Covering the war in Iraq:

Frame choices in American and German national newspapers

Sabine Wilhelm

Friedrich-Schiller University Jena, Germany

Abstract

Coverage during conflicts with threatening potential put a pressing note on accurate information about and interpretation of events. When delivering news worldwide, national spotlights as well as cross-cultural notions are set to create unique themes of interest. Those frames - offered by mass media - are vital organizing concepts to establish public agendas. The ambiguously perceived warfare on Iraq was chosen to identify differences in American and German newspaper reports. Using a quantitative content analysis, following focuses could be examined: (a) The basal organization of war-related frames in articles, and furthermore (b) formal and linguistic disparities. Results of the pilot study show that only slight variances emerge in formal characteristics (format, images). However, the linguistic analysis of frame choices (variety, war motives, evaluation of political leaders and usage of stereotyped terms) revealed to be an expandable indicator for intercultural and intra-national discrepancies.

Key words: International war coverage, Iraq War, media frames, media bias, formal and linguistic presentation of news, cultural differences in news language

1 Introduction

Media at war define a controversial and complex issue. It comes along with multifaceted backgrounds and subsequently evolves numerous constellations of power, namely represented by actors and nations involved. Such events deal with many unforeseen aftermaths and long-term consequences. In this situation, media permanently stuck in the dilemma to perform various contradictory tasks. They are a part of the military and political machinery involved. Yet, they need to fulfill their role as an objective and accurate transmitter of information and, additionally, have to consider their part as a socially responsible institution of public.

Current international war coverage is also suffering under a loss of credibility. Terms, such as propaganda or biased news, come instantly into play when reconsidering recent military strikes, for example the U.S.-led intervention in Iraq 2003. Seldom has a war been so ambivalently perceived from the beginning. Sharply contrasting presentations and interpretations revealed an event framed in heterogeneous modes.

Several key aspects are examined in this paper to point out how U.S and German quality newspapers presented the Iraq War: (a) In which mode are war-related topics organized in American and German quality newspapers? And (b), do theme choices in articles reveal significant similarities/disparities? On which level (formal or linguistic) do they occur?

2 War coverage in the media age

Media and its institutions are essentially concerned with the production and dissemination of knowledge. Those images of shared social events, like international conflicts and war, are for most people the main source of awareness (McQuail 1999:267). Primarily the media in the United States has to consider its role as a provider of order throughout a huge, geographically dispersed, multiethnic, multiracial and multireligious society (Sparrow 1999:177).

News is another crucial term linked to press coverage. W. Lance Bennett regards news as everything that "[…] newsmakers promote as timely, important or interesting, […] which news organizations select, narrate, and package into information formats […], and that people consume, at any moment in history"

(Bennett 2001:19). Schudson claims that "news is also a manufactured good, the product of a set of social, economic and political institutions and practices, such as the press or the news media" (Schudson 2003:14).

Media in general are observer and provide the most continuous line of contact with institutions of the society in which they live. People use media to reduce uncertainty, judge a specific situation, and as a consequence, adjust the behavior to communicate properly with their proximate environment. Media have a great power potential by attracting and directing public attention and influencing behavior.

Especially global conflicts ask for quick and extensive information, and organize status and legitimacy hierarchies. Since conflicts most often cannot perceived directly, media help to confirm, neglect or decide the newsworthiness of actions and events. Increasingly, the press becomes a national and global public forum - a record for events. Political interest groups influence directly or indirectly the news coverage. News reporting via media also includes modification or, at worse, manipulation of news beyond production and distribution.

In this context, war as "extra-event" (Ruhrmann 1993:86) defines some special tasks, the entire press and its news reporting needs to fulfill. News media have a key position in the communication process. Conflicts create powerful images and associations which function as social phenomenon (Seaton 1999:12). Its unexpectedness focuses the attention and sensitizes the audience. Media is a powerful catalyst for political processes involved in these events.

An estimated 3.000 journalists analyzed the Iraq conflict, making it one of the best covered wars in history. This number includes more than 800 journalists who were embedded with coalition forces (IPI release, April 2004. URL: (http://www.freemedia.at/index1.html). Although - or because - the amount is immense, media reportage in Iraq can state how easy it might be to undermine journalistic standards.

The research field of mass communication must guide these discussions and provide useful tools to examine similar issues more precisely. The framing theory, explored in the next part, can give assistance to a further understanding of processes and activities involved in the production, distribution and cross-cultural perception of war coverage in the media.

3 The concept of media frames

To understand the complex mechanism of news coverage, the theoretical concept of frames need to be implemented. Frames are thematic fields in press coverage that "define the boundaries of the discourse concerning an issue and categorize the relevant actors based on some established scheme of social taxonomy" (Pan & Kosicki 2001:41). They help to define problems, diagnose the causes of issues, make moral judgments and suggest remedies (Sparrow 2001:31). News is therefore the key arena in which the creation of frames, agenda setting and the construction of issues take place.

Other scholars put the emphasis on the development of individual expectations while processing news. They postulate that frames consist of elements which combine salient current events and associated past events. Relationships among them define the anticipated interactions of those components. Violations of expectations indicate that the frame is no valid representation of the situation (Nelson 1999:23).

As indicated, framing processes can be examined from the view of journalists, recipients, communicators and the media/text (Kohring 2004:56). Since the latter perspective is of great significance for the empirical study conducted, some conceptual base has to be elaborated.

Mass media and thus journalists actively set the frames of reference that readers or viewers use to interpret and discuss public events. Audiences absorb a constructed reality, made of own experiences, interaction with peers and interpreted slices from the mass media. Combined with those individual frames, media frames serve as "the bridge between larger social and cultural realms and everyday understandings of social interactions" (Scheufele 1999:107). They can be defined as "central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events" (Scheufele 1999:65).

Entman (1993) develops a more specific description of media framing while regarding causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation as main observation points for the

problem presented. Entman (1980) characterizes the concept from a very different angle. He puts the emphasis on the verbal and visual inclusion/exclusion of arguments in a discourse to achieve persistent presentation patterns. The manipulation of news is close connected to this feature and must be seen as one of its biggest critical remarks.

A single frame contains schemes of various object classes/attribution sets and refers to cognitive as well as affective relations among them, for instance events, actors, causes, treatments, etc. (Scheufele 2003:55-62.). They are the central theme of a message. Particular media frames can be applied to a diverse array of themes and, the other way around, one topic can be presented in diverse frame lineups. Seen from another point of view, components of media framing and news values, as examined from the journalistic perspective, are also intertwined and refer to each other. Frame-consistent features of an event covered can increase the news value and vice versa. Framing activities of mass media transform the management of domestic as well as international news. One of the salient issues connected to framing is media bias. Journalists may color events to advance a political, economical or ideological aim or argument. Critical voices even state that framing just replaces the term of media bias (Schudson 2003:34). Media frames recognize, interpret, select, emphasize and organize verbal and visual discourse to bring matters of human interest into a certain form called news. Thus, the power to frame depends on access to resources, the store of knowledge and strategic alliances. A frame is 'successful' when it is able to change opinions by shifting the individual's sense of priorities with respect to the issue in question (Nelson 1999:10). Observed on a more individual level, media frames guide political attitudes when people come into conflict with core values or own beliefs, when events are ambiguous, and they do not know what to choose. Then people are more likely to turn to trusted sources such as familiar political figures or they seek for fitting arguments or perspectives within media frames.

