

SUPPORT YOUR TROOPS?

*The Falling Support for War, the Height of Military Prestige,
and Media Portrayals*

Comparing the Vietnam War and the Iraq War Eras' Public Confidence in
the U.S. Military

An honors thesis for the Department of Political Science

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Abstract

This thesis examines how the U.S. mainstream media affected the public confidence in the military during the Vietnam and Iraq wars through four quantitative and qualitative analyses. First, media framing analysis demonstrates the U.S. public was less willing to subscribe to human-interest and nation-protecting frames that presented the military negatively in Iraq as opposed to Vietnam. Furthermore, a thematic analysis of political rhetoric shows that Iraq War politicians were enabled by a verbal and cognitive separation of supporting the war and troops, allowing the public to separate the success of the war with their confidence in the troops. Two media-content analysis demonstrate that while front-page newspaper articles tended to neutral present the military in both wars, opinion-editorials presented a more favorable view of the military in Iraq than in Vietnam. Finally, a set of qualitative interviews clarified the effects of the embedding policy instituted in Iraq and how the perception of the military benefited positively from this institutional arrangement. In all, these analyses demonstrate how advancing the “support the troops” paradigm became a mechanism by which the news media maintained credibility and operational success and the U.S. military and government advanced security and wartime objectives.

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Acronyms and Terms

9/11	September 11 Attacks
ABC	American Broadcasting Company
CA	California
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CNN	Cable Network News
Col.	Colonel
DOD	Department of Defense
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
IED	Improvised explosive devices
LA	Los Angeles
Lt.	Lieutenant
M-16	U.S. military grade rifle
MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NBC	National Broadcasting Company
NPR	National Public Radio
NYT	New York Times
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organization
UN	United Nations
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
US	United States of America
USS	United States Ship
VFW	Veterans of Foreign Wars
WMD	Weapons of mass destruction
WP	Washington Post
WWII	World War II

*The Falling Support for War, the Height of Military Prestige,
and Media Portrayals*

Chapter One: Two Wars, Two Outcomes

“One cannot wage war under present conditions without the support of public opinion, which is tremendously molded by the press and other forms of propaganda.” – General Douglas MacArthur

On February 27, 1968, the most trusted man in America climbed on the reporting stage of CBS News as he had done every night for years. He did not claim perfect objectivity despite being renowned for his fairness. The newscaster’s six minute presentation informed the state of the war to millions of Americans across the United States. Speaking with defined, declarative sentences and a calm, stern voice, Walter Cronkite was said to have changed the American perception of the Vietnam War on that night:

We have been too often disappointed by the optimism of the American leaders, both in Vietnam and Washington, to have faith any longer in the silver linings they find in the darkest clouds. For it seems now more certain than ever, that the bloody experience of Vietnam is to end in a stalemate. To say that we are closer to victory today is to believe in the face of the evidence, the optimists who have been wrong in the past. To say that we are mired in stalemate seems the only realistic, if unsatisfactory conclusion...the only rational way out then will be to negotiate, not as victors, but as an honorable people who lived up to their pledge to defend democracy, and did the best they could. This is Walter Cronkite. Good night (NPR 2009).

Upon hearing Cronkite’s assessment, a beleaguered President Lyndon B. Johnson allegedly snapped off the television set and declared to one of his aides: “If I’ve lost Cronkite, I’ve lost the country.” February 1968 marked the beginning of a trend that would persist for decades to come. It signified the fall of support for the war, where the majority of America believed that the U.S. made a mistake sending troops to Vietnam. It also marked when public attitudes towards the military, as an institution, began to shift negatively. The world’s “most powerful” military was experiencing its first defeat. It was the first time being a service member was no longer honorable according to a vast swath of Americans. Nearly 35 years later, the U.S. entered another major war: this time, in Iraq. Iraq would bear many similarities to Vietnam, ending in comparable pessimistic assessments of the success of the

war and a crippling lack of public support for the war. However, this time, the military not only retained the confidence and favor of the public; it increased as the war progressed. Unlike the tragic stories of Vietnam War soldiers returning home to booing crowds and resentful communities, the Iraq War soldiers experienced a far different fate. The U.S. championed its troops, bolstering the institution with nearly irrevocable respect and lauded adulation. The reign of distaste towards the military that began in Vietnam was over. I seek to understand what role of the U.S. news media played in sparking that change.

Research Question

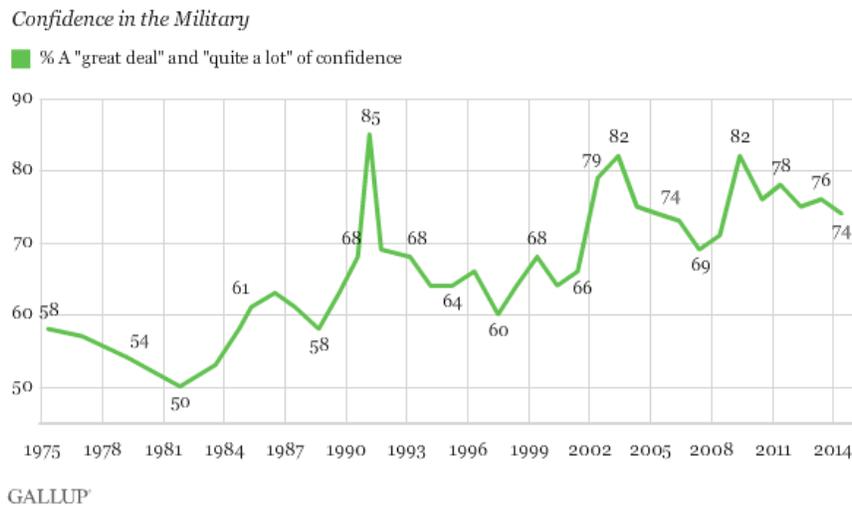
This thesis seeks to answer the following question: *why did declining support for the Vietnam War also lead to a decline in favorable or confident attitudes towards the military, but in the case of Iraq, declining support for the war was coupled with rising favorability and confidence in the military?* I will refer to these attitudes as the "confidence trend," which I define as the extent to which the public expresses favorable views of the military, i.e. approval, and the conviction that the military is reliable and trustworthy. Therefore, the thesis will evaluate the role of media portrayals in engendering a higher confidence trend in Iraq as compared to Vietnam. I define the news media as consistent of major cable network, television, and print outlets in the U.S.

Confidence in political institutions is produced by the factors of process, the most important factor that it is perceived widely that the institutions operate fairly. Confidence is also produced by policy: if institutions achieve expected results and exhibit proper behavior according to those it governs, confidence increases (Gronke and Feaver 2001, 6). Among institutions in the United States, the military has maintained the highest level of confidence for the past few decades. In contrast to the alleged rejection of returning Vietnam veterans, "citizens have welcomed soldiers by applauding them at airports, giving up a seat on public transportation, or offering to buy them a meal at a local restaurant" in recent years (Joseph 2006, 23). The rise and sustainment of public confidence reflects a high regard for the military and its mission. This may be in part due to the shift from a conscript to

an all-volunteer force. It may also be attributed to reduced fears of military abuses, influenced by the military's minimal presence in the domestic arena and the military's adopted apolitical attitude since Vietnam (Hill *et al.* 2013, 50).

Generally, Americans express higher levels of confidence in the military and the presidency than in Congress, the FBI, or the CIA (Gross *et al.* 2009, 114). Since 1998 and from 1989 to 1996, the military has been the top-ranked institution each year (Jones 2011). In 1975, the military had a 58 percent confidence rating. Since then, it has steadily gone up to 78 percent in 2016 (Gallup 2016). Hill *et al.* argue that this confidence reflects a high regard for the military. While the events surrounding the Vietnam War undermined trust in the leadership of virtually all major American institutions, only the military has been able to recover that confidence (2013, 54; Figure 1.1). This thesis will look at how the media-military relationship may have facilitated this trend.

Figure 1.1: Confidence in the Military



Source: Riffkin 2014

Related to confidence in the military is prestige and public support. A Pew Research survey found that military prestige fell alongside public support for the Vietnam War. However, in the Iraq War, favorable views of the war remained high despite a falling opinion of the war (Figure 1.2).¹ The

¹ The survey also makes the note that “questions asked in the Vietnam period referred specifically to military leaders, while Pew Iraq-era surveys refer to the military generally. However, an Opinion Research Corporation

military is viewed positively by all major social and demographic groups. Since the Iraq War began, nine-in-ten Americans have said that they have felt proud of the troops, while 57 percent say the Iraq War has not been worth fighting (Pew Research Center 2011).

Figure 1.2: Military Prestige and Public Discontent



Source: Pew Research 2007

What will become evident throughout the thesis is that confidence in the military is affected by the media. For example, the type of media to which individuals are exposed affects their regard for the military (Figure 1.2). In an interview survey conducted with 1034 participants from a probability sample designed to represent the American electorate, Hofstetter found that those who watched TV news frequently expressed a higher regard for the military (69 percent versus 59 percent) than those who watch TV news infrequently (Hofstetter and Moore 1979, 263). This is merely one of the few instances that demonstrate a suggested impact of the media on public opinion, especially in regard to the military.

To summarize, the inspiration for this thesis arose primarily from a discrepancy observed in American public opinion polling. While American public support for the war effort in Iraq

1971 survey found similar levels of favorability when the public was asked about attitudes toward “our Armed Services in general” (Allen *et al.*, 2007).

deteriorated more quickly than during Vietnam, public opinion of the Iraq War followed a similar path to the Vietnam War. In the beginning of the U.S. intervention in Vietnam, 26 percent of Americans thought sending U.S. troops to Vietnam was a mistake. By early January 1973, that number rose to 60 percent (Allen et al. 2007). The Iraq era experienced a relatively similar trend in the fall of support for the war (Figure 1.2).

Interestingly enough, the confidence trend did not evolve in the same way during the two wars. In 1966, almost halfway through the Vietnam War, confidence in the “people running the military” was 62 percent. By March 1973, that number had fallen thirty points (Allen *et al.* 2007; Figure 1.2). Yet, the opposite trend occurred during the Iraq War. Prior to 9/11, 29 percent of Americans had a very favorable view of the U.S. military and twice that number had a “great deal/quite a lot” of confidence in the military. After September 11, 2001, the confidence trend shot up. By January 2007, 84 percent of Americans expressed a favorable view of the military, more so than any other U.S. public institution (Allen *et al.* 2007). In 2011, at the end of the war, confidence in the military remained at a high of 78 percent and only 3 percent had “very little or none” (Gallup 2011). Despite public support falling for the correctness of the war, Americans increasingly had confident and favorable attitudes towards the military, contrary to what was observed in Vietnam. I posit that the answer to this discrepancy lies in the coverage and actions, intentionally or not, by U.S. mainstream media.

Significance of the Research

Reflecting upon this discrepancy in the confidence trend between the two wars, the theoretical and policy significance of this thesis is twofold. First, I will demonstrate whether there is a relationship between media portrayals and public support for the military. Second, I will show why public support can fall for a war but not for the military itself. If the distinction is caused by the evolution of media coverage since Vietnam, then I will demonstrate the extent to which the media can affect perceptions of the military and vice versa.

Political science research overwhelmingly concludes that news media exerts a considerable influence on mass political behavior. The public relies almost exclusively on the media to inform their position about military conflicts as well as the military itself. In fact, the legitimization and contesting of war is shaped more by the media production of war rather than “organic” experiences (Hoskins and O’Loughlin 2010, 4). There is a wide array of research focused on public opinion and support for the war. Yet, there are deficiencies and gaps in our understanding of the military-media relationship specific to generating public support for the military itself. There is a dearth of studies that focus on the effects of media on opinions and attitudes toward the military. The ones that do normally focus on institutional and societal characteristics, like policies, military tactics, and social movements. Even so, very few of them focus specifically on effects of the media-military relationship on public confidence and the military. The findings of this thesis will cast new light how war coverage can be presented and is perceived by the American public. This, in turn, will provide insight into the public’s ability to make evaluations of the military via mass media. I seek to show if certain media – television or newspaper – affect confidence levels differently. Thus, my findings will inform how certain media portrayals of conflicts can affect the legitimization of the military itself. In short, the findings of this thesis are critical to furthering our understanding of public support for the military and the media’s role in this process.

Evaluating Explanations and Additional Research Questions

In answering the main research question, I offer three possible explanations. I will also demonstrate their linkages with one another. The first explanation seeks to answer how the military and administration’s framing and rationale for entering the war affected public support. I posit that a more positive trend in confidence in the military occurred during the Iraq War because of the success of administration and military framing of coverage. As a result of the Iraq War beginning with a more potent catalyst for the war, the attacks of September 11, 2001, versus the Gulf of Tonkin affair of Vietnam, it triggered a stronger frame that increased national solidarity. The Vietnam War did not

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experience such a strong national solidarity around the war because it was framed as a war against communism, which may have been a less pressing threat in the eyes of the public. Thus, the more compelling frame – waging war against terror – elicited more support and favorable views of the war and the military that persisted and grew throughout the Iraq War. This translated into higher confidence in the military in Iraq as opposed to Vietnam. Furthermore, in the coverage of atrocities, the Bush administration and military were able to push forward human-interest frames that favored the troops after Abu Ghraib as opposed to the Johnson administration during My Lai. Therefore, I will consider the media’s role and method of framing administration and military rationale for war and justification of atrocity. I will also consider public reactions and their subscription to the administration’s arguments through public opinion polling.

