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국제학석사학위논문

‘Fear’ and the Iraq War:

**a content analysis of US presidential rhetoric
(2001-2009)**

‘공포’와 이라크 전쟁:

**2001년부터 2009년 사이 미국 대통령의 이라크 전쟁
관련 수사에 관한 내용 분석**

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‘Fear’ & the Iraq War

- A content analysis of U.S. presidential rhetoric (2001-2009) -

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Abstract

‘Fear’ and the Iraq War

A content analysis of US presidential rhetoric (2001-2009)

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This study analyses the use of ‘fear’ in US presidential rhetoric as an active soft power strategy designed to achieve support mobilisation and maintenance for the Iraq War. A quantitative content analysis of the Weekly Radio Broadcasts of the President of the United States between January 2001 and January 2009 is conducted in order to study presidential rhetoric in isolation from the broader media framing of war discourse. Such analysis shows that ‘terror’ and the threat of WMDs were central elements in the creation of a rhetoric of fear, and that such elements were often juxtaposed with reference to a US role of promoting peace and security in the region within presidential rhetoric. This

study finds that in the highly sensitised environment the US found itself in following the September 11 2001 terror attacks, 'fear' proved to be a highly effective tool for mobilising public support for short-term policy initiatives. However, due to a lack of flexibility and adaptability, the rhetoric of fear as employed by President Bush was ineffective in overcoming a loss of credibility and legitimacy, therefore proving ineffective as a mechanism for achieving long-term support maintenance amongst the US population. Thus, this study suggests that rhetoric strategies for successful for long-term support maintenance require elements of adaptability and verifiability, which are not essential in achieving initial support mobilisation.

Keywords: United States, Soft Power, Rhetoric, Framing, Content Analysis

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I. Introduction

Despite assuming the role of global hegemon and maintaining a distinct competitive advantage in terms of military power the United States has failed to achieve clear success in a war since World War II (Cypher, 2015; Ward, 2018). In confronting the issue of why this phenomenon has arisen many scholars point to the changing nature of modern warfare rendering traditional military resources less effective. As stated by Arquila and Ronfeldt (1999), “the world of traditional power politics is typically about whose military or economy wins. Politics in an information age may ultimately be about whose story wins”. Thus, the importance of strategies appropriate to the modern age, whether these be termed as *communication strategies*, *information campaigns*, or *soft power*, is ever increasing. As noted by former British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, “even the best of diplomatic policies may fail if it neglects the task of interpretation and persuasion which modern conditions impose” (Wagnleitner, 1994, 50).

It is in light of such circumstances that this research shall aim to address the competence of US soft power strategies in order to contribute to our understanding of the wider issue of why the US is struggling in modern conflicts. It will do so through an analysis of US presidential rhetoric on the Iraq War as employed by the Bush administration from 2001-2009. This will be conducted through the specific analysis of how President Bush utilised a rhetoric of fear in weekly presidential radio broadcasts in order to address the question

of why the US was unable to maintain support for the campaign in Iraq, and how, as a democratic society, this potentially constrained presidential action and affected the campaign. Through such a process the research aspires to contribute to the discourse on soft power strategies and to aid in our understanding of the requirements for successful political and military campaigns in the information age.

In the context this broader issue, this paper will address the following research questions:

How was a rhetoric of fear created and utilised in George W. Bush's presidential radio broadcasts and what were the implications of the utilisation of such rhetoric?

How effective was the rhetoric of fear in mobilising and maintaining support for the Iraq War?

As such two concepts will form the underlying framework of this research: soft power and framing, whilst further concepts such as securitisation and communications theories will also be incorporated into the analysis of President Bush's rhetoric strategy. These concepts will be presented in chapter three. Chapter two will provide an in depth review of existing literature and studies relevant to this research. This includes reference to studies of framing, explanations for fluctuating levels of public support for the Iraq War, and research on presidential rhetoric which was particularly influential in directing the focus of this study.

In addressing the question of how a rhetoric of fear was employed by the President quantitative content analysis has been employed to address levels of fearful rhetoric

along with the composite elements contributing to the formation of such rhetoric. This will be introduced in more detail in chapter five and the results will be presented in chapter six. As such, chapter five will address the question of *how* the rhetoric of fear was constructed and utilised in presidential radio broadcasts whilst chapter six will address the implications and effects of this for mobilising and maintaining public support levels and consequently for the legitimacy and credibility afforded to the Bush administration.

II. Literature Review

This chapter will review existing literature relevant to this study. It shall start by offering a brief overview of the background leading up to the Iraq War in order to help situate this research. Then literature covering explanations for why the US has struggled in modern conflicts including the war on terror will be briefly presented before moving to examine previous studies on framing and the Iraq War. The latter section will be further divided into the presentation of studies covering media framing of the campaign and those regarding official frames of the Bush administration. Finally the chapter will be concluded by discussing explanations for the fluctuating levels of support for the war amongst the American public.

1. Background to the Iraq War

Before moving to analyse the rhetoric used by President Bush towards the campaign in Iraq as a part of the greater ‘War on Terror’, it is necessary to layout the context and background against which such rhetoric was used. This section therefore, will aim to provide such background through first providing an overview of the Iraq War including major events and issues arising within the duration of President Bush’s terms in office.

The Iraq war can be considered a highly significant event during Bush's presidency. The war itself can be broken into two main phases; the initial invasion in 2003, a brief, conventional war in which a US led coalition force overthrew the Iraqi regime headed by Saddam Hussein, and a subsequent occupation of Iraq involving defending against counter-insurgency operations as the US attempted to install a democratic government sympathetic to the US (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). The war continued for the duration of Bush's presidency, although following a decrease in levels of violence from 2007 onwards, the levels of US troop deployed in the country gradually reduced and in December 2011 the US formally completed its withdrawal from Iraq under President George W. Bush's successor, President Barak Obama.

Following the Gulf War of 1990-1991, Saddam Hussein's Iraq had been under sanctions from the United Nations (hereinafter UN) in order to restrain future Iraqi aggression and prevent the progress of Iraqi munitions programs (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). Despite such measures, inspections throughout the 1990s suggested that Iraq was in violation of the UN weapons ban, leading US President Bill Clinton to order the strategic bombing of several Iraqi military installations in 1998. Following this operation however, the Iraqi regime refused to reopen its borders to inspectors. Thus, in 2002, following the September 11 terror attacks of the previous year, President George W. Bush argued that the US was vulnerable to future such attacks posed by the likes of Iraq in light of the latter's alleged weapons of mass destruction (hereinafter WMD) programs and links to and support for terrorist groups including al Qaeda, the group responsible for the

September 2001 attacks. Bush therefore argued that disarming Iraq, removing Saddam Hussein, and installing a democratic government sympathetic to US interests in his place was a priority for ensuring US security, regional stability in the Middle East, and greater global peace (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

Further UN Resolutions in 2002 required that Iraq admit inspectors into the country in order to assess its compliance with previous resolutions regarding its WMD programs, and Iraq appeared to comply with these demands. President Bush however, along with British Prime Minister Tony Blair, stated that Iraq was not in full compliance with these inspections and was concealing WMDs or their development programs. Whilst other nations were in favour of trusting in Iraqi compliance with inspections and giving inspectors time to fully assess whether or not Iraq was in violation of UN resolutions, in 2003 the US along with a 'coalition of the willing', supported mainly by the United Kingdom, declared an end to diplomatic efforts and gave Iraq an ultimatum; Saddam Hussein had 48 hours to leave the country or the US would use force to end his regime and disarm Iraq (The Economist, 2003; The Guardian, 2003). This ultimatum faced strong criticism from other nations including notably US NATO allies in France and Germany (BBC News, 2003).

Upon the failure of Iraq to meet this ultimatum, the US launched its military campaign with an aerial attack on the morning of March 20th 2003. This was followed by a ground invasion a few days later. The initial stage of combat operations in Iraq was very brief, with US forces taking control of the capital Baghdad on April 9th 2003 and announcing

an end to major combat operations and a US victory over Hussein's regime on May 1st 2003. Saddam Hussein was captured by US forces in December 2003 and turned over to Iraqi authorities for trial in June 2004. He was executed for his crimes, including counts of crimes against humanity, on December 30th 2006 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

Following the collapse of Hussein's regime the US undertook the task of restoring law and order to the country in light of severe outbreaks of violence and looting targeted mainly at government offices and public institutions. Continued attacks against occupying forces developed into full guerrilla warfare which compounded existing economic and infrastructural obstacles to rebuilding the country. Despite low initial casualty levels, deaths of US troops increased rapidly during this period reaching roughly one thousand by the 2004 US presidential elections and three thousand by 2007 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

By late 2006 violence levels in Iraq were at an all-time high. To combat this in January 2007 Bush announced the 'Surge' - the deployment of an additional 20,000 American troops to Iraq with the goal of "put[ting] down sectarian violence and bring[ing] security to the people of Baghdad" (The White House Bush Archives, 2007). By September 2007 however, Bush announced a reduction in troop numbers in Iraq from 169,000 to 130,000 following General Petraeus' report of the progress of the Surge earlier that month. However, despite such reports of progress and a reduction in troop levels 2007 was the deadliest year for US troops in the entire duration of the War (Singal et al., 2010). By

2008 however, despite on-going insurgency activities, the situation on the ground in Iraq appeared to be improving with levels of violence and troops deaths lower than 2007 levels. Following this gradual decline in violence levels in Iraq and reductions in US troop levels the war continued to wind down with the US announcing the complete withdrawal of remaining military personnel from the country under Bush's successor, President Barak Obama in October 2011 (BBC News, 2011a). The last US troops were withdrawn on December 18th 2011 (Jaffe, 2011).

2. Why the US Can't Win: the New Media Ecology & Modern Warfare

This study is conducted against the backdrop of the broader question of why the US has struggled to achieve success in recent conflicts. As such, before looking specifically at studies of President Bush's approaches to the Iraq War as part of the broader War on Terror it is necessary to evaluate more general explanations for this overarching question.

A broad explanation for why the US cannot win wars rests on the changing nature of warfare in the modern age. Characteristics of this change include the increase in civil conflicts and the declining legitimacy of the use of military force as a consequence of the post-1945 strengthening of norms against aggression (Kaldor, 2014, 376). Civil conflicts have constituted over 90% of recent conflicts and create a myriad of problems

including difficulty distinguishing enemy militants from civilians, the lack of a clear end to conflicts, and meaning it is often no longer enough to simply defeat the opponent on the battlefield as this may lead to a power vacuum thus resulting in further insurgencies, instability, and ultimately continuation of the conflict (Ward, 2018). Such possibilities mean that US forces must be committed to long-term stabilisation and nation-building activities in order to achieve success – something they are often either unwilling or unequipped to do. The Iraq War provides an excellent example of this as what originated as a conventional military campaign to achieve regime change devolved into civil war and a long-term occupation. Arguably, it was during the occupation and consequent long-term support maintenance efforts that the US struggled.

A second problem for the US in modern warfare is the conflict between politics and military decision making. Clausewitz (1918) stated, “war is merely the continuation of politics by other means” but for the United States this has become more of a curse than a blessing as it has allowed political, short-term considerations to obstruct the formation of calculated, strategic decisions. Moreover, political pressures make leaders feel the need to be seen to be doing something, especially in the face of terrorist groups or those believed to support them, which has led the US to attempt to take out such “bad guys” even in absence of a coherent plan for subsequent stabilisation of the region. As such, a changing environment and failure of the US to adapt to meet such new requirements coupled with the US belief that it has a duty as the global hegemon to become involved in regional conflicts and instability have been considered contributing factors to the US

military failings in recent decades (Ward, 2018). The extent to which such short-term political considerations may have affected decision making regarding the Iraq War and presidential rhetoric regarding it will be explored in chapter six.

Under this new media ecology conflicts are becoming less about military capabilities and more about the use of softer strategies and effective communication strategies. This is something that US adversaries including terrorist groups know well but that the US has failed to fully grasp rather viewing such activities as “support functions of kinetic activity” (Taylor, 2010, 153). Taylor (2010, 163) asserts that terrorists know that their activity is 10% violence and 90% publicity, whereas US responses in Afghanistan and Iraq have been 90% violence and 10% strategic communications. It is not only directly in dealing with the war on terror that the US has failed to appropriately apply soft power strategies. Polls show that even some of the more moderate Islamic countries have indicated a belief that the US poses a bigger threat to world peace than Bin Laden and that following headlines stating “we are all Americans” there was actually an increase in anti-American sentiment (Taylor, 2010, 153). Further studies show that it is not only Islamic countries but also traditional allies of the US such as Germany and France that have shown increasing levels of anti-Americanism following the proposal and initiation of the military campaign in Iraq; this despite heightened sympathies for the US following the 9/11 attacks (Pew Research Centre, 2008).

3. Framing & the Iraq War

This section will address the existing literature regarding framing of the Iraq War. It will be divided into two further subsections, the first of which shall address media framing of the Iraq War, whilst the second shall address official government rhetoric and framing of the war.

3-1. Media Framing & the Iraq War

Numerous studies have been conducted on US communications strategies and framing of the war in Iraq with various conclusions reached regarding the shortcomings of the US ranging from a divergence in official government framing with the frames most commonly supported in the media (Speer, 2017), suggestions that framing and rationale may be influential at the start of a military campaign but that in the following period it is volume of media coverage rather than such factors which are influential in public opinion and support (Coe, 2012), or that fragmentation of media along political divergences means that the public often accesses only those frames which conform to their pre-existing views (Muddiman et al., 2014).

In the build-up to war and in the initial phases of the conflict, media coverage was found to closely echo the official lines of the Bush administration with critical view generally

omitted or downplayed. Dimaggio notes the Bush administration's contribution to and harnessing of the climate of fear rife within the United States following the September 11 terror attacks. By encouraging and utilising such sentiment, the administration was able to create an atmosphere of fear under which the public became highly susceptible to calls for action in Iraq in a way which would not have been possible prior to the attacks. The media also played an important role in amplifying this rhetoric of fear in part due to the heavy reliance journalist placed on official sources from both parties, rather than offering critical analysis or independently challenging pro-war views, or employing diversified sources in discussing the war (Dimaggio, 2015, 72). Thus, much of what Americans saw and heard was socially constructed by political officials (Dimaggio, 2015, 107; Mitchell & Hulse, 2002).

Howard Kurtz, former editor of the Washington Post, reported that from August 2002 to March 2003, the paper published more than 140 front page stories heavily emphasising the administration's rhetoric whilst stories questioning the administration's claims were relegated to the back pages of the paper (Dimaggio, 2015, 75; Finnegan, 2006). Even those news sources which questioned whether the US should immediately go to war did not question whether Iraq constituted a direct threat to the United States that must be dealt with at some stage – the question was with the timing of the proposed action rather than with the information or proposal itself (Dimaggio, 2015, 73). Furthermore, research has suggested that increased reporting of alleged terrorist threats was associated with

increased public support for the Bush administration (Dimaggio, 2015, 75; Nacos et al, 2011).

Along with compliance with the administrations rhetoric, a Center for International Security Studies analysis of pre-war coverage concluded that reporting failed to distinguish between WMD programs and actual WMDs and that there was a distinct lack of critical examination of the ways in which officials framed the events, issues, threats, and policy options in the build up to the Iraq war (Dimaggio, 2015, 78; Moeller, 2004). Moreover, the alleged associations between al Qaeda and Iraq were regularly repeated in the media which accepted without question the administration's assertion that the two were linked (Dimaggio, 2015, 79). Fox news went so far as to suggest that anyone challenging the narrative linking Iraq and terrorism were "disloyal Americans" and anti-war views were framed as extreme and posing a threat to national security thus further discrediting and repressing such views (Dimaggio, 2015, 80; O'Reilly, 2003). As such, media compliance and repetition of the government narrative, along with the repression and de-legitimation of opposing views, were highly influential elements in the success of Bush's framing of Iraq and in winning support for his war policies (Dimaggio, 2015, 90; Finnegan, 2006).

From 2004 to 2005 media reports widely conceded that Iraq did not possess WMDs and discussion of the lack of apparent link between Iraq and al Qaeda also became more common during this period (Dimaggio, 2015, 102; BBC News, 2003b). Public response to this showed a decline in support for the war among Americans (Dimaggio, 2015, 102-

3). Moreover, as the occupation continued regular coverage of negative events such as growing levels of violence, the Abu Ghraib prison controversy, and the failure to find evidence of WMDs further stoked public hostility and opposition to the war (Dimaggio, 2015, 106). Speer (2017, 282) further elaborated on this finding in a study of New York Times coverage of the War between 2005 and 2006, concluding that “journalists avoided the preferred frame of the White House whilst amplifying the preferred frame of the military.” Thus, we can see that the role of media in promoting or criticising government rhetoric was extremely influential in affecting support levels for the war and the president’s handling of it.

Further studies have found that during the US occupation of Iraq rationales for war presented in the media did not have a substantial impact on public attitudes towards the campaign. Suggested explanations for this include that rather, such rationales may be influential in the early stages of a campaign rather than in the latter stages as “once the war has progressed for some time, people’s attitudes crystallize, and they tend to interpret new information about the war as supportive of their pre-existing attitudes” (Coe, 2012, 500; Gaines et al., 2007). This crystallisation of viewpoints can be further explained by the fragmented nature of American mass media where when “faced with partisan media, audiences gravitate towards messages matching with their political beliefs” (Iyengar & Hahn, 2009; Klapper, 1960; Muddiman et al., 2014; Stroud, 2011). Thus, during the latter stages of the war media reporting can be considered to have reinforced existing views rather than moulding public perception. With regards to the

Iraq War however this was not considered unanimous by all studies, as other studies suggest that the American public displayed significant independence from political parties with public opposition preceding party opposition (Dimaggio, 2015, 156).

The lack of effectiveness of such frames was further explained due to the changing public attitudes about specific rationales over the course of the War. For example, Coe cites the rationale of 'threat', with polling data showing that whilst in December 2003 62% of American's felt that the war had contributed to US security, by December 2004 only 51% of the American public still held that view (Coe, 2012, 501). Thus, if public threat perception is decreasing, repeating usage of such frames are unlikely to drive public support. As such, studies have concluded that if media coverage does influence public support levels this may be through mechanisms other than the rationales offered in their coverage. Rather, the sheer quantity of coverage and the patriotism such coverage stirs in the American public may be more significant factors in influencing public support (Coe, 2012, 501; Althaus & Coe, 2011).