Media coverage during war organizes or frames the public agenda which therefore determines how the event is perceived - nationally and globally. The set-up of news must be seen in broad environmental arrays. Public demands, governmental and political lines and the journalistic sphere are three essential groups that implement their interests directly or indirectly into the mode of coverage. At the same token, they open a prudent interaction, knowing about the importance of each other's influence.

Controversial international events, such as the Iraq War, contain even more critical aspects. Cultural differences influence the insertion of frames. Formal characteristics, frame choices or news language (usage of stereotyped terms, etc.) do not only reveal national spotlights, they can disclose slightly or completely new cross-cultural perspectives.

4 Intercultural view at global conflicts

As stated earlier, media and its framing processes are not neutral. They present slices of a constructed reality which serve the interests of many involved subsystems and players. Indeed, news media do not transmit information without transforming it into specific cultural, political and economical carriers of meaning. Social sciences in general and mass communication in specific are gradually turning toward the analysis of cultural framing devices which aid to manifest differences within global coverage. Every nation has distinct ways to select and evaluate international events by implementing unique formal and linguistic pattern. Media frames follow such cultural codes to distinguish what is of consequence, what is legitimate, and who has the status to say what may be traded as the truth.

In regard to cross-cultural differences, so called 'cultural' frames play an important role within media frames (Wolfsfeld 1999: 33ff.). Culture consists of shared beliefs and understandings, mediated and constituted by symbols and language of a group or society (Zald 1996: 262). Although media occupy an independent role in the creation of agendas, they serve as cultural time capsules that offer a brief glimpse of mainly political symbols, myths and stories which are popular at a particular time and space.

The depth of a given frame can be judged by considering the level of specificity and its 'age'. The older and more culturally tied it is, the more resistant it is against modifications. During periods of war, cultural and current frames are intertwined to serve the typical 'rally around the flag'. President Bush for instance – pleading for the war on Iraq - employs the polarizing 'us and them' or "good versus evil" phrase that can be explained with deeply rooted national pride and U.S. ethnocentrism. Sensitized by its own history, the German government as well as the public calls for a peaceful, internationally supported solution.

Zald (1996) borrows the expression of culture seen as a versatile toolkit for examining media frames and mediated frames in general. They create a coherent package by combining symbols and other elements, giving them relative emphasis and attaching them to larger cultural ideas (Reese 2001: 17). Media frames are both based on frames that are available in the surrounding culture and those which are designed to serve specific needs of the government, journalists etc. Professionals attempt to find a narrative fit between incoming information and culturally familiar frames to organize the news as understandable packages (Goffman 1974: 37). The pilot study conducted has to verify to what extent international war coverage is implementing this scheme to underline inter-cultural dissimilarities and to strenghten national affinities. Authorities will find it indeed much more difficult to promote their domestically directed frames to news media of other countries, mainly because of differences in political and cultural attitudes regarding global conflicts. In reverse, media frames of foreign countries may have particular problems to get access into national media and thus the sympathy of the audienceship. With that, the 'myth' of media objectivity is fading as the acceptance of subjective reality construction is increasing.

Attention has to be laid into the framing of language and possible variations (McLachlan 1994: 85). Frames generally reduce complex issues into evocative phrases, metaphors and slogans. The rhetorical quality of frames is crucial for their success in the respective area. It helps to increase the public comprehension and to create common national bonds but arouse as well feelings of exclusion in other countries, as happened between many European countries and the United States before, during and after the war on Iraq.

5 Press coverage during the war in Iraq – a comparative study

Aim of the following empirical study is to identify and examine dominant media frames which are utilized in the press coverage of national newspapers to present the Iraq War 2003. To comprehend the issue from varying cultural perspectives, a comparative examination of both American and German quality papers has been implemented.

As discussed, media frames can be determined on various levels. The 'creators' of mass mediated frames, namely journalists, can be observed in depth to gain knowledge about influential factors such as working routines or ethical codes. Considered from the opposite side, effects on society and specifically on audience can be measured. Modifications of behavior and opinions related to disseminated issues and/or arguments may occur which again alter the media coverage of the event. Finally relevant for this pilot study, a media frame itself can be dissected in its components to gather information about cultural views.

5.1 Hypotheses

In a first step, formal characteristics are illuminated before examining the hypotheses specifically connected to media frames. Journalistic format and the presentation of photos can reveal basic insights about the relevance the issue achieves in each quality paper. Then, the following hypotheses are examined:

> 1. German national newspapers cover the Iraq War with a higher thematic variety than American quality newspapers do.

> 2. Internationally-centered meta-frames are more often utilized by German national newspapers.

> 3. Articles of U.S. newspapers introduce more often arguments which tempt to explain key motivations for the war on Iraq.

Next, the news language is studied in detail. War coverage is usually presented in unique linguistic patterns as discussed in chapter 4. Attention needs to be forced to particular stylistic devices of frames, such as dichotomy phrases or stereotyped terms:

> 4. Polarizing positive/negative presentations of President Bush and the Iraqi leader Hussein play a more vital role in American articles during war.

5. American reports about the Iraq War employ stereotyped terms to a higher degree than German articles.

Results should reveal distinctions between German and U.S. quality newspapers. Beyond, intra-national differences could appear when exploring pluralistic, democratic systems. Textual discrepancies will elevate critical remarks about tasks and claims of national papers in both countries.

5.2 Research method and sampling procedure

Content analysis as research method is an appropriate concept to scan and code the newspaper articles selected. A quantitative content analysis, multifunctional and non-reactive research tool used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within (sets of) texts, encloses suitable features to execute the empirical study.

The method offers several advantages. It helps to scan through large volumes of data in a systematic fashion. The unobtrusive yet effective tool looks directly at communication via texts or transcripts and hence gets at central aspect of social interaction, human thoughts and language. Besides, the method allows closeness to the given text as well as operational flexibility. The content is coded, categorized and classified which increases the reliability and validity of the data gathered. Diekmann (2001) refers to another benefit: Content analysis is able "to draw conclusions of non-reactive material which has been produced in the past" (Diekmann 2001:487).

Four quality newspapers have been selected for this pilot study to obtain the data necessary for the comparative analysis: The New York Times (NYT) and the Washington Post (WP) in the United States and the Sueddeutsche Zeitung (SZ) and the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) in Germany. The time period chosen covers approximately one month (18/03/2003 – 15/04/2003) or 25 days since Sunday editions are excluded. It contains the countdown that introduced the attacks as well as the main battles of the Iraq War, and ends after main offensives have been finished. German quality papers contain slightly less contributions to the topic but all four newspapers accentuate their coverage with supplementing sections and special reports. Considering the fact that Germany is not actively involved in battles, the narrow 'coverage-gap' comes by surprise.