The second explanation will explore how the rhetoric of political elites towards the waging of the wars affects views of the military. I hypothesize that contrasting opinions of the military in the two wars was due to a “differing” rhetoric among political elites. These speeches are filtered through the media in making their way to the public. The media’s role becomes more an emissary of the attitudes encoded in political rhetoric. Iraq War politicians may have adopted a more positive tone towards the military itself, as compared to Vietnam War politicians, in demonstrating their opposition to the war. In Vietnam, politicians may have lacked outward verbal support of the troops in their speeches, which may have allowed room for public negative attitudes towards the troops. However, in Iraq, while some political elites argued against the war, they maintained respect and support for the military itself. This in turn may have influenced the public to make the distinction between the righteousness of the Iraq War and their view of the American military. Therefore, I will explore the language of political elites when referencing the military/troops and whether the media indirectly drove public opinion by the represented differences in political speech.

The third and final explanation will discuss how the evolution of media-military relations since Vietnam affected views of the military. I theorize that by controlling media access in the invaded country, the military's embedding policies influenced reporters to present a more favorable view of the troops than in Vietnam War. In Vietnam, there was relatively little control asserted or censorship conducted by the military on journalists covering the war, despite the existence of embedded journalists. Journalists may have felt freer to be critical in Vietnam. In Iraq, the majority of coverage was conducted via embedded journalists who were bound by strict military policies. This allowed the military to better frame the coverage and elicit sympathy for the troops even when the public disapproved of the war itself. Therefore, I will consider if the media's positive portrayal of the military influenced by military whose policies encouraged such portrayals.

By focusing on the experiences of the Vietnam and Iraq War, the similarities, discrepancies, and transformation of media portrayals will be evaluated and their effects drawn out. Comparison of the Vietnam War and Iraq War makes it clear that the public's perception of the military followed reverse paths. In pursuing this thesis, the following subtopics will also be investigated to further advance discussion:

- How has the media's portrayal of the military changed with evolving methods of warfare or with the advancement of technology?
- Was there a political bias in the media and did that affect how different groups of Americans, such as conservatives and liberals, viewed the wars and military?
- What was the role of conscription versus an all-volunteer force and other institutional characteristics of the military in affecting views of it? How did the media portray these topics?
- How did the social environment of the U.S., in regards to protests and feasibility of dissent, affect discussions surrounding the wars? Did the media present public dissent equal to administration and military announcements about the wars?

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These questions only scratch the surface of this topic. Inevitably, some will prove more pertinent than others and some may not be relevant at all. New topics will arise as the thesis progresses. It is my hope that even if these questions are only partially answered in the thesis, they will at least either inform the answer to this discrepancy or encourage further research.

Plan of Research and Methodologies

To answer my research questions, I will evaluate a wide array of literature on the topic, focusing on works concerning the historical background of media in relation to the presidency and military in the time shortly preceding and following each war. Then I will transition to works concerning the relationship between the military and the media. I will also review literature specific to Vietnam and Iraq. I will examine polling history from Pew, Gallup, NBC News, and other reputable polling companies. I will also search for interviews of military and political officials associated with the conflicts in addition to journalists who covered the wars. I will also look at analyses of television coverage of the wars, looking at networks such as CBS, NBC, ABC, Fox, and CNN News. After investigating these sources, I will move on to archives in newspapers such as *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times*, in addition to archives from the Pentagon and the Department of Defense. To supplement my content analyses, I will also conduct interviews with military professionals who fought during the Iraq War as well as media correspondents who were embedded during that war. By looking at these wide range of sources, I hope to appropriately account for the independent and dependent variables involved and develop a strong understanding of the topic in order to come to a well-supported conclusion.

The research methodologies involved in carrying out this thesis are qualitative and quantitative. I will first supplement my analysis of the framing of the wars and their catalysts with survey and polling data from those time periods. The polling data will cover topics of confidence in the war, views of the military, among other relevant surveys. It will look across time, including data for a specific number of months before and after the wars were initiated. I will then conduct a thematic analysis of political

speeches and statements to provide insight on political dissent by looking specifically at parts discussing American troops. Next, I will conduct a media content analysis of written coverage (newspaper and magazine articles and op-eds) during the Vietnam and Iraq Wars, looking specifically for changes in tone and attribution of responsibility. The media sources will ideally explain the perspectives of the writers and readers. This is critical as the public often looks to media for the justification of their opinions. Finally, the interviews will provide a qualitative supplement to help understand the data and draw conclusions about the perceived relationship between the media and military and its actual consequences. In theory, my explanations and the respective findings will build upon each other to formulate a comprehensive answer to the research question.

What to Expect

This section lays out the groundwork for the thesis, detailing the research questions, explanations, policy and theoretical importance as well as the plan of research and methodologies. As the chapters of the thesis progress, I will examine in depth the media coverage of the Vietnam and Iraq wars and the media's evolving relationship with the military in attempt to answer my research question.

Chapter Two, "Putting Boots on the Ground," provides a historical summary of the Vietnam and Iraq Wars. Furthermore, through an analysis of the similarities and differences, it explains why Vietnam and Iraq can be and should be compared to understand trends in confidence and favorability towards the military. Finally, it concludes with a review of the evolution of the military's public affairs branch since Vietnam to cast light on how the military's relationship with the media evolved. In Chapter Three, "Doomed to Repeat It," I will summarize and analyze the existing scholarly literature related to each of the explanations and draw support for those explanations. It will also explain my scholarly niche and further elucidate the importance of this research. Chapters Four through Six contain the heart of my research and empirical analysis. Each of these chapters will include the research conducted specific to the explanation, covering the methodology, results and analysis, and

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conclusions. With Chapter Four, “Spinning the Web of War,” I will move onto evaluating my first explanation: media portrayals of administrations’ framing of the wars. This will include a focus on the original frames of the war, derived from the Gulf of Tonkin Affair and September 11 Attacks, and then specifically on media framing of two highly-covered atrocities, My Lai and Abu Ghraib. Chapter Five, “The Better and the Brighter,” will examine my second explanation concerning political rhetoric. It will first introduce the sampling frame that details the scope of the thematic analysis as well as the media content analyses in the following chapter. Afterwards, I will introduce and analyze my thematic analysis of speeches by prominent political, military, and civilian elite. Chapter Six, “Mind the Gap,” and Chapter Seven, “Illuminating the Black Box,” will cover the third explanation. It will include my media content analysis of front-page news articles and op-ed articles. Chapter Seven, “Illuminating the Black Box,” will continue the work of Chapter Six and discuss embedding in detail through a series of interviews with military professionals and news correspondents. Finally, Chapter Eight, “After Action Report,” will review the implications of my findings on media portrayals of the military and its effect, if any at all, on the confidence trend. I will conclude with suggested courses for future research and improvements on my research design.

Chapter Two: Putting Boots on the Ground

“The specter of Vietnam has been buried forever in the desert sands of the Arabian Peninsula.” – George H.W. Bush

Chapter Overview

This chapter will provide pertinent background for the next chapters which include a review of scholarly literature and the three explanations. The literature review and explanations will focus on specific aspects of the wars and the media-military relationship as well as their effect on public opinion. Before entering those discussions, however, this chapter will set the foundation by discussing the broader histories of the wars. The first section of this chapter will provide a historical summary of each of the wars, detailing their impetus, major events, turning points, and the conclusions of the war. This is to provide some historical background that will inform the explanations. The second section of this chapter will compare and contrast the two wars on strategic, military, and political dimensions. This is to provide justification for why relevant aspects of the wars, especially media coverage, can be compared. The third section of this chapter will elucidate on the evolution of the military’s strategy in interacting with the media from Vietnam to Iraq. This is to provide an understanding of the media-military relationship before discussing its intricacies. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to highlight why the Vietnam and Iraq wars are suitable to compare and discuss in relation to each other, setting the foundation of the literature review and my hypotheses concerning the research question. For now, we turn first to the historical summaries of the wars.

Historical Summaries of the Wars: *Rationale, Major Events, Turning Points and Conclusions*

While these summaries by no means encompass the entire history of each of the wars, it provides an adequate background of relevant details about the influences of the wars and major events leading to their conclusions. These summaries will provide the foundation to understanding each of the wars and how they can be compared.

Chapter Two: Putting Boots on the Ground

Summary of the Vietnam War

The battle against communism became a foreign policy priority for the U.S. in 1945 in the aftermath of World War II, fueled by two strategies: containment and the domino theory (DeGroot 2000, 57; Volo 2010, 419). The domino theory was first described by President Eisenhower in a speech about Indochina. He posited that the fall of North Vietnam to Communism might trigger a sort of Communist chain reaction where the rest of Southeast Asia would follow. While Vietnam itself may not have been important in world order, it became so with the American pledge to resist communism's spread. This pledge began with the Truman Doctrine in 1947. Vietnam held strategic importance, being a former colony of the French. For the U.S. to maintain its political and trading relationships with France, then, "preserving French interests in Indochina became part of America's global security planning" (Anderson 2005, 18). With these positions as underlying rationale for U.S. involvement in Vietnam, the roots of the war were formally set with North Vietnam's encroachment into South Vietnam, notably commencing in 1955. The communist North Vietnam rationalized its maneuvers as an attempt to unify the country by imposing overarching communist rule. Ngo Dinh Diem, the Prime Minister of Vietnam since 1954, staved off the North Vietnamese, retaining control of South Vietnam with the help of the U.S. His policies, despite their cruelties, caused the communist infrastructure to suffer (DeGroot 2000, 65). However, the apparent success of Diem did not end U.S. involvement in Vietnam; in fact, the U.S. became increasingly embroiled in the conflict. The U.S. formally joined on the side of South Vietnam in 1961, expanding military and financial assistance to the South Vietnamese. America had hoped that Diem would push his country towards democratic principles, but it soon became clear that Diem's regime was not one for making such concessions. His brutal regime continued. As a result, "the U.S. found herself tied to an unpopular ally and a losing cause for the sake of an elusive goal and a simplistic principle" (De Groot 2000, 60). While South Vietnam suffered from its own internal struggles, the resistance to Diem's regime heightened. It was organized by Ho Chi Minh-backed National Liberation Front, commonly known as the Viet Cong.

Intervention in Vietnam symbolized America's reputation as a defender of small nations and crusader against communism (Anderson 2005, 21). In February 1962, the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) was formed to oversee America's commitment. It denoted a solidified U.S. presence in the region (DeGroot 2000, 72-73). However, in 1963, amidst constant religious and non-violence protests, Diem and his brother were assassinated by Nguyen Van Nhung, an aide of the General Duong Van Minh, the leader of the Army of Republic of Vietnam (Anderson 2005, 21). This was during a coup d'état sanctioned by the U.S. and led to the collapse of Diem's regime. The U.S. had realized that the Diem regime was unsalvageable; however, the assassination was not an intended consequence. In the eighteen months that followed, Saigon went through five different Prime Ministers, all ineffectual and most of them corrupt. Even so, due to the U.S.'s complicity in the coup, the U.S. was locked into supporting each regime. Thus, "as Saigon grew weaker and more chaotic, U.S. involvement deepened" (DeGroot 2000, 82).

By the election of President Lyndon B. Johnson, Vietnam's symbolic importance outweighed its strategic importance: the reputation of the U.S. as a defender and anti-communist crusader was at stake (DeGroot 2000, 125; Anderson 2005, 42). The Tonkin Gulf affair, though its validity retrospectively questionable, provided the "incident of sufficient magnitude to fire the wrath of the American people" (DeGroot 2000, 127). Allegedly, North Vietnamese forces attacked U.S. Navy ships in the Gulf of Tonkin in 1964. The Tonkin Gulf Resolution was passed with 85 percent support by the public for the administration's policy in Vietnam and with only two senators dissenting in Congress (Volo 2010, 430). Bombing campaigns, such as the 1965 Operation Rolling Thunder, ensued and Johnson's "Americanization" of the war led to nearly 400,000 U.S. troops to be present in Vietnam by the end of 1966. Yet, as the war protracted, public support continued to fall.

The Vietnam War was of insurgency, rather than aggression (Anderson 2005, 48). It was marked by atrocities on both sides. However, U.S. involvement in war crimes such as the massacre at

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My Lai, where frustrated U.S. soldiers killed hundreds of unarmed Vietnamese civilians, helped further bring down public support. The Tet Offensive symbolized the decrease in public support, plummeting to only 26 percent right after the conflict (De Groot 2000, 169). It was launched by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army in 1968, attacking nearly thirty U.S. targets and dozens of cities in South Vietnam at once. The U.S. was able to win a tactical victory, but it was covered as a defeat by the American media who saw the fighting and chaos in conflict with the administration's optimistic reports. In view of a failing war, support for the war fell under 50 percent at the end of Tet (DeGroot 2000, 254). Anti-war movements concurrently rose across the U.S., marked by formal protests against the war and military draft. Johnson did not run for a second term in light of national disapproval for the war and his presidency. Upon Nixon's election, a policy of "Vietnamization" was promoted with the promise of the gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops (Rid 2007, 54). Eventually, the U.S., North and South Vietnam, and the Vietcong signed a peace agreement in Paris that ended direct U.S. military involvement in January 1973. The last U.S. military personnel left Vietnam that March.