3-2. Official Government Framing & the Iraq War

Whilst some studies suggest that the media was influential in framing the war through their level of alignment with government rhetoric, much discourse also suggests that it was the Bush administration who effectively manipulated news coverage in their favour

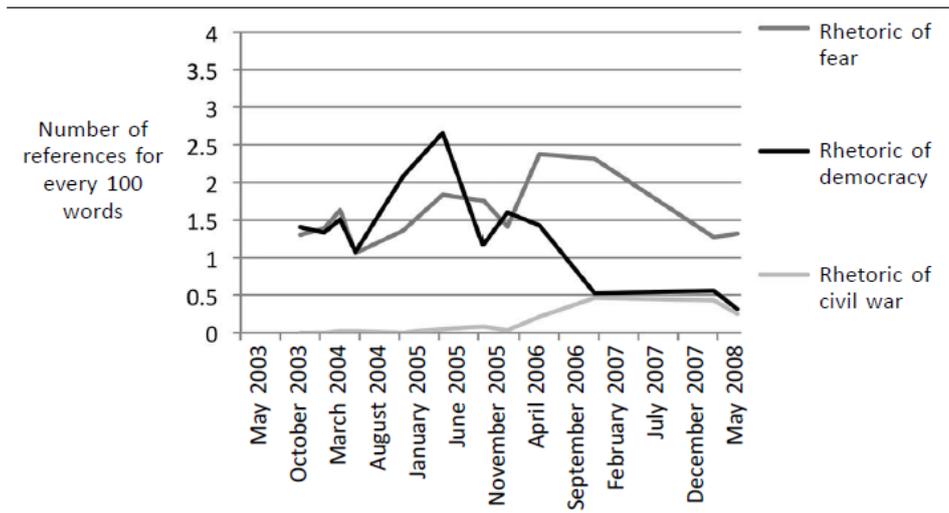
during the campaign in order to convince the American public of the need to invade Iraq and displace Saddam Hussein (Fritz et al., 2004; Isikoff & Corn, 2006; Rich, 2006). This suggests however, that regardless of the mechanism or direction of influence Presidential rhetoric, working in synchronisation with media reporting, was a force for support mobilisation for the Iraq War. Thus, this section shall examine the existing literature on presidential framing and rhetoric in the Iraq War.

Studies note that from the outset, Bush's rhetoric relating to Iraq was extremely one sided claiming the regime possessed WMDs and ties to terrorist organisations (Dimaggio, 2015, 59). Dimaggio demonstrates that in the lead up to, and initial phases of Bush's Iraq campaign there were several factors synergised to cultivate the high levels of support seen between 2002 and 2004, namely: fearful messages, a compliant media, and a susceptible public which already shared such fears of terrorism following the attacks of September 11th 2001 (Dimaggio, 2015; Roberts, 2005). This indicates that Bush's rhetoric was effective in moulding public opinion in the War on Terror with public support for the war increasing by 12% following Bush's September 11 anniversary and UN speeches (Dimaggio, 2015; Nacos et al, 2011).

Major government frames identified in previous studies include *fear*, including the war on terror, *hope* or democracy building and the role of the United States to promote peace and stability around the world, and the *Iraq civil war* as shown in figure 1 (below). Moreover, further studies note that the *insurgency frame* which was given preference in media coverage during the occupation of Iraq was the frame promoted by the US military,

in contrast with the *war on terror* frame preferred by the White House (Dimaggio, 2015; Speer, 2017, 283). Whilst the War on Terror Frame promoted the conflict in Iraq as part of a wider struggle against terrorism and was used in justification for the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the Insurgency Frame rather portrayed events during the occupation as acts of violence by domestic ‘insurgency’ groups against Iraqi and coalition forces (King & Wells, 2009; Michaels, 2010; Speer, 2017; Wolfe, 2008). Other frames identified by previous studies include a ‘danger of civil war’ frame, a frame promoted initially by American scholars from 2005 onwards but later adopted by some Democratic senators and military officials, and an ‘occupation’ frame, however this was primarily adopted by anti-war activists rather than government or military officials (Feldman, 2006; Lakoff, 2006; Michaels, 2010; Speer, 2017). It has been noted that when it comes to framing of facts and events, what is omitted can at times be more telling and more significant than what it included (Entman, 1993, 54). This is particularly notable for Bush’s ‘civil war’ frame, as this was framed rather as sectarian violence and direct reference to civil war was for a large part absent from presidential discourse on the War, and direct references to a civil war were completely absent from presidential radio broadcasts as analysed in this study.

Figure 3.10. The Bush Administration’s Changing Rhetoric on Iraq (May 2003–May 2008)



Source: Presidential speeches.

Figure 1: Themes of Presidential Rhetoric on Iraq (Source: Dimaggio, 2015, 81)

Speeches in 2002 and the early years of the war were framed in ways to place emphasis on “terror” and “fear” as dominant themes and to create a sense of urgency, imminent threat, and need for preventive action in the minds of the US population. In an October 2002 Cincinnati speech Bush spoke of Iraq as a “grave threat” to peace and warned that this threat would only increase with time (Dimaggio, 2015, 60). This rhetoric of fear and terror was increased by attempts to link Iraq with terrorist organisations such as al Qaeda and responsibility for the September 11th attacks, with 48 references linking Iraq with al Qaeda made in that speech and a further 33 references in the 2003 State of Union address (Dimaggio, 2015, 63). In fact, Dimaggio states that “the campaign to sell the war was strategically calculated to begin the day after the one-year anniversary of September 11.”

The timing further suggests a desire to convey a link between Iraq and the September 11 attacks and to manipulate the heightened emotions and sensitivity of the US public to terror threats in the wake of such a catastrophe (Dimaggio, 2015, 62).

In juxtaposition to the rhetoric of fear directed towards Iraq, another significant element of official framing was the provision of hope to the US public and the belief that the president would act to protect them against terrorism and such enemies. Bush's 'hope campaign' is divided into three pillars: firstly, hope that the United States will "defend the world from danger" and work for the peace and defence of the world. Secondly, the importance of human rights, and framing Hussein as committing crimes against humanity for which the United States will punish him and save countless innocent civilians from such fates. Third and finally, is the hope of democracy building, thus preventing such future atrocities (Dimaggio, 2015, 83). However, themes stressing democracy and human rights were less emphasised in both presidential rhetoric and media reporting, compared with those of WMDs and terrorism. Despite this, such themes did increase in salience in presidential rhetoric once it had become clear that no WMDs would be found (Dimaggio, 2015, 81). As such, over the period of the US occupation of Iraq, following the acceptance that the discovery of WMDs would be unlikely and under increasing doubt as to the accuracy of claims linking Iraq to al Qaeda, Bush's rhetoric shifted between the rhetoric of fear and terrorism and democracy building and hope (Dimaggio, 2015, 105).

Despite figures suggesting the success of presidential rhetoric in selling the war to the American people there have been some studies countering this viewpoint. Some scholars assert that most Americans believed that Iraq had ties with al Qaeda before the onset of Bush's campaign, suggesting presidential rhetoric was not as influential as first thought in selling the war. Similar arguments also question the role of the media in influencing public support for the war on the same grounds that the public needed no convincing of connections between Iraq and terrorism (Dimaggio, 2015, 95; Althaus & Largio, 2004). This conclusion however, has been criticised on the basis of the logic behind the Bush administration commitment of tremendous amounts of energy to selling a war to a public that "needed no convincing" and with reference to fluctuating levels of support for the war between 2002 to 2003, coinciding with congressional pushback and the fluctuation in the Bush administrations control over political-media discourse (Dimaggio, 2015, 95; Merolla & Zechmeister, 2009; Nacos et al, 2011). Nonetheless, such remarks do highlight the importance of *audience priming* or the susceptibility levels of an audience to a certain frame or rhetoric, such as the disposition of American's to believe in another imminent terrorist threat following the September 11 attacks (Iyengar et al., 1982).

4. Fluctuations in Domestic Public Support Levels for the Iraq War

Bush's approval ratings along with domestic public support for the Iraq War fluctuated from majority support during the president's first term in office and the preliminary stages of the war, to some of the lowest approval ratings and majority opposition to the war by the end of his second term in office in 2009 (Newport, 2008). This section will aim to first present an overview of the trends in public opinion before presenting the conclusions of existing literature on why such a fluctuation in support levels and eventual majority opposition to the war occurred.

4-1. Trends in Public Opinion

For the most part the war was viewed critically by the international community including overwhelmingly negative public opinion in both Europe and the Middle East. According to some reports, many in the Middle East viewed the campaign as a new form of anti-Islamic, western imperialism and thus opposed the occupation of Iraq by foreign forces (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019; Pew Research Centre, 2008; Taylor, 2010, 153).

In the US however, public opinion was for the most part supportive of the campaign at its outset. Polls revealed considerable support for military action in Iraq both in the pre-war period and during the initial invasion (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019; Rosentiel, 2008). Opinion polls reveal pre-war public sympathies for Bush's Iraq agenda and a significant increase in support for the invasion by early 2003. Fluctuations in public support have been attributed to presidential rhetoric and media coverage, with evidence that core arguments of Bush's framing of the campaign were receiving majority support by late 2002 to early 2003 (Dimaggio, 2015, 91). Growth in support for the war effort in early 2003 coincided with Bush's renewed dominance over political-media discourse, suggesting that public attitudes are often the product of citizens responding to changes in the informational environment (Dimaggio, 2015, 92).

Following the capture of Saddam Hussein in December 2003, the view that the war was "worth fighting" grew from 45% on December 13 2003 to 53%. Furthermore, approval of Bush's handling of the war increased from 46% in November 2003 to 57% in January 2004 (Dimaggio, 2015, 122; Polling Report). By June 2004 however, support for the war had fallen once again to 46% making 2004, all in all, a landmark year for the war with some of the highest monthly US casualties (BBC News, 2011b).

By 2004-2005 Bush was failing to justify the war, and from 2005 to 2007 Americans reached a turning point (Dimaggio, 2015, 102). Most Americans had grown tired of the war after just a few years, and figures suggest that majority support for withdrawal emerged as early as 2004 to 2005. Figures from 2008 suggest that by that time, despite

the president celebrating a decline in violence in Iraq following the 2007 'surge' initiative, moral opposition to the war had reached a majority of the population, and most Americans felt not only that the war was a mistake but also that the president had misled the public on the reasons for the war (Dimaggio, 2015, 111). By April 2008 63% of American reported considering the War to be a mistake, an increase from 23% of Americans in March 2003, and 41% in June 2004. Thus, as the war continued, and its related costs and casualties increased, America experienced emerging mass opposition to the war, directly contrasting to the mass support seen for the war in the early days of the campaign (Dimaggio, 2015, 105).

Many Americans opposed to the war felt that President Bush was mishandling the occupation of Iraq and thus criticisms of the Bush administration began to increase. Media coverage and exposition of the Abu Ghraib prison scandal further damaged the US and Bush's public image and altered public perceptions of the war both at home and abroad (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). Further harming public approvals for the president and the war were the results of the September 11th Commission report which revealed that there was no evidence of collaboration between Hussein's regime and al Qaeda – a central element of Bush's case for war prior to the initiation of combat operations. Thus, this revelation combined with the failure to find evidence of Iraqi WMDs by US forces strongly contributed to increasing opposition to the war by the US public. Thus, this suggests that evidence of Bush's manipulation information in making

the case for war was a central element stoking public opposition to the war, and reducing public support levels for President Bush.

For the most part, initial support for the war was not split along party lines, with many on the left supporting the use of force in Iraq due to their opposition to perceived human rights violations committed by Saddam Hussein's regime. Conversely, there were those from the right wing who viewed the campaign as "reckless internationalism" and evidence of US global overstretch and acting as the world's policeman (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). Partisan differences in support levels increased however as the US occupation of Iraq continued with Democratic support for the President's handling of the war decreasing well before, and to a greater extent than Republican support. By June 2007 however, even Republican support for Bush's handling of the war had dropped, with 38% of Republicans polled opposing the war (Singal et al, 2010).

Initially media dominance worked to the advantage of the Bush administration in selling their narrative of events and framing Iraq in such a way as to incite support for US military intervention in the country. However, when the extent to which intelligence had been manipulated became public knowledge this constituted a major blow for the Bush campaign, discrediting presidential rhetoric and adding fuel to the campaigns of those criticising the war effort, thus increasing the rate of public opposition to the Bush administration and the war in Iraq. Such movements were only further stoked by the President's later admission that there was no evidence linking the Iraqi government and al Qaeda and that Saddam Hussein had not been involved in planning the September 11

attacks (Dimaggio, 2015, 68; Frick, 2008; Mount, 2008; Shepard, 2003). When asked the question of whether the Bush administration deliberately misled the public about the Iraq threat, 43% of US respondents felt that it had in October 2003 and when this question was put forward again in December 2005 that percentage had increased to 52% showing an increasing lack of trust in the administration (Dimaggio, 2015, 69).

4-2. Casualty Levels & Attentiveness to Political-Media Discourse

A relationship is evident between reporting and public opinion. An individual level analysis reveals that individuals paying close attention to the political-media discourse on Iraq were more supportive of the war. Furthermore, close attention to presidential rhetoric was accompanied by a 15% increase in support for the war (Dimaggio, 2015, 96; Gershkoff & Kushner, 2005). Attention to Bush's 2003 State of the Union address produced growing acceptance that Iraq had ties with al Qaeda and that it possessed WMDs, increasing support for the president's handling of Iraq, for taking military action, and for the use of ground troops, coupled with increased opposition to further inspections in Iraq (Dimaggio, 2015, 96; DiMaggio, 2010, 247).

From early 2003 onwards, war support increased noticeably among those following political-media discourse on Iraq. Those attentive to such discourse were more likely to view Iraq as a threat, to associate terrorist fears with Iraq, and to support military action

by margins of between 7-20% more than those inattentive to political-media discourse (Dimaggio, 2015, 98). Moreover, in May 2003 when President Bush delivered his “mission accomplished” speech his approval rating stood at 72%. The speech announced that “major combat operations have ended” and that “in the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed” (The White House Archives, 2003). Such a combination of rhetorical appeals to fear and democracy, absent of major criticism within US domestic media, were effective in cultivating public support for the war (Dimaggio, 2015, 121). Attention to news on Iraq during the elections in the period following the removal of Saddam Hussein produced a reduction in support for the withdrawal of US troops from the country due to the seemingly positive nature of a democratic election coupled with a reduction in levels of criticism within the media (Dimaggio, 2015, 132).

However, the failure to find WMDs and consequent shift in reporting in 2004-2005 harmed Bush’s credibility, with the relationship between those paying attention to reporting that no WMDs were found and the likelihood of opposing the war or voting against the president in the 2004 elections showing statistical significance (Dimaggio, 2015, 103 & 126; DiMaggio, 2010, 248). Thus, public opposition to the war increased during periods when reporting of violence was growing and decreased in periods when reporting was dominated by the official rhetoric of the Bush administration (Dimaggio, 2015, 115; DiMaggio, 2010). This correlation between increased criticism of Bush’s handling of the Iraq War and a divergence in media framing with official rhetoric

regarding the war suggests that increased public attentiveness to political-media discourse on the War was a factor affecting public opinion on the war. Moreover, studies show that between 2003 and 2007, the period during which the majority of war dissent emerged, reporting paid greater attention to growing casualty levels even if this meant clashes with the Bush administration's framing of progress in the campaign (Dimaggio, 2015, 113). Growing violence fostered increased dissent to the war, and caused American's to rethink their commitment to the occupation of Iraq (Dimaggio, 2015, 114). Thus it is evident that attention to reporting combined with shifts in focus of media coverage to include increased coverage of casualty levels or increasing violence were significant factors in influencing public sentiment for the war.

4-3. Partisan Pressures & Support Levels

Along with the influence of attentiveness to media discourse on public opinion, several studies have also analysed the effects of partisan pressures on public support for the war (Aday, 2010; Feldman et al., 2012; Muddiman et al., 2014). Increased public attentiveness to political-media discourse on Iraq, in the period of late 2002 when there was a decline in Bush's dominance over reporting, was correlated with growing opposition to Bush's agenda among Democrats and Independent voters, although no influence was recorded on the support levels amongst Republicans (Dimaggio, 2015, 97; Howell & Pevehouse, 2007).

Muddiman et al., (2014, 215) examined the relationship between exposure to partisan programming and opinions on the Iraq War and found that due to the fragmented nature of the media, audiences are drawn to those messages which reflect their pre-existing viewpoints. As such, media coverage may work to reinforce existing viewpoints rather than challenging and shaping audience opinions. Moreover, those following different media outlets coverage of the same issue of event may come away with very different perspectives of the issue due to the agenda setting nature of partisan media outlets (Muddiman et al., 2014). For example, one study found that in 2004 those following Fox News coverage were more likely to consider terrorism as an important problem than those following the war coverage on CNN or MSNBC (Muddiman et al., 2014, 217; Stroud, 2011). Therefore, due to this partisan exposure it was independent voters, rather than individuals identifying specifically with one political party, who were more susceptible to influence by media coverage (Muddiman et al., 2014, 219; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987).

Within the US government initial support for the war was distinctly bipartisan in both the House and the Senate (Jacobsen, 2010, 590). This changed rapidly however, as the legitimacy of the war began to be called into question with no evidence of WMDs or links to al Qaeda found. Thus Democratic opposition to the war and President Bush's handling of it began to grow (Jacobsen, 2010, 591; Jacobsen 2011). As the war continued into Bush's second term support for the President's handling of the war began to drop even amongst Republican congressmen (Jacobsen, 2007; Jacobsen, 2010, 591).

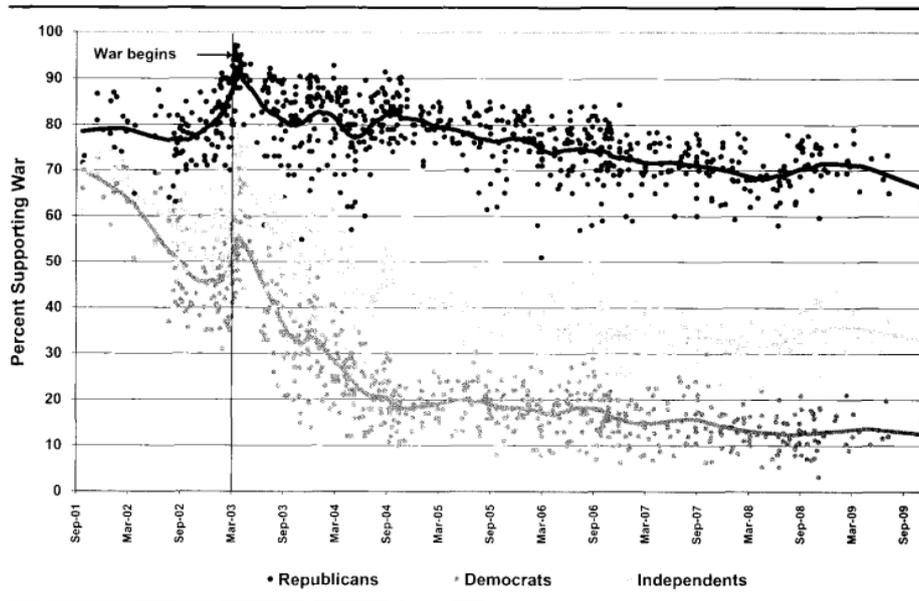


Figure 2: Partisan Support Levels for Iraq (Source: Jacobsen, 2010, 593)

As with congressional support, there also existed majority public bipartisan support for the war at its outset due to the belief that Saddam Hussein shared in responsibility for the attacks on New York’s World Trade Center of September 2001 and that he could pose a direct threat to the US again if not effectively dealt with (Jacobsen, 2010, 591; Jacobsen, 2011, 110). At the start of Bush’s second term in office roughly 73% of self-identified Republicans offered positive responses to questions regarding the Iraq War compared to just 16% of Democrats (Jacobsen, 2010, 592; Jacobsen, 2011). Thus it is clear that whilst initially partisan pressures do not appear to have been a major influence on support for the war, as the occupation continued and media reporting became

increasingly fragmented partisan divides became increasingly evident. Figure 2 shows the difference in support levels for the Iraq War between Republicans, Democrats and Independent Americans. Whilst support levels amongst Republicans suffered only a slight decline, support levels amongst Democrats declined much more dramatically.