The coverage in newspapers is very dense regarding the fact that an average of 40 articles per newspaper/day or a basic population of 4.000 articles for the entire analysis-period have been counted. Since this amount is by far too broad to be entirely analyzed, some measurements are implemented that systematically reduce the immense number of articles. Overall, 600 articles have been analyzed for the content analysis.

5.3 Codebook

The codebook is a fundamental core of any content analysis (see appendix). It consists of all variables and categories necessary to scan the sample in an adequate mode. The codebook names and defines all textual features to reduce ambiguous decisions within the coding process.

One of the most relevant category sections gives attention to framing questions raised in the theoretical approach. Based on frame selections in related studies (see Reese, 2001) and own pretests, a range of categories can be filtered. The subdivision into political, military, economic, humanitarian and a human touch frame is illustrated in Chart I (appendix). Those descriptions are rough guidelines which have been adjusted to singular country characteristics enclosed in each article during the coding process.

To test furthermore the reliability of the category-system and of the coder, pretests are necessary. It additionally assists in revealing codebook weaknesses or coder failures which can be refitted before the entire analysis is conducted.

5.4 Outcomes

5.4.1 Formal presentation – Journalistic format and press photos

Examining what kind of journalistic formats are utilized during the coverage of the Iraq War can disclose some insights about the way particular frames are presented to increase interest among readers. Varied formats can indeed arrange a revised and multifaceted array of related topics. Quality newspapers with their large international network of reporters (U.S. newspapers additionally implement a great amount of embedded journalists) should deliver a higher number of correspondent reports and own articles but only few press releases. Global threats need to be analyzed, presented and reconstructed in all its details to an interested and even more worried readership all over the world.

Chart II undermines the anticipated outcome as the number of correspondent reports and self-produced reports appear very high. In all four papers, both categories outmatch other formats. Apart from the NYT (33 articles include own press coverage which is well adjusted with a high 64 within the correspondent report category), all papers show overly similar performances.

Paper (Amount of Articles)					Overall Result
Format	**SZ**	**FAZ**	**NYT**	**WP**	
Correspondent Report	46	54	64	48	212
Own Report	60	49	33	56	198
Reportage	13	15	27	29	84
Mix of 1 and 2	15	19	18	2	54
Commentary, Apostil, Leading Article	8	10	6	13	37
Press Releases	5	1	1	2	9
Interview	3	2	1	0	6
Overall Result	150	150	150	150	600

Chart II: Cross-classified table with format choice applied in each newspaper.

Few differences emerge when examining formats in detail. Washington Post articles apply the format-mix of own report and press release only two times in comparison to all other papers which lie well beyond. Another discrepancy is visible in the reportage category. German quality papers employ this journalistic style less often than their U.S. counterparts due to the fact that their front pages/political sections do not regularly contain opinioned articles.

The format is utilized in boulevard or yellow press rather than in national newspapers. Apart from cross-national paper characteristics, another reason is responsible for the finding: As seen in Chart III, the high number of emotional and personal human touch stories in U.S. papers calls for the reportage format. Implemented on a low level, the distribution of human touch frames in German articles do reveal an almost similar distribution among the presented journalistic formats.

Format (without category "Miscellaneous")	**Human Touch Frame in U.S. papers**	**Human Touch Frame in German papers**
Reportage	34	8
Own Report	12	3
Correspondent Report	11	3
Commentary, Apostil, Leading Article	6	2
Mix of 1 and 2	1	2
Interview	1	1
Press Releases	0	0
Overall Amount	65	19

Chart III: Chart with format choice/application of human touch frame in U.S. and German newspapers.

Media also depend on images as they handle unique tasks, varying from providing information, entertainment and interpretation to emotional stimulation and the mediation of events (Meckel 2001:26). They verify and support frames implemented in articles. The aim during war is to generate attention by delivering relentless, authentic and exclusive pictures which fit into already existing visual images and stereotypes. Yet, the power of images lies also in the ability to ignore or neglect specific aspects or, quite the contrary, to overemphasize details. Both can have effects on how to perceive and evaluate particular frames. Photos are effective tools to frame and articulate messages which correspond with singular ideas and interests (Messaris 2001:220).

Considering the comparative analysis, it is interesting to examine the amount of images which are implemented into articles, and the mode of how photos are presented (positive, neutral, negative). Results show (see Chart IV) that about two-thirds of all reports contain images, mostly pictures of political leaders involved, illustrations of military actions and humanitarian aspects.

| Paper	Photos			Overall
	Pos. Presentation	Neut. Presentation	Neg. Presentation	
SZ	17	46	33	96
FAZ	9	54	12	75
NYT	33	57	23	113
WP	24	62	27	113
Overall Result	83	219	95	397

Chart IV: Chart with amount of pictures per newspaper and its overall presentation.

German national newspapers tend to use fewer photos than U.S. papers. The low number for the FAZ can be explained with the policy of the paper to minimize illustrations at the front page. Nevertheless, the difference is apparent, and may be proof for the trend to popularize newsworthy stories, mainly through emotional or personal reports. When turning the attention to the question how photos are presented in every paper, other characteristics appear:

Figure I: Pie chart of photo presentation in U.S. newspapers in percent.

A first look at the pie charts in Figure I shows that an overwhelming majority of photos implemented into U.S. war articles do present people or actions in a more or less neutral way. The WP reports include more negative pictures (23.9 % in comparison to the NYT with 20.3 %) while the NYT uses a higher amount of positive images to carry related stories (29.2 % in contrast to 21.2 %).

German newspapers reveal only to some degree similar patterns (see Figure II). It is clearly visible that discrepancies among those two papers are bigger. The SZ has the highest peak of all newspapers in terms of photos which present negative images (34.4 %). The FAZ highlights even more concise features when gearing the attention to the low percentage of negative (16 %) as well as positive images (12 %) employed in reports. Those outcomes can give new insights of the phenomenon already discussed above.
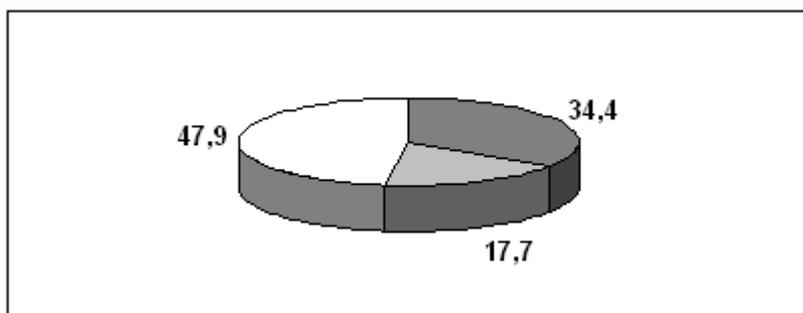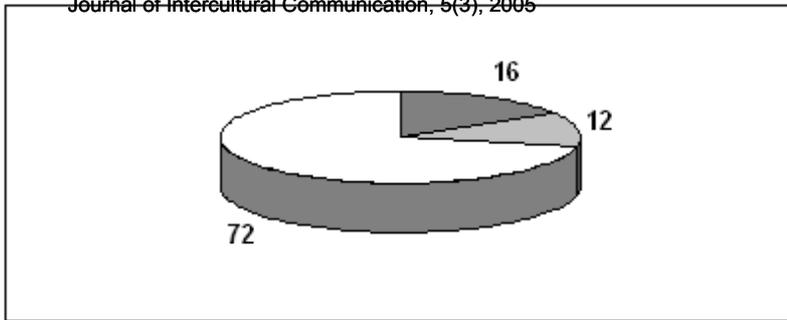
Figure II: Pie chart of photo presentation in German newspapers in percent.