The war in Vietnam existed before the arrival of the Americans and continued after they left. Funding of the South Vietnamese army dwindled from the U.S., and the North Vietnamese forces took the weakness in South Vietnam and U.S. support to intensify their attacks. This culminated to an all-out offensive in the spring of 1975. Saigon fell to North Vietnam on April 30, 1975. The country was reunited under Communist rule as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, ending the war. Vietnam War was waged from 1961 to 1973 by the U.S., making it the longest conflict the U.S. had ever fought and the first war it lost.

Summary of the Iraq War

Nearly 35 years after the end of the Vietnam War, broken apart by many international conflicts, the U.S. entered a war that, for some, was a “Second Vietnam.” Sometimes referred to as the Second Gulf War, the Iraq War’s prelude was Iraq’s defeat by a U.S.-led coalition after Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Yet the Iraq War soon became the “most controversial and most deadly U.S. military operation since the Vietnam War” (Gelpi *et al.* 2006, 7). At the heart of the struggle of the massive sectarian civil war was Saddam Hussein’s oppressive Sunni regime. The Sunni regime was marked by its history of atrocity, reserving some of its most brutal punishments for the majority Shiite Arabs and Kurds in the north. U.S. power and prestige were committed to invading Iraq and overthrowing the Saddam Hussein regime. In emphatic judgments, commentators have remarked that the “decision to attack Saddam Hussein’s regime on 19 March, 2003 was a product of political biases, misguided priorities, intentional deceptions and grand strategies of President George W. Bush” and his national security team (Harvey 2011, 1). With the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks, reports of Iraq possessing weapons of mass destruction (WMD) surfaced. These were retrospectively fallacious. Nevertheless, claims of WMD coupled with reports of Saddam’s brutal regime incited concerned calls for intervention from the wider, international community. Adding to the concern was the Bush administration’s citations of Saddam’s potential ties to Al-Qaeda, a terrorist organization founded by Osama Bin Laden. This created grounds for a link between the September 11 Attacks and the Iraqi regime. It became U.S. policy that disarming the weapons and the regime were essential to the long-term security interests of the U.S. This all combined together prompted the formal invasion of Iraq on 20 March, 2003.

The main bulk of the forces in Iraq were contributed by the U.S. and U.K. The coalition invasion combined land, air, and water assaults to control most of the large cities. On 15 April, 2003, the invasion was declared complete and the hunt and capture of all government officials of the Saddam regime began. With Saddam Hussein’s capture in December 2003, the U.S. mission turned from

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invasion to military occupation. Violence continued and casualties increased, as American forces staved off insurgents who use guerrilla tactics and sabotage, including suicide attacks, improvised explosive devices (IED), and destruction of water and electrical structures. American support of the war shifted towards criticizing the Bush administration and its handling of the war. Further dissent was produced by the inability of the Bush administration to discover evidence of WMD in Iraq or a linkage between the regime and al-Qaeda. Deaths of U.S. troops soared, reaching some 1,000 by the U.S. presidential election in November 2004. The most serious fighting of the war was on 31 March, 2004 in Fallujah where Iraqi insurgents ambushed a Blackwater convoy provided security for food caterers. The contractors were killed and set ablaze with their corpses hung over a bridge crossing the Euphrates River. In the following month – April 2004 – the American broke news of widespread prisoner abuse in Abu Ghraib. The photos dealt a fatal blow to moral justifications for occupation: the atrocities in Abu Ghraib marked as a turning point in the war.

On 6 December, 2006, the results of the Iraq Study Group Report concluded that “the situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating” and the “U.S. forces seem to be caught in a mission that has no foreseeable end.” That same month, Saddam Hussein was hanged for crimes against humanity by an Iraqi court. It was one of the most public executions of the modern period. Initially portrayed as a relatively orderly execution, after video coverage was leaked of the hanging demonstrating jeering protestors, it transformed into a story about the disorder of Iraqi justice (Hoskins and O’Loughlin 2010, 32-33). As the military occupation in Iraq unraveled, dissent in the U.S., from the public to high-ranking government officials, reached all-time highs. However, the Bush administration pushed forward with the war. In 2007, there was a massive surge in U.S. troops, coupled with a change in U.S. tactics (Holsti 2011, 65). Saluted as “The New Way Forward,” the administration rationalized the deployment of 20,000 additional troops as necessary to help establish a democratic, self-governing Iraq by ensuring Iraqi forces were capable of providing security. Despite strong domestic and political

opposition, the Bush administration went ahead and increased the U.S. military presence in Iraq, continuing the protracted war with no end in sight.

By early 2007, U.S. troop deaths surpassed 3,000. Within the first three to four years of the conflict, an estimated 151,000 to 600,000 Iraqis were killed. The increase in troops saw a decrease in insurgent activities. This would be the same year that the Iraqi government voted in favor of coalition forces leaving. In 2008, a new Iraqi army was formed and its troops started to complete basic training with the help of U.S. military personnel. Withdrawal began after a 2008 U.S.-Iraqi agreement which planned an extended withdrawal process from Iraq beginning in mid-2009 (Harvey 2011, 2). The last combat brigades departed from Iraq on 19 August, 2010. The mission was formally ended on 15 December, 2011 under the presidency of Barack Obama. The 2003 invasion of Iraq was the largest, longest, and most costly use of armed forces by the U.S. since Vietnam. The differences and similarities of the two wars do not merely end here.

Comparing the Vietnam and Iraq Wars: *Differences and Similarities*

Since the Vietnam War, the U.S. has engaged in several major military operations: the 1965 invasion of the Dominican Republic, 1983 invasion of Grenada, 1989 invasion of Panama, 1991 Gulf War, 1999 NATO intervention of Kosovo, 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, and the 2003 Iraq War to name but a few. Although each of these military operations are compelling in their own right, this thesis will focus specifically on comparing the media portrayals of the military during the Vietnam and Iraq War. That being said, will reference the military operations in between these wars to demonstrate the evolution of the media-military relationship throughout this thesis. This section will introduce prominent differences and similarities between the two wars, and ultimately conclude that the wars bear enough political similarities to be comparable, and their differences will ultimately inform why opposing trends in public confidence were observed between the two wars.

Differences

The major differences between the Vietnam and Iraq War were the enemy and its capabilities, the composition of the U.S. Army and casualty rates, and the abilities of the media and how it criticized the wars.

Enemy. The North Vietnam military machine was a formidable foe, developed through decades of fighting against the Japanese, French, and South Vietnamese. Ho Che Minh, the dictator of North Vietnam, was a compelling leader with a clearly articulated Communist agenda. On the other hand, the Iraq War was waged against no clear foe or organized army; rather, it was waged against a collection of terrorist bands that had no coherent program for the future and no economic or territorial base. The Vietnam War began as a guerrilla war and escalated into a conventional war, whereas the Iraq War began as a conventional war and degenerated into a guerrilla war. Furthermore, The North Vietnamese received substantial support from the Soviet Union and Communist China. Together, they provided military supplies, weaponry, cash, and diplomatic support to North Vietnam. The Iraqi insurgents, however, received no documented support from any governmental entity in the world. This may explain why support for the Iraq War may have been slightly more prolonged than the Vietnam War as success was harder to ascertain in the occupation phase of the war.

Conscription versus an All-Volunteer Force. During the Vietnam War, the draft was instituted, pulling a cross-section of Americans, many of whom which did not want to fight. On the other hand, the Iraq War was defined as an all-volunteer force, where everyone enlisted voluntarily in the military. Horowitz and Levendusky found that mass support falls by 17 percentage points when there is a draft relative to an all-volunteer force (2011, 525). While symbolic factors often outweigh self-interest, self-interest has a significant impact on attitudes toward the war. After 1965, the draft as a system of conscription drove much of the protests, fueled by the belief that it was unfairly administered to blue-collar Americans and African-Americans (Joseph 2006, 12). In 1969, the U.S. government instituted the draft lottery, and consistent with the self-interest logic, those with lower draft numbers and thus more likely to be conscripted were more likely to strongly oppose the war

(Horowitz and Levendusky 2011, 527). Vietnam also served as a transitional period from mobilized war to conditional, still burdened by personnel demands that conscription could only meet. However, the conscription was marked with bias and inequality, sustained by a policy of student deferments that ensured that those fighting in Vietnam, for the most part, were among the socially disadvantaged. After Vietnam, U.S. warfare was characterized more by conditional war. The American public no longer expected to serve as the U.S. military transitioned to an all-volunteer force (Joseph 2006, 13). This changed the relationship of citizens and war from 'participant' to 'spectator,' in that armed conflicts carried only a minimal impact on the majority of civilians. Even so, Christain Appy asserts that, despite the differences between the draft and the all-volunteer force, "both systems put most of the dirty work of warfare in the hands of people with significantly fewer choices and opportunities" (Gardner and Young 2013, 8). The professional difference between the draft and all-volunteer force may be in part why opposing public confidence in the military was observed because the latter was composed by individuals prouder and more devoted to their work and the public reacted to that.

Causalities. In Vietnam, 58,000 Americans died as a result of the War. In the Iraq War, a total of 4,491 U.S. service members were killed between 2003 and 2014. However, if we include the casualties from 9/11 (2,996) as well as the years spent in Afghanistan (2,326) – stimuli for the Iraq War – that brings the total figure to 9,813. This is still nowhere near to the causalities suffered during the Vietnam War. The differences in causalities may explain why the Vietnam War engendered more outrage than the Iraq War, as the public was far more likely to be involved and negatively affected by the significantly greater deaths.

Media and Criticism of the War. The emergence of new media (talk radio, the internet, and blogging) has also changed the media landscape completely since the Vietnam War. Since the Vietnam War, the American public enjoys more diverse sources of information. However, as argued by General William Nash, there was a fundamental difference in the American public's response to the war:

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In the late '60s and early 70s, the nation's dissatisfaction with the war and with the government policies was directed toward those who were but the executors of that policy, not its creators. Much of the criticism in those days was directed toward the army that was trying to serve loyally our democratic system. Today, even those of U.S. who disagree with the policies do not direct our criticism toward those magnificent soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who serve our nation, as the Constitution calls for them to do (Gwertzman and Nash 2005).

Reporters during the Vietnam War had unparalleled freedom to roam South Vietnam, so their stories were not subject to routine censorship by the U.S. military (Carruthers 2011, 146). On the other hand, the Iraq War media coverage was defined by the U.S. military's embedding policy. Under the embedded policy, reporters were required to sign a contract and agree to ground rules. They lived among the soldiers and had a detail attached to them when they would venture out. It was a popular policy as 64 percent of print journalists in Iraq were embedded and of the articles to appear on a front page of a newspaper, 71 percent were written by embedded journalists (Linder 2008, 38). This difference between the two wars is fundamental in understanding why public opinion for the military was so drastically different in spite of the similarities discussed in the next section.

Similarities

The similarities between the Vietnam War and the Iraq War are the context of withdrawal, lack of knowledge of the enemy, duration of the conflict, the U.S.'s attempt at state-building, failure to sustain public support, and the leadership and politics of the conflict.

Withdrawal. In both conflicts, pressure for the U.S. government to withdraw troops increased as American public opinion and media judgments turned against the war. However, in both conflicts, it was made clear to Americans the horrific consequences of unilateral and unconditional withdrawal. As a result, the administrations at the time successfully bartered with the American public in staying in the war, until the time would be right to leave. This is exemplified by the concept of the decent interval (Elliott 2013, 32). Essentially, it was the face-saving formula of U.S. extrication from a conflict it realized it could no longer win. While this is an important similarity, it is not entirely relevant to the conversations elicited by this thesis. This thesis will primarily focus its attention to the time

periods of the Johnson and Bush presidencies, which ended before the formalized endings of both of their respective wars.

Knowledge of the Enemy. The U.S. knew very little about either Vietnam or Iraq before involving itself in conflict. Specifically in Vietnam, the U.S. did not have a thorough understanding of the history of the nation: centuries of Chinese dominance, effects of Japanese occupation during World War II, or the consequences of French colonial rule. In Iraq, U.S. officials allegedly demonstrated poor comprehension of the complex and long history of the nation, from the Ottoman Empire to British colonialism, and from the transition from the Hashemite monarchy to Saddam's dictatorship. Towards both countries, U.S. officials had little knowledge of the regional and religious conflicts that festered in the regions. Thus, in both places the U.S. attempted to impose American solutions in dissimilar political cultures. This may inform how the wars were similarly framed and conducted without an extensive strategic plan by both the Johnson and Bush administrations.

Duration of Conflict. Both the Vietnam and Iraq War were extended conflicts, exceeding seven years, with a less clear measure of what victory would look like as the wars progressed. The Vietnam War intended to bolster South Vietnam and the Iraq War intended to topple Saddam Hussein. However, once that was achieved, the administration's reconstruction goals were lacking in both conflicts. The Vietnam and Iraq wars were also defined by elements of guerrilla warfare and counterinsurgency operations. Vietnam was the last major counterinsurgency experience of the U.S. military until Iraq. This similarity may give rise to the fall of support for the actual wars. The public is more likely to see a war as a failed venture and demonstrate less support, the longer a country is engaged in a war.

Attempt at State-Building. Many argue the involvement in Iraq is similar to the Vietnam War in its effects on the invaded region. The U.S. was once again stumbling into a foreign quagmire, characterized by a protracted, indecisive, and expensive struggle. The U.S.' mission in Iraq was what

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it failed to do in Vietnam War: build a sustainable, indigenous government the Iraqi people accept and create political order in the region. Despite the U.S.' overwhelming military power in both conflicts, it could not turn it into a political advantage. The failure of state-building in Iraq failed for the same principle reason that it did in Vietnam: the U.S. was unable to create a political order that commanded popular legitimacy. This is partially relevant to the first hypothesis, which concerns the administrative and military framing. State-building as a frame of the U.S. occupation failed and this potentially gives reason to the public's loss of confidence in the government to achieve what it set out to do and the presumed capabilities of the military.

