When the framing material does not fall under any of the defined categories or is confusing then code it as the Other Frame, see the definition below.

### **1= FIGHTING AGAINST TERRORISM FRAME**

Here the focus is on equating the Iraq war/issue with the fight against terrorism. The source (s) will explicitly project the frame that the Iraq war/issue is a fight against terrorism. For example, President Bush may emphasize that Iraq was axis of evil under Saddam Hussein's regime and that world is better off without him being in power.

**KEY WORD/PHRASE EXAMPLE:**

*Fight against terrorism, axis of evil, world better off without Saddam, supporting terrorists, weapons of mass destruction, protecting America from terrorists, etc.*

### **2= FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY FRAME**

Here the focus is on equating the Iraq war/issue with bringing freedom and democracy to Iraqi people. The source (s) will explicitly project the frame that Iraqi people have been liberated from the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. Efforts are being made to establish a democratically elected government in Iraq.

**KEY WORD/PHRASE EXAMPLE:**

*Democracy, liberation, freedom, rescuing Iraqi people from tyranny of Saddam, bringing freedom and democracy to Iraqi people, etc.*

### **3= KERRY INCOMPETENCE FRAME**

Here the focus is that Kerry is a flip-flopper. Source (s) would frame Kerry as indecisive and that he changes his issue position on the Iraq war, which makes him unfit to lead the nation, specifically handling the Iraq issue.

**KEY WORD/PHRASE EXAMPLE:**

*Flip-flopper, indecisive, Kerry does not make a good leader, etc.*

### **4= BUSH COMPETENCE FRAME**

Here the focus is that Bush is a better commander-in-chief to lead the nation in right direction. Bush can do a better job than Kerry at the domestic front as well as in foreign policy such as the war in Iraq.

**KEY WORD/PHRASE EXAMPLE:**

*I will be a better leader, I will be a better commander-in-chief, I can lead the nation in right direction, etc.*

### **5= CONFLICT FRAME**

Here the focus is on Bush and Kerry claims in the context of the terrorism and Iraq issue that they would provide a safer America. To be considered a conflict frame, sources should be explicitly referring to the broader international conflict rather than to the election. The Republican and Democrat partisans will argue respectively that they can fight the terrorism better.

**KEY WORD/PHRASE EXAMPLE:**

*I will make a better leader, I will handle Iraq situation better, attack, etc.*

#### **6= POLITICAL FIGHT FRAME**

Here sources explicitly identify that one or both sides, Republicans and Democrats, are using the Iraq issue to secure some political or electoral gain, as a tactical strategy or to be considered a political fight frame.

**KEY WORD/PHRASE EXAMPLE:**

*Shoring up support, wedge issue, political gain on support, winning voter strategy, etc.*

#### **7= CONSENSUS FRAME**

Here the focus is on Bush and Kerry agreeing or expressing consensus on some aspect of the Iraq issue. **TO BE CONSIDERED A CONSENSUS STORY BOTH THE PARTISAN SOURCES SHOULD BE PRESENT OR ATTRIBUTED IN THE STORY.** For instance, when Bin Laden tapes threatening America asking to withdraw troops from Iraq were released during presidential campaign, Bush and Kerry agreed that they will never give in to the demands of terrorists. In such situations Bush and Kerry emphasized that America remains united, and is not Republican or Democrat when it comes to tackling terrorism.

**KEY WORD/PHRASE EXAMPLE:**

*We are united to fight against terrorism, we will not give in to the threats of terrorists, we are united and not Republican or Democrat when it comes to fighting terrorism, etc.*

#### **8= RESPONSIBILITY/POLICY FAILURE FRAME**

Here the focus is that the Bush administration is responsible for a mess in Iraq and that the Iraq policy is a failure. The focus is on Bush administration, and not Bush as an individual. For instance, Kerry might argue that the Bush administration took a hasty decision of invading Iraq and it reflects a poor thinking and planning on the part of current government.

**KEY WORD/PHRASE EXAMPLE:** *Responsible, reason, policy failure, hasty decision, etc.*

#### **9= ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCE FRAME**

Here the focus is on economic consequence of the Iraq war. For example, Kerry might point out that the ill-planned Iraq war has cost over \$200 billion, which could have been used for education and generating jobs.