4-4. Strategic & Moral Factors & Public Opinion

With regards to considerations that may have influenced public support levels, strategic considerations, the importance of casualties, partisan pressures, and moral concerns have all been highlighted by past studies. This includes feelings that the war was unwinnable, concerns that the president had manipulated intelligence to support the arguments for war, growing moral opposition for the war itself, and feelings that it may even be unjust and illegal (Guthrie & Quinlan, 2010). Of these factors, Dimaggio concludes through regression analysis (see figure 3 below) that moral objections were the most important driver for opposition amongst the American public (Dimaggio, 2015, 106). The analysis further finds a statistically significant relationship between the belief that President Bush misled the public on WMDs and feelings that the war was unwinnable (Dimaggio, 2015, 155). Primary drivers for such objections included civilian casualty levels, the number of Iraqi's suffering under an increasingly violent occupation, and mass anger over the perceived deception and manipulation of intelligence by the Bush administration in

making the case for war, whilst secondary objections included US casualty levels and the perception that the war was unwinnable (Dimaggio, 2015, 153).

Moral objections became increasingly articulated by the anti-war movement with objections centred on the following issues: that the Iraq war was imperialist and contrary to the interests of the Iraqi people, concerns that the US was motivated by a geopolitical interest in oil, claims that Bush misinformed or lied to the public about WMDs, claims that the war was illegal under international law, and anger because American troops and Iraqi civilians were killed (Dimaggio, 2015, 107).

Moral objections were further fuelled by the Abu Ghraib prison scandal in April 2004 which was another blow to the credibility of the war effort. This scandal drew international attention, and US behaviour was labelled as illegal under international law (Dimaggio, 2015, 127; International Committee of the Red Cross, 2004; United Nations, 1984). In a speech on May 24th 2004 President Bush articulated his response to the scandal, relying heavily on the rhetoric of democracy with such language appearing 35% more often than fearful language (Dimaggio, 2015, 128; The White House, 2004). Some studies have suggested that Bush succeeded in blunting critical narratives in US discourse, while others suggested that discourse remained critical due to the visual nature of the scandal and the images appearing in the media (Dimaggio, 2015, 128; DiMaggio, 2010). Nonetheless, the scandal undermined claims that the US was in Iraq for humanitarian purposes and many Americans' faith in the 'nobility' of the war was shaken.

Table 3.3. Moral and Strategic Factors (March 2006–December 2011)

| Influences on support for/opposition to war | Predicted impact of each factor on public opinion | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Support for/opposition to war | | | | | |
| | Opinions of withdrawal Opinions of withdrawal (March 2006) | Opinions of w/in one year (March 2006) | Support immediate withdrawal (June 2007) | Support or oppose war (June 2007) | Support or oppose war (March 2008) | Support or oppose war (December 2011) |
| 1. Morality of war | .18**** | .28**** | .28**** | .44**** | .57**** | .42**** |
| 2. Expected success | .13*** | .18**** | .34**** | — | .37**** | — |
| 3. War's progress (in the moment) | — | — | — | .34**** | — | — |
| 4. Was the war a success? (retrospectively) | — | — | — | — | — | .25**** |
| 5. Did Bush mislead U.S. on WMDs? (retrospectively) | — | — | — | — | — | .25* |
| 6. Ideology | .14** | .18** | .2*** | .27*** | .25** | .29**** |
| 7. Party | .06* | .08* | .05 | .20**** | .11 | .19**** |

Significance levels: * = 10% level, ** = 5% level, *** = 1% level, **** = .1% level.

Sources: CNN/ORC surveys (March 2006, June 2007, March 2008, December 2011)

Figure 3: Regression analysis of moral & strategic factors affected war support levels (Source: Dimaggio, 2015, 151)

5. Conclusion

In summary, President Bush framed the war as a part of the larger War on Terror and labelled Iraq as a direct and imminent threat due to alleged linked with al Qaeda and WMD programs and shared responsibility for the attacks of September 11th 2001. Whilst initially media coverage was closely aligned with official rhetoric, as the occupation progressed media coverage became increasingly critical of the war, and showed increasing coverage of instances of violence and casualty levels in Iraq which have been

found to show a statistically significant relationship with rising levels of opposition for the war.

Legitimacy of the conflict was also increasingly a problem for the Bush administration. Whilst initial support levels were high, polls taken before the war suggest the possibility for even greater support had the war received support from the United Nations or major US allies (Jacobsen, 2010, 591; Jacobsen, 2011, 85). Moreover, as has been illustrated in this chapter increasing views that the war was illegitimate, immoral, and that the president had manipulated intelligence and deceived the public were key drivers of public opposition.

With reference to framing and the shaping of attitudes with regards to the Iraq war, validations of both elite and democratic theory can be found, with public opinion lying somewhere between the two. Elite theory argues that political officials mould public opinion by framing events, thereby determining how individuals interpret events whilst democratic (or rational public) theory contends that events matter and that individuals are rational in that attention to real world events influences their beliefs. Evidence in past studies suggests that the reality is somewhere in between (Dimaggio, 2015, 155). Validating elite theory, at times Americans appeared to embrace the presidential rhetoric portraying Iraq as a threat, and US policy as humanitarian without considering alternative narratives. Conversely, validating democratic theory, the public displayed rationality by responding to the changing conditions on the ground in Iraq with increasingly negative news acting as a primary driver of war opposition despite

consistency in official framing of the war (Dimaggio, 2015, 106). As such, opposition to the war was driven most significantly by strategic and moral objections that the war was unwinnable and that casualty and violence rates were too high.

Previous studies have thus provided a wealth of discourse on significant frames both in media and official rhetoric in discourse on the Iraq War and have investigated the relationship between various factors and audience support levels for the war. However, despite this wealth of research on the topic, the majorities of studies have focussed on the nexus between presidential rhetoric and media coverage rather than on presidential rhetoric itself as a specific strategy in the Iraq War. This research therefore is intended to address this issue, analysing presidential rhetoric in isolation from media coverage as a political-military strategy employed in the Iraq War.

In the 2015 book 'Selling War, Selling Hope' Dimaggio highlights 'fear' as the central frame employed by the Bush administration towards the Iraq War. However, the way in which such a frame is created and employed, along with its direct influence on public support levels is not addressed in detail. As such, in addressing presidential rhetoric strategies in the Iraq War, this study has built upon the work of Dimaggio by taking the rhetoric of fear as the item of analysis. In such a way this research hopes to contribute to the existing literature by extending upon the existing findings and adding specific research on how such strategies were employed and to what effect. In such a way contributions can be made from a political science perspective to a body of research that

has to this point been dominated by communications studies in order to contribute to further evaluations of rhetoric strategy and related discourse.

III. Conceptual & Theoretical Frameworks

This chapter will introduce the concepts that form the foundation of this study and thus will thus help situate the analysis of Presidential rhetoric in addressing the greater question of why the US has struggled in modern conflicts. There are two main concepts that will be introduced in this chapter. The first is the concept of soft power which will explain the selection of ‘rhetoric’ as an item of study, whilst the second is framing which will address how and why such mechanics are influential in the sphere of domestic and international politics.

1. Soft Power & Human Communications

The backbone of this research will be founded on the concept soft power. As noted in the previous chapter, conflicts are about much more than which side has the superior military force and it is often no longer enough to simply defeat the opponent on the battlefield. Such truths are becoming even more pronounced in the modern information age where the war is no longer contained to the battlefield but is rather projected across the globe through the media. This creates increased potential for opposition, not only from the adversary but from third parties and even the domestic audience depending on how such coverage is received. As such, the concept of soft power has been applied here

for two reasons. The first is to address this nexus between soft and hard powers in conflicts in light of the effects of the increased scope of warfare in the modern information era, and the second is in order to facilitate a strategic understanding of the ways in which tools such as rhetoric and framing can be used by leaders as a part of the war-fighting strategy under such circumstances.

Soft power rests on the culture, history, political values and foreign policy of a country however has become increasingly understood to have a diverse range sources and forms including norm diffusion, rhetoric and framing, agenda setting, strategic narratives, and other communicative or cultural tools (Kaldor, 2014; Nye, 2008, 96; Nye, 2014, 21; Rothman, 2011; Roselle et al, 2014). Specifically this research will apply the concept as revised by Rothman (2011) who reconceptualised power as a continuum spanning from the hardest forms of power (physical force) to the softest forms (rhetoric and framing)¹. Such a conceptualisation allows for greater flexibility in the way in which different resources may be incorporated and defined within the power spectrum and thus may be more appropriate for application in conflict scenarios in which the distinction between soft and hard powers may not be clearly distinguishable (Rothman, 2011, 50). In terms of the softest forms of power, Rothman divides this into two subcategories: *normative framing* - the use of morals or emotions, and *analytical framing* - the generation of a story or narrative which may identify harm and victims, along with attribution of blame or responsibility (Rothman, 2011, 54-55). Both of these forms of framing can be

¹ See appendix 1

identified in the Iraq War as President Bush plays highly on the morals and emotions of American's in order to make his case for the war, but also clearly identifies victims and elements of narrative commonly seen in analytical framing in his discussion of Saddam Hussein's regime and terrorist leaders in Iraq.

If *power* is understood as the ability to influence the actions and behaviour of others (Dahl, 1957; Nye, 2008; Nye, 2014; Rothman, 2011), *soft power* as first conceptualised by Joseph Nye is defined as “the ability to obtain a preferred outcome by attraction and persuasion rather than coercion and payment” (Nye, 2008, 95; Nye, 2014, 19). Since the term was first coined scholars have contributed their own revisions to soft power theory including the conceptualisation of soft power as the use of intangible resources (Lee, 2009; Lee, 2010; Rothman, 2011) or as “the ability to create consensus around shared meaning” (Roselle et al., 2014, 72). Moreover, scholars have debated what constitutes *soft power resources* as means of producing soft power. Whilst Nye considered a country's soft power to rest on its culture and history, political values, and foreign policy (Nye, 2008, 96; Nye, 2014, 21), other scholars have suggested more diverse sources including norm diffusion, rhetoric and framing, agenda setting, strategic narratives, and other communicative or cultural tools (Kaldor, 2014; Rothman, 2011; Roselle et al., 2014). However, increasingly scholars have come to consider soft power discourse to place excessive emphasis on defining soft power and differentiating soft and hard power resources rather than focussing on the effects of such capabilities and their influences (Roselle et al., 2014, 71). Therefore, alongside providing insight into the US struggles

and the requirements of modern conflicts, this paper also hopes to contribute to the discourse on soft power through the analysis of President Bush's 'fear rhetoric' as a specific political-military soft power strategy in order to offer a more practical insight into the effects and capabilities of soft power strategies in the modern age.

In this information age one arena within which soft power can be applied is in conflicts or military campaigns. In military jargon, soft power can fall under a number of terms including; *information campaigns, soft engagement, full spectrum dominance, hearts and minds operations, non-kinetic operations, influence operations, and media operations*, and is often intended for the purpose of influencing a particular leadership, audience, or group in support of government policy. Such operations may influence whether targets groups become involved and how they will participate in the conflict (Taverner, 2010). Roselle et al., (2014) identify *strategic narratives* as a form of soft power and suggest specific applications for this in conflicts through influence on how situations, actors and behaviours interact and are understood.

Furthermore, in discussing factors for effective soft power strategies Taylor (2010, 162) states that "strategic communications to be effective must be *credible*" and must assume a defensible policy, respectable identity, and core value. Similarly, in considering *narratives* as a central form of human communications scholars have identified *plausibility* and *logic* rather than *verifiability* as some of the most important components in presenting rational narratives for audience consumption (Fisher, 1984; Bruner, 1991). Bruner (1991, 10) further emphasises the importance of *intension* – why the story is told

and how it is interpreted as it is – in the construction of effective narratives. Fisher (1984) considers narrative both to act as a mode of social influence and through the *narrative paradigm* to offer a conceptual framework and logic for “assessing ‘stories’ and determining whether one should adhere to the stories one is encouraged to endorse or to accept as the basis for decision and actions” (Fisher, 1985). Building upon assumptions of humans as rational actors Fisher further identifies narrative *probability* and *fidelity* as two core principles upon which to judge the merits of stories as forms of communication of social reality (Fisher, 1984; Fisher, 1985). As such, these components of effective narratives will be considered in the analysis of US soft power strategies within this study.

2. Framing & Rhetoric

Framing can be understood as the “selection of a restricted number of thematically related attributes for inclusion on the media agenda when a particular object is discussed” (Weaver, 2007, 143). It is not however, merely limited to media usage. Rather, framing is relevant when anyone discusses anything and can have tremendous influence on how people react to and accept particular realities. Furthermore, frames can be commonly considered to be “tied in with culture as a macro societal structure” which is especially important for framing in issues such as the Iraq War where culturally significant elements can be utilised and highlighted in order to gain support for a certain course of

action (Weaver, 2007, 143). An example of this significant to this research would be the usage of freedom as a value of cultural importance in American society & therefore able to be utilised by the Bush administration to garner support for his initiatives in Iraq.

Framing is commonly considered in terms of what aspects are highlighted and increased in salience within a particular text in order to promote a certain definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment of the item described (Entman, 1993, 52; Weaver, 2007, 143). By definition, by increasing the salience of certain bits of information about an item, those pieces of information are made more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences. In the process of framing, this can be achieved through placement or repetition, or by association of such information with culturally familiar symbols (Entman, 1993, 53). The frame therefore “determines whether most people notice and how they understand and remember a problem, as well as how they evaluate and choose to act upon it”. As such, and as demonstrated by Kahneman & Tyersky’s experiments, frames call attention to particular aspects of the issue described whilst simultaneously directing attention away from other aspects (Kahneman & Tyersky, 1984). As such, “most frames are defined by what they omit as well as include” (Entman, 1993, 54). This directing of attention to certain aspects of a particular issue can therefore lead audiences to have different reactions. Within domestic politics we commonly see politicians competing with each other and the media over news frames in battles for public support (Entman, 1989; Riker, 1986; Entman, 1993, 55). Thus, frames can exert great social power especially once a certain frame has become widely accepted,

as subsequently to use another term or frame is to risk that the target audience will perceive the communicator as lacking credibility (Entman, 1993, 55; Gamson, 1992). This element was seen in the early stages of the Iraq War campaign, when Presidential rhetoric dominated media framing of the issue and thus any opposing or alternate frames were omitted from the discourse or relegated to the back pages of newspapers, thus decreasing the salience of such views (Dimaggio, 2015, 75).

Entman further identifies four locations in the communication process of frames. These include the *communicator*, the *text*, the *receiver*, and the *culture*. In this study these locations can be identified as the Bush Administration (the communicator), presidential radio broadcasts (the text), the US public (the receiver) and American values and norms (the culture). The role of these elements in the framing process are as follows; “communicators make conscious or unconscious framing judgements in deciding what to say, guided by frames that organise their belief systems. The text contains frames, which are manifested by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgements. The frames that guide the receiver’s thinking and conclusion may or may not reflect the frames in the text and the framing intention of the communicator. The culture is the stock of commonly invoked frames” (Entman, 1993, 52). It is along this basis therefore, that this research has been conducted through the application of key word frequency analysis in examining the question of how President Bush used a rhetoric of fear in discussing the Iraq War.

As such, framing plays a significant role in affecting how people react to events or issues. This is especially important in the political setting where the democratic process is essentially a competition of different narrative frames working to garner support for a certain approach to an issue. Framing can therefore be considered as a core mechanism in the democratic process as it allows political elites to control the discourse on particular issues, thus determining public opinion (Entman, 1993; Zeller, 1992). It is for that reason that this research will focus on the frames adopted by the Bush administration, in particular those relating to a rhetoric of fear, in understanding why high initial levels of public support were not sustainable throughout the campaign.

IV. Research Design

The research proposes the application of quantitative content analysis of US soft power strategies, defined for the sake of this study as presidential rhetoric, as employed by President Bush in analysing the case study of the Iraq War. More specifically, this research will analyse and evaluate how President Bush utilised the rhetoric of ‘fear’, as identified and introduced in chapter two of this paper as the prominent frame utilised by the administration in discussing the Iraq War, and the consequences, both positive and negative, of this rhetoric strategy for public support levels. This research is specifically intended to test the input of various elements in constructing a rhetoric of fear and the extent to which such rhetoric was successful in achieving the goals of support mobilisation and maintenance for the President’s handling of the Iraq War.

1. Methodology

Using the software Wordsmith for computer based analysis combined with manual methods, a word frequency analysis was conducted on the transcribed text of President Bush’s weekly presidential radio broadcasts² for the duration of his presidency from

² White house archives – President Bush’s Weekly Radio Addresses: <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/radio/>

January 20th 2001 through to January 20th 2009 (n = 418). Word frequency analysis was conducted only on terms identified through previous studies to constitute a rhetoric of fear. These are listed as: “terror”, “terrorism”, references to “terrorist threats”, terrorist leaders such as Osama bin Laden and Abu Musab al Zarqawi, “WMDs”, “murder”, and “fear” along with references to attempts by the United States to promote “peace” and “security” (Dimaggio, 2015, 120). Due to problems of contextualising computer based word frequency lists, reference to WMDs were considered present when reference to “weapons” occurred in conjunction with references to “biological”, “chemical”, “nuclear” or “mass destruction”. Moreover, counts of “peace” and “security” are considered as proxy for reference to US attempts to promote peace and stability in the region. Thus the unit of analysis was word frequency count of reference to fearful rhetoric. Finally this study additionally accounted for references to the terror attacks of September 11th 2001 as a review of the existing literature has identified this as a critical event in influencing public opinion and susceptibility to a rhetoric of fear. This was achieved through identification of the occurrence of “September” in conjunction with “eleven” or “eleventh” in Presidential radio addresses in computer based analysis.

Whilst the umbrella term used here of Bush’s “rhetoric of fear” is referring to the theme of fear in presidential rhetoric as a functioning mechanism intended to incite within the public great emotions and increased threat perception, leading to greater susceptibility to presidential calls to action, ‘fear’ as a term included within word frequency counts is rather considered, along with ‘murder’ to be terms indicating attempts by the President

to stoke anxiety within the US public by suggesting action and sentiment created in the victims of Presidential narratives (Dimaggio, 2015, 120).