Sustaining Domestic Political Support. Due to the limited and abstract nature of U.S. objectives in Indochina, there were limits to the domestic political sustainability of American war effort. The increasing casualty rates and loss of economic capital coupled with no apparent policy progress turned the U.S. public and political elites against the Vietnam War. This prompted a withdrawal of U.S. forces and abandonment of South Vietnam to its Communist foe. Although there is a numerical difference in the casualty rates, the drop-off level in public support followed similar patterns in both wars. Research points that public support falls 15 percent as the number of casualties increase by a factor of 10 (Klarevas 2002, 426-427). Furthermore, the economic cost of the wars are paralleled. As per the Department of Defense (DOD), the United States spent around \$168 billion (around \$950 billion in 2011 dollars), with the entire war costing \$111 billion in military operations from 1965 to 1972, and \$28.5 billion in economic and military aid to Saigon from 1953 to 1975. For direct spending on Iraq, the DOD totaled it to \$757.8 billion, though the costs are contested. This failure to sustain domestic political support for the war is an interesting point when evaluating the similar rise and fall of support for the war, and even more so interesting when understanding opposing success in sustaining public confidence in the military itself.

Politics and Leadership. Throughout the 1960s and the 70s, Democrats were the dominant party in the U.S., possessing uninterrupted control of both houses of Congress even amidst a Nixon presidency. During the majority of the Iraq War, Republicans controlled both houses of Congress and the Presidency. Thus, both wars were characterized by a unification in the political arena, at least in their beginnings. Both Secretary McNamara, who served during the Vietnam War, and Secretary Rumsfeld, who served during the Iraq War, entered the Pentagon with ambitious agendas. The presidencies of both times, were arguably lead by similar hubris: they plunged into these situations because of a circumstantial obligation to do something. For Johnson, it was to build on the war efforts begun by Eisenhower and Kennedy. For Bush, it was to build on the Middle Eastern policy of his father and react to 9/11. Furthermore, the wars were begun on a web of lies: the Tonkin Gulf incident, the inexistence of WMD or contracts between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaida, among other examples of misinformation. They were also driven by “domino theory.” The U.S. believed that if it lost Vietnam or Iraq, states surrounding would fall to communism, in the case of Vietnam, or to terrorism, in the case of Iraq. Another similarity of great relevance in the first and second explanations was the “blank-check nature of the congressional authorization of military actions and the allegations of presidential deception to gain congressional assent” (Elliott 2013, 18).

Charting the Evolution of Public Affairs Strategies in the Military

The final section of this chapter selectively explains the history of the military’s strategy in interacting and coordinating with the media. It discusses the rationale for the military’s public affairs policies beginning in Vietnam as well as the mistakes it sought to learn from. It also discusses the presidency and administration’s attempt to curate public opinion on the war and the military. While this does not encompass every facet of the evolution of the relationship, this section aims to clarify and provide the groundwork for the upcoming chapters by describing the “media-military relationship.”

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The Media-Military Relationship in Vietnam: A Disastrous Legacy

In battlefields, the military historically controlled access. Yet, as it will come up time and time again, the battlefield was almost fully accessible to the reporters in Vietnam. The events of the Tet Offensive in early 1968 were definitive in shifting public support for the war. The media interpreted the events of Tet Offensive as an indicator of military weakness. Regardless of the military victories, the images of violence, long casualty lists, and a new perception of an untruthful military frustrated a public that once revered the military in wars past. The inability to achieve a meaningful military solution in Vietnam increased public frustration towards the war as well, and the frustration impacted the military. Furthermore, the media-military relationship became increasingly strained, especially from 1968 onwards. The press reported on their misgivings of the Tet Offensive, stressing that the “United States had been caught off guard by the intensity and coordination of the offensive” and like gloomy comments (Hammond 1988, 345). It was not necessarily the journalists who deviated from custom, but their sources who were radically reappraising the war (Carruthers 2011, 147). The MACV could do little at the mercy of a slow communications system and was immobilized in its ability to frame the information as official credibility fell to staggering depths. The press reported on violations of war conduct committed by American troops. With the catastrophic battle of Khe Sanh, public approval ratings of the war and of President Johnson fell. By the end of February 1968, “pessimism pervaded the American news media” (Hammond 1988, 369). The Tet offensive and bloodbath in Khe Sanh, among other incidents that would follow after, cast doubt on the effectiveness of the U.S. military. My Lai and other crimes against humanity cast doubt on the morality of the U.S. military. An increasing number of reports cited that the war was a costly stalemate. The chaos coupled with the uncertainty helped undermine public legitimacy in the war (Joseph 2006, 86).

Policymakers in Washington sought further methods of mediating the public relations of the war by refusing to allow information officers to mention the use of napalm or armed helicopters. This backfired against the military, as newsmen still reported on these and “the attempt to mislead newsmen

about the extent of the American involvement in the air war thus forced information officers” to take positions that undermined their credibility (Hammond 1988, 16-17). Administration attempts to control public opinion were thwarted by the immediacy of information. The public was privy to many disheartening images almost in real-time. On average, the American public viewed 500 body bags and flag draped coffins on television every month, which, informed by Mueller’s casualty argument, adds to explaining why public opinion of the war shifted negatively (Volo 2010, 431).

Yet, the continuing turmoil in Vietnam for the next three years sparked debates in Congress and amongst the American public about the continuation of the war and American funding to South Vietnam: “American newspapers were as perplexed as Congress but relatively unified in their condemnation of the U.S. government’s lack of leadership on the Vietnam question” (Hammond 1988, 127). One concern that underlined the press’ position was the conviction the government had purposely lied about its South Vietnam involvement, citing the suppression of the North Vietnam infiltration story among other grievances. Such negative views of the military and government’s handling of the war only served to set the foundation of public disapproval. Vietnam created a generation of embittered officers who despised the press and sought to mediate its relation so that the “failures of Vietnam” would not happen again.

Even though the majority turned against the Vietnam War after the Tet Offensive, around one-third claimed to support further escalation as to win. This trend of one-third supporting the military despite costs is mimicked in the Iraq War (Joseph, 6). With that point made, the “presentation of the chaos, uncertainty, and cost that surrounded the U.S. effort helped undermine public legitimacy in the war” (Joseph, 86). Vietnam exemplified a two-sided defeat for the U.S.: on the battlefield and in the creation of the “Vietnam syndrome.” This was defined by the limited approval of soldiers in overseas combat.

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Part of the dissent towards the troops may have been due to the qualities that characterized a military drafted from a cross-section of America. During the Vietnam era, Jeffrey Record in the May 1995 *Proceedings*, the magazine of the Navy's professional society, wrote:

The Corps registered rates of courts-martial, non-judicial punishments, unauthorized absences, and outright desertions unprecedented in its own history, and, in most cases, three to four times those plaguing the U.S. Army. Violence and crime at recruit depots and other installations escalated; in some cases, officers ventured out only in pairs or groups and only in daylight (Atlantic 1997).

Perhaps negative sentiments of the military during Vietnam were driven by the fact that the military was plagued by socially unacceptable and rampant drug abuse. However, regardless of the truth, the charge that the media lost the war through negative reporting is a legacy that erected a stone wall between the institutions, trickling down to the public. For the next few decades, the military would attempt to improve its relationship with the media in hopes of avoiding another Vietnam.

The Media-Military Relationship between Vietnam and Iraq: Trial and Error

The military-media relationship right after Vietnam was incredibly strained. For many, the pinnacle of that strain – reconciling the need for military secrecy and the press' need to publish information – was reached with the American invasion of Grenada. The invasion of Grenada was marked by media blackout of two days. This was met by media furor (Venable 2002, 67). To help improve military-media relations in 1983, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chair General John W. Vessey Jr. brought together a set of military officers and journalists to form the Sidle Panel, named for its leader, Major General Winant Sidle. Its recommendations were “the basis for the Department of Defense National Media Pool. Among the panel's recommendations were that public affairs planning be conducted with operational planning” (*ibid.*). The media pool was in the military eyes' a way to smooth relations with the press by allowing a small group of journalists in the battlefield who would return to share the reporting with their colleagues.

The eight recommendations proposed by the Sidle Panel, including the incorporation of public affairs considerations in operation panel, were tested in Panama for the first time. Journalist Steve Katz wrote of the experience: “This was the Pentagon’s first test of the military’s ability to adopt the recommendations of the Sidle Panel. It flunked the test” (68). Media coverage was restricted in Panama, with the Pentagon requiring journalists “to participate in pools, exclude restricted information from their articles and broadcasts, and submit their reports to military officials for security review” (Doctrinal Foundations of Public Affairs). This limited network coverage and poor coordination with the media resulted in news organization leaders to strongly criticize military treatment of the media.

During the Persian Gulf War, the military continued to hash out its policy for coordinating with the media. The military practiced censorship to some degree and the media found the military guilty of controlling access to units (69). In response, the Pentagon created the DOD Principles for News Media Coverage of DOD operations in April 1992. This emphasized to “military commanders the importance of their personal involvement in planning for news coverage of combat operations” (Doctrinal Foundations of Public Affairs). Furthermore, it expressed open and independent reporting and voluntary compliance to security guidelines. In the conflicts between the Gulf War and the Iraq War, the military learned the concepts of security at the source, that “military personnel being interviewed must ensure that they do not reveal classified information” (Venable 2002, 70). It was in these years that they would begin entertaining the idea of embedding reporters into military units. These viewpoints would define the media-military relationship in Iraq.

The Media-Military Relationship in Iraq: Practicing New Tricks

The censorship that occurred during the Iraq War was very much driven by the administration, who took such responsibility away from the military. Bush administration “pursued a very active public relations campaign to promote and sustain support for its Iraq policy” (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 132). The American public’s disenchantment did not significantly affect policy, but it impelled a transformation

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in the way the administration framed the issue. Despite the difficulties of bringing peace and security to Iraq, the Bush administration's policies were framed as essential to protecting national security. However, it was evident that the administration sought to do more to mediate the public's views of the war. Some of the more dubious efforts on the administration's part included shielding the public from the "true" costs of war:

It tightened limits on media access to the Dover, Delaware, and Ramstein, Germany, air bases to prevent coverage of flag-draped coffins returning from Afghanistan and Iraq. The Pentagon also took steps to obstruct coverage of burial services for those killed in Iraq, even if grieving family members gave the media permission to attend (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 142).

This policy was enacted in 1991 and continued into the Iraq War until the ban was lifted by President Obama in late February 2009. The rationale provided by the administrations was it protected the privacy of the families of the dead. However, critics saw it as an attempt to manipulate public opinion. By preventing the images of body bags to surface on news networks, as in Vietnam, the public opinion was predicted not to fall as negatively.

Despite the actions of the administration, the most marked evolution of public affairs of the military and their treatment of the media was through the embedding policy. While we will return to this idea in more detail, the embedding policy was constructed as an antidote to Saddam Hussein's propaganda, devised as a method of increasing transparency and accountability, and construed as the best way for the military to maintain credibility. As it stands now, the mission of DOD public affairs is to "plan, coordinate and synchronize U.S. military public information activities and resources for two main objectives: support the commander's intent and support the commander's concept of operations" (Doctrinal Foundations of Public Affairs). Public military information is disseminated through coordinating media relations, thus through the access of the media to military operations. In this thesis, it will be shown that the military successfully achieved its goal through embedding and like policies outlined by its Public Affairs division.

Conclusion

It is difficult to compare two wars that are so far apart in time, location, and historical circumstances. It is also clear that many differences of the circumstances of the wars do outweigh the similarities in the strategic and military dimensions of the conflicts. However, this is not true when considering the political dimensions of the war. As Paul Joseph writes, “Iraq’s desert does not equal Vietnam’s jungle and the precise circumstances of the two wars differed in other ways. But underlying themes in each war were very similar” (2006, 35). These political dimensions provide insight into the goal of this thesis and warrant proper examination.

The politics of understanding public support and how the administration and media grappled with sustaining and reporting war, respectively, in Vietnam and Iraq is undeniably important. There may be very few ways public opinion can influence the military directly and vice versa; however, this is not an indicator of insignificance. The growing public need “to know,” is often enabled, facilitated and, to an extent, fostered by the media. This inspires political micro-management which dictates operation choices and constrains military force (Golby *et al.* 2013, 6). The American media is often considered the fourth branch of government. Traditionally, the media should serve two functions: to inform the public and to record what happened. The media covers the American military, which entails public examination of the goals and purpose of armed conflict. Essentially, the media represents the military to the public in contemporary military operations, and positive public opinion is decisive. Success in this role provides tension between the military and the media, as demonstrated both in Vietnam and Iraq, as well as the years in between. It is on this front I will compare the war.