**KEY WORD/PHRASE EXAMPLE:**

*Economic cost of the Iraq war, billions of dollars have been wasted on the war, war is causing economic burden on the country, etc.*

#### **10= BUSH INCOMPETENCE FRAME**

Here the focus is on Bush's incompetence to handle the Iraq issue. The focus is on Bush as an individual. For instance, Kerry might allege that President Bush misled the country by claiming that Iraq stored weapons of mass destruction and took the nation to the war without taking the citizens into confidence.

**KEY WORD/PHRASE EXAMPLE:**

*Cannot handle the Iraq issue, misled, arrogant, poor planner, etc.*

**11= KERRY COMPETENCE FRAME**

Frame projected here is that Kerry will keep focus on terrorism, not on Iraq. Kerry will be smarter than Bush. Kerry will get allies, world support to hunt down and kill terrorists.

**KEY WORD/PHRASE EXAMPLE:**

*Competence, allies, winning international supporters, global test, etc.*

**12= OTHER FRAME**

Use the other frame when the frames projected by the sources don't fall into any of the defined categories above. Or when the projected frame (s) cannot be clearly established.

V19. Iraq Issue Frame set by the Democrat(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

Time in sec.

- 1= Fighting against terrorism frame
- 2= Fighting for freedom and democracy frame
- 3= Kerry incompetence frame
- 4= Bush competence frame
- 5= Conflict frame
- 6= Political fight frame
- 7= Consensus frame
- 8= Policy failure/responsibility frame
- 9= Economic consequence frame
- 10= Bush incompetence frame
- 11= Kerry competence frame
- 12= Other frame

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Follow the same framing rules and definitions as under V18)

V20, V22, V24. Determine how many experts, ordinary citizens and journalist sources make **non-partisan** Assertions. Non-partisan expert is anyone who is explicitly mentioned as expert in the news story (not affiliated to any political party), can be a pollster, scholar, political analyst. Ordinary citizen is any common man interviewed in the story. Journalists are individuals covering news as reporters or anchors.

V21, V23, V25: Count the time given to non-partisan sources

V26. Iraq Issue Frame set by the non-partisan source(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

Time in sec.

- 1= Fighting against terrorism frame
- 2= Fighting for freedom and democracy frame
- 3= Kerry incompetence frame
- 4= Bush competence frame

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 5= Conflict frame \_\_\_\_\_
- 6= Political fight frame \_\_\_\_\_
- 7= Consensus frame \_\_\_\_\_
- 8= Policy failure/responsibility frame \_\_\_\_\_
- 9= Economic consequence frame \_\_\_\_\_
- 10= Bush incompetence frame \_\_\_\_\_
- 11= Kerry competence frame \_\_\_\_\_
- 12= Other frame \_\_\_\_\_

(Follow the same framing rules and definitions as under V18)

**V27. Iraq Issue Frame set by Journalists** \_\_\_\_\_

- |                                             | Time in sec. |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1= Fighting against terrorism frame         | _____        |
| 2= Fighting for freedom and democracy frame | _____        |
| 3= Kerry incompetence frame                 | _____        |
| 4= Bush competence frame                    | _____        |
| 5= Conflict frame                           | _____        |
| 6= Political fight frame                    | _____        |
| 7= Consensus frame                          | _____        |
| 8= Policy failure/responsibility frame      | _____        |
| 9= Economic consequence frame               | _____        |
| 10= Bush incompetence frame                 | _____        |
| 11= Kerry competence frame                  | _____        |
| 12= Other frame                             | _____        |

(Follow the same framing rules and definitions as under V18)

**V28. Overall Dominant Frame** \_\_\_\_\_

A story might have multiple sources projecting multiple frames. In such a situation, record number of seconds devoted to each frame by different category of sources (Republicans, Democrats, Non-partisans, and Journalists). Add up the total framing seconds and then within this framing time find out if any defined frame accounts for 50% of the frame material time to determine the Dominant Frame.

For instance, in a news story out of 60 seconds of framing material time if 30 seconds are devoted to Fighting for Freedom and Democracy Frame and 15 seconds each to Political Fight Frame, and Responsibility/Policy Failure Frame, then the Fighting for Freedom and Democracy Frame will be determined as dominant frame as it accounts for 50% of the total framing material time.