Two data sets were developed using computer based word frequency analysis. The first recorded total counts of the rhetoric of fear based upon the terms identified above, whilst the second data set aims to control for the use of fearful rhetoric used in reference to Iraq by only considering word frequency counts of such terms occurring in radio broadcasts that also directly refer to “Iraq” (n = 141). The results of both data sets are presented in chapter five. The decision to include both controlled and uncontrolled data sets was taken in order to evaluate the extent to which Iraq dominated the rhetoric of fear, and also to suggest whether the rhetoric of fear was a tool used only in references to Iraq or as part of a broader narrative. Finally alongside computer based data, manual word frequency analysis was also conducted in order to add improved elements of validity to the data. Despite advantages in terms of context and validity when conducting manual analysis, computer based analysis holds advantages in terms of reliability, thus combining both methods is intended to improve both the reliability and validity of the study (Pashakhanlou, 2017).

Alongside the development of data presenting the overall occurrence of fearful rhetoric across the duration of Bush’s presidency, word frequency data for the specific terms constituting a rhetoric of fear is also presented in figures 14 through to 22 in chapter five. Such data allows for deeper analysis of the frames and elements used in the creation of

a rhetoric of fear, and permits for analysis of the trends in this over time. This will be addressed in more detail in chapters five and six.

2. The Weekly Radio Address of the President of the United States

As stated above, this study takes Presidential Radio Broadcasts as the object of analysis. The Weekly Address of the President of the United States is a short, weekly speech delivered by the President to the nation. President Bush also introduced the release of Presidential Radio Addresses in podcast form alongside standard radio broadcasts.

Presidential radio broadcasts were selected as the data source for this study for several reasons. Firstly, they offer a consistent overview of presidential rhetoric as they are for the most part of a similar length, and are broadcast on a regular weekly schedule for the full duration of Bush's presidency. Secondly, as this research wishes to focus on presidential rhetoric and not media coverage and framing of the president's message, , presidential radio broadcasts allow such a direct communication of presidential rhetoric as it would have been received by the target audience – the US domestic public. As President Bush lamented that a media “filter” prevented Americans from getting “the truth” about Iraq, analysis of Presidential Radio Broadcasts allows this study to focus on

presidential narrative and rhetoric in isolation from such a media filter, thus controlling for the effects of media coverage on official rhetoric (Dimaggio, 2015, 116).

Finally, data suggests that even as recently as 2017, American radio listenership remains high. Schmidt (2018) reported that 90% of Americans over the age of twelve listened to AM/FM radio at least once a week, and that 57% of online radio listeners were also tuning in at least once per week. The report furthermore, cites a study from Edison Research which found that podcast listenership was continuing to grow (Schmidt, 2018). Therefore, whilst data specifically regarding listenership for presidential radio broadcasts is not available, such data does suggest that in general, radio broadcast remained a relevant way to reach large portions of the US population.

3. Content Analysis

Content analysis can be used for several purposes and in addressing various types of research questions. This include questions regarding the antecedents of communications, or questions of by whom and why such communication methods are used, to describe and make inferences about the characteristics of communications – the ‘how’ and ‘what’ questions – and to make inferences about the effects of communications – the question of ‘with what effect’? (Holsti, 1969). It is with regards to the latter groups of questions,

how and *with what effect* that this study shall aim to employ quantitative content analysis in addressing the research questions proposed in chapter one.

Whilst computer based content analysis has become increasingly employed due to associated increases in reliability, manual analysis is still considered useful when dealing with latent meaning as humans are considered to maintain an “interpretive edge over computers” (Pashakhanlou, 2017, 449). As such, despite potential drawbacks in reliability manual content analysis is still considered well suited for inquiries dealing with *how* and *why* questions alongside *what* questions (Pashakhanlou, 2017, 449). Therefore, in order to address some criticisms of computer based quantitative analysis in terms of contextualisation, interpretation, and validity, and to achieve the highest possible combination of validity and reliability in this study, a combination of computer based and manual content analysis has been employed in addressing the use of a rhetoric of fear by President Bush.

Moreover, elements of qualitative analysis will be employed within the interpretation of data covered in chapter six in order to supplement the analysis by adding the necessary interpretation, contextualisation, and validity required to further mitigate some of the shortcomings of quantitative content analysis (Pashakhanlou, 2017, 452). Qualitative elements of content analysis are considered favourable to a combination of quantitative content analysis and other forms of qualitative analysis such as discourse analysis when the aim is to reduce the data to study systematically, rather than opening it up to analyse holistically, and aiming to arrive at a single interpretation rather than providing multiple

readings by focussing on what is in the material rather than silences (Pashakhanlou, 2017, 452). As such, this was considered to be the optimum method for this research where only the rhetoric of fear, and not other presidential frames will be analysed, and where the sheer volume of data covered makes it impossible to cover adequately through in-depth, qualitative methods.

V. Word Frequency Counts of ‘Fear’ & its Composite Elements in Presidential Radio Addresses (2001 – 2009)

This chapter will present the results of computer and manual based word frequency analysis and will thus address the question of *how* a rhetoric of fear was created and employed in George W. Bush’s presidential radio addresses. The first section of the chapter will provide an overview of total counts of fearful rhetoric appearing in radio broadcasts by year and by month according to both computer based and manual methods of analysis. The latter half of this chapter will be dedicated to presenting the different frames and elements that constituted such rhetoric, thus allowing the identification of trends in terms of what elements were used to construct a rhetoric of fear at different points throughout the Bush presidency. This will provide a framework for analysis and interpretation of *why* and *to what effect* such rhetoric was used, as will be addressed in chapter six.

1. Overview

Figure 4 shows an overview of the occurrence of fearful rhetoric in George W. Bush’s presidential radio addresses for the duration of his terms in office. It includes data from

both computer based and manual analysis. The computer based analysis has been further broken down into two data sets, total counts of fearful rhetoric in all presidential radio addresses and controlled for addresses mentioning Iraq, as introduced in the previous chapter.

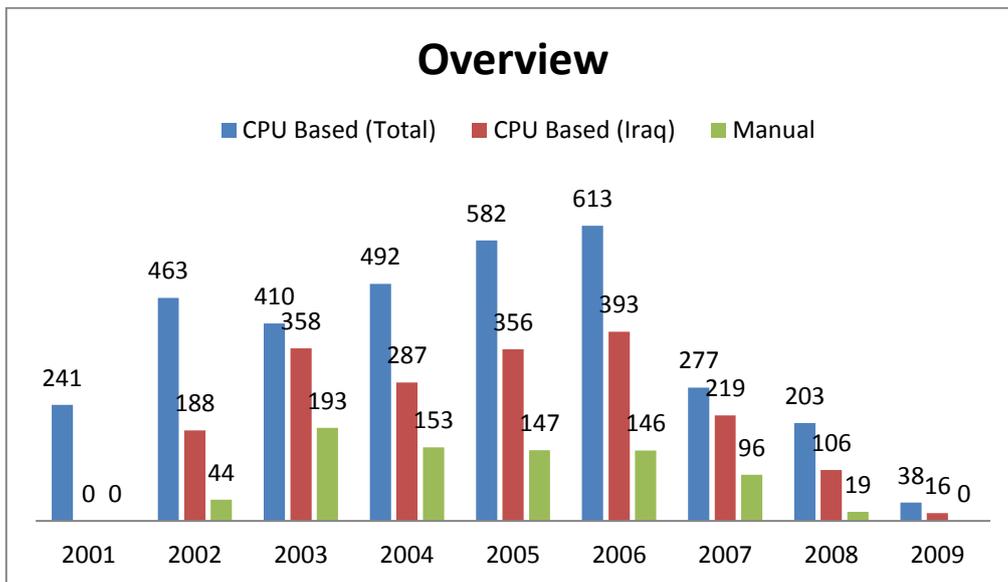


Figure 4: An overview of fearful rhetoric in Presidential Radio Addresses during the Bush presidency.

From figure 4 we can see that counts of total fearful rhetoric were relatively high from the start of Bush’s presidency, and increased considerably in 2002, after which counts continued to increase steadily through to 2006. Following this there is a rapid decline in counts of fearful rhetoric employed in 2007 and a further decline in 2008. 2009 also shows very low counts of fearful rhetoric but this can be attributed in large part due to

the end of Bush's presidency in January 2009 meaning only three presidential radio addresses were broadcast that year. Counts of fearful rhetoric increased markedly following the September 11 attacks, and total counts of fearful rhetoric remained higher both than counts when controlled for mentions of Iraq and than manual counts, suggesting that rather than fearful rhetoric being a unique frame of Iraq War campaign, rather Iraq was fit into a pre-existing narrative frame of fear and threat utilised by the Bush administration.

Computer based word frequency counts show that fearful language was employed to a significant extent from the first year of Bush's presidency in 2001. Perhaps unsurprisingly, as figure 5 shows, the majority of this rhetoric occurred in the latter half of 2001 however, following the September 11 terrorist attacks on New York's World Trade Centre. Significantly, during this year there were no direct references to Iraq in presidential radio addresses.

Direct references to Iraq first appeared in September of 2002. The general trend of both overall fearful rhetoric and that when controlled for direct references to Iraq shows an overall increase in utilisation of 'fear' from this point up until a peak in such rhetoric in 2006. In fact, years 2003, 2005, and 2006 recorded over 300 counts of fearful language when controlled for addresses directly referencing Iraq. This finding is perhaps unsurprising as this covers the build-up to and initial phase of the Iraq campaign, and the period leading up to the 2004 US presidential elections. All of these would have been critical times in building domestic support for the president and the wars in Iraq and

Afghanistan constituted major items in the presidential campaigns and debates leading up to the 2004 elections (Levy, 2018). Moreover, according to computer based frequency counts, from 2003 until the end of the Bush administration, over half of the fearful rhetoric used in presidential radio addresses was employed in addresses which also made direct reference to Iraq. This shows the high salience of Iraq within presidential rhetoric and its position as a central element in the rhetoric of fear.

Now I shall discuss the general trends of manual word frequency counts. These are noticeably lower than that of computer based counts as these were selected only where the fearful rhetoric was considered to be used in direct reference to Iraq, thus controlling for the use of similar language and frames towards other issues.

According to manual word frequency counts, the highest concentration of fearful rhetoric towards Iraq occurred in 2003, the year in which the initial invasion and the bulk of combat operations occurred. As such, this was a critical period for the president to justify the need for such operations in order to win domestic public support for the campaign. Following this, counts remained fairly stable, hovering around the 150 mark through to 2006. Following this there was a drop by roughly one third in counts from 2006 to 2007 and a further significant decrease in 2008. In the three presidential radio broadcasts made in 2009, no counts of fearful rhetoric used directly against Iraq were found through manual analysis. Manual counts remain much lower than computer based counts throughout the Bush administration. This suggest that either a rhetoric of fear was part of a broader narrative concerning more than just the Iraq war, but also as may be

revealed through qualitative analysis, that whilst elements of the rhetoric of fear and reference to Iraq were often made within a single radio address, from 2004 onwards the linkage of such elements to Iraq was often more nuanced and ambiguous than the direct linkages between ‘fear’ and Iraq made in 2002 to 2003. This will be addressed in more detail in chapter six

2. Word Frequency Counts of Fearful Rhetoric by Year:

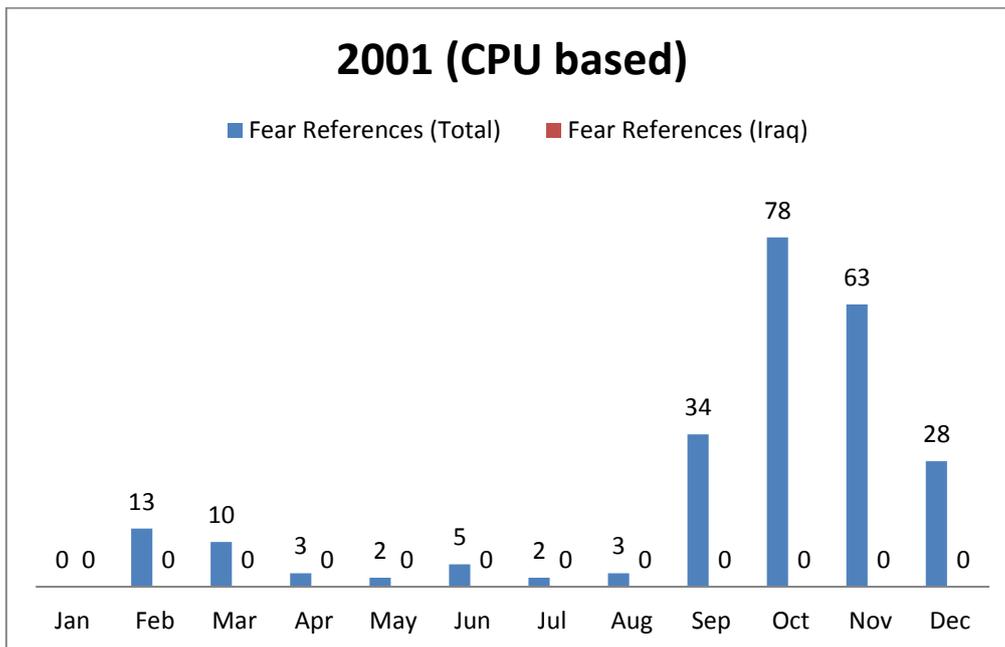


Figure 5: Computer based word frequency counts for fearful rhetoric in 2001.

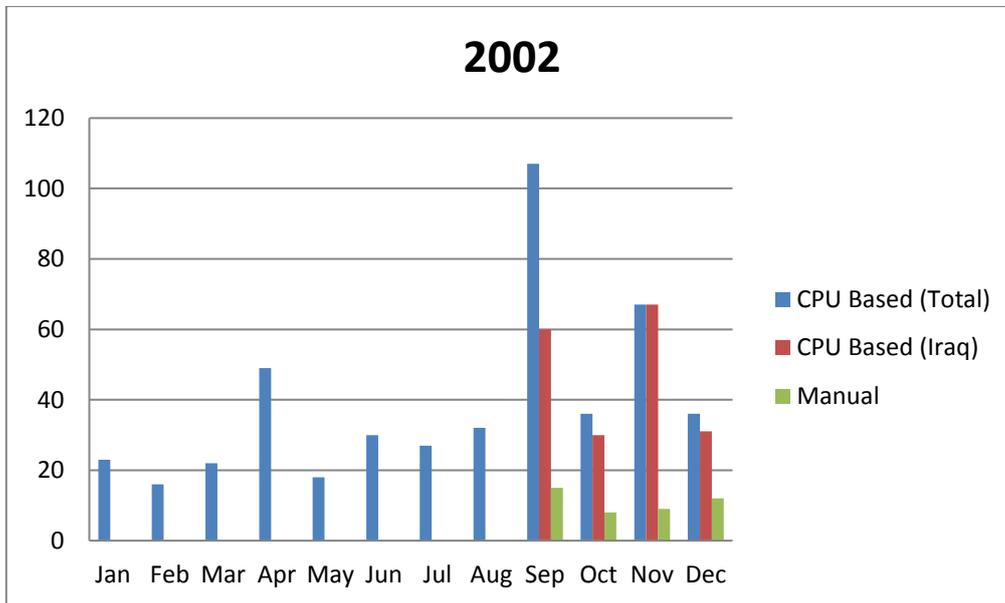


Figure 6: Word frequency counts for fearful rhetoric in presidential radio addresses in 2002

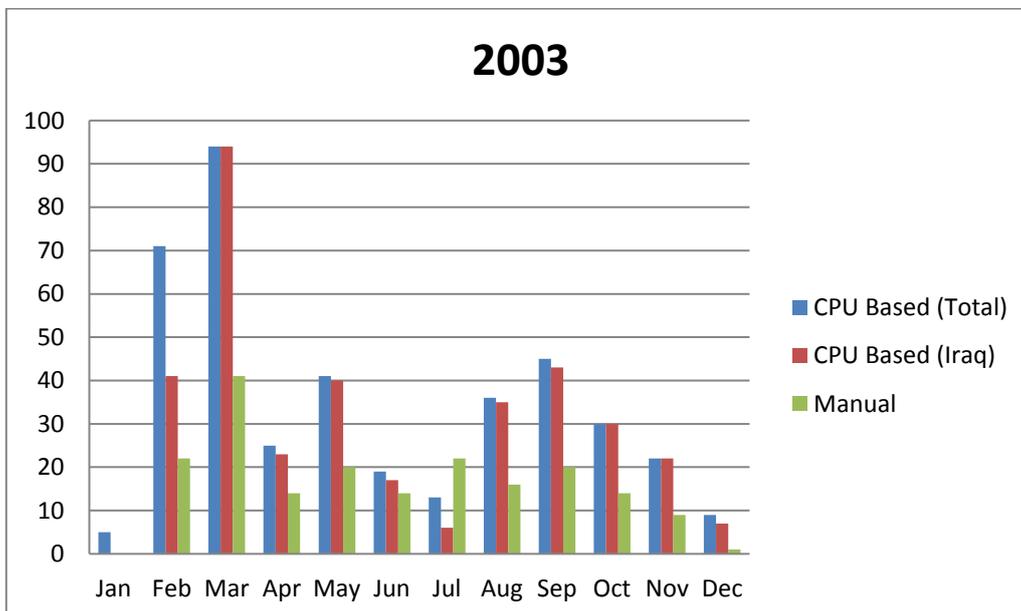


Figure 7: Word frequency of fearful rhetoric in presidential radio addresses from 2003

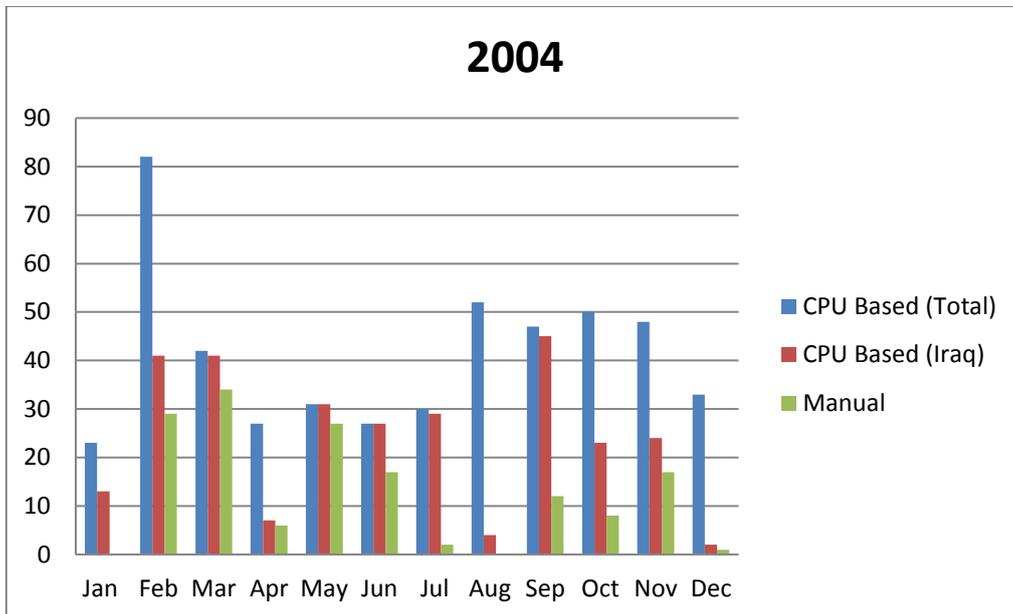


Figure 8: Word frequency of fearful rhetoric from presidential radio addresses from 2004

Direct references to Iraq did not appear in presidential radio addresses until September 2002, one year after the September 11 attacks. In fact, the first direct mention of Iraq occurred on September 14th 2002, almost exactly a year to the day after the attacks. This timing of introduction of Iraq is very significant and appears have been a conscious decision adopted by the Bush administration in order to maximise the impact of a rhetoric of fear on the US public (Dimaggio, 2015, 62; Western, 2005). This can therefore be interpreted as further indirect efforts to link Iraq with the fear and threat of terrorism and the possibility of another direct attack on the US homeland in the minds of the American public.