Chapter Three: Doomed to Repeat It

“Our government rests in public opinion. Whoever can change public opinion, can change the government, practically just so much.” – Abraham Lincoln

Overview of the Chapter

In this chapter, I review the research literature dealing with each of three explanations for the observation that positive views of the military declined during the Vietnam War alongside with support for the war, but in during the Iraq War, positive views of the military rose despite a fall of support for the war. The first explanation concerns the framing of the wars through the lens of the administration, military and media. I specifically will refer to Gulf of Tonkin Affair and the September 11 Attacks as well as My Lai and Abu Ghraib. By considering scholarly research, I will evaluate the intricacies and success of the administrations’ framing of the wars and the media’s representation of those arguments. The second explanation concerns rhetoric among political elites. In Vietnam, politicians may have lacked outward verbal support of the troops in their speeches, allowing room for public negative attitudes towards the troops. However, in Iraq, while some political elites argued against the war, they maintained respect and support for the military itself. This in turn may have influenced the public to make the distinction between the righteousness of the Iraq War and their view of the American military. The third and final explanation discusses the evolution of media-military relations since Vietnam and how it affects views of the military. I will consider embedding policies, censorship, and other military public affairs policies. I will also determine if a particular environment in the media was developed from the influence of the military that encouraged positive portrayals of the military.

This chapter is divided into three miniature literature reviews corresponding to each one of the explanations. Within these sections, I consider relevant political and media theories and concepts, the literature surrounding the Vietnam War and the Iraq War, and a summary of the conclusions be made from existing research. Each section also identifies gaps in the literature that I intend to address in the chapters to follow.

Explanation 1: Spinning the Web of War

This literature review examines scholarship and the historical events of the Vietnam and Iraq War, looking particularly at their origins. This is to understand how administration and military framing of the events encouraged support for the war and, by extension, the military. The literature review will first consider relevant theories and concepts, the framing of the Vietnam War, the framing of the Iraq War, and then come to conclusions about the gaps in scholarly research.

Relevant Theories and Concepts

Rally around the Flag Effect and the Cascade Model

The “rally-around-the-flag” effect primarily affects presidential approval ratings, denoting a relationship between presidential popularity and international events. First examined by John E. Mueller in the 1970s, the expression has gained significance in political science research. Mueller argues that the rally effect as “being associated with an event which (1) is international and (2) involves the United States and particularly the president directly; and it must be (3) specific, dramatic, and sharply focused” (Mueller 1973, 209). In reference to wars, the rise of cumulative casualties causes public support to wane (266). There are two schools of thought embedded in Mueller’s term. The first one is the “Patriotism School of Thought” which holds that Americans will rally to the president, in approving of their policies, in a symbol of national unity in times of international crisis (Hetherington and Nelson 2003, 37). The second school is the “Opinion Leadership School,” which holds that the rally occurs in the presence of a lack of criticism from Congressional opposition party members (2003, 38). The former explains the causes of rallies whereas the later explains their durations (2003, 39). In the Vietnam War, support “was followed to a remarkable degree to the same trend pattern and was a function of the logarithm of the number of American casualties” (Mueller 1973, 266). In Iraq, the rally effect was of a longer duration, but diminished as casualties and scandals mounted. Therefore, while the administration can count on an increase in approval rating, it should not expect approval to last

very long or for the public to approve of the war indiscriminately, especially in light of military scandals.

A second relevant theory is the cascade model. The cascade model presents a line of influences and is the way media frames affect public opinion (Bennett *et al.* 2008, 81). The government influences elites, who influence the media, which shapes public opinion by the framing of words and images. Frames that have more culturally resonant terms have the greatest potential to influence. For example, recurring the usage of words like “evil” and “war” and “Iraq” in framing September 11, allowed the Bush administration to lead the public to war. These topics and theories will be discussed in more detail when considering the wars specifically.

Framing

For the aforementioned effect and model to be capitalized on by the administration and military, these institutions must be able to frame the event to their desire for the public. Framing occurs when the media’s emphasis on a subset of considerations cause individuals to focus on these considerations when constructing their opinion as opposed to other considerations (Pfau *et al.* 2004, 76). Framing “is the selection of a restricted number of thematically related attributes for inclusion on the media agenda when a particular object is discussed” (McCombs 1997, 6). Frames are the central organizing story lines which provide meaning to a strip of events. By framing events in a certain manner, the media influences how people think and remember events (Schwalbe 2006, 269). When framing occurs, the media present the facts of an initial reporting in a way that gives the audience a particular point of view or interpretation. An example would be a news reporter or a headline asserting that Trump has extreme views on abortion or that Clinton’s proposed budget cuts would be harmful.

Nelson and his colleagues have found that media frames change attitudes by influencing audience perceptions of belief importance (Dardis *et al.* 2008, 127). This means that framing is a far more active and aware process, in that individuals will accept or refute certain frames based on their

prior dispositions. Unlike biases, framing “adds the possibilities of additional, more complex emotional responses and also adds a cognitive dimension (beliefs about objects as well as attitudes)” (Tankard 2001, 96). When media frames highlight issues through a certain frame, they interact with the individual’s prior attitudes. By assessing individual-level responses to differently framed news stories with 184 participants, Dardis *et al.* found that, dependent on the amount of cognitive dissonance the frame produces, an individual “may incorporate the information of the frame into her or his mental framework, updating attitudes accordingly” (2008, 127). Even if briefly exposed to an individual, the right kind of frame can impact how a person thinks about an issue, as it provides readily-accessible constructs from which the individual will draw to formulate supporting or refuting arguments. With repeated exposure to that frame, the opinions of an individual may change.

The three sources which influence how journalists frame a story are journalistic-centered influences, organizational pressures, and external influences (Schwalbe 2006, 280). Journalist-centered influences arise from the attitudes, professional values, and ideological or political orientation of a journalist. The second source are organizational pressures and constraints, which include the outlet’s political orientation, the level of autonomy of the news station, and national interests. The third source are external influences, like audience expectations and pressure from politicians and interest groups. This is important to understand as the reporting style advanced by the media, that is, framing, can be more potent than what is verbally expressed. It creates a narrative that may unintentionally or intentionally promote a particular interpretation. Framing is conducted through the manipulation of four primary structural dimensions of news: syntactic structures, word and phrase placement; script structures, perceived newsworthiness; thematic structures, causal statements attributing blame; and rhetorical structures, the stylistic choices of journalists (Kosicki and Pan 1993, 56). Furthermore, framing is influenced by five media traits which can create a frame of reference: important judgments, agency, categorization, generalization, and the identification of potential victims, (Entman 1993, 52).

The media tends to frame in a way biased to the status quo, and frames themselves tend to reflect shared cultural narratives and social themes prevailing in society at the time of publishing.

Two types of frames considered primarily in political science are episodic and thematic frames. Through a content analysis of over 500 television newscasts, Iyengar (1987) demonstrated that newscasts are framed in episodic or thematic terms. Episodic frames “depict public issues as concrete instances or specific events, whereas thematic newscasts report on a more abstract level in the form of general outcomes” (Scheufele 2000, 307; Schwalbe 2006, 269). Thematic framing, as opposed to episodic framing, leads to greater treatment responsibility to the government to make change (Aaroe 2011, 209; Hart 2010, 6).

Historically, researchers have taken the position that episodic frames of news stories significantly influence the cognitive responses of respondents. Price *et al.* (1995) found a hydraulic pattern of comprehension in their study of 278 students. They presented four randomly assigned versions of a fictitious news story containing either no, human interest, conflict, or personal consequences news frames. They discovered that thoughts stimulated by the frame drive out other possible responses (Scheufele 2000, 308). Episodic framing affects opinion through various psychological processes dependent on the receiver of the frame. As a result, it does not act uniformly across individuals (Slothuus 2008, 21). Of those who are moderately politically aware or hold weak political values, framing effects are mediated “through processes of changing importance of considerations as well as changing content of considerations” (Slothuus 2008, 1). Of those who are highly aware, framing effects were mediated only through importance change process. Of those who are strongly aware, there are no framing effects.

Furthermore, episodic framing is mediated by three models. The first is the accessibility model, as previously discussed. The second is the importance change model, where episodic frames are potent in that they affect opinion by making certain consideration of more importance than others (Slothuus

2008, 5). Therefore, the accessibility model makes preexisting considerations more accessible in memory. On the other hand, the importance change model “influences opinions by affect the perceived relative importance of different accessible consideration” (Slothuus 2008, 5). The third is the content change model, where new information from an episodic frame affects opinions through a two-step process. This involves the reception of new ideas and the acceptance of some as new considerations. It does not make some preexisting considerations more important, but changes the content of those considerations. While there has been extensive focus of research on framing, the research community has been preoccupied with episodic framing, which has traditionally defined the methods utilized by the media community. This information about framing, specifically the differences between thematic and episodic framing, is important to keep in mind in the discussion of Explanation One.

Vietnam War and the Gulf of Tonkin Affair

In 1955, media attention, for the most part, focused on military tactics with little discussion of the necessity for the intervention in Vietnam. However, on 7 August, 1964, The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution gave broad congressional approval for the expansion of U.S. engagement in Vietnam. While the U.S. never formally declared war, the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was the “functional” equivalent (Katsiaficas 1992, 49). In the spring of 1964, the Johnson administration feared that the public would not accept an expansion of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. This would undermine the meticulous effort military planners had put into their detailed designs for major offenses on North Vietnam. Yet, the administration did not have enough cause to enter war. By summer, rebel forces controlled nearly half of the South. Senator Barry Goldwater, the Republican presidential nominee, heavily criticized President Johnson for his failure to pursue the war more aggressively (Katsiaficas 1992, 50). With reputations at stake, the Johnson administration needed “an incident of sufficient magnitude to fire the wrath of the American people” (DeGroot 2000, 127). This came with the Gulf

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of Tonkin affair. Between the dates of August 2 and August 4, USS destroyer *Maddox* and another destroyer, *USS C. Turner Joy*, reported that they were under North Vietnamese attack.

Before the attacks, U.S. Naval intelligence vessels were traveling to the Gulf of Tonkin to patrol to make U.S. presence known and monitor North Vietnamese and Chinese communications and actions in the area (Karnow 1994, 347-348). North Vietnam believed that the vessels were not on routine patrol but there to support U.S. military actions on behalf of South Vietnam. Routine naval maneuvers normally were conducted in international waters and not within the water boundaries of Vietnam. However, U.S. Naval ships were within three miles of the North Vietnamese shoreline. International waters began twelve miles from the coast (Moise 1996, 11). Allegedly, the commander and crew of *Maddox* were been warned about the possibility of an attack, two or more hours prior to confrontation. Still, *Maddox* remained in the waters. It became the target of a torpedo attack from North Vietnamese patrol boats, though the damage consisted of a single bullet hole (Moise 1996, 73). There were no American casualties. On the Vietnamese side, three vessels were damaged and there were four casualties as well as six wounded.

Subsequently, Johnson ordered *C. Turner Joy* to join in the patrols. On August 4, *Maddox* and *Turner Joy* appeared to be under attack once again. However, in this confrontation, there was no clear evidence of the presence of enemy vessels. There was no debris to actually demonstrate that an enemy ship had been sunk (Moise 1996, 106). In 1968, the second attack was deemed as “either an outright fabrication or an innocent misassumption” (DeGroot 2000, 129). Nevertheless, President Johnson authorized 64 bombing runs the next day in retaliation. He also petitioned Congress successfully for a resolution that encouraged further action to protect American military personnel and allies against the actions of communist states. Interestingly enough, this resolution had been drafted at least five months prior to the Gulf of Tonkin affair (Karnow 1994, 358). As soon as the attacks occurred, Johnson made a nationally televised address that inflated the case. Public opinion polls at that time

were strongly behind supporting a military response to North Vietnam, showing national solidarity behind the administration who pushed the Gulf of Tonkin incident as a clear sign of aggression against the U.S. (Katsiaficas 1992, 49). The consequential resolution was quickly approved by Congress, gaining the unanimous votes of the House and 88 in favor in the Senator, all but Senators Wayne Morse of Oregon and Ernest Gruening of Alaska (DeGroot 2000, 128). In their dissent, Morse noted that “History will record that we have made a great mistake...by means of this resolution,” and Gruening said, “All Vietnam is not worth the life of a single American boy” (Volo 2010, 430). Morse and Gruening were each later turned out of office because of their outspoken opposition (Mann 2010, 128). However, it would become clear that their opposition was neither misguided nor incorrect. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution had essentially given the president a blank check for military action.

Direct intervention in Vietnam was framed as necessary because of the instability of the South Vietnamese government and its risk of falling to what was considered Soviet expansionism. The Johnson administration would not be the last administration to “enhance claims that turned out to be far weaker than presented,” as the Bush administration would follow suit with the war in Iraq (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 179-180). The Vietnam War was rationalized under the domino theory, a doctrine dating to the Eisenhower administration, and the threat of communism. Yet, for many, the communist threat was a scapegoat that hid imperialistic intentions. For others, it was illegal interference with the self-determination of the country, supposedly ensured by the UN Charter. Finally for some, the Vietnam War was not a threat to U.S. security but a civil war that America ought not to have intervened. In all cases, critics of the military pointed to the political nature of the war and argued that the mission of the military lacked any clear idea of how to achieve its objectives. With this background of the Johnson administration’s deception to engage in a war in Vietnam, the parallel with Iraq is framed.