**V29. Sponsor of the dominant frame (circle one answer below).**

1. Republicans      2. Democrats      3. Non-partisan      4. Journalist



## Appendix II

### Frame Type Examples

#### Examples of Pro-Bush Frames

##### ***1. Fighting Against Terrorism Frame***

President GEORGE W. BUSH: We're chasing down these killers overseas so we don't have to face them here at home. (CBS, Evening News, September 8, 2004)

President GEORGE W. BUSH: Saddam Hussein would still be in power. He would control all those weapons and explosives and could have shared them with our terrorist enemies. (NBC *Nightly News*, 2004).

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Pres. BUSH: I wasn't happy when we found out there wasn't weapons, but Saddam Hussein was a unique threat and the world is better off without him in power. (NBC *Nightly News*, October 9, 2004).

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President GEORGE W. BUSH: If we stop fighting the terrorists in Iraq, they would be free to plot and plan attacks elsewhere, in America and other free nations. (CBS *Evening News*, September 23, 2004).

##### ***2. Fighting for Freedom and Democracy Frame***

President GEORGE W. BUSH: They [Iraqis] are going to have elections in January of 2005. The world is becoming a better place because freedom is on the march. (CBS *Evening News*, September 17, 2004).

##### ***3. Kerry Incompetence Frame***

President GEORGE W. BUSH: During the course of this campaign, the fellow I'm running against has probably had about eight positions in on Iraq. Let me be clear: Mixed signals are the wrong signals to send to our troops in the field, the Iraqi people, to our allies and most of all to our enemies. (CBS *Evening News*, September 16, 2004).

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President GEORGE W. BUSH: He apparently woke up this morning and has now decided, no, we should not have invaded Iraq, after just last month saying he still would have voted for force, even knowing everything we know today. (NBC *Nightly News*, September 20, 2004).

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KELLY O'DONNELL (Reporter): The trouble for Kerry is that he did vote to authorize the war and even today defended that vote, turning the blame on the president, saying Mr. Bush failed to use it properly. Kerry aides say they believe they can move beyond that now with a more pointed critique on the worsening conditions in Iraq and by challenging the president on what should be done next. The president fired back from New Hampshire accusing Kerry of "twisting in the wind."

President GEORGE W. BUSH: He apparently woke up this morning and has now decided, no, we should not have invaded Iraq, after just last month saying he still would have voted for force, even knowing everything we know today.

O'DONNELL: The Bush campaign characterizes Kerry's view as "retreat and defeat"...

Sen. KERRY: Our troops have served...

O'DONNELL: ...while Kerry claims the administration's choices and troubling conditions on the ground are reason enough for voters to choose change. Kelly O'Donnell, NBC News, New York. (NBC Nightly News, September 20, 2004).

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PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

Having gone back and forth so many times, the Senator from Massachusetts has now flip-flopped his way to a dangerous position. My opponent, my opponent finally has settled on a strategy, a strategy of retreat.

TERRY MORAN (Reporter)

(Voice Over) On fighting terrorism, Mr. Bush accused Kerry of having, quote, a "September 10th attitude" and, quote, "a policy of weakness."

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

He says that preemptive action is unwise not only against regimes, but even against terrorist organizations. (ABC World News Tonight, October 18, 2004).

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WOLF BLITZER (Anchor): Iraq has emerged as the central issue in the election.

Without mentioning his Democratic challenger by name, the president pointedly used the Allawi visit to go after John Kerry's supposed flip-flops on the Iraq war.

"I believe a leader must be consistent and clear and not change positions when times get tough. And the times have been hard. These are hard times. But I

understand what mixed messages do. You can embolden an enemy by sending mixed messages," President Bush said. (CNN Wolf Blitzer Reports, September 23, 2004).

#### **4. *Bush Competence***

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH, UNITED STATES

And in this time of choosing, I want all Americans to know you can count on me to fight our enemies and defend our freedom. ABC World News Tonight, October 18, 2004)

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PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH, UNITED STATES

In the final four days of this historic campaign, I'm taking my vision of a more hopeful America directly to the people of this country. (ABC World News Tonight, October 29, 2004)

#### **Examples of Neutral Frames**

#### **5. *Conflict***

President GEORGE W. BUSH: Let me make this very clear. Americans will not be intimidated or influenced by an enemy of our country.

Senator JOHN KERRY (Democrat, Massachusetts; Presidential Nominee): As Americans, we are absolutely united in our determination to hunt down and destroy Osama bin Laden and the terrorists. (CBS Evening News, October 29, 2004).