The peak in counts of fearful rhetoric in Bush’s first term in office occurred in March 2003. This was the period of initial military operations in Iraq. Thus, the data suggests that an increase in utilisation of a rhetoric of fear coincided both with the bulk of combat operations in Iraq and with campaigns to win public support for the President in the 2004 presidential election campaign. This suggests that President Bush used fear as an active soft power strategy and mechanism to gain public support for short term-goals and policies.

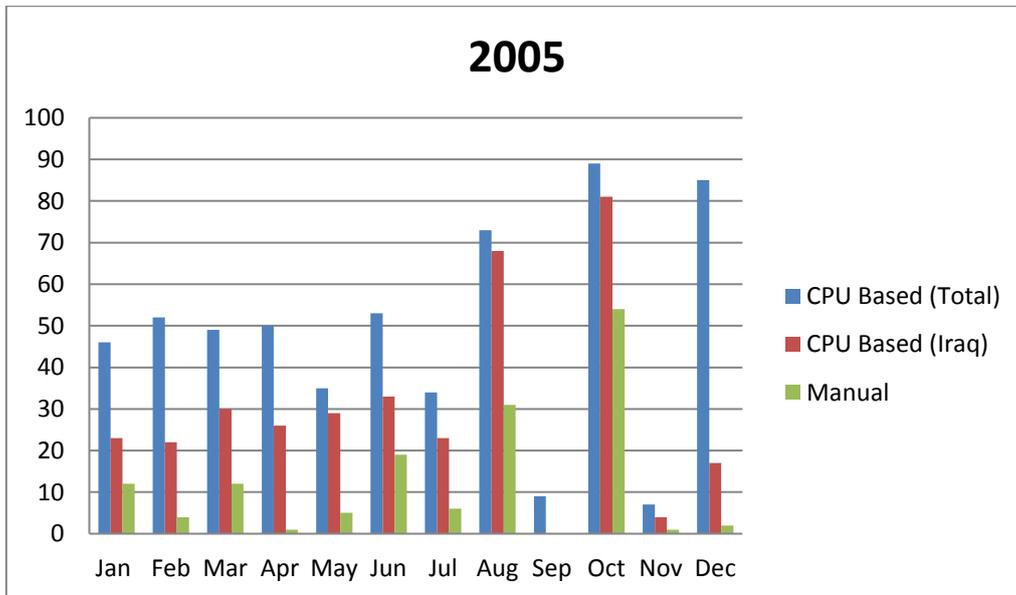


Figure 9: Word frequency of fearful rhetoric from presidential radio addresses from 2005

In terms of manual word frequency counts of the direct application of fearful rhetoric towards Iraq, the peak occurred in October of 2005. This was the period of Iraqi referendum on the new Iraqi constitution, suggesting fear may have been used in framing the development of Iraq and progress made towards democracy. Following this there

was a significant decrease in references to Iraq and very low counts of fearful rhetoric employed overall within presidential radio broadcasts. Fearful rhetoric when controlled for references to Iraq remained low for the remainder of Bush's presidency, only surpassing 20 counts in manual analysis in three months in 2006 and two months in 2007. Computer based frequency counts were slightly higher but still significantly lower than the numbers that were seen repeatedly in the first term of Bush's presidency from 2001 to 2004.

Despite this, an increase was observed in computer based frequency counts in September 2006 and in July through to September 2007. It is possible that some of this increase can be explained by efforts to win support for the Surge, an increase in US troop levels in Iraq in order to try and deal with increasing sectarian violence within the country, and the need to justify this to the domestic population as by this point support levels for the war had fallen drastically with opinion polls show that the majority of the population was in support of a reduction in troop levels deployed in Iraq even at the expense of civil order in the country (ABC News, 2007; Washington Post Poll, 2007).

Figure 10 shows the results for word frequency counts of fearful rhetoric employed in 2006. Peaks in total fear references when controlled for references to Iraq occurred in September 2006 when 109 out of 129 total counts of fearful rhetoric occurred in speeches referencing Iraq. Interestingly however, manual word frequency counts for this month remain significantly lower. This could be explained either by human error in the data analysis process leading to inaccurate manual work frequency counts. However, it could

alternatively suggest that whilst fearful rhetoric was utilised heavily in conjunction with references to Iraq, the linkage between Iraq and ‘fear’ was left intentionally ambiguous.

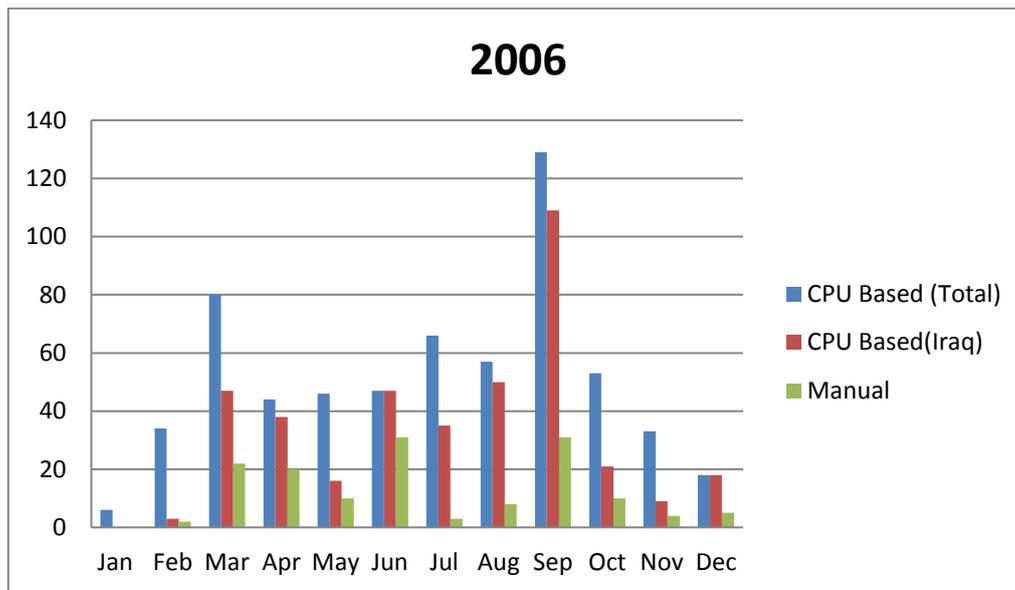


Figure 10: Word frequency of fearful rhetoric from presidential radio addresses from 2006

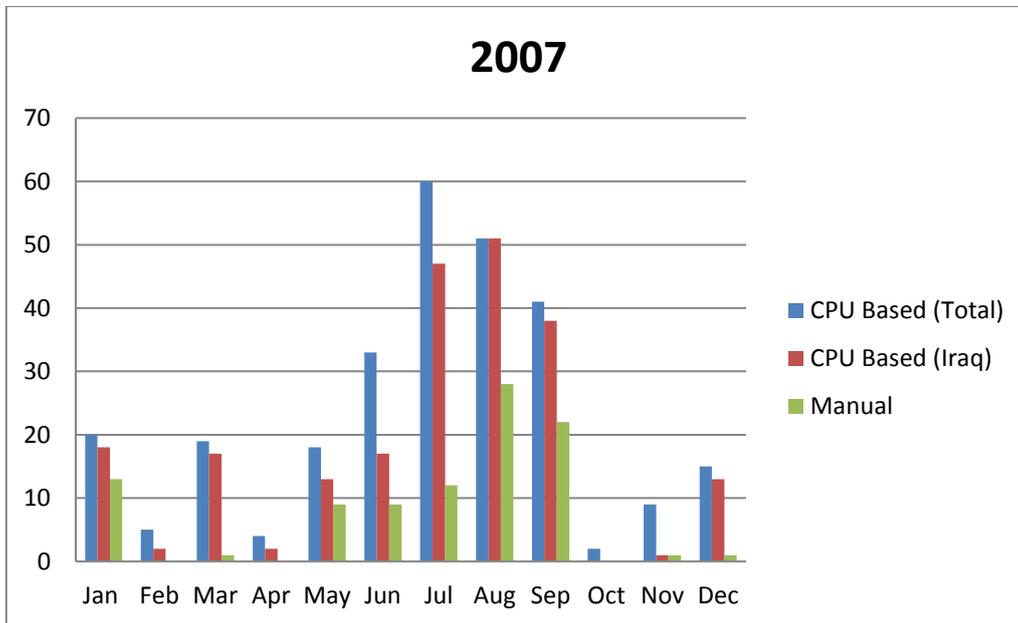


Figure 11: Word frequency of fearful rhetoric in presidential radio addresses from 2007

In 2007, whilst seeing an overall reduction in counts of fearful rhetoric compared with 2006, use of fearful rhetoric gradually increased from the start of the year with peaks in July and August and September, during which period there were increases in word frequency counts of ‘fear’ across all measures. Counts were particularly high in August and September. In August, computer based word frequency counts show that all uses of fearful rhetoric in that month occurred in radio addresses directly referencing Iraq, reflecting the deep integration of Iraq and ‘fear’ in presidential rhetoric.

The overall decrease in counts of fearful rhetoric from October 2007 onwards continues through to 2008 when the highest total counts of fearful rhetoric occurred in January, whilst the highest counts of fearful rhetoric when controlled for references to Iraq

occurred in April. According to manual counts Iraq was only directly targeted by such rhetoric in January, April, May, June, September, and December, and in each case only a couple of references were made, a significant decrease even when compared to 2007 levels. Thus we can see that towards the end of Bush's presidency fearful rhetoric was used to a significantly lesser extent. Potential explanations for this will be discussed in the next chapter.

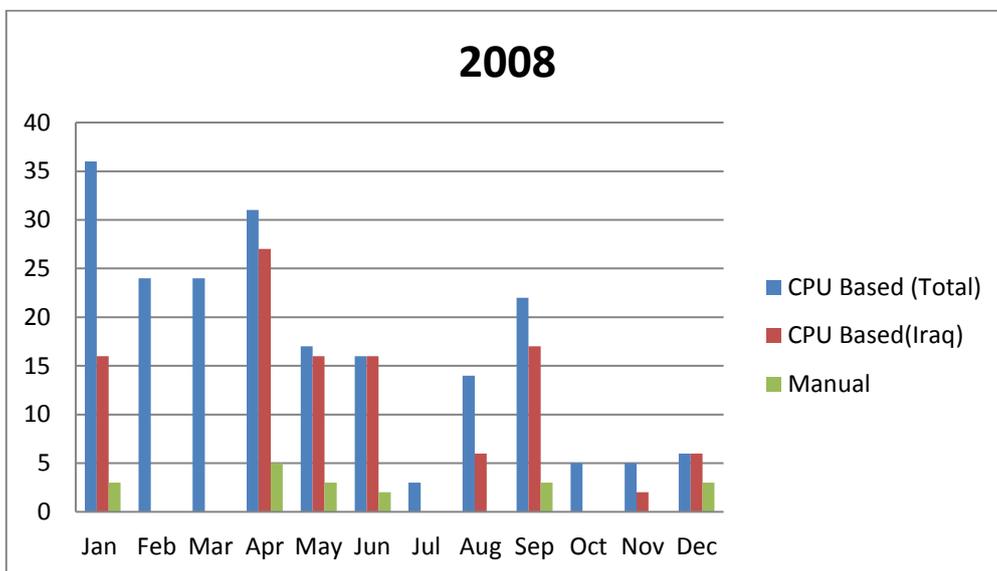


Figure 12: Word frequency of fearful rhetoric in presidential radio addresses from 2008

From mid-2004 onwards there appears to be a decreasing trend in the level of fearful rhetoric directed towards Iraq. Despite surges in the levels of fearful rhetoric directed towards Iraq in August and October 2005 these levels remain generally low throughout 2005 before seeing an increase in 2006. By April 2006, according to computer based counts, Iraq has once again begun to dominate fearful rhetoric used by the president.

This could be in light of increasing violence in Iraq during the US occupation of the country and in efforts to maintain support as the occupation and campaign drags on and public support levels for the President's handling of the war decreases (Arango, 2013). This dominant trend continued through 2007 until October, when there was a major drop in all counts of fearful rhetoric both when controlled for direct reference to Iraq and in total counts. Whilst references to Iraq dropped further in 2008, the computer based analysis suggests that when discussed, addresses directly mentioning Iraq accounted for the overwhelming majority of counts of fearful rhetoric used by the president. Iraq remained central in Bush's rhetoric of fear through to the end of his presidency in 2009, when in just three radio addresses made before the termination of Bush's presidency, almost half the counts of fearful rhetoric occurred in speeches directly referencing Iraq according to computer based analysis. Despite this, manual counts suggest that no fearful rhetoric was directly targeted towards Iraq in 2009.

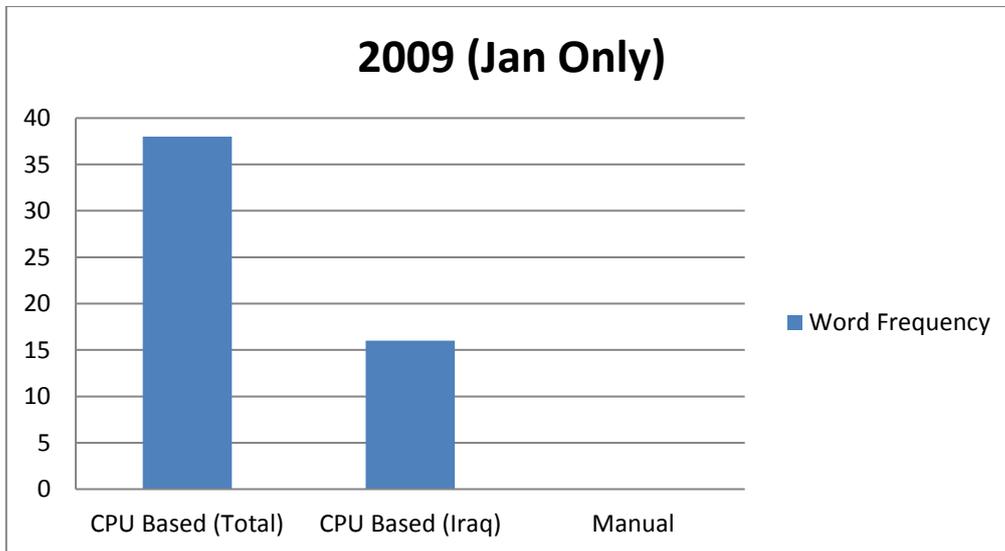


Figure 13: Word frequency of fearful rhetoric in presidential radio addresses from 2009

3. Computer Based Quantitative Analysis by Frame

This section will show the occurrence of key words relating to different themes considered to be components of Bush’s rhetoric of fear. The data used here is only from computer based word frequency counts after controlling for direct reference to Iraq. Thus data for 2001 has not been included as there were no direct references to Iraq in presidential radio addresses delivered in 2001.

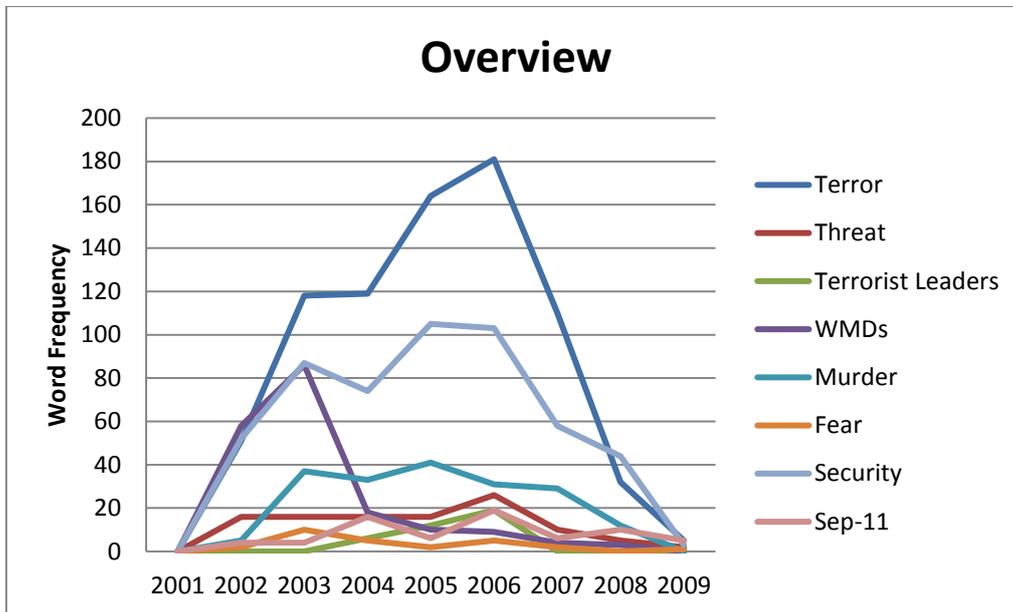


Figure 14: Word frequency by theme 2001-2009

Figure 14 shows there was a consistent increase in use of rhetoric relating to terror in presidential radio addresses until the peak in 2006, after which references to terror dropped dramatically. References to security and efforts to promote peace and stability, indicated by “security” on the graphs, followed a similar but less dramatic trend. As year by year data sets also show, references to threats such as ‘terror’ or ‘WMDs’ are often accompanied by a simultaneous increase in references to ‘peace’ and ‘security’. The graph further shows that reference to WMDs, which was a major theme in the first few years of Bush’s presidency and the war in Iraq, quickly became insignificant, reducing close to zero from 2004 onwards. Finally, from 2002 onwards ‘murder’ can be considered a significant frame, although its salience is much lower than that of ‘fear’, ‘security’, or ‘WMDs’ prior to 2004. This suggests attempts by the administration to

appeal to universal morals and the emotions of the audience within their rhetoric strategy. The overall trend shows a drastic decrease in all counts of fearful rhetoric post 2006, a trend that was consistent through to the end of Bush's presidency.