Emotional, dramatic pictures may add a specific perspective to the article and also German quality newspapers (namely the Sueddeutsche Zeitung) are not totally unaffected of this issue. Furthermore it can be evidenced that dichotomous wars do occupy an exceptional status in news coverage and with that, in its imageries. When interpreting results which deal with the actual frame-selection in articles, more insights can be drawn from these trends.

5.4.2 Frame choices – Variety and war motives

After guiding the attention to basic formal aspects, particular frame selections are tested to understand inter- and eventually intra-national differences. The first hypothesis helps to discover general media frame patterns or irregular theme applications within the diverse set of quality papers analyzed:

1. German national newspapers cover the Iraq War with a higher thematic variety than American quality newspapers do.

To filter proper results, a bar chart reveals insights about the overall distribution of frames:
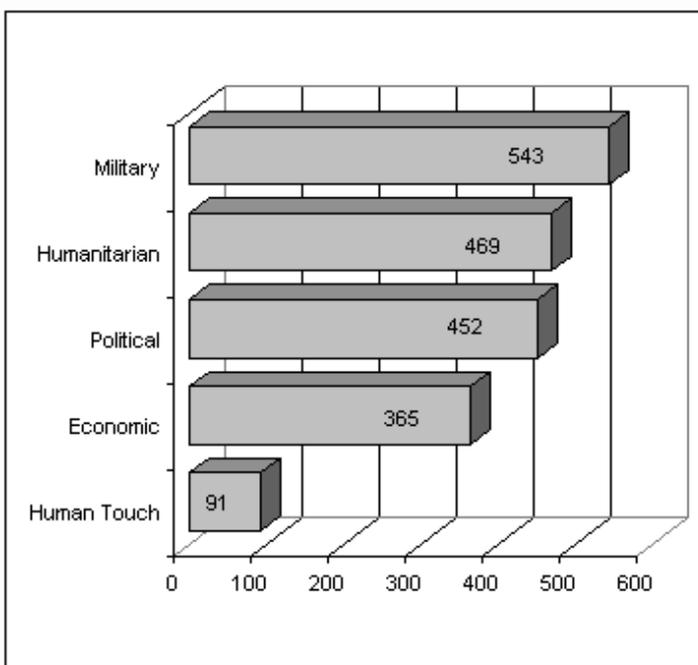
Figure III: Bar chart together with chart of general frame choices in all newspapers.

Against all assumptions, a broad and frequently used variety of frame choices can be seen in all quality papers. The military frame is the most often applied frame, followed by the humanitarian, political and economic frame. This distribution makes sense since many reports need to encircle aspects dealing with war preparations, weapons/missiles used and with the strengths of troops, to name only a few facets. Apparently, quality newspapers in the U.S. attach also great importance to their journalistic code and

social task to provide various themes of a story. They seem to create a balancing counterpart to superficial television coverage and yellow press-sensationalism. It is nevertheless surprising that humanitarian frames already play such a noticeable role during the war on Iraq while political themes get less space. This is a rather unusual outcome considering how controversial and internationally far-reaching the conflict has been for many governments.

When looking at each newspaper, cross-cultural differences occur. First, German newspapers use a higher amount of political frames. The SZ implements this frame 123, the FAZ 122 times (out of 600) while the NYT (102) and the WP (105) accentuates other newsworthy actions.

One explanation refers to the dispute the war created in Europe. The involvement of the United Nations Organization and the frequent meetings of politicians may be a major reason for the importance of this frame. Second, less German articles implement the dramatic human touch theme although the SZ uses those stories to a much higher degree than the FAZ. This result can be linked to particular format characteristics discovered earlier in the paper. Hypothesis 1 has to be falsified.

In a next step, meta-frames are analyzed to gain information about the general perspective of global conflicts in newspapers. The study abstracts U.S.-, Germany-, internationally- and Iraq-centered frame perceptions to underline their respective relevance in each article. Following hypothesis directs the media frame issue discussed in part 3:

> 2. Internationally-centered meta-frames are more often utilized by German national newspapers.

The presumption derives from the fact that the United States reflects its cultural ethnocentrism and preferences of national issues also in war coverage. One crucial example offers the so called 'rallying-around-the-flag syndrome' which traditionally emerges in times of conflict and war. Multifaceted international perceptions or political actions do not get as much attention as in most of the European countries. The American audience may be less motivated or interested in international reactions. This can lead to one-sided journalistic interpretations and wrong public assumptions. To detect differences among the papers, frequencies and percentages of meta-frames are analyzed in Chart V.

Paper	Meta-Frame				Overall
	U.S.-Cent.	German.-Cent.	Internat.-Cent.	Iraq-Cent.	
SZ	34	18	41	57	150
FAZ	30	20	50	50	150
NYT	65	0	24	61	150
WP	72	1	25	52	150
Frequency	201	39	140	220	600
Percentage	33.5	6.5	23.3	36.7	100
Cumulative Frequency	33.5	40.0	63.3	100.0	