#### **6. *Political Fight***

TOM BROKAW, anchor:

President Bush and John Kerry are at war over the war in Iraq. And while the president ties it to terrorism, the issue that serves him best, Senator Kerry opened a new front today linking the war to the American economy and social issues. This on a day when new questions have surfaced about the president's service in the National Guard. We're covering both campaigns tonight. We'll begin with NBC's Kelly O'Donnell and the latest Kerry strategy. (NBC Evening News, September 8, 2004).

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TERRY MORAN (Reporter)

(Voice Over) Before a raucous partisan crowd here, Mr. Bush launched a scathing attack on Senator Kerry's record and policies on national security issues. On Iraq, a harsh accusation. (ABC World News Tonight, October 18, 2004).

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TERRY MORAN (Reporter), ABC NEWS

(Voice Over) This morning in Manchester, New Hampshire, after weeks of slashing away at Senator John Kerry, President Bush offered an argument for his reelection, without once mentioning his rival. (ABC World News Tonight, October 29, 2004)

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DEAN REYNOLDS (Reporter)

(Voice Over) On Iraq, Kerry seized on reports that the former US army commander there, General Ricardo Sanchez, had complained a year ago of inadequate supplies for things like tanks and helicopters to fight the insurgents. And Kerry noted other former officials have belatedly admitted they asked for more troops, as well, to no avail. (ABC World News Tonight, October 14, 2004).

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## ***7. Consensus Frame***

DAN RATHER, anchor:

With just four days left in the presidential campaign, Osama bin Laden suddenly dropped himself right in the middle of it with a videotaped message to the people of the United States. The fugitive al-Qaida leader admits for the first time that he, indeed, ordered the September 11th attack on America. He lays out his reasons for it, and he threatens another attack. This tape tends to confirm that bin Laden is alive and well, safely somewhere.

President Bush responded by saying the United States will not be intimidated. Senator Kerry said the country is united in its determination to hunt bin Laden down. CBS' Bob Orr begins our coverage. (CBS Evening News, October 29, 2004).

## **Examples of Pro-Kerry Frames**

## ***8. Policy Failure/Responsibility Frame***

Senator JOHN KERRY: The president's policy in Iraq has not strengthened our national security; it has weakened it.

O'DONNELL (Reporter): Today, Kerry went further than he ever has before, Using the equation, consider everything known today, Kerry now says the war was wrong and labeled a series of the president's judgments as a "colossal failure."

Sen. KERRY: If we know there was no imminent threat, no weapons of mass destruction, no ties to al-Qaeda, the United States should have invaded Iraq? My answer is resoundingly 'No!'

O'DONNELL: Kerry repeatedly mentioned Osama bin Laden and said invading Iraq was a profound diversion from that real enemy.

Sen. KERRY: We have traded a dictator for chaos that has left America less secure.

O'DONNELL: The trouble for Kerry is that he did vote to authorize the war and even today defended that vote, turning the blame on the president, saying Mr. Bush failed to use it properly. Kerry aides say they believe they can move beyond that now with a more pointed critique on the worsening conditions in Iraq and by challenging the president on what should be done next. (NBC Nightly News, September 20, 2004).

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DEAN REYNOLDS (Reporter)

(Voice Over) ... quickly turned serious, at a news conference that included a scathing review of the president's speech to the UN.

SENATOR JOHN KERRY

The president of the United States stood before a stony-faced body and barely talked about the realities, at all, of Iraq.

DEAN REYNOLDS

(Voice Over) Kerry cast Bush as a failed leader.

SENATOR JOHN KERRY

The president really has no credibility at this point. And he has no credibility with foreign leaders who hear him come before them and talk as if everything is going well.

DEAN REYNOLDS

(Voice Over) Once again, though, Kerry was at pains to explain why if he thinks Iraq is such a mess, he voted to give Bush authority to go to war. But this time, he boiled it down to just two sentences.

SENATOR JOHN KERRY

My vote was a vote to do this the right way. And had I been president, we would have done this the right way.

DEAN REYNOLDS

(Voice Over) How, asked Kerry, could anyone have known that the Bush war plan, as he described it, would ignore expert advice, leave Iraq's borders and ammunition dumps unguarded, or be so slow to rebuild the country?

SENATOR JOHN KERRY

This has been incompetently handled, mismanaged every step of the way. (ABC World News Tonight, September 21, 2004).