Figures 15 and 16 clearly show that in the lead up to and early stages of the Iraq War 'WMDs' and efforts to promote 'peace and security' were central frames in the composition of Bush's rhetoric of fear. From mid-2003 however counts of WMD references dropped significantly and from this point on, 'terror' became the central pillar of fearful rhetoric. For the most part, efforts to promote peace and security remained significant and steady. From April to June 2008 efforts to promote peace & security did become the dominant theme, however due to low counts of fearful rhetoric in general over this year this can be better understood in terms of the maintenance of this frame relative to a significant decrease in reference to other elements such as terrorism.

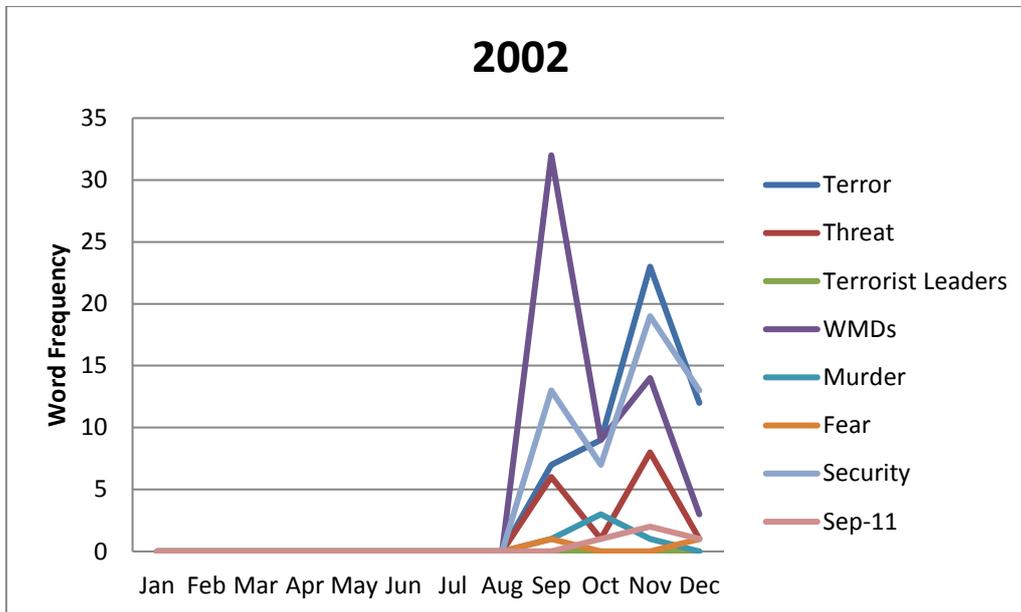


Figure 15: 2002 Word Frequency count by frame

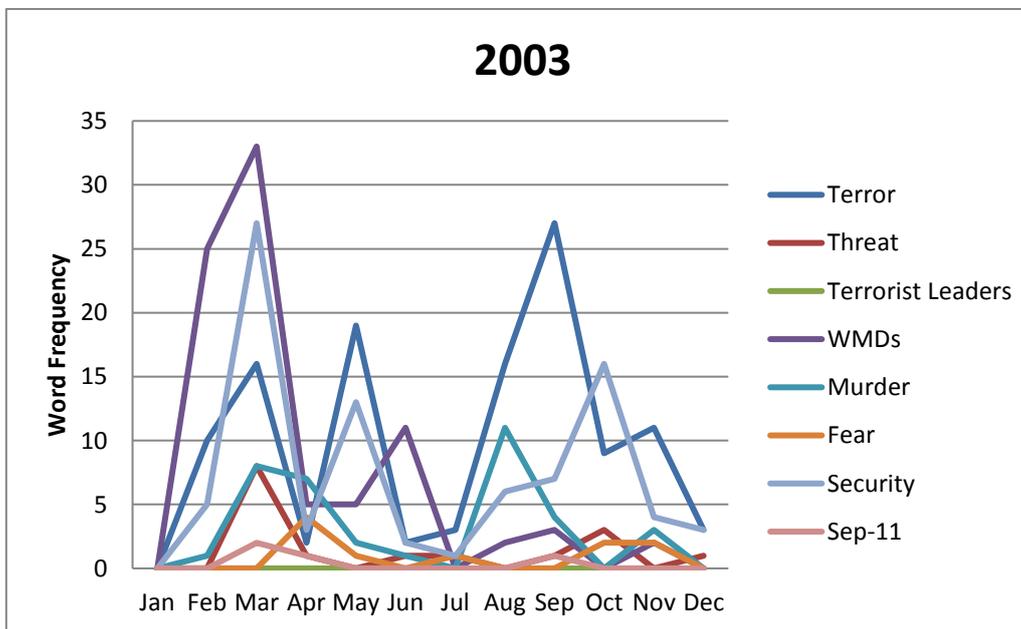


Figure 16: 2003 Word frequency counts by frame

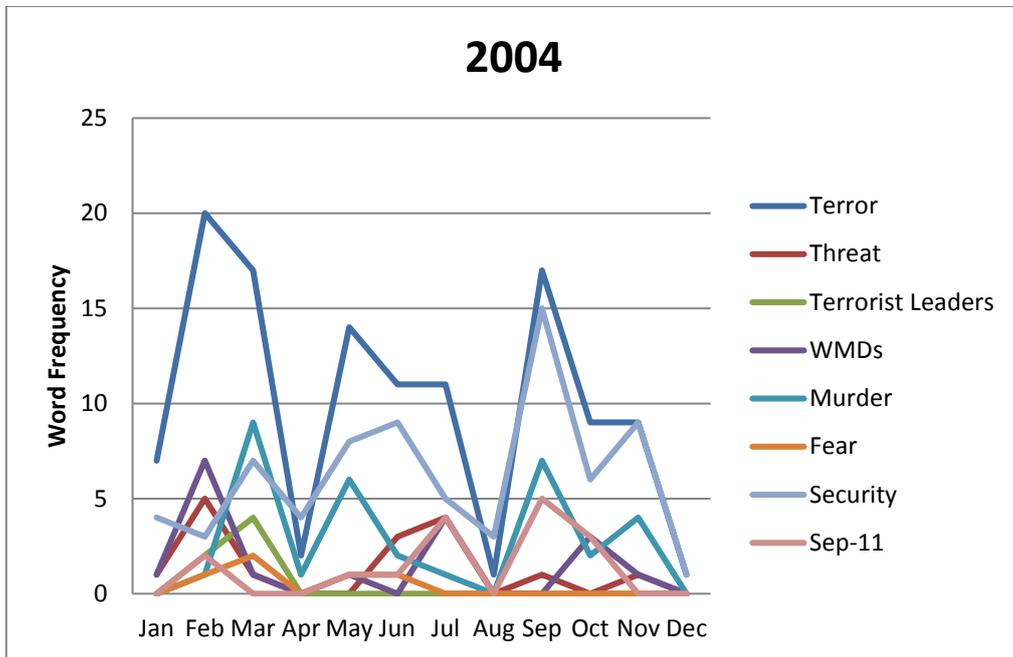


Figure 17: 2004 word frequency counts by frame

Interestingly, from 2002 through to 2004, the data shows that increases in references to ‘terror’ or ‘WMDs’ were often coupled by a simultaneous increase in references to ‘security’. This supports previous findings that the combination of such frames were used to gain support for a policy initiative – in this case the invasion of Iraq - by juxtaposing the threat, the alleged existence of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction within Iraq, with the need for action and the ability of the US forces to defend against such threats (Dimaggio, 2015, 64).

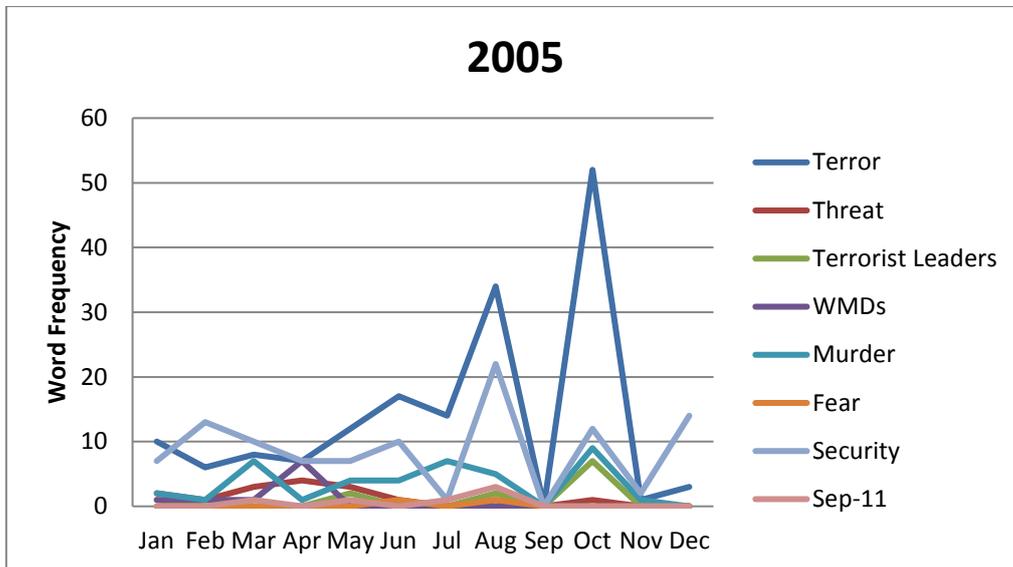


Figure 18: 2005 word frequency counts by frame

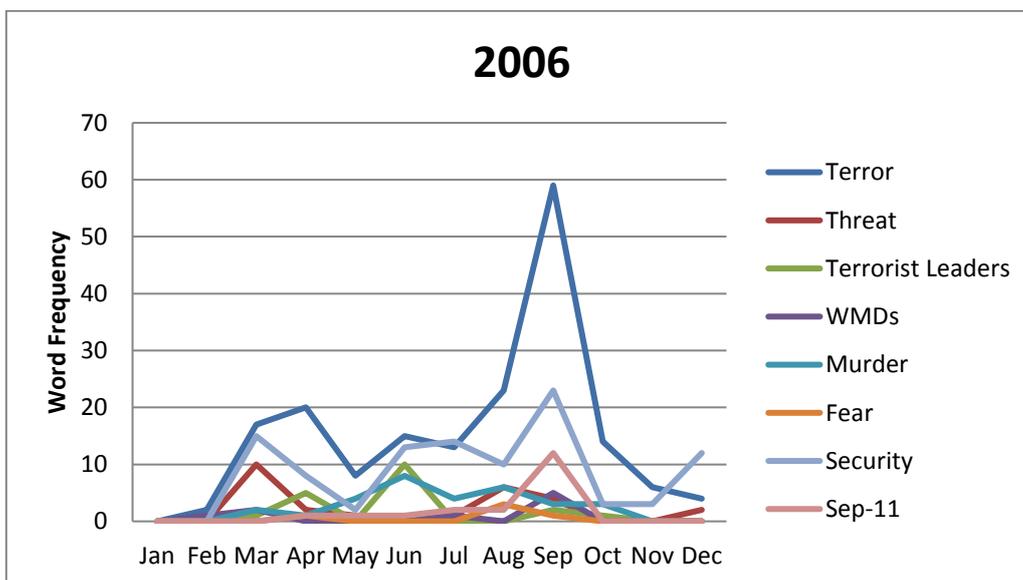


Figure 19: 2006 word frequency counts by frame

Figure 19 suggests that the peak in fearful rhetoric occurring in September 2006 was largely due to a substantial increase in references to ‘terror’ occurring in this month. Word frequency counts for terrorism and related terms increased almost three fold from the previous month, before returning to these lower levels in October. Again this increase in references to terrorism was accompanied by a simultaneous increase in security related terms however, this increase was slight in comparison. There was also a simultaneous but smaller increase in references to the September 11 2001 attacks during this period.

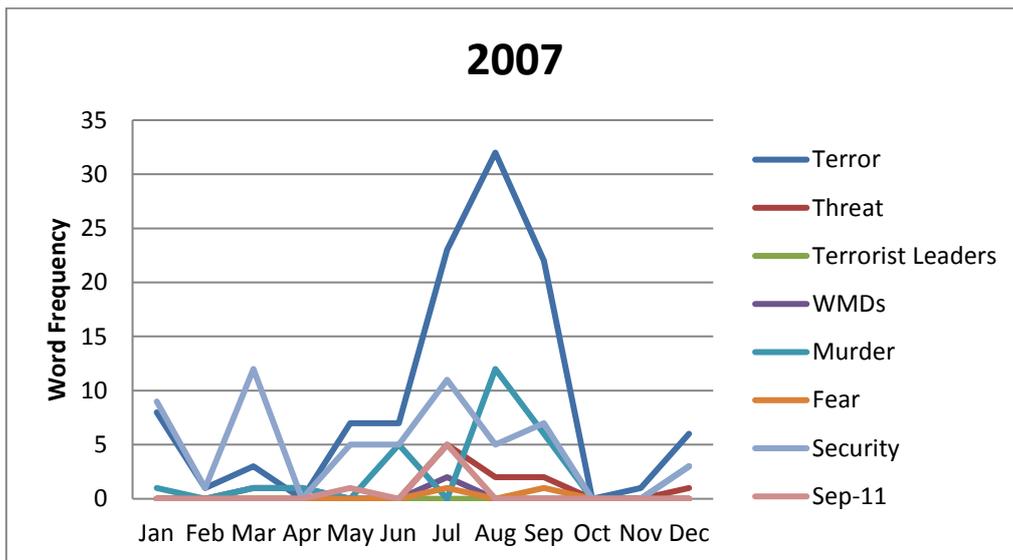


Figure 20: 2007 word frequency counts by frame

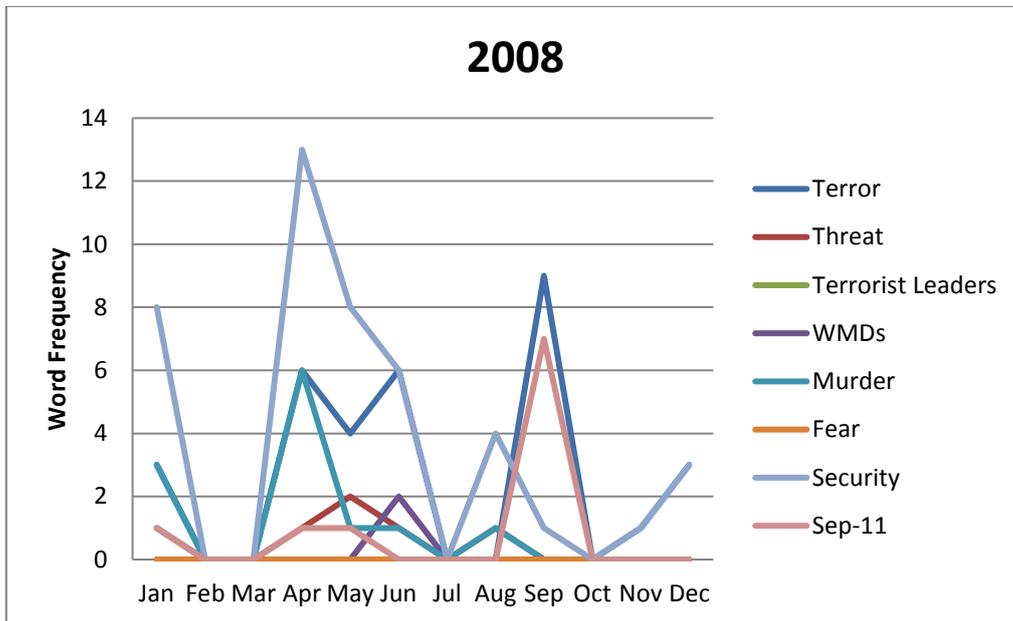


Figure 21: 2008 word frequency counts by frame

In 2007 and 2008 there was an increase in references to ‘security’ relative to references of ‘terror’ and other frames. Due to timing, following the Surge in the start of 2007 and nearing the end of Bush’s presidency, it is possible that this increase in hopeful, positive language relative to fearful rhetoric may be an attempt to portray the campaign as successful as Bush’s presidency came to a close. Alternatively it could be interpreted as suggesting that due to Bush’s inability to run for another term in office, there was no longer considered a need to win support for the campaign as policy options would no longer be Bush’s to make, therefore the effects and constraints of public opinion no longer posed such a major concern to the president. In 2008 the world suffered a major financial crisis and recession, therefore the common use of security to discuss issues including economic and financial issues means that it is possible that some of this

relative increase is actually due to a reduction in salience of Iraq, and an increase in other concerns discussed using similar language however, such differences were indiscernible through computer based analysis methods.

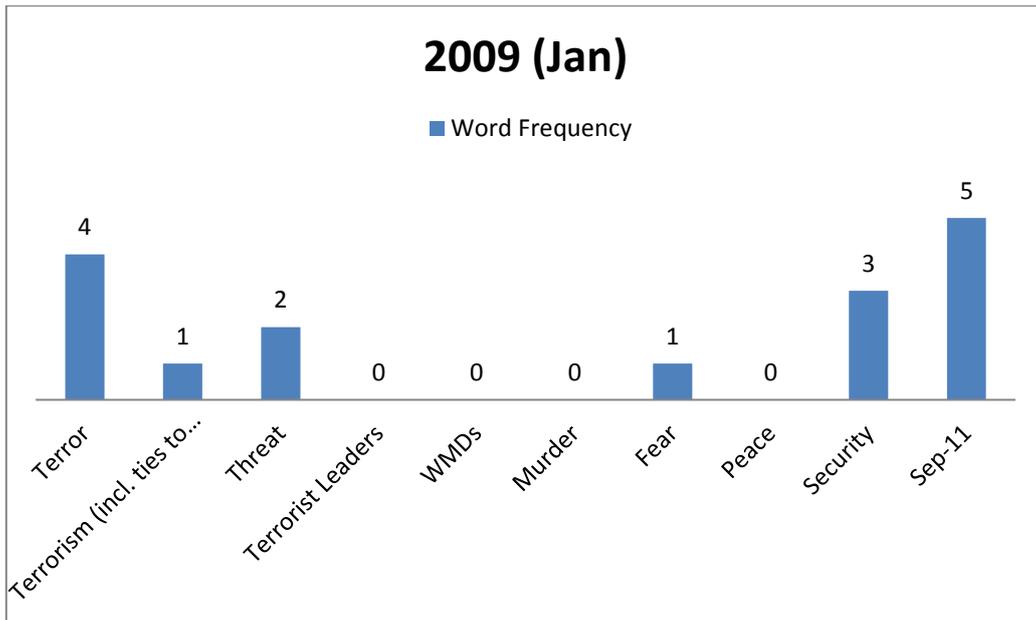


Figure 22: 2009 word frequency counts by frame

Finally, data shows that increases in uses of references to ‘terrorism’ or ‘WMDs’ in presidential radio addresses were accompanied by simultaneous increases in references to ‘peace’ and ‘security’. This was often employed through the juxtaposition of the ‘evilness’ of terrorism or the Iraqi regime, and the ‘good’ nature of US forces and their mission in Iraq as exemplified in several radio broadcasts.³ As such, we can consider

³ Specifically radio broadcasts from March 22nd 2003, March 29th 2003, and April 5th 2003 among others exemplify such rhetoric methods.

that the president used a rhetoric of fear not in isolation but in combination with hopeful rhetoric in order to both emphasise the ‘evil’ nature of the adversary, but also the need for the US to take action, and the justness, and legitimacy of the use of force by the United States. This supports Dimaggio’s observations in identifying ‘hope’ along with fear as a significant frame in presidential rhetoric concerning the Iraq War (Dimaggio, 2015, 64).

4. Conclusion

In summary, trends in the use of fearful rhetoric show that use of such rhetoric in presidential radio broadcasts increased steadily over the first term of George W. Bush’s presidency, reaching a peak in September 2006. Following this, use of such rhetoric decreased substantially for the remainder of the Bush presidency. Total counts of fearful rhetoric remained higher than when controlled for references to Iraq, and computer based counts remained higher than manual counts. This suggests that both Iraq was part of a wider rhetoric of fear which it dominated at times, and that the link between elements of fearful rhetoric and Iraq were not always made explicit by the administration.

‘WMDs’ constituted a significant element in the rhetoric of fear during the first term of George W. Bush’s presidency but references to these decreased significantly when it became apparent that Iraq did not possess such capabilities. ‘Terrorism’ and the ‘war on

terror' frame remained central to Bush's rhetoric of fear throughout the war with elements such as 'murder' remaining lesser elements, but with increasing salience at certain points in the campaign. Finally, increases in references to 'terror' or 'WMDs' were often accompanied by increases in references to 'peace' and 'security', thus supporting the findings of previous studies (Dimaggio, 2015; Speer, 2017). The potential interpretations and implications of this will be addressed in the following chapter.

VI. Interpretation & Implications of the President's use of "Fear"

The previous chapter highlighted major trends in the use of fear in Bush's presidential radio broadcasts in addressing the question of *how* a rhetoric of fear was created and employed by the Bush administration. This chapter will discuss influential factors in why such trends in the data appeared, and potential implications of the use of such rhetoric in order to address the questions of *why* and *to what effect* such rhetoric was employed. The chapter will be divided into two major sections. The first will look to explain the trends appearing in the data in addressing why fear was employed in such a way, whilst the second will address what were the implications and effects of the Bush administrations employment of such rhetoric strategies on both a domestic and international level.

1. Interpreting Trends in the Data

This section will examine the trends appearing in the data presented in the previous chapter. It is organised into two subsections, the first of which will address the high levels of fearful rhetoric in presidential radio broadcasts from 2001 through to 2006,

whilst the second section will address the subsequent rapid decline in utilisation of a rhetoric of fear towards the end of President Bush's second term in office from late 2006 through to January 2009.

1-1. High use of 'Fear' between 2001 & 2006

Firstly, I shall address the increase in use of fearful rhetoric between 2001 and 2006. Most significantly, this period covered the build-up to war, the initial military conflict, and the early stages of the US occupation of Iraq, when it was essential for the president to gain support for his administration's war policies in order to successfully conduct operations. As concluded in various studies, fear was initially a successful driver of bipartisan support for the war with threat perception of Iraq amongst the US population high (Dimaggio, 2015; Muddiman et al, 2014). When discussing threat perception, capability and intent are considered two main elements central to its creation (Stein, 2013). Through a rhetoric of fear President Bush moulded both of these elements by referencing Iraq's alleged WMD program to suggest capability, and links with al Qaeda and the hatred of the west harboured by such terrorists as indication of Iraq's destructive intent.⁴ Through such mechanisms, as well as repeated reference in presidential radio broadcasts to Iraq's ability to obtain nuclear weapons within a year if intervention did

⁴ Examples include in Presidential radio broadcasts from September 28th 2002 & March 20th 2004.

not occur, the president successfully employed fear to manipulated the threat perception of Iraq within the minds of the US public, securitising the issue, as a means of driving support for the war as the pre-emptive use of force to ensure the security of the United States.⁵

Whilst there has been somewhat of a shift in the framing of Iraq in official rhetoric, from a distinct threat sharing responsibility for the September 2001 terror attacks to rather portraying Iraq as a central battleground in the war on terror, the main elements used in construction fearful rhetoric remain generally consistent. Whilst reference to WMDs in presidential radio broadcasts decreases significantly from mid-2003 onwards references to terror remain high, becoming the main driver from this point onwards. Moreover, following this the significant elements constituting Bush's rhetoric of fear remain relatively constant. This is despite revelations that Bush had misled the public on claims that Iraq had links to al Qaeda and shared responsibility for the September 11th terror attack. This may explain the apparent decrease in susceptibility of the US public to rhetoric appeals to fear and the threat of terrorism. Such elements became less and less influential as drivers for public support as the credibility of Presidential rhetoric deteriorated and the public became increasingly critical towards the legitimacy of the war (Dimaggio, 2015, 153).

As for why utilisation of the rhetoric of fear remained high following the initiation of the campaign through to 2006, this can be understood in terms of legitimising and

⁵ As indicated in radio broadcasts from September 14th 2002 & September 28th 2002.

justifying the need for maintaining US forces in Iraqi territory during the democracy building process along with countering rising criticism of President Bush in light of revelations that Iraq neither possessed WMDs, nor had ties to those responsible for the terrorist attacks of September 2001. Whilst Bush announced the end of major combat activities in a radio broadcast on May 3rd 2003, he maintained that there still remained those with links to terrorism who would work to undermine and destabilise the new regime, therefore requiring the presence of US forces in the country to root out such groups and protect the country, and by extension the United States, until a stable democratic regime could be established. Moreover, as the occupation continued, instances of violence and US troop deaths increased, and war fatigue set in it became increasingly important for the President to justify the need to maintain troops in Iraq in spite of these factors. This was particularly important as increasing media coverage of casualty and violence levels in Iraq were linked closely with increased public opposition to the war (Bourke, 2011; Francis, 2007). Thus, whilst fear may have been effective in winning support for the war initially, it appears to have been less successful in blunting such criticisms as public support levels continued to fall during this period despite continued emphasis on the rhetoric of fear and utilisation of the war on terror frame by the administration (Speer, 2017).

Use of fearful rhetoric peaked in 2006 according to both total and controlled computer based word frequency counts. Whilst at this point President Bush had seen some major successes in the war including the capture of Iraqi terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in

June 2006, he was facing increasing opposition at home. Such criticism included the argument that the stationing of US forces in Iraq was a factor behind the increasing levels of violence in Iraq and was actually therefore increasing the threat of terrorism (Singal et al., 2010). The President responded strongly to such criticism stating in a radio broadcast from September 30th 2006: “some in Washington have selectively quoted from this document to make the case that by fighting the terrorists in Iraq we are making our people less secure here at home. This argument buys into the enemy’s propaganda that the terrorists attack us because we are provoking them”. In such a way the president attempted to discredit such criticism and the use of such methods mirrors tactics that had been used in the lead-up to the Iraq War, labelling those opposing the President’s calls for war as “unpatriotic” (Dimaggio, 2015, 80). Therefore fear and the threat of terror was used in attempts to counter and discredit such criticism and justify the need for the deployment of US forces in the country despite increasing casualty levels and domestic violence in Iraq. However, unlike during the build-up to war in 2002-2003, by 2006 such methods showed limited results in influencing public opinion (Pollak, 2006; Stewart, 2014).

Despite opposition, Bush announced the ‘Surge’ in January 2007, and launched operations in March 2007. This decision suggests that whilst public opinion may constrain government policy, it does not dictate it, as the Surge was conducted largely against the grain of public sentiment which called for the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq (Dimaggio, 2015, 110; Langer, 2006). The surge saw more than 20,000 additional

US troops deployed to Iraq in order to counter and suppress the violence occurring there and return stability to the region (Dubik, 2015). The surge appears to have been somewhat successful with instances of violence decreasing, and the initiative receiving an ultimately positive progress report from General Petraeus in September 2007, and the civil war in Iraq winding down by June 2008 (Dimaggio, 2015, 118). As such, we can see that the use of a rhetoric of fear appears to have been used to greatest effect by the administration in gaining support for short-term policy initiatives or action. Used in conjunction with promising hard power operations it could see temporary effects in facilitating policies and winning short-term support, but was ultimately less effective as a tool for long-term support maintenance, and was insufficient to overcome the loss of credibility and overwhelming public opposition suffered by the Bush administration.

1-2. Decrease in the Employment of ‘Fear’, 2007 Onwards

Trends show that following the peak in 2006 the use of fearful rhetoric reduced dramatically in presidential radio broadcasts. As previous studies have shown, strategic considerations and perceptions of success were a major factor in predicting public support levels for the war (Dimaggio, 2015). As such, in order to attempt to maintain support it was important for the president to frame the war as a success. In the initial phases this was concerned with justifying the need for the use of force in Iraq and the maintenance of an occupying force once major combat activities had ceased. This

explains the high frequency of fearful rhetoric employed in the first term of Bush's presidency and up till 2006 when the main concern can be considered selling this justification. As Bush's administration drew to an end however, with no possibility of re-election having already served two terms in office, it was important rather to frame the War in a way so as to suggest progress had been made, and that something had been achieved in Iraq during the presidency. As such, continued use of a rhetoric of fear may have had an effect counter to this, by emphasising the failure of US forces to remove all terrorist elements from the country and to fulfil all the goals of disarming Iraq, regime change, ending insurgency operations and sectarian violence, and building a stable and functioning democracy as had been laid out in statements by the administration.⁶ Continued frequent references to such elements would only suggest the Bush administration had failed to achieve the goals they had put forth. Therefore, we can interpret the drastic reduction in counts of fearful rhetoric during the latter period of Bush's second term in office as attempts to counter perceptions of lack of progress in the occupation.

Whilst the most noticeable decrease in use of fearful rhetoric did not occur until the latter half of 2006, the data shows that generally usage of fearful rhetoric was higher in Bush's first term in office than in his second. Whilst many factors contributing to this have already been discussed above, another potential factor contributing to this may include Bush's campaign for re-election in the 2004 US presidential elections. The rhetoric of

⁶ References to U.S. goals in Iraq can be found in radio broadcasts from November 16th 2002, March 8th 2003, March 22nd 2003, September 18th 2004, & September 25th 2004.

fear can be considered to have been used to drive support for specific policies including the initiation of the war in Iraq and the Surge in 2007. As such, it could also be used to drive support for Bush's re-election campaign by emphasising the threat that could have been posed by Iraq had the US not initially intervened to end the Saddam Hussein regime, and that may re-emerge if the US was not successful in rebuilding Iraq as a functioning democracy friendly towards the United States. As such, the Iraq War can be considered a core policy of the Bush administration and central element in the 2004 election campaigns (Levy, 2018). Bush's narrow success in the election, winning by 50.8%, 286 electoral votes and one state, suggests that up to this point presidential rhetoric including the rhetoric of fear was sufficiently convincing and persuasive to blunt criticism of the President's handling of the war during that period.

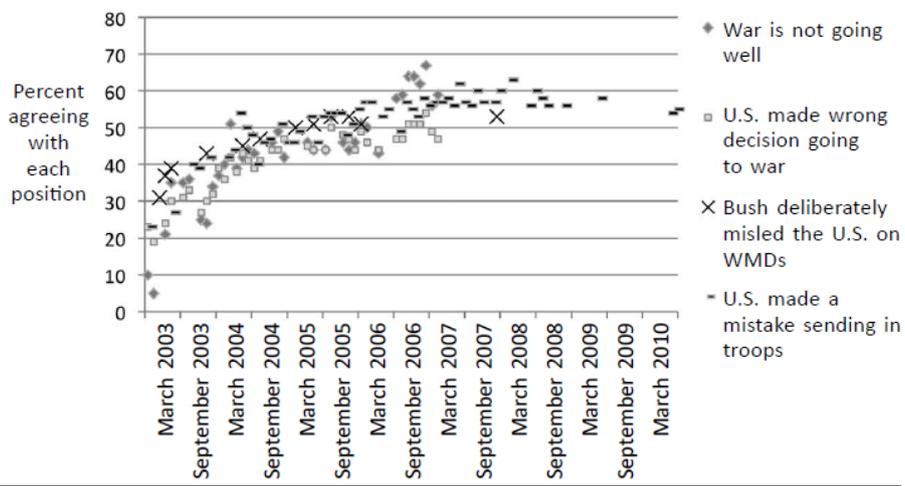
2. Implications of the Rhetoric of Fear

This section will address the potential implications of the employment of a rhetoric of fear in presidential radio addresses. As with the previous section, it will be divided into two subsections, firstly comparing the findings of this study with data for support levels for the Iraq war in addressing what effects such rhetoric had on domestic public opinion. The second subsection will then address briefly the potential implications of the use of a rhetoric of fear on the US global image.

2-1. Fearful Rhetoric & Support for the Iraq War

As discussed previously in this study, support levels for both President Bush and for the Iraq War fluctuated from extremely high during the early 2000's to extremely low by the end of Bush's second term in office. Figures 23 and 24 show the increasing levels of opposition for the war along with factors contributing to such sentiment amongst the US population. Interestingly, the increasing trend of scepticism regarding the war as show in figure 23 reflects the general increasing trend in use of fearful rhetoric utilised by the president, with the absence of a decrease from 2007 onwards. Whereas usage of fearful rhetoric decreased from this point opposition to the war continued to increase. Moreover, the period of September 2006, which saw highest total counts of fearful rhetoric in computer based word frequency also saw some of the highest levels of scepticism regarding the war, especially in terms of view that 'the war is not going well'. This would suggest that a rhetoric of fear was ineffective in blunting emerging opposition to the war over an extended period of time and thus proved an ineffective tool for long-term support maintenance. Moreover, such trends suggest that 'fear' had a diminishing effect as a driver of public support over time. We can term this as 'fear fatigue', referring to the reduced influence of fear on public opinion and the reduced susceptibility of the public to such rhetoric over time.

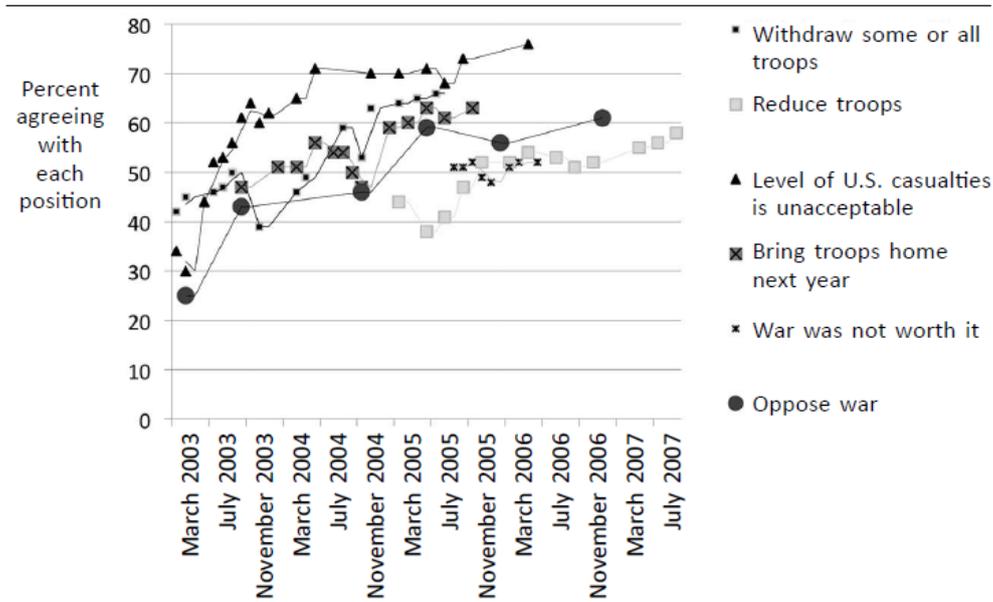
Figure 3.1. General Skepticism of the Iraq War (March 2003–March 2010)



Sources: Pew and Gallup surveys.

Figure 23: General Scepticism of the Iraq War (Source: Dimaggio, 2015, 111)

Figure 3.2. Substantive Opposition to War (March 2003–July 2007)



Sources: ABC News/*Washington Post*, Harris, NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*, and Gallup surveys.

Figure 24: Reasons for War Opposition (Source: Dimaggio, 2015, 112)

The findings of this research support the conclusions of previous studies that despite continued employment the rhetoric of fear became less effective over time in cultivating and maintaining support for the war (Dimaggio, 2015, 157). Moreover, US public opinion regarding the war shows elements of both democratic and elite theory. Following democratic theory, Americans displayed rational characteristics with growing opposition to war appearing as a function of engagements with real-world events in Iraq, shown by increasing media coverage of violence and casualty levels in the war. Conversely, in line with elite theory, many Americans were manipulated into accepting government rhetoric regarding the 2005 Iraqi elections and the surge – narratives which

dominated media coverage at the expense of other views. Thus, by consuming one-sided information on these events, Americans had difficulty considering counter narratives that questioned presidential rhetoric (Dimaggio, 2015, 157). It is therefore evident that presidential rhetoric alone is not enough to guarantee and maintain support for a policy – rather, it is most successful when it provides the dominant voice, obscuring competing narratives and thus dulling the rational capabilities of the domestic population to consider alternative realities and frames. This shows the importance of free press, and critical approaches to reporting in allowing a democratic public to make rational decisions. Moreover, it shows the importance for leaders and politicians to gain the support of the media in mobilizing and maintaining public support.

There may be arguments that the employment of fearful rhetoric was still somewhat successful in influencing public opinion during the later year of the Iraq war, if to a lesser extent than in the early years of Bush's presidency. Figure 25 shows that around the time of September 2006, the period that saw the highest counts of fearful rhetoric according to computer based analysis, saw a temporary, short-term decrease in views that the US had made a mistake in sending troops to Iraq. However, such decrease in opposition was short lived, suggesting that despite its temporary effect, increased use of fearful rhetoric was insufficient to stem the momentum of increasing opposition for the War and President Bush's handling of it.