Chart V: Chart with distribution of meta-frames in each article

When scrutinizing the results, support for the assumptions can be drawn. With 41 (SZ) and 50 (FAZ) reports German papers offer twice as much internationally-centered frames. But this frame is not frequently used. The total percentage of each theme reveals that U.S.- (33.5 %) and Iraq-centered (36.7 %) meta-frames dominate the report perspective. Figure IV shows the insertion.
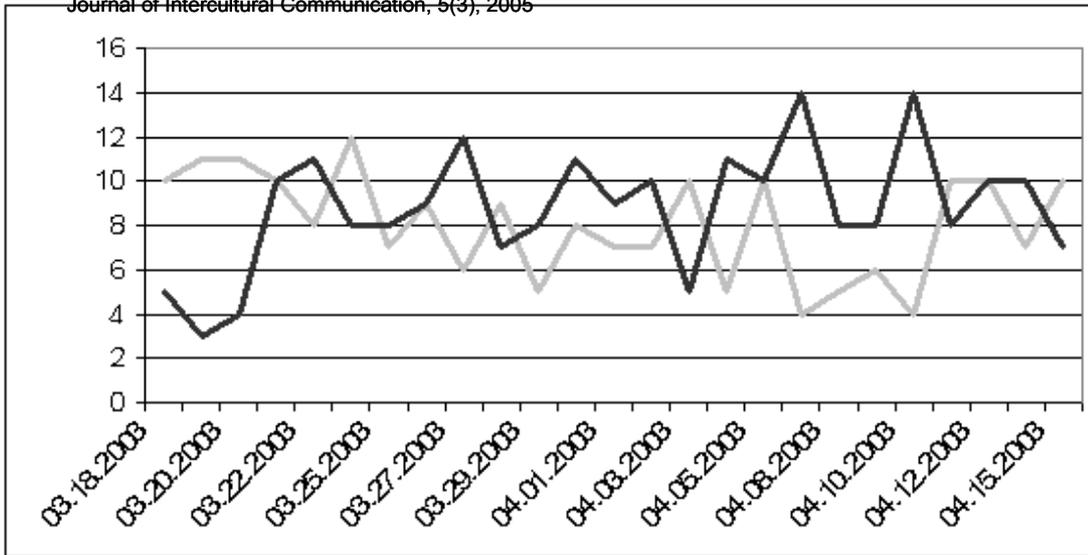
Figure IV: Line chart with linkage of U.S.-centered and Iraq-centered meta-frame.

Primarily at the beginning of the war, Iraq meta-frames play an insignificant role while the U.S. theme rules the agenda. After some reversions, the ending conflict exhibits the same pattern. This finding can be explained as it refers to the asymmetric process of action on the one hand and, temporary lagged, the reaction of the respective counterpart. For instance, during Bush's declaration of war the media first forces its alertness to the United States. In a next step, attention is aimed at Hussein's and thus Iraq's possible response to the countdown, and so forth.

U.S. national papers concentrate on national affairs and the Iraqi side whereas German coverage implements many articles that deal with internal viewpoints and also Middle East affairs. Although the hypothesis is corroborated, some critical remarks need to be taken into account. First, the fact that Germany is not actively involved into the war may alter the outcomes. As more or less distant observers, there is enough space to include exhausting daily agendas about all global players involved. Newspapers in the United States accentuate aspects differently since their country is waging the unilateral war on Iraq. Second, the prominence of U.S.-centered articles in the Washington Post has its origin in the strongly pro-governmental line of the paper. Third, general lobbying forces and particular interests may have a higher impact on the U.S. media system.

Analyzing particular frame choices, argumentation lines and explanatory statements for and against the war can now aide to define cross-cultural characteristics of media frames. It seems reasonable that German quality newspapers, as representative voice of the critical European view, introduce divergent anti-war rationales to substantiate oppositional claims. The other way around, U.S. papers can underscore the presidential line to increase public support.

> 3. Articles of U.S newspapers introduce more often arguments tempt which to explain key motivations for the war on Iraq.

A cross-classified table is able to merge the multiple-answer categories and to gain a general understanding. The distribution of pro-war arguments, as listed in Chart VI, produces some outcomes.

Paper					Overall Result	
Pro-War Rationales	SZ	FAZ	NYT	WP	Amount	Percentage
Topple Saddam Hussein/Destroy Baath Party	38	64	81	100	283	35.5
Freedom and Democracy for Iraqi Citizens	19	33	59	42	153	19.2
Consolidation of Middle East Region	28	32	23	22	105	13.2

Weapons of Mass Destruction	19	24	22	27	92	11.5
Fight Against Terrorism/Terror-Networks	11	31	16	13	71	8.9
Secure Iraq's Oil Fields and Resources	5	11	12	17	45	5.6
No Peaceful Solution in Sight	4	6	13	20	43	5.4
Justice/Compensation for September 11	1	0	3	1	5	0.6
Overall Result	**125**	**201**	**229**	**242**	**797**	**100**

Chart VI: Cross-classified table with amount of pro-war rationales in all four newspapers.

U.S. newspapers implement more pro-war motivations than German papers, as seen in the 'Overall Result' row. Here, the Washington Post (242 references) outnumbers all other newspapers, followed by the New York Times (229). But also national varieties are visible. Hypothesis 3 has been validated yet intra-national contrasts need further explanations.

In almost all of the four newspapers examined, toppling Saddam Hussein and with it the Baath Party (35 %) is the major rationale for war. This result can later be linked to the presentation of President Hussein and Bush. It is quite possible that the peculiar language of 'good' and 'evil' pushed the Iraqi leader in the spotlight of the war. Dramatic personifications - a commonly applied propaganda tool - idealize justifications to wage war. Nevertheless, the range from 38 articles (SZ) to 100 (WP) is apparently huge within this category. German newspapers seem to deal with a critical public and thus avoid magnifying predetermined assumptions. Freedom and democracy is the second most often named reason with 19.2 %. This rationale can act as a positive counterbalance to the former motive. Again, a gap between German and U.S. papers is visible. Solely the consolidation of the Middle East region (and partly the fight against terrorism) is getting a higher level of attention in Germany. Weapons of mass destruction, a major pre-war cause which aroused the unilateral war in Iraq, slipped almost from the agenda due to lack of clear evidences. The idea that no peaceful solution might be in sight or the connection to September 11 is scarcely mentioned in reports.

When contemplating anti-war argumentations, cross-national results are mixed. The U.S. newspaper NYT (257) and the German FAZ (237) refer often to rationales against war. The WP (187) includes in comparison to the high amount of pro-war reasons a smaller degree of critical ideas.

Paper					Overall Result	
Anti-War Rationales	**SZ**	**FAZ**	**NYT**	**WP**	**Amount**	**Percentage**
Inhumanity of War	51	54	88	77	270	28.4
Consequences of War are Incalculable	34	66	86	83	270	28.4
International Disharmony and Distrust	26	38	32	36	131	13.8
Decisions/Resolutions of the United Nations	40	48	20	15	123	12.9
Costs of War	14	10	17	36	82	8.6
Pointlessness of War/Alternative Solutions Exist	12	13	12	10	47	4.9
	9	8	2	10	29	3.0

Fear of U.S. Occupation of Iraq's Oil Fields/Resources						
Overall Amount	186	237	257	187	952	100

Chart VII: Cross-classified table with amount of anti-war-rationales in all newspapers.

A surprisingly high number of U.S. articles talk about the inhumanity and the incalculable consequences and costs the war might bring. This finding stands in sharp contrast to the favourable line most U.S. newspapers take over when covering threatening conflicts with national impact. It is possible that the pressure due to anti-war protests and critical external voices motivates the press to point at menacing factors on a moderate level.

Decisions and resolutions of the United Nations and other important international institutions are broadly covered by German newspapers (SZ with 40 and FAZ with 48 reports) but barely mentioned by the U.S. quality press (NYT 20 and WP 15 articles). Indeed, results acknowledge the rather ethnocentric culture of the United States. Most of the coverage is geared toward a restricted global involvement. Rather ineffectual arguments, such as alternative solutions and the fear of the occupational power the U.S. might unfold, have not been accentuated in any of those newspapers surveyed. All in all, the hypothesis stated above can be confirmed, yet intra-cultural divergences have to be explored in future studies in a more detailed mode. U.S. quality newspapers do not only introduce more motivations for the war on Iraq; they partially undermine international claims and bolster governmental rights. Yet, distinct negative consequences are taken into account with respect to public demands.