Iraq War and the September 11 Attacks

Following the September 11 attacks, the media frames utilized by the government and mass media were in sync. Both the government and the military narrowly defined the problem, diagnosed the cause, made moral judgments, and suggested remedies. These positions were reflected in the media. The world was framed as binary and the Bush administration framed its narrative with justice from 9/11 would only be attained through the invasion of Iraq. Without the Bush administration's campaign to disseminate information about WMD and Iraq's alleged ties to al-Qaeda, the Iraq War could have never taken place (Hallin 2013, 96). The 9/11 attacks demonstrated the vulnerability of the United States. Terrorist organizations had the desire and ability to cause as much death and destruction possible, without care for civilian casualties or the rules of war, in any place possible. An unofficial reason behind the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 was that it was a demonstration of the U.S.'s military establishment. The Bush administration was under a pressure to dispel any perceived weaknesses following 9/11 (Karon 2011). It was the structural shock of 9/11 that "served to raise the importance of rogue states with WMD potential and the necessity of dealing effectively with this new type of threat" (Cashman and Robinson 2007, 378). While there were many other considerations and potential catalysts for the war, such as Iraq's possession of the world's second largest oil reserves or an exercise of the domino theory in the Middle East, the fallout after 9/11 was used to motivate the Iraq War.

The war was sanctified by the Congressional resolution, "Joint Resolution to Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces against Those Responsible for the Recent Attacks Launched against the United States." This resolution authorized the President to "to take military action against any nation, organization, or persons that had been involved in the 9/11 attacks." It was confirmed with 420-1 in the House and 98-0 in the Senate (Holsti 2011, 26). Congressman Barbara Lee (D-CA) was the only voice of dissent in Congress, receiving death threats almost immediately after her vote (Mann 2010, 159). This reaction to dissent was not uncommon: national solidarity and patriotism was

quickly linked with supporting the war. Anything less was framed as allying oneself with the terrorists. After the events of 9/11, the U.S. embarked on a global “War on Terror,” in which terrorism became a military issue. Any organization that was deemed to be a terrorist one would be targeted. In pushing the Iraq message, the Bush administration relied on lobbying, media appearances, and televised appearances. Undoubtedly, President Bush and his advisors capitalized on the reality that America was already pre-sold with the events of 9/11. Still Iraq had no direct ties with Al-Qaeda. Yet, “the question of Iraq’s link to terrorism grew more urgent with Saddam’s suspected determination to develop weapons of mass destruction,” as the Bush administration declared that Hussein might share these weapons with terrorist cells to be used against the U.S. (Council on Foreign Relations 2005). Vice President Cheney, for example, argued that Iraq must be addressed if the U.S. were properly to combat international terrorism (Cashman and Robinson 2007, 308). President Bush termed this relationship of states providing aid to terrorist cells as an “axis of evil.” Thereupon, he identified Iraq as a prime target in the War on Terror (Bush 2002; Holsti 2011, 29). Other institutions soon fell in line with Bush policy. The 9/11 Commission, for example, corroborated that Hussein used foreign terrorist groups as an instrument of foreign policy. The media as well appeared to be eager to follow the lead of the Bush administration after the 9/11 attacks. In fact, they appeared so eager that rarely did the news media do their most essential duty as journalists: ask questions (Seethaler *et al.* 2013, 4). Being patriotic was to follow the Bush administration to Iraq. Any opposition was marginalized. The longer this was the case, the more difficult it became for journalists to contradict the Bush policy.

The U.S.’ aims and freedom of military action were more limited in Vietnam than in Iraq. The U.S. invasion of Iraq demonstrated a stronger goal of revolutionary regime change. Gallup data from February 2001 demonstrated that the public preference for a Baghdad regime change preceded not only 9/11 but dates back to the aftermath of the Gulf War (Holsti 2011, 36). Favorability of the invasion in the mind of the public reached a peak of 74 percent describing it as “the right thing” after

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Bush declared three months after the invasion's onset that hostilities had come to a successful end. This was in light of the fact that Hussein still had avoided capture, one of the invasion's purported goals (Holsti 2011, 38). Successfully balancing fear-mongering and advocacy, Bush was able to capitalize on the solidarity of the country to legitimize the war. By defining the response to terrorism as war, the Bush administration weakened the public's post-Vietnam constraints on military force (Joseph 2006, 43). President Bush successfully managed the fear and anger that followed 9/11 so that most of the public would support the subsequent invasion of Iraq. This emotional management was aided by desires for vengeance, rallying around the president, and backing troops overseas. The Bush administration also provided no alternative to combatting terror. Given the need to do something and no other option, the public was all but convinced that waging war in Iraq was justified.

The media also had a role, although not as pronounced, in engendering patriotic attitudes post 9/11 that military briefers/handlers had no role in creating. For example, hundreds of news producers around the U.S. created graphics of the American flag to wave in the background of news reports or on the corner of the screens (Hallin 2013, 97). Many reporters also wore flag-lapel pins and teared up when discussing soldiers and the events of 9/11. Many more ended their broadcasts with phrases such as "God Bless America *and* our troops." *CBS*, for example, closed many of their news broadcasts with profiles on "Fallen Heroes" (Hallin 2013, 102).

Yet, by August 2006, Americans increasingly saw the war in Iraq distinct from the fight against terrorism. Of those surveyed in the *NYT/CBS News* poll, 51 percent saw no link between Iraq and the broader anti-terror effort, which was a 10 point jump since June of that year. This was a considerable shift from polls in 2002 and 2003, where the majority of the U.S. regarded Iraq as crucial to the anti-terror campaign, where in 2006, only 32 percent view it a major part and 12 percent as a minor part. Like Vietnam, acceptance of the Iraq War fell despite a more potent catalyst and a more effective framing by the administration that shone through in media broadcasts.

Conclusion

What this literature review demonstrates is that first, scholarly research shows the September 11 attacks compared to the Gulf of Tonkin Affair elicited more national solidarity. The Bush administration was also more successful capitalizing on that solidarity to achieve its goals, making a war out of nothing where the Johnson administration simply expanded a pre-existing war. Following the Gulf of Tonkin incident, public support for military involvement in Southwest Asia rose from 42 percent to 72 percent, a total of 30 points (Russett 1990, 37-38). President Johnson's approval ratings jumped in a classic rally effect, although he found out that the rally did not last indefinitely. Both President Bush and Johnson had approval ratings in the 60 percent range initially. For Johnson, the Tonkin Resolution and subsequent buildup of troops was not accompanied by as a significant rally effect as Bush. In 2001, President Bush's approval rating increased a staggering 35 points after the September 11 terrorist attacks, with an estimated 94 percent of U.S. citizens supporting military action against those responsible (Larson and Savych 2005, 94). It was the largest rally effect ever recorded. In 2003, after Bush announced the "opening stages" of the war in Iraq, his approval rating increased by 13 points three days after. The effects of the 9/11 terrorist attacks lasted a year and half before President Bush's approval rating declined to 58 percent. This was still seven points higher than his approval before the attacks. The Gulf of Tonkin Affair and the 9/11 attacks both fulfilled the criteria that Mueller proposed: international U.S. involvement that was specific, dramatic, and sharply focused.

This discrepancy between Vietnam and Iraq's starting national solidarity may also be in part due to some of the major differences between their catalysts. Unlike the Gulf of Tonkin incident, the 9/11 attacks were on domestic soil and there were major U.S. casualties. As mentioned when discussing the theory of the rally effect, the magnitude of the act is crucial. Larger attacks result in greater unification of political elites. Furthermore, if the attack originates from abroad, mainstream political elites are more likely to rally behind the president. Initial support for the Iraq War was a great deal higher than support for the Vietnam War, undoubtedly affected by the stronger catalyst and the

presence of a rally-around-the-flag effect. However, the subsequent decline in support by the public and the media mirrored each other. Additionally, unlike Vietnam, the military in Iraq experienced more favorable attitudes. Thus, this is the first gap in scholarly research on the subject. Research on national solidarity formulated by the rally-around-the-flag effect cannot yet explain for this difference between the wars.

This literature review also highlights the fundamental difference in the politics of and sophistication in manufacturing these threats between Vietnam and Iraq (Prados 2013, 117). In Iraq, the neoconservatives who engineered the war faced a much tougher task in obtaining public compliance than the national security advisors to Johnson. The issue was there was no longer a distinct enemy “perceived to be malevolent and all-powerful, and the attentive public was no longer automatically inclined to support military forces when the government called for it” (Porter 2013, 88). Furthermore, unlike Vietnam, there was not a forgoing conflict. The U.S. and Iraq were at peace with one another prior to the war. In the case of Vietnam, the war planners – McNamara, Rusk, McGeorge Bundy, etc. – either feigned ignorance of the intelligence estimates or referred to them to assert another point. In the case of Iraq, the war planners put great pressure on intelligence while using fabricated evidence to construct a case for the public (89). The neoconservatives linked Saddam’s Iraq and the greatest American fears after 9/11: terrorists exploding nuclear weapons in U.S. cities or using biological weapons. The Bush administration employed “a complex and multipronged strategy to shape intelligence, media coverage, and public opinion to conform to a line that would be compatible with their interest in going to war against Saddam” (102). In fact, the selling of the Iraq War was achieved by three components: leaks of national security information to friendly journalists, closely coordinated speeches, and reporting the most menacing bits of intelligence to suggest the link between 9/11 and Saddam (Prados 2013, 113).

However, as the wars progressed, these initial and very successful framings of the Vietnam War as a war against communism and the Iraq War as a war against terrorism failed. The Bush White House engaged in many semantic exercises to deny the sectarian conflict in Iraq amounted to a civil war at this time when claims of WMD in Iraq were dismissed. It echoed Johnson's administration's denial that the struggle in Vietnam was not a civil conflict but rather external aggression (Elliott 2013, 24). Yet, "when the war literally went south, the original rationale for involvement in Vietnam, the domino thesis, lost its power to convince anyone" (Gardner and Young 2013, 6). This was a similar trend in Iraq, though it happened later in the war:

The pattern show by the Vietnam war involved media coverage that was largely deferential to official representations and to the standard celebratory or at least sanitized framing of war coverage in the early period, followed by a shift, over a number of years, toward a more skeptical and pluralistic coverage that began with tactical arguments among political elites and moved on to relatively negative, if not particularly questioning coverage. The Iraq War showed essentially the same pattern, and the timing was quite similar (Hallin 2013, 95).

Despite the Bush administration have more success in engendering public support for the war and 9/11 being a more potent catalyst for the rally-around-the-flag effect, its effects wore off and the Bush administration lost its lead in being able to frame the war. It also most likely that the Bush administration used that political capital to start a war with no decisive history of aggression as opposed to Vietnam, which was a previously ongoing engagement. The literature discusses how support for the wars themselves was created and reiterated the justificatory groundwork scholars use in explaining the decline in support. Yet, there is very little literature, if any at all, that addresses how support for the military itself was affected by framing. It does not address whether the military was viewed negatively when administrative and military frames failed. Therefore, I aim to fill this gap in literature by evaluating public subscription to framing throughout the two wars.

Explanation 2: The Better and the Brighter

This literature review examines scholarship concerning political elites and their dissent as portrayed in media during the Vietnam and Iraq War. This is to understand how the public support for the war and military may have been affected by how political elite support or dissent for the war was represented by the media. The literature review will first consider relevant theories and concepts, political dissent in the Vietnam War, political dissent in the Iraq War, and then come to conclusions about the gaps in scholarly research.

Relevant Theories and Concepts

Cascade Model

As described in the previous chapter, the cascade model describes the ladder of influence which is the process by media frames affect public opinion. The government influences elites, which influences the media, which trickles down to shape public opinion through the framing of words and images. Visible and vigorous debate – directed at the citizenry – helps to keep the public informed and enables them to consider competing claims to arrive at informed decisions (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 4). Theoretically, political parties should be challenged by one another to foster debate. It is the task of the press not only to convey the debate but critically examine the claims advanced, weigh the evidence, and look into the accuracy of the points presented (2015, 5). Essentially, if “democracy is meant to empower the public, it follows that a public that exhibits modest engagement and passive acquiescence is less democratic than a public that is thoughtful, critical, and informed” (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 6). However, war times can often trump democratic accountability concerns. If stories are reported according to how the government presents them, the reality of news from Washington can be described as an insular and self-fulfilling operation (Bennett *et al.* 2008, 17). This is enhanced by the fact that it is difficult to keep challenges going if they are dismissed or if high-level U.S. officials fail to engage with them.

National Solidarity

During periods of international crises, elite rhetoric can shape and mold public opinion, and the president has the capability with the ability to marshal support across partisan lines. In the early stages of an international intervention, political elites and the media are often in agreement about the legitimacy of the conflict. As demonstrated in the previous section, the magnitude of the act is crucial, with larger attacks resulting in greater unification of political elites. Political elites tend to be less critical in the early stages of a crisis. Even if there is disagreement the public tends to reframe the coverage as the effects of political partisanship. It is important to also note that if all elites agree that a war is necessary for vital national interests, then it is those interests rather than their own self-interest that voters will use to evaluate the war (Horowitz and Levendusky 2011, 533). However, the question remains: when political elites dissent or criticize the government or military, does that effect the public's confidence in those institution? For this, we must again look at the facts of Vietnam and Iraq.

Political Environment of the Vietnam War and Elite Rhetoric

Between 1964 and 1966, American support was united across party lines and political ideologies in both the public sphere and among Congressional elites (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 16). The early stages of Vietnam War were devoid of elite disagreement. In fact in the early periods of Vietnam, “dissent and protest was almost silenced in the mediated public sphere, either ignored or treated as treason” (Hallin 2013, 101). The result was that the public was offered only one way to consider the war: the administration's view. War in Vietnam, they demanded, was crucial in containing communism (Zaller 1992, 8). News stories that criticized governmental policy did so only in a framework that assumed the importance of winning the war and obstructing communism. In addition, Zaller found that politically attentive liberals tended to adopt the positions of the liberal elite, and politically attentive conservatives doing the same with their party leaders (*ibid.*).