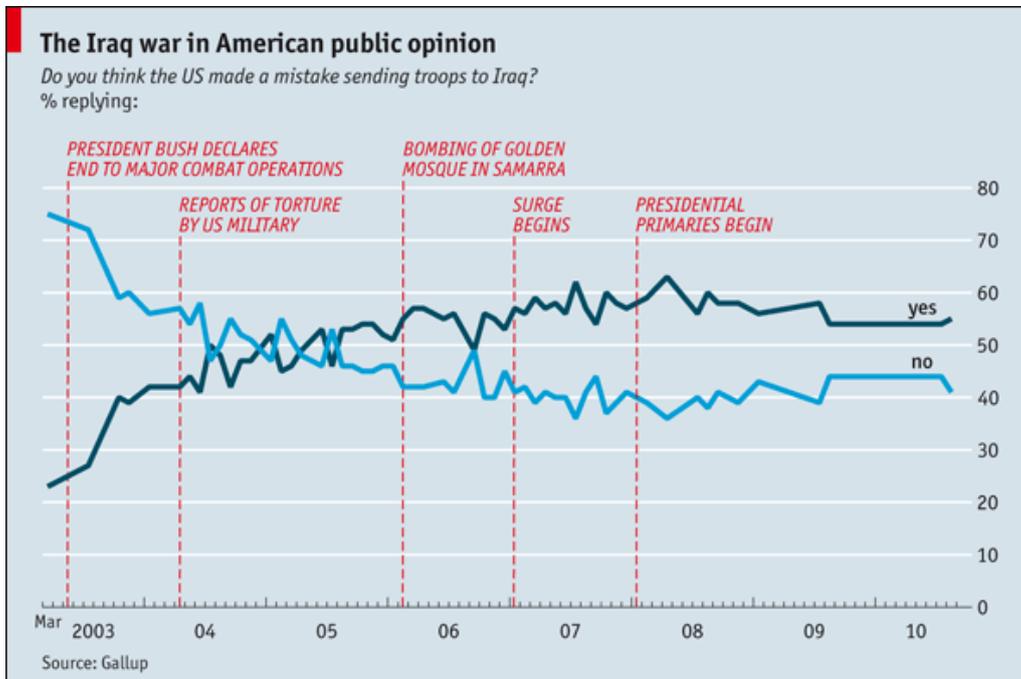


Figure 25: US Public Opinion - did the US make a mistake in sending troops to Iraq (Source: The Economist, 2010)

In discussing factors for effective soft power strategies Taylor (2010, 162) states that “strategic communications to be effective must be *credible*” and must assume a defensible policy, respectable identity, and core value. It can be argued that President Bush’s rhetoric lost credibility when it was discovered that Iraq neither possessed WMDs, nor had links with the al Qaeda terrorists responsible for the attacks of September 11th 2001 (Dimaggio, 2015, 68). Moreover research suggests that considerations that the war was illegal and provoking increased levels of violence in Iraq challenged the respectable identity and core values of many American’s who had previously supported the war as a humanitarian mission both to protect the United States,

but also to help those innocent Iraqi citizens who were reported as suffering under the tyranny of Saddam Hussein's regime (US Department of State, undated). As such, core foundations of the rhetoric of fear had been undermined and thus the same rhetoric that had been so effective in winning support in the early years of the campaign had lost its power of persuasion over the US population. Coupled with the loss of credibility of the Bush regime and his rhetoric campaign as discussed above, moral norms were strengthened and led to the increase in domestic public opposition on the basis of moral and strategic considerations (Dimaggio, 2015, 146). Finally, once such rhetoric had been discredited, the mechanisms of 'fear' were no longer effective for sustaining or further driving support for the administration. Thus despite consistency in the levels of fearful rhetoric employed by President Bush for the majority of the US occupation of Iraq, domestic public support levels continued to fall.

2-2. 'Fear' & the US Global Image

Whilst this paper is interested predominantly in the domestic effects of President Bush's employment of a rhetoric of fear, it is worth noting that such rhetoric also had potential consequences reaching well outside of the borders of United States territory. Combined with the US' enduring grand strategy of 'primacy', and with components of the 'Bush Doctrine', the US has become viewed increasingly as war prone, and even as a threat to global stability (Pew Research Center, 2008b; Porter, 2018; Singh, 2006; Taylor, 2010).

The use of fearful rhetoric can be considered to have heightened such perceptions through two interrelated mechanisms. Firstly, through increasing domestic audience cost, along with the use of dichotic language and emphasising the need to strike against terrorists in linking Iraq with the war on terror, Bush's use of a rhetoric of fear added credibility to his threats of the use of force in the Middle East (Fearon, 1994; Schultz, 2001). This may have been advantageous in terms of coercive diplomacy vis-à-vis Saddam Hussein, and in adding credibility to threats of military action if Hussein did not comply with UNSC resolutions, however it also reinforced the view of United States as war prone, and even 'imperialist' in the eyes of some including traditional European allies. In fact, according to polls conducted by the Arab American Institute in 2007 68% of Saudi Arabians, 70% of the population of the UAE, 76% of the Lebanese population, 83% of Egyptians, and 96% of Jordanians had a negative view of the US role in Iraq (Arab American Institute, 2007). Moreover, a Pew Global Attitudes Project Report found that majorities in numerous countries including the Netherlands, Germany, France, Russia, China, Canada, Poland, Pakistan, and Turkey among others believed that the world had been safer before the Iraq War and the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime (Pew Research Center, 2004).

Secondly, whilst the use of fearful rhetoric may have given Bush the legitimacy within the US to condone the use of force in Iraq without concrete evidence of Iraqi weapons programs or links to terrorist groups, it did not have the same effect on a global audience. A 2007 BBC World Service poll suggested that 73% of the global population

disapproved of the US handling of the Iraq war and believed that the U.S should withdraw its forces from the country (BBC, 2007). Thus such rhetoric may have contributed to an image of the US as war mongering and disregarding of international rules and norms (McCoy, 2015).

3. Conclusion

Throughout the duration of Bush's Presidency Iraq was linked to the war on terror. As the war developed however it was transformed from an isolated threat sharing responsibility for the devastation of the September 11th terror attacks, to a central front in the war on terror. As such, links to the war on terror frame and the salience of fearful rhetoric remained high for the majority of the War and subsequent occupation of Iraq, declining only eventually following the 2007 surge and subsequent winding down of the Iraq Civil War and decrease in instances of violence in the country.

The political implications of the rhetoric of fear were significant: political officials can more easily manipulate those paralysed by fear. As such, when presidential rhetoric and media reporting overemphasised terrorist threats, the public became overly paranoid and more susceptible to influence from rhetoric emphasising such threats. This increased attention to terrorism was associated with decreased dissent against the administration (Dimaggio, 2015, 96). It can be considered that it was through such mechanisms, at least

initially, that President Bush was able to win high levels of support for the Iraq War. As such, support was high in the early days of the war, before the loss of credibility of presidential rhetoric following the failure to find WMDs and revelation that the President had misled the public in linking Iraq to al Qaeda terrorists in justifying the war.

Thus, whilst fear alone was ineffective to maintain support levels the long-term it does however appear to have been effective in winning support initially, suggesting the possible application for such rhetoric strategies in support mobilisation for specific, short-term policy initiatives. Moreover, through such ability to drive domestic support and increase audience costs, it may also have application in external posturing and adding credibility to threats, thus potentially forming a tool for coercive diplomacy on an international level when employed by democratic actors (Art & Cronin, 2003; Fearon, 1994; Lord, 1989).

In summary, a rhetoric of fear may have effectively been used as a short-term, support mobilisation strategy by the Bush administration, capitalising on existing fears within the American population following the devastation caused by the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001. Such rhetoric strategies were less effective however for long-term support maintenance due in part to a loss of credibility for both the Bush regime itself and of core elements of such rhetoric, thus critically undermining the persuasive power of the rhetoric of fear, and due to difficulties in effectively balancing between sustaining an atmosphere of fear sufficient to justify the maintenance of US forces in Iraq in the face of reports of violence and other scandals, whilst not undermining progress made in

the campaign. Finally, whilst such rhetoric may have been successful in initial support mobilisation for the war amongst the US domestic audience, on the international stage it can be argued that it rather contributed to existing perceptions of the US as war prone and a threat to international peace and stability, stemming from the US long-standing grand strategy of primacy and Bush's perceived preference for pre-emptive use of force coined as the 'Bush Doctrine'.

VII. Conclusion

In concluding this paper, this chapter shall first summarise the main findings of this research with relation to the research questions proposed in chapter one along with the conceptual frameworks upon which this study has been constructed. Following this the limitations of the study will be addressed and avenues for future research will be suggested.

1. Summary of Research Findings

This paper opened with the proposal of the following research questions:

1. How was a rhetoric of fear created and utilised in George W. Bush's presidential radio broadcasts and what were the major implications of the employment of such rhetoric?
2. How effective was a rhetoric of fear in mobilising and maintaining support for the Iraq War?

In addressing the first research question, quantitative data found that a rhetoric of fear was not solely a strategy directed towards the war in Iraq, but rather was employed heavily following the attacks of September 11th 2001 towards perceived terrorists threats.

Once Iraq had been introduced into the narrative of the war on terror in September 2002 however, it became a central pillar of such a narrative. As the campaign progressed, the administration's framing of Iraq shifted from a direct and imminent threat to a central front in the war on terror. Nonetheless, despite shifts in frame, 'terror' remained a major element in forming the rhetoric of fear. At the outset, reference to WMDs also comprised a major element in the rhetoric of fear, however this decreased sharply following the failure to find evidence of Iraqi WMDs and terror thus became the central pillar of presidential rhetoric. The data presented in figures 14 to 22 also supports the findings of previous studies, that a rhetoric of fear was juxtaposed with elements of 'hope', that the US would take action to eliminate such threats (Dimaggio, 2015). As such, a rhetoric of fear was created through frequent and repeated references to 'threats' such as that of terrorism and WMDs, increasing the salience of such issues within presidential rhetoric. This was used in combination with 'hope' to mobilise support for the War.

The implications of the rhetoric of fear were numerous. Initially, a fearful population was easier to influence thus allowing President Bush to gain high levels of support for the war both within the White House and amongst the American public (DiMaggio, 2010; Dimaggio, 2015, 96; Merolla & Zechmeister, 2009). However, as the occupation continued, under increasing opposition and a loss of credibility, the president suffered walking a tightrope between emphasising terrorist threats in order to maintain and rebuild support for the occupation, and emphasising hope and Iraq's progress towards a functioning democracy in portraying success in the war. This suggests the need to

balance between strategic and moral considerations both of which were found in previous studies to have been powerful drivers of public opposition to the war (Dimaggio, 2015).

Moreover, such rhetoric did nothing for America's global image with polls showing even US allies were critical of the US role in Iraq and in effecting global peace and stability even prior to the war (Pew Research Center, 2004, Pew Research Center 2008). Thus, domestically a rhetoric of fear was effective in mobilising public with elements of *plausibility* and *logic* being powerful enough to drive support despite lack of evidence supporting key claims. However, the rhetoric of fear appeared to yield a decreased rate of return over time as the audience began to suffer from 'fear fatigue' therefore once credibility had been lost, repeated utilisation of such rhetoric was insufficient to regain domestic support. Moreover, it appears that whilst a domestic audience was found to respond to a narrative that was both plausible and logical without the need for validity, the same cannot be said for the international audience, which criticised the US for acting without concrete evidence of Iraqi WMDs or ties to al Qaeda (Fisher, 1984). This suggests therefore, that the requirements for successful rhetoric strategies directed towards domestic and international audiences may be different. Whilst the narrative element of *validity* does not appear to be an essential element in domestic support mobilisation, its role in support maintenance or support mobilisation towards a foreign audience may be much more significant. Therefore the different elements required to gain domestic versus global support, along with support mobilisation versus support

maintenance may be potential avenues for further research into soft power and support mobilisation strategies. In such a way this research has contributed to our understanding of the framing of the Iraq War through an analysis of ‘fear’ as a political strategy therefore offering conclusions and lessons that can be applied to other cases in order to draw further conclusions regarding the usage of ‘fear’ as a mechanism for support mobilisation and influencing public sentiment. Other potential applications may include analysing the use of ‘fear’ Trump’s presidential campaign in the 2016 US elections or Britain’s Brexit campaign among others.

Thus, in addressing the second research question of the effectiveness of ‘fear’ in mobilising and maintaining support for the war we find that whilst such rhetoric strategies were highly effective in short-term support mobilisation they were less effective for long-term support maintenance. Thus, despite high approval ratings and bipartisan support in 2002-2003, by Bush’s second term support levels had dropped across the board and partisan differences had become much more evident (Dimaggio, 2015; Mudimann et al, 2014). Such early levels of support for the war can be considered “rational” in that such an outcome was entirely predictable in the pro-war informational environment that existed in early 2003 (Dimaggio, 2015, 102).

It can therefore be concluded that under the unique domestic environment in which the US found itself following the September 11th terror attacks, a rhetoric of fear built upon the threat of further devastating attacks was an effective tool to win support for the war. Fear was not an effective tool however, for maintaining support during a long and violent

occupation, coverage of which challenged both moral norms and values of the US population, and considerations that the war was just in cause and conduct (Guthrie & Quinlan, 2010). The effectiveness of ‘fear’ in support mobilisation relied heavily on perspective of imminent threat, which in its nature, cannot be sustained indefinitely. Moreover, once central arguments used to justify the war had been discredited, the President suffered a loss of credibility that continued use of fearful rhetoric based on the same elements as had been used initially, was unable to overcome.

In relating the findings of this study to the wider issue of why the US is struggling in modern warfare, one may conclude that whilst the use of fearful rhetoric was well orchestrated as an active soft power strategy designed to mobilise support for an initial use of force in Iraq, the strategy was suboptimal as a tool for support maintenance. Consequently, a lack of flexibility and adaptability within President Bush’s rhetoric strategy may be considered a contributing factor to the US sub-par performance in the Iraq War campaign. Adaptability is accepted as a central element for successful hard power or conventional military operations, thus we can surmise that the same is true with regards to soft power strategies (Dickerson, 2003; Murray, 2009). Whilst decreasing public support levels may not have dictated government policy in the war, it undoubtedly proved an obstacle and constraint, further handicapping the government in managing a difficult occupation and democracy building operations (Dimaggio, 2015, 109; Sobel, 2001).

This study therefore has not only contributed to our understanding of framing and rhetoric in the Iraq War through offering a political science perspective to a field largely dominated by communications theories. In such a way this research has aimed to look deeper into how fear was used as a rhetoric strategy rather than analysing how the media has framed the war and the nexus between official rhetoric and media reporting, thus offering insight that may be valuable for policy makers and future political science studies. Furthermore, through offering a practical case study and quantifiable data this study has also aimed to contribute to the discourse on the concept of ‘soft power’, through a focus on the practical implications of soft power strategies thus addressing a deficiency in the discourse on this topic (Roselle et al., 2014, 71). Finally, this research has offered a base for further research by highlighting underlying mechanisms and potential explanations for the ineffectiveness of a rhetoric of fear in the Iraq War. Thus future research may aim to build upon these findings through the exploration of whether there are conditions under which a rhetoric of fear may be effective over the long-term and under which ‘fear fatigue’ can be mitigated, or whether as this case suggests fear is only effective as a short-term mechanism for support mobilisation.

2. Limitations & Avenues for Future Research

The major limitations of this research relate to the quantitative nature of the analysis conducted. Computer based quantitative methods, whilst invaluable in generating reliable quantitative data, lack context and thus, whilst the results of such processes may be reliable they may lack in validity. This research has attempted to account for this by including manual quantitative alongside computer based word frequency data. However, whilst such manual analysis may add context and thus validity to study, it is open to human error and discretion and therefore lacks greatly in reliability. Furthermore, whilst qualitative elements are included in this study, the foundation of analysis is quantitative in nature there have been those who argue that many significant issues in international relations can only be addressed by detailed analyses unable to be obtained through quantitative methods (Jervis, 1967). Therefore, a possible avenue for future research could be a further analysis of presidential rhetoric based more heavily on qualitative research methods.

Jervis further criticises the used of frequency as an indicator of importance in quantitative content analysis, arguing that reasons why a word appears more than others may have nothing to do with its significance (Jervis, 1967). Whilst the validity of this observation cannot be denied, it can be argued that the target word choice observed in the word frequency data used in this study does designate significance, as word choice was made based upon terms found through previous study to have significance for this

avenue of research. Moreover, despite Jervis' assertions, other studies have suggested that frequency can be a viable indicator of significance and importance, thus supporting the use of such methods of research (Entman, 1993, 53).

Several potential avenues for further research have already been proposed here including a qualitative study of presidential rhetoric strategies, studies testing the 'soft power dilemma' and the different factors influential in mobilising domestic versus international support, and a further examination of the different elements necessary for support mobilisation versus support maintenance. Other potential avenues further research include a comparative study of similar rhetoric strategies applied to another case study to test if the findings of this study were unique to the situation of the Iraq War or whether they may be applied more broadly, and to also test the extent to what extent audience priming in the form of public sensitivity to references to the threat of terrorism were influential in the effectiveness of a rhetoric of fear following the September 11th 2001 attacks on New York's World Trade Center. Finally, further analysis of a rhetoric of fear, including significantly if there are any situations in which 'fear' can be sustained as a long-term strategy for support maintenance would build upon and further develop the findings of this research.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Rothman's Continuous Power (Rothman, 2011, 51)

| | | | | |
|-------------|----------------------|------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Dichotomous | Hard power (command) | | Soft power (co-opt) | |
| | Coercion | Inducement | Agenda-setting | Attraction |
| Continuous | Harder powers | | Softer powers | |
| | | | | |
| Resources | Military | Economic | Institutional | Rhetoric/success |

Figure 1. Dichotomous and continuous power.

Appendix 2. Scale of Passivity & Activity of Attractiveness (Lee, 2010, 121)

Figure 1. Soft Power and Policy Goals:
Scale of Passivity and Activity of Attractiveness

| | | | | |
|------------------------|---------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Passive Attractiveness | | | | Active Attractiveness |
| | | | | |
| Threat Reduction | Unit Cohesion | Support Mobilization | Idea Manipulation | |

국문 요약

'공포'와 이라크 전쟁:

2001년부터 2009년 사이 미국 대통령의 이라크 전쟁 관련
수사에 관한 내용 분석

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석사과정 국제협력전공

이 연구는 이라크 전쟁 유지와 지지를 이끌기 위한 전략으로서 미국 대통령 발언에서 나타나는 '두려움'의 사용을 분석하였다. 대통령 발언의 전략을 연구하기 위해 2001년 1월부터 2009년 1월 사이에 대통령 라디오 방송에서 나온 대통령 미사여구에 대한 정량적 콘텐츠 분석을 했다. 이 분석은 '테러'와 대량살상무기의 위협이 공포의 미사여구를 조성하는 데 있어서 중심 요소였다는 점을 보여준다. 대통령 라디오 방송 내에서 이러한 요소들은 중동의 평화와 안보를 증진시키는 미국의 역할과도 병행되었다. 이 연구는 다음과 같은 사실을 발견하였다. 2001년 9월 11일 테러 공격 이후 미국 내에서 조성된 매우 민감해진 환경에서 '공포'는 단기 정책에 대한 대중의 지지를 동원하는 데 매우 효과적인 도구였다. 그러나 유연성과 적응력이 떨어져 부시 대통령이 겪었던 신뢰성과 정통성의 손실을 극복하는 데는 효과가 없었다. 따라서 장기적인 지지를 유지하기 위한 전략으로 효과를 보지 못하였다. 이 연구에서 미사여구 전략은 단기 지지를 받기 위해서는 적응과 검증은 필요하지 않지만 장기적인 지지를 성공적으로 유지하기 위해서는 적응과 검증이 필요하다는 것을 밝혀냈다.