5.4.3 Linguistic criteria – Evaluation of political leaders and metaphors

News language develops its own unique national as well as international style when covering ambiguously-perceived, global events. Newspapers may apply specific lingual earmarks by portraying protagonists in a more favorable or rather disadvantageous light, or by utilizing unique terms. In regard to anticipated cross-cultural gaps, following hypothesis is highlighting the issue:

> 4. Polarizing positive/negative presentations of President Bush and the Iraqi leader Hussein play a more vital role in American articles during war.

Figure V illustrates the distribution of positive, neutral and negative presentations of Bush and Hussein. Both leaders achieve a neutral presentation (193 articles of Bush versus 199 reports with Hussein) although more reports are written about the Iraqi leader. The U.S. President receives more positive attributions whereas the Iraqi leader gets less favorable coverage. The output fits to the ranking of pro-war rationales where 'Topple Saddam Hussein/Destroy Baath Party' obtains the top position. Bush has to deal with disadvantageous coverage as international support for the unilateral war is vague. The question now is whether these findings stem from cross-national differences.
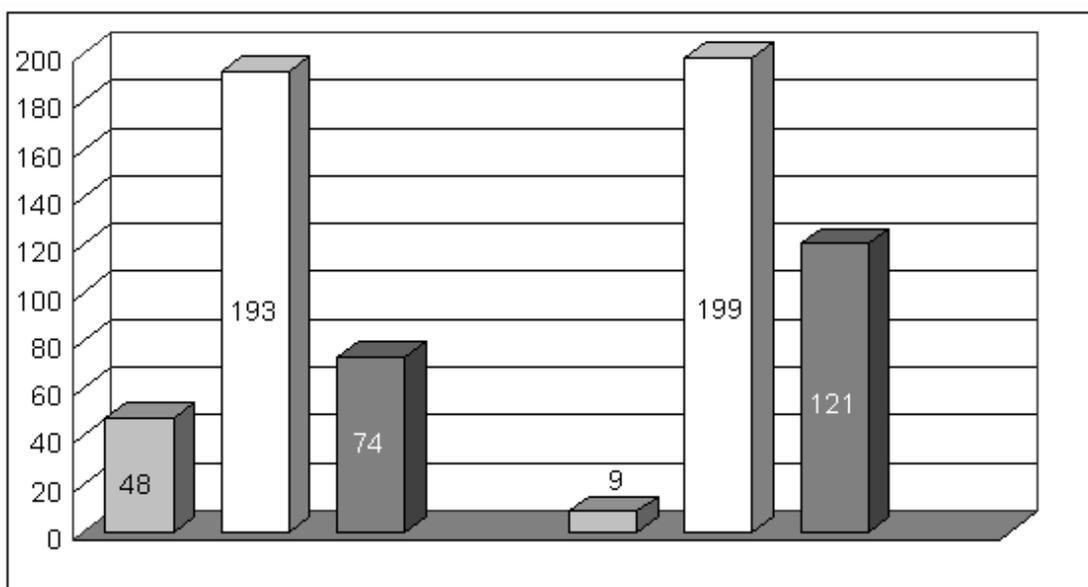
Figure V: Bar chart with general distribution of presentation mode Bush – Hussein.

Figure VI exhibits results of all papers. The presentation of President Bush shows discrepancies. U.S. newspapers (NYT 15 and WP even 2 reports) are more likely to illustrate their leader in an advantageous manner. The SZ on the other hand includes most of the negative Bush-coverage (30), followed by the FAZ (17). The overall analysis of variance shows a significant result of 36.6 % (see appendix, Chart VIII). When taking a closer look at the cross-national comparison in Chart VIII, far greater differences can be extinguished in U.S. papers. Also noticeable is the unfavorable illustration of Saddam Hussein in U.S. national papers. The WP includes more biased (50 negative) than neutral reports (31). The NYT follows this trend with 39 negative articles. In opposition to U.S. papers, the FAZ almost abandons negatively colored statements for the benefit of neutral war coverage. Fewer articles related to Hussein have been published in Germany. As reasoned earlier, cultural circumstances affect the way newspapers frame the war. Governmental positions as well as the public involved alter mass-mediated themes when both sides have a strong interest.
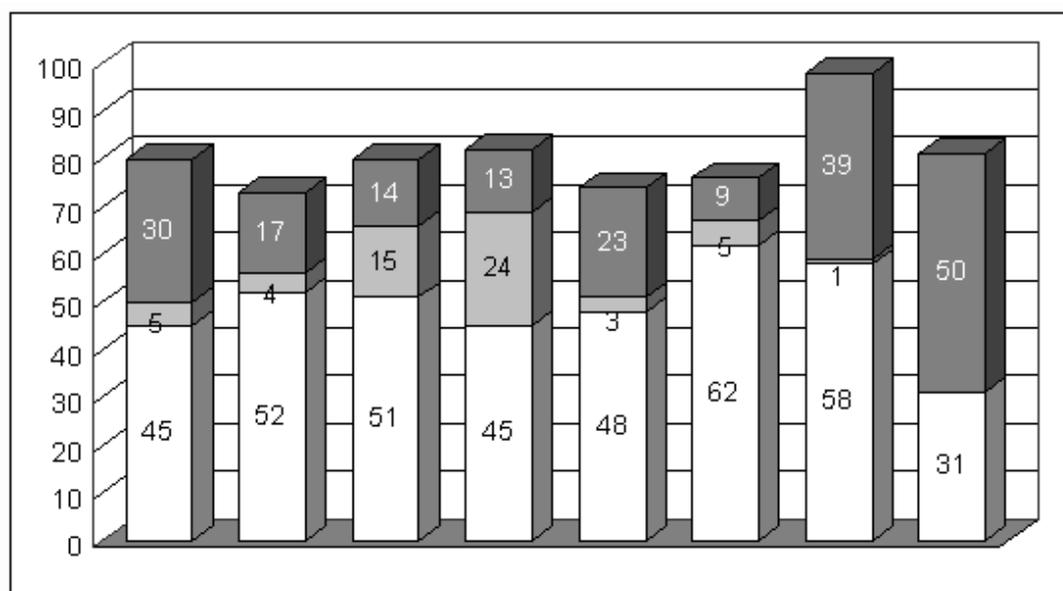

Figure VI: Chart with newspaper-specific distribution of presentation mode Bush – Hussein.

Hypothesis 4 cannot be fully supported. Moderate biased reporting about political leaders appears in German and in U.S. papers. While the former uses negative coverage about Bush and his war policies, the latter accentuates unfavorable views on Hussein and his regime. Differences occur with the degree of implementation as the amount of prejudiced Hussein-articles peaks in U.S. papers. Cross-national but also national differences are visible. Contrary war opinions and cultural distinctions are reflected as stated in chapter 4.