### ***9. Economic Consequence Frame***

AXELROD (Reporter): The war alone is not a big winner for Kerry. Many voters approve of the president's handling of it, plus, Kerry voted for it. But Kerry's now taken it a step further, linking the cost of war in Iraq with a money shortage for problems at home.

Sen. KERRY: \$200 billion that we're not investing in education, in health care, job creation here at home.

AXELROD: Again and again, Kerry tied the \$200 billion figure to home-front issues.

Sen. KERRY: I call this course a catastrophic choice that has cost us \$200 billion because we went it alone. We've paid an even more unbearable price in young American lives. (CBS Evening News, September 8, 2004).

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KELLY O'DONNELL reporting:

Good evening, Tom. Tonight a more aggressive John Kerry is trying to reframe the discussion on the president's signature issue. Kerry's new buzzword, "choices," urging voters to see the costs of the war in Iraq differently.

Today John Kerry's retooled line of attack attempts to fuse the issue he struggles with most, Iraq, with one topic that advisers believe gives Kerry his best shot at unseating the president: the economy.

Senator JOHN KERRY: And while we're spending that \$200 billion in Iraq--that's to this date; it will go on--eight million Americans are looking for work here in America.

O'DONNELL: Kerry chose Cincinnati, the same spot where Mr. Bush made his case two years ago for toppling Saddam...

President GEORGE W. BUSH: (From file footage) The threat comes from Iraq.

O'DONNELL: ...and chose to repeat the president's own words of assurance then about careful planning, all to link the growing costs of war to unmet needs at home.

Sen. KERRY: Two hundred billion dollars for going it alone in Iraq. That's the wrong choice. That's the wrong direction. And that's the wrong leadership for America.

O'DONNELL: A theme repeated in Kerry's latest ad.

Unidentified Man: (From Kerry ad) Two hundred billion dollars for Iraq. In America, lost jobs and rising health-care costs. (NBC Nightly News, September 8, 2004).

### ***10. Bush Incompetence Frame***

TERRY MORAN (Reporter)

(Voice Over) The president's bottom line, containment of Saddam Hussein was no longer an option. Democrats were having none of that.

SENATOR JOHN F. KERRY, DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE

The president this morning was in absolute full spin mode.

TERRY MORAN

(Voice Over) Senator Kerry said the president was grasping at straws, denying the reality of Iraq and looking for new reasons to justify the war.

SENATOR JOHN F. KERRY

Ladies and gentlemen, the president of the United States and the vice president of the United States may well be the last two people on the planet who won't face the truth about Iraq. (ABC World News Tonight, October 7, 2004)

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## SENATOR JOHN F. KERRY, DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE

Despite the president's arrogant boasting that he's done everything right in Iraq and that he's made no mistakes, the truth is beginning to come out, and it's beginning to catch up with him. (ABC World News Tonight, October 18, 2004).

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### *11. Kerry Competence Frame*

WOLF BLITZER (Anchor): On the campaign trail in Columbus, Ohio, Kerry shot right back saying, "I want victory. I want to win. And I have a better plan to win than George Bush does. The president says that things are getting better in Iraq and we must just stay the course. Well, I disagree. They're not getting better and we need to change the course to protect our troops and to win." (CNN Wolf Blitzer Reports, September 23, 2004)

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ROBERTS: But is it a flip-flop? Kerry has consistently said holding Saddam accountable was and remains the right thing to do. And he's been just as consistent in his opposition to the way President Bush went to war.

Sen. KERRY: It's not I would have done just one thing differently in Iraq; I would have done everything differently in Iraq. (CBS Evening News, September 7, 2004).

### Other Frames

TERRY MORAN (Reporter)

(Off Camera) In a statement, Bremer says he believes current troop levels are sufficient, and that his opinion that more were needed related only to the early stages of the occupation. He also says he strongly supports President Bush's reelection... (ABC World News Tonight, October 5, 2004).

### Example of No Frame

HEADLINE: THE KERRY CAMPAIGN DEMOCRATIC HOPEFUL  
ENERGIZED

PETER JENNINGS (Anchor), ABC NEWS

(Off Camera) Senator Kerry, as we know, has been talking about Iraq for a long time and the president's leadership there. And he's been talking about this ammunition dump for a couple of days in a very intense way. Here's ABC's Dean Reynolds. (ABC World News Tonight, October 27, 2004).



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