Zaller analyzed war stories appearing in *Times*, *Newsweek*, and *Life* which featured the Vietnam War on their cover. Between 1963 and 1964, there was a ratio of four pro-war stories to 1.5 anti-war.

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Feldman *et al.* found in their own study of Iraq that 46 percent of the articles were pro-war and 30 percent were anti-war (2015, 176-177). There was a forgoing pro-war bias in the media. To put it simply, “if news media become an adjunct of the military, serving in more of a public relations role than a journalistic capacity, the flow of information to the public will almost certainly take on a militaristic coloration” (Seethaler *et al.* 2013, 7). When this bias is overtly reinforced by the government, the public are far more likely to believe the point of view of the government and far less likely to develop an informed alternative viewpoint if there is no comparably accessible counterpoint.

Public support began to change in 1966, when instead of seeing a “carefully managed compilation of administration-friendly war news,” the public saw a far different story than what their president claimed. The U.S. military was no longer justifiably viewed as the mightiest or the most effective military in the world. There was a growing chorus of war opposition from liberal and Democratic elites. This changed the stance of the most attentive of the public (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 17). Even so, the opposition to the war was still relatively muted. In the start, political critics from the Democratic left such as Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy always proposed that the U.S. negotiate rather than flat-out leave Vietnam. Even the strongest attacks, which came from Foreign Relations Committee members like William Fulbright, always assumed that North Vietnam would negotiate (Volo 2010, 440). Opposition was not without influence. Americans would hear criticism of Johnson’s war policies from respected military experts, such as retired Lieutenant General James Gavin, who called Vietnam a “baited trap” (Mann 2010, 131). Such dissent from the higher echelons of the military further corroborated the mindset of a failing war. Democratic Party members, the party of the President, made up almost half of all the TV foreign policy news broadcasts between 1969 and the early 1980s (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 63). By this time, the Democrats had turned on their president’s policies. Anti-war information increased further to reach almost all liberals by 1970, while

conservatives supported the war throughout its duration (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 17). Elites began to act autonomously and go against the administration only after they felt that it was safe to do so.

One of the most popular views of the relationship between the media and the administration's war effort is the stab-in-the-back thesis, in which anti-war protesters and the liberal U.S. media undermined the war effort (Holsti 2011, 168). Essentially, the media had thwarted American victory through the presentation of graphic and distorted facts, unvarnished depictions of the casualties, and misguided attempts to broadcast American atrocities inflicted on the Vietnamese (Carruthers 2011, 111; Holsti 2011, 169). In recent literature, the stab-in-the-back theory has lost much of its credence. While the war was confusing on all ends from the military to the media covering it, it was the lack of solid proof of progress that created a problem of justification for the administration. The media did not specifically betray the administration. It may have very well been in part due to the accompanying shift in opinion of the political elite to opposing the war, through the voices of Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy among others, which created a subsequent shift in media coverage (Rid 2007, 54).

The media arguably reflected public opinion rather than created it. In an analysis conducted by Hallin of a random sample of 779 television broadcasts from 20 August 1965 to 27 January 1973, coverage appeared to be quite favorable to administration policy prior to the Tet offensive (1984, 7). Vietnam period journalists became more inclined to critically report on official policy but it was more of the continuing of objective journalism than an active oppositional news media. When "commentaries are excluded, only 8 percent of all Vietnam stories contained explicit comments by journalists reflecting favorably or unfavorably on major actors" (Hallin 1984, 12). During the war this percentage change, rising from the 5.9 percent pre-Tet to 20 percent during Tet and then settling the average of 9.8 percent after Tet. What really changed was the story of domestic dissent, where television reported its rise and the opponents of war became increasingly visible in the news. In 1969, a study of the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* found that U.S. government officials were 72 percent

of the sources in Washington and 54 percent in Saigon (Hallin, 1984, 14). Coverage of the opposition was not especially favorable, but “the change seems best explained as a reflection of and a response to a collapse of consensus – especially of elite consensus – on foreign policy” (Hallin 1984, 20). Opposition to the war expanded from the political fringes to the mainstream, with presidential candidates coming out against the war. Data shows that 49 percent of all domestic criticism of administration policy were attributed to other public officials with only 16 percent attributed to reporters and 25 percent to all other sources (Hallin 1984, 22). The war became a political issue and the media began to reflect the prevailing pattern of debate. There were also political factors in engendering dissent towards Vietnam. In 1968, President Johnson began a re-election campaign, opposed by a member of his own party: Eugene McCarthy. McCarthy performed surprisingly well against the incumbent, delivering a major blow to the Johnson campaign. This political party infighting only furthered the lack of credibility the administration had that had based its campaign and legacy around the success of Vietnam.

Media coverage in Vietnam demonstrated that the media is precisely attuned to fluctuations in their sources which inscribe a routine bias in favor of power elites. Aptly put, “only when the elite itself is riven with dissent, or an administration loses the will or ability to manage a story after its own fashion – as during Tet – do the mainstream media become discordant” (Carruthers 2011, 150). This prophetic statement came to fruition in Iraq, but only to an extent. Nevertheless, it will become clear that the differences between the Vietnam War and Iraq War political dissent may have made a significant difference in regards to public opinion concerning the military.

Political Environment of the Iraq War and Elite Dissent

As concluded in the previous section, following the September 11 attacks, the media gave the administration a virtually blank check to engage in whatever way it saw fit in Iraq as long as it was to fight against terror. Repeated administration claims about WMD or Iraq’s relation to al-Qaeda were largely allowed to go unchallenged in the onset of the war (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 133-134). Beginning

in September 2002, Bush's political campaign to mobilize public support to secure congressional approval was designed and launched. Nearly every installment of the Iraq story from then on was well-staged and expertly provided to the reporters by the Bush administration, at least partly influencing why the story was written as much as the administration told it (Bennett *et al.* 2008, 15). While it may have been the success of the political campaign, the media was complicit in providing biased coverage. Television news use, unlike newspaper readership, was "positively related to confidence in both waves...and to pride in both waves" (Gross *et al.* 2009, 116). Thus, television news helped foster positive emotions and confidence in the war and the military in the immediate aftermath of the attacks and the following summer. Feldman *et al.* conducted a content analysis of 226 news stories discussing the Iraq-al Qaeda link on evening television stories on ABC, CBS, NBS, CNN, and Fox as well as the top thirty newspapers. They found there was a greater continued attention to the link in newspapers than on TV, with the former printing 2-3 times as many stories than aired on outlets in the three weeks after the story's launch (2009, 83). Feldman *et al.* extended the research via a similar study finding that, in relation to the Iraq- al Qaeda link, the administration's claim was supported by 55 percent of TV stories as compared to 29 percent of newspapers (2015, 88). Furthermore, when opposition was demonstrated it was usually conveyed mildly and when support was demonstrated it was conveyed strongly, holding across all media outlets.

Domestic criticism in newspapers was more likely to arise from nonpartisan sources (49 percent) than Democratic partisan sources (29 percent) (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 93). The way that television networks chose its featured "guests" and "experts" limited the range of view the public was able to consider. Take the two weeks surrounding Powell's 2003 UN address. Of those cited, two-thirds were from the United States. Of these people, "75 percent were either current or former government or military officials. Within this group, only one (Senator Edward Kennedy [D-Mass.]) expressed strong skepticism about the forthcoming war" (Joseph 2006, 96). Robert Entman extends

the argument, going so far as to say that the media is shaped by an intense pro-military bias, in that they engage in patterns of reporting and editorializing which support the military's frame of problems and solution. This configuration "makes it politically dangerous for politicians to fundamentally dissent" from a view not within the military prism (Entman 2013, 204). The media consistently appeared to be responsive to the government's military frame, even though they did report bad news in Iraq.

While the media was complicit in propelling positive views of the war, so were the political elites at the time. The professional norms of the political elite in tandem with political, commercial, and cultural pressures created a vicious spiral of elite silence (Entman 2013, 211). Major Democratic congressional figures yielded to the administration's call to go to the war against Iraq, and only a minority of Democratic senators "argued against the war or at least took issue with the administration's shifting war rationale" (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 10). This was in the face of the two intertwined external threats that the public faced – the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and the potential Iraqi possession of WMD – that incurred a formidable rally-around-the-flag effect. Under circumstances calling for national solidarity, which predisposed the public to support the executive and that exemplified less than optimal democratic conditions, the public had to consider launching a war. The underreporting of numerous challenges to the war campaign were due to the fact that the administration's claims were largely unopposed by powerful political actors, making it so the public was not meaningfully engaged (Bennett *et al.* 2008, 21; Holsti 2011, 163). Since the public relies on the mass media, and the media relies on government officials if there is a lack of dissent among governmental officials, arguments that generate debate will be absent. This was exactly the case in Iraq.

Scholarly research has shown that in deciding whether to go to war, the public looks to political elite messages (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 14). The moderately engaged political middle are the most readily persuaded by elites, "because they are exposed to the ongoing flow of information but lack a strong

partisan or ideological basis on which to reject powerful and persuasive political messages” (2015, 15). However, the Democratic elite during the onset of the Iraq war were mindful of their political fallout after their opposition to the successful Persian Gulf War. Thus, they were wary of opposing what was expected to be an easy victory. In this context, Democratic leaders failed to give strong signals to their party adherents. Nevertheless, Democratic support did decline during the war. In explaining this, one theory Feldman *et al.* cite elites can drive public opinion by signaling their stance on a policy. Republican support can arouse Democratic opposition and vice versa, but this trend cannot explain the decline or opposition amongst independents (2015, 20). Therefore, the majority of Democratic partisan leaders simply followed the lead of the administration and chose not to make a compelling case against the war. What made opinion fall was that the American public came to its own conclusions about the war from regional newspapers not privy to or in constant communication with the administration, such as Knight Ridder. That and the rising casualty rates in the Iraq War.

In the context of an American public paying more attention to rising sectarian violence and military/civilian casualties than the “optimistic prognoses from administration officials,” the Bush administration launched “Victory in Iraq,” a public relations campaign in November 2005 (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 54). It was designed to counter charges from congressional critics and launched with a major speech by Bush at the U.S. Naval Academy where he declared that the U.S. had an effective strategy and the mission “is to win the war. Our troops will return home when that mission is complete” (*ibid.*). President Bush and his speech writers utilized linguistic techniques, such as drilling catastrophic words and phrases to incite high anxiety in the listener, which quelled potential opposition to their goals (Joseph 2006, 45). In a computerized content analysis of 74 of President Bush’s major speeches, Bush made more references to concepts encompassed in the hardship dictionary, with increasing references to the hostility of the attacks and nature of terrorism, and the satisfaction

dictionary, with increasing references to a future of better times (Bligh *et al.* 2004, 568). The media reflected the themes of these references.

However, the media could not avoid giving voice to critics of the war and the conduct of military operations in Iraq. Interestingly enough, Republican dissent was granted greater coverage than Democratic dissent before the war resolution. By February 2003, there was almost no evidence of either Democratic or Republican dissent indicative of resounding Congressional confirmation of the war resolution. The media had little incentive to report on elite dissent (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 60). This was met by distaste by top administration officials, such as Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz, who on more than one occasion charged the media with “aiding and abetting the country’s enemies, thus hampering the war effort in Iraq and playing into the hands of terrorists” (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 164; Holsti, 96). Nevertheless, as it was in Vietnam, the majority of TV news sources were from the administration and Republican Party, with as little as one in twelve coming out of the White House between September 2002 and 2003 (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 63).

The public opinion of the war in Iraq followed the events faithfully, as the erosion of the support was linked with the rising casualties and the founded belief that the American effort was not going well (Holsti 2011, 74). The administration’s attempt to rally support was more successful with the president’s party, inadvertently increasing the partisan gap to unprecedented proportions in the polling on American foreign policy. Well in advance of September 2002, Republicans supported the war though their support did not increase even with the administration’s launch of pro-war campaigns (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 2). As the war progressed, Republicans “consistently judged that the situation in Iraq was going well on most measures of success, Democrats were far less optimistic” (Holsti 2011, 91). Republicans overwhelmingly dismissed charges that the administration had deliberately misled the public (84 percent), as compared to Democrats (14 percent).

Furthermore, there was a difference in how the electronic and print media painted the events surrounding the war, with the public relying “on sources that sustained their predilections” (Holsti 2011, 93). Newspapers are responsible for 85 percent of all core news and more likely than TV to utilize investigative journalism; newspapers are more likely to criticize an administration’s foreign policy than TV (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 71). When opposition was demonstrated it was usually conveyed mildly and when support was demonstrated it was conveyed strongly, holding across all media outlets. Domestic criticism in newspapers was more likely to arise from nonpartisan sources (49 percent) than Democratic partisan sources (29 percent) (93). Even so, support for the war declined despite the administration’s information campaign and the lack of unified-high profile Democratic opposition to the war (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 61). There is no research specifically on whether political opposition affected confidence in the military, despite the breath of research on topics surrounding this question.

Conclusion

There is a systematic bias in the American media-political culture toward war, and the press in both the Vietnam War and Iraq War emphasized pro-war voices early on in the conflicts regardless of its merits. This literature review determined how the political elites engaged with and were engaged by media. However, there are clear gaps in the literature concerning the role of political statements – in proposition or opposition – to the war in affecting public support for the military. The best theoretical analysis was provided by Feldman *et al.*’s research. The closest analysis to this was Joseph’s and Bligh *et al.*’s arguments about President Bush’s linguistic techniques inspired support for the Iraq War by fear. A similar thematic analysis that looks directly at political elite statements when referencing the military itself could inform how the U.S. public may have been predisposed to have low or high confidence in the military. Since the public looks at the political elite to develop their own stances, this a crucial gap in the literature that must be filled in order to answer the major research question.

Explanation 3: Mind the Gap

This final literature review section examines scholarship concerning the media-military relationship and its evolution during the Vietnam and Iraq War. This is to understand how the public support for the war and military may have been affected two types of developments. The first is developments in strategies employed by the military to manage its depiction by the media. The second is subconscious developments in the media that encouraged more favorable views of the military. The literature review will first consider relevant theories and concepts, the media-military relationship in the Vietnam War, the media-military relationship in the Iraq War, and then come to conclusions about the gaps in scholarly research.

Relevant Theories and Concepts

Mediatization of War

Perceptions matter. The legitimization and contesting of war is shaped more by the media production of war rather than by organic experiences (Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2010, 4). This is called the “mediatization” of war, where the social and cultural opinions are formed by the growth of the media’s influence. To give consent to a war, the public must have knowledge of the situation of the war, which is provided by the media and the information given by military and political leaders. In the eyes of the military, the journalistic desire for a scoop makes the press prone to spilling operational secrets (Carruthers 2011, 5). Yet, the media tends to mirror audience expectations. This creates an initial advantage for the military and government in controlling the media as there is a strong pressure for conformity among news outlets (Young and Jesser 1997, 14). The White House and Pentagon carry out war management, which involves drawing on popular beliefs and opinions, public rhetoric, and – most important to this thesis – a media strategy (Joseph 2006, V).

Regardless of the democratic nature of a political system, politicians and government officials have traditionally attempted to utilize the available tools to restrict the independent powers of the press as to influence the content of their coverage. In earlier state governments, these attempts

manifested in a form of censorship and the development of an official state media. However, “when democratic institutions proscribed such restrictions, politicians tried to undermine the credibility of independent or hostile media outlets and develop outlets controlled by – or at least high sympathetic to – their own factions” (Ladd 2012, 194). Furthermore, in more recent times, the media-military relationship is as the mediatized professionalization of the armed forces. Instead of preferring propaganda, controlling the information, lying, or censorship, the military allegedly prefers its interactions consistent of partial truths, mental embedding, and self-censorship (Seethaler *et al.* 2013, xiii). The media has become part of the military strategy: war has to be sold to the public. This section evaluates the evolving relationship between the military and media will be evaluated. As always, we start with Vietnam.

The Military’s Relationship with Media in the Vietnam War

Vietnam coincided with the age of investigative journalism, where habits of journalistic objectivity were overrun by a deliberate, confrontational attitude to authority (Carruthers 2011, 113). There was a real fear that American enemies could simply read American press releases to acquire crucial information. Thus, limiting the American public’s knowledge of military risk-taking would – in the mind of the military – help to defuse adverse domestic reactions (Hammond 1988, 13). The military felt justified in tightening restrictions in 1962 so that “correspondents were never to go along on military operations that might generate unfavorable news stories that the United States wanted to avoid” (Hammond 1988, 15). Reporters also agreed to withhold certain categories of information at the risk of losing their accreditation. Even with these restrictions, when compared to correspondents in World War II or Korea, reporters in Vietnam had unparalleled freedom and even military assistance in roaming South Vietnam. This posed a particular problem for the Pentagon (Carruthers 2011, 120; Joseph 2006, 24). In World War II, censorship of the media was standard. However, with the advent of television and widely disseminated newspaper coverage, the administration found censorship less tenable. The stories produced by Vietnam War correspondents were not subject to routine censorship.

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This took the mediatization of the war outside of the military's hands and into that of the media and public.

The original contingent of journalists covering Vietnam, at least in the early years, rarely questioned the anti-communist commitment that allegedly drove the intervention (Joseph 2006, 85). They did not raise questions about South Vietnam's alliance, corruption, or apparent inability to fight effectively. The country and the media appeared to be in favor of the war and desired for the U.S. to succeed. As the war grew, so did the presence of the press. Beginning with some 40 personnel in 1964, it reached 419 accredited by the MACV by August 1966, including support personnel (Hammond 1988, 199). Convinced the press and public support would erode as casualties increased, the Johnson administration imposed a series of additional restrictions. General Westmoreland instructed unit information officers to "maintain 'a friendly but dignified' relationship with the press, [and] had also issued guidance emphasizing the importance of withholding classified information from anyone lacking a security clearance" (Hammond 1988, 206). Yet, these restrictions were mainly voluntary and lacked any true effectiveness.

Opposition to the war became more vocal toward the end of 1966. Throughout 1966 and 1967 the Johnson administration attempted to discredit critics and promote national unity. The government and the military believed that publishing anything but good news was disloyal (Joseph 2006, 35). In parallel to the administration's efforts, "the Military Assistance Command... strove continually to temper news stories that tended either to reflect poorly upon the South Vietnamese government or to embarrass President Johnson" (Hammond 1988, 265). However, continued incidents in Vietnam were blamed on U.S. officer negligence in stories by ABC News and the *New York Times*. For example, the discovery of American troops exaggerating the body count fueled the fire of public discontent with how the war was being waged (Rid 2007, 55). The emphasis on a "body count" as a way of measuring military success, quotes such as "it was necessary to destroy the village

to save it,” and the killing of civilians indiscriminately by U.S. troops in incidents like My Lai provided ammunition to the anti-war movement.

With the war’s progression, frustrations endemic to the conflict made their way into the press: the media reported on the president’s assertions of progress but also provided a pessimistic counterpart (Hammond 1988, 386). The military found themselves drawn progressively to selling the war to the American public, and created “a system of voluntary guidelines that largely eliminated security problems but left reporters free to comment on the inconsistencies that plagued the U.S. effort” (Hammond 1988, 387; Rid 2007, 54). Especially during the beginning of the war, the press fell in line with the anti-communist rhetoric justifying the war. However, new cycles of reporters replaced older ones, and the younger reporters entering the Vietnam news landscape tended to be more anti-war. They also were more prone to practicing “active journalism that attempted to convince rather than to inform” (Hammond 1996, 12). The news landscape in the final years of the war demonstrated a continuation of the tense interactions, where both the military and the media grew distrustful of the other. After the Tet Offensive, the military refrained from completely cutting off press access but blamed the press for the failures of the war. The failures, however, more likely stemmed from poor policy decisions and an American public who had grown discontent with war. To many people, including prominent members of the media, the Vietnam War was no longer worth dying for.

Open press coverage of armed conflict was viewed as risking support at the home front. This was one of the many so-called lessons of Vietnam, where sensational media coverage “piped for the first time into the homes of Americans” was blamed for the army’s defeat (Rid 2007, 1). The idea was that “reporters opposed to the war used this freedom to publish negative stories that contributed significantly to the final defeat quickly became standard” (*ibid.*). However, numerous studies have discredited this view, as press coverage appeared to be favorable until the Tet Offensive of 1968. The critical tone of the press adopted thereafter “confirm[ed] the widespread public view held well before

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Tet, that the people had been victims of a massive deception” (Young and Jesser 1997, 91-92). The press reflected public concern about casualties and lack of progress. For example, official briefings in Saigon – nicknamed by the press as “Five O’clock Follies” – were construed as uninformative when not deceptive (Rid 2007, 56). The media limelight focused on isolated operations depicting military failure in spite of success. This influenced the public’s perspective that the government and military both failed to live up to their official optimism and promises (Rid 2007, 59).

The military believed that the media was given too much free rein and it utilized that license to subvert popular opinions (Rid 2007, 1). Military personnel expressed fear that “reporters, in quests for sensationalism rather than truth, may publish stories or images that breach security, cost lives, or undermine public support” (*ibid.*). This transformed the military’s relationship with the media. It ran through a full gauntlet of attempts to mediate the media, eventually leading up to the policies employed in the Iraq War. Furthermore, Vietnam created a generation of embittered officers who despised the press. The military had become the symbol for misguided policy “and the anti-war movement’s anger and the public’s frustration were unloaded upon the returning officers” (Rid 2007, 128). Through the loss of credibility of and trust in the government and the military, the American public reacted to what they saw as a failure of their nation’s previously esteemed institutions. The Vietnam War was a prime example of the government and military’s archaic expectations, derived from the experiences in WWII of popular support for war (Young and Jesser 1997, 79). Even so, despite blaming the media as a source of its failure, the military could not afford to separate itself from the need to engage with the press. With no effective censorship, the military could only influence the media through the presentation of its own official version. Official reports were disproved by the excursion of journalists into the fields. Accompanied by official denial, the newsworthy coverage was brought into American homes within hours (Young and Jesser 1997, 86). The public rejection of governmental and military deception brought their associated loss of credibility and then public support.

While the public relations battle was fought on almost every front and level, the television was able to provide an immediate, uncensored coverage where the public was free to see the truth as the media saw it and what they perceived as accurate. The public saw the denials and promises made by the administration to be increasingly false, and the governmental and military were rendered virtually powerless in molding public opinion. The media became the scapegoat. One particular illuminating event is when General Westmoreland sued CBS in 1982 for defamation of character in a documentary about Vietnam (Joseph 2006, 87). Though Westmoreland withdrew, the tumult of the lawsuit encouraged CBS and the wider media to be more wary of critical coverage of the Pentagon. This was coupled of military disdain for the media. The agenda became one where the press would never be fully allowed to have unlimited or uncontrolled access to cover a conflict (Young and Jesser 1997, 96).

The Military's Relationship with the Media in the Iraq War

The military over the next few conflicts and wars leading up the Iraq War attempted various improvements in their engagement with the media. Prevailing journalistic practices made it impossible for Washington to retain absolute control over the war story. This inspired administrations to develop a substitute that could shape public perceptions while avoiding charges of censorship (Joseph 2006, 25). The two preferred methods of interaction used by the Pentagon include a human-interest focus on the soldiers themselves and embedded reporting. The arrangement used by the military during the Iraq War is “embedded media.” Here a reporter is assigned to a unit, deployed with it, and lives with the unit throughout a period of operations. In this arrangement, reporters allegedly could not but bond with their units and express a degree of appreciation of the difficulties of the mission. Therefore, many believe that embedding tends to result in favorable reports (Willey 1999, 4-5). This ‘active cooperation’ with the media marked a change in the culturally robust military bias against the media: access of journalists to the battlefield was no longer a vulnerability but as a force multiplier (Rid 2007, 9). It is not to say the military’s road to redefining its interactions with the media was marked entirely by success. At first, the Pentagon proactively cultivated “military analysts.” They were around six-

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dozen high-ranking retired officers “desired as ‘message force multipliers’ – who could be instructed to paint a glowing picture of the administration’s prewar and wartime policies” (Feldman *et al.* 2015, 149-150). They then were presented as independent analysts, making appearances on network and cable broadcast television programs. This drew negative attention, so – before it faced congressional review –the program was suspended in 2008.

Nevertheless, the challenge faced by the U.S. military’s Public Affairs division was to stress a crucial distinction between supporting the policy of the war and supporting the men and women in uniform. The embedded media policy was seen as a vehicle to educate the public. In words of the Special Assistant for Public Affairs McCreary’s words, the public should be able to say: “OK, I like this war, I hate this war, I take the choice – but I really feel that these troops are doing a damn fine job because they’re doing what their country asks them” (Rid 2007, 128). While there is no official document that makes this rationale explicit, the logic was probably intuitively understood as one of the many selling points of the embedded policy.

Besides embedded journalists, the only other approved alternative in Iraq was military briefings. In a study of 414 news stories from ABC, CBS, and NBC between September 2002 and February 2003, all but 34 originated from the White House, Pentagon, or State Department (Snow and Taylor 2006, 403). This demonstrates the level of sophisticated and holistic approach the military and government applied in managing perceptions of the war. Military briefings controlled the information released to the public. If the media wanted to get their own information, they would have to employ their own journalists. Funding an independent reporter was far more costly than military briefings and only in the province of elite news sources such as *The New York Times* (Linder 2008, 36). This allowed the military to retain a larger influence on reporting. However, what made Iraq unique was the embedded policy.

The embedded media policy had three objectives: preempt disinformation by the Iraqi regime, encourage dissent amongst Iraqi civilians and soldiers, and demonstrate success (Rid 2007, 133). Around 2,500 journalists were registered by the American military and around 775 reporters were embedded within coalition troops, more than 100 reported from a hotel in Baghdad, 900 stationed in Northern Iraq, and several more thousand in Kuwait, Qatar, and Jordan (Rid 2007, 151; Esser 2009, 710; Joseph 2006, 99). During the Iraq War, the Pentagon publicity campaign was based on four pillars. First, the military must retain the freedom to legitimize the war, that is, to control what the war is framed to concern. Second, press briefings were to be used to influence the media and general public to consider the military as a trustworthy source. Third, these objectives would be achieved by embedded journalists. Fourth, the military should employ strategic framing in how the campaign was sold by high-ranking government officials (Esser 2009, 710). The three channels to which information to the public was provided were strategic, operational, and tactical:

The strategic picture of the war was presented to international press corps briefings in Washington...the operation briefings were held at Central Command's headquarters in