Another important stylistic device which aides to detect distinct media frames in war coverage is the implementation of specific terms. They are explicitly created by government and/or newspapers to serve particular interests. 'Anti-terror-coalition' or 'friendly fire' are just two of the concepts inaugurated before and during the war on Iraq. This study takes a strong interest in these meaningful linguistic gadgets. Previous outcomes imply that a 'lingual gap' could exist between quality newspapers in the United States and Germany.

> 5. American reports about the Iraq War employ stereotyped terms to a higher degree than German articles.

To get a view of the arrangement of such terms, Chart IX (multiple-answer-choice) is inserted with the amount and percentage of articles affected.

Paper	Overall Result

Stereotyped Terms	SZ	FAZ	NYT	WP	Amount	Percent.
Regime Change	24	23	53	56	156	29.9
Anti-Terror-Coalition/Coalition of the Willing	12	22	41	65	140	26.8
Friendly Fire	22	20	30	26	98	18.8
Peace, Liberty and Hope for Iraqi People	8	2	28	28	66	12.6
Embedded Journalists	8	4	7	20	39	7.5
Axis of Evil	5	7	4	7	23	4.4
Overall Result	68	69	111	127	522	100.0

Chart IX: Chart with newspaper-specific distribution of particular linguistic devices.

Surprisingly few German articles introduce stereotyped terms. Since the coverage is in the widest sense anti-war focused, newspapers are careful not to overuse biased terms. But they are oftentimes introduced by patriotic U.S. media. 'Regime change' is the most often applied stereotyped term (29.9 %), followed by 'anti-terror-coalition/coalition of the willing'. Those two linguistic specialties manifest already a cross-national disagreement. In both categories, German papers revert half as much to those colored concepts.

Another evident distinction offers the category 'peace, liberty and hope for Iraqi people'. Almost none of the SZ (8) or FAZ (2) articles refers to that rather patriotic motivation to lead war. Long before definite consequences appear, conclusions are set for a post-war Iraq. 'Friendly fire' – a rather palliating phrase - is very popular among American papers although it is linked to accidents caused by own troops and thus own failures. A specific degree of self-criticism and the confession of new threats and dangers is also a necessary tool in the U.S quality press to elucidate the public while strengthening the support. 'Embedded journalists' and the 'axis of evil' play a minor role in war coverage.

With those findings in mind, hypothesis 5 can be reaffirmed. American reports do implement more stereotyped terms whereas German articles, although not at all freed from such concepts, avoid explicit imageries in their daily agendas. In other words, American war coverage is more strongly influenced by a visualizing and pictured language. War-related articles can represent a rather exceptional state of coverage, but this very fact allows first insights about the representation of delicate events in quality newspapers. The degree of biased news language can be a useful indicator for media frames, cultural distinctions and for the status of public opinion.

6 Summary and future perspectives

The cross-national study presented reveals that the formal presentation in quality newspapers does not evolve significant cultural perception gaps between America and Germany. All national newspapers estimate the news value in a synonym manner although the level of actual involvement is clearly unlike. Only the more complex examination of frame choices within each article is a more fitting indicator for cross-national discrepancies.

Results refer to expected as well as unforeseen phenomena developed in chapter 4. The selection of themes is manifold in both German and American newspapers but human touch reports are nevertheless an arising trend in the U.S. coverage. Moving stories about soldiers rescued or family members waiting at home appear to be a very successful tool to arouse sympathy among American readers. Similar formats play (still) a minor role in German quality papers. War motives on the other hand frame only gradually country-specific interests. Against all assumptions, U.S. national newspapers do not completely mask negative outcomes. Concerning the presentation of political leaders, press coverage is a clear mirror of governmental and public perspectives. The Iraqi dictator receives more negative coverage in U.S. organs. In return, German articles condemn Bush's governmental affairs and political decisions but to a minor degree.

National editorial lines show oftentimes greater variances than overall cross-national results[15] might promise. Finally, stereotyped terms implemented generate more awareness in U.S. reports.

The coverage- and cultural gap between German and U.S. newspaper frames is far less than expected. Although the war is reversely regarded both in public and government, the coverage does not constantly pinpoint at such perceptions in its daily coverage. Above all, national differences are oftentimes more outstanding. Editorial lines, primarily in the Washington Post (pro-war) and the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (anti-war), affect the mode of how events are publicized in the respective country. Other press organs (regional papers/yellow press) or media (television, internet) probably contain a wider range of discrepancies. Awareness should also be geared to framing procedures in other mass communicated channels for supplementing case studies.

First outcomes of this pilot study have shown that hypotheses must be restructured to appreciate the significance of intra-national variances. Emphasis has been laid on a global perspective and could not explore country-specific differences to an appropriate degree. Future research should take these unexpected findings into account to underline outcomes and explanations presented.

Framing approaches in general and media framing processes in specific suffer under a lack of comparative case studies. Cross-national war coverage can be a fruitful topic to analyze cultural perceptions as well as formal and lingual modes of illustration.

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Appendix

Attachment - Codebook

Variable	Code	Content/Description
1	1-25	Date
2	1-6	Weekday
3		**Newspaper:**
	1	Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)
	2	Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)
	3	New York Times (NYT)
	4	Washington Post (WP)
4		**Placement of Article:**
	1	Front Page

	2	Politics Section
5		**Photo/Art:**
	0	No
		Yes, namely a:
	1	Positive Presentation
	2	Neutral Presentation
	3	Negative Presentation
6		**Article Size (in cm²):**
	1	50-100
	2	101-200
	3	201-300
	4	301-400
	5	401-500
	6	501-600
	7	601-700
	8	701-800
	9	801-900
	10	901-1000
	11	1001-1100
	12	1101-1200
	13	1201-1300
	14	1301-1400
	15	1401-1500
	16	1501-1600
	17	1601-1700
	18	1701-1800 (Full Page)
7		**Journalistic Format:**
	1	Own Report
	2	Press Release
	3	Mix of 1 and 2
	4	Correspondent Report

	5	Reportage
	6	Interview
	7	Commentary, Apostil, Leading Article
	8	Miscellaneous
Frame Choices of and in each Article:		
8		**Which Meta-Frame dominates the article:**
		(Select the predominant one.)
	1	U.S.-Centered Meta-Frame
	2	Germany-Centered Meta-Frame
	3	Internationally-Centered Meta-Frame
	4	Iraq-Centered Meta-Frame
9		**Is a Political Frame implemented in the article:**
	0	Not Mentioned
		Yes, namely a:
	1	Positive Presentation
	2	Neutral
	3	Negative
10		**Is a Military Frame implemented in the article:**
	0	Not Mentioned
		Yes, namely a:
	1	Positive Presentation
	2	Neutral
	3	Negative
11		**Is an Economic Frame implemented in the article:**
	0	Not Mentioned
		Yes, namely a:
	1	Positive Presentation
	2	Neutral
	3	Negative
12		**Is a Humanitarian Frame implemented in the article:**
	0	Not mentioned
		Yes, namely a:

	1	Positive Presentation
	2	Neutral
	3	Negative
13		**Is a Human Touch Frame implemented in the article:**
	0	Not Mentioned
		Yes, namely a:
	1	Positive Presentation
	2	Neutral
	3	Negative
14		**Are other Frames implemented in the article:**
	1	Yes
	2	No
15-16		**What are the most often alluded motivations for the War on Iraq:**
		(Code the most often mentioned reasons; Code a maximum amount of 2 items)
	0	Not mentioned
	1	Fight Against Terrorism/Terrorism-Networks
	2	Weapons of Mass Destruction
	3	Regime Change/Topple Saddam Hussein
	4	Freedom and Democracy for Iraqi Citizens
	5	Consolidation of Middle East Region
	6	Justice/Compensation for September 11
	7	Secure Iraq's Oil Fields and Resources
	8	No Peaceful Solution in Sight
	9	Other Reasons
17-18		**What are the most often alluded motivations against the War on Iraq:**
		(Code the most often mentioned reasons; Code a maximum amount of 2 items)
	0	Not mentioned
	1	Decisions/Resolutions of the United Nations
	2	Inhumanity of War
	3	Pointlessness of War/Alternative Solutions Exist
	4	

	5	Costs of War
	6	Consequences of War are Incalculable
	7	Fear of U.S. Occupation of Iraq's Oil Fields and Resources
	8	International Disharmony and Distrust
		Other Reasons

Stylistic Devices (Stereotypes and Metaphors) and Catchwords which influence the coverage:		
19		**Evaluation of George W. Bush:**
		(Code only the predominant one.)
	0	Not mentioned
		Yes, namely a:
	1	Positive Characterization
	2	Neutral Characterization
	3	Negative Characterization
20		**Evaluation of Saddam Hussein:**
		(Code only the predominant one.)
	0	Not mentioned
		Yes, namely a:
	1	Positive Characterization
	2	Neutral Characterization
	3	Negative Characterization
21-22		**Stereotyped Terms used:**
		(Code the most often mentioned ones; Code a maximum amount of 2 items)
	0	None used
	1	Axis of Evil
	2	Anti-Terror-Coalition/Coalition of the Willing
	3	Friendly Fire
	4	Embedded Journalists
	5	Regime Change
	6	Peace, Liberty and Hope for Iraqi People

Overall Style of Article (Presented as Semantic Differential):		

23		**Article is Unemotional vs. Emotional:**
	1	Very Unemotional
	2	Quite Unemotional
	3	Neither/Nor
	4	Quite Emotional
	5	Very Emotional
24		**Article is Superficial vs. Profound:**
	1	Very Superficial
	2	Quite Superficial
	3	Neither/Nor
	4	Quite Profound
	5	Very Profound
25		**Article is Generalizing vs. Differentiating:**
	1	Very Generalizing
	2	Quite Generalizing
	3	Neither/Nor
	4	Quite Differentiating
	5	Very Differentiating

Frame categories

Frame of article is:			
U.S.-centered Frame	**Germany**	**International**	**Iraq**
1. Political Frame ——— Def.: Political arguments and opinions (speeches); controversies, e.g. anti-war protests, UN resolutions and global/country relations allies vs. enemies, weapon inspectors, etc.; implemented policies; political leaders and officials; strategic actions			
2. Military Frame ——— Def.: Operations and tactics; presentation of weapons, missiles and its impact (explained by			

experts, etc.); major attacks and offensives; characterization of (material) potentials and threats of countries involved; security issues

3. Economic Frame ———— ———— Def.: War impact on (global or country-specific) economy; recession; oil industry; war costs			
4. Humanitarian Frame ———— ———— Def.: Victims, numbers of death (both soldiers and civilians); help of organizations, countries, etc.; mental and material situation in country attacked and countries attacking			
5. Human Touch Frame ———— ———— Def.: Personal cases/stories about soldiers, victims, politicians, journalists, families members, etc. (topics: strokes of fate, blessing in disguise); unique, dramatic, emotional reports			

Overall

ANOVA - BUSH

Bush	N	Mean	Stand. Dev.	Stand. Error	Conf. Int.		Min.	Max.
					Low. Lev.	Upp. Lev.		
SZ	150	1.2333	1.23384	.10074	1.0343	1.4324	.00	3.00
FAZ	150	1.0600	1.14827	.09376	.8747	1.2453	.00	3.00
NYT	150	1.0600	1.08825	.08886	.8844	1.2356	.00	3.00
WP	150	1.0200	1.05213	.08591	.8502	1.1898	.00	3.00
Overall	600	1.0933	1.13288	.04625	1.0025	1.1842	.00	3.00

Bush	Sq. Sum.	Df	Means of Sq.	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.080	3	1.360	1.060	.366
Within Group	764.693	596	1.283		
Overall	768.773	599			

Cross-national Comparison:

German Papers	Significance	U.S. Papers	Significance
SZ	.209	NYT	.746
FAZ		WP	

Overall

Huss.	N	Mean	Stand. Dev.	Stand. Error	Conf. Int.		Min.	Max.
					Low. Lev.	Upp. Lev.		
SZ	150	1.1200	1.19798	.09782	.9267	1.3133	.00	3.00
FAZ	150	1.0400	1.07366	.08766	.8668	1.2132	.00	3.00

NYT	150	1.3600	1.21224	.09898	1.3644	1.7556	.00	3.00
WP	150	1.4133	1.35699	.11080	1.1944	1.6323	.00	3.00
Overall	150	1.1200	1.19798	.09782	.9267	1.3133	.00	3.00

Huss.	Sq. Sum.	Df	Means of Sq.	F	Sig.
Between Groups	26.900	3	8.967	6.080	.000
Within Group	878.933	596	1.475		
Overall	905.833	599			

ANOVA - HUSSEIN

Cross-national Comparison:

German Papers	Significance	U.S. Papers	Significance
SZ	.543	NYT	.324
FAZ		WP	

Chart VIII: One-way analysis of variance: Presentation of Bush/Hussein in each newspaper.

About the author:

Sabine Wilhelm (M.A.) studied mass communication/media studies at the Friedrich-Schiller-University in Jena (Germany) with the minor field of study in history of economics and social life and social psychology since October 1999. From August 2002 to May 2003, she advanced her studies in Advertising and Public Relations for two semesters at the Southeast Missouri State University/Cape Girardeau (U.S.). Furthermore, involvement in many study projects concerning the impact of news values in mass media. Sabine Wilhelm graduated in October 2004 at the Friedrich-Schiller-University in Jena.
Research focus: impact of mass media/journalism on international conflicts; media research methods (content analysis, survey)

Master-thesis (abridged) at the Department of Mass Communication/Media Studies
Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena/Germany in October 2004

Sabine Wilhelm (M.A.)
Berggartenstrasse 8
04155 Leipzig
++49(0)173-3535170
Email: sa.wi@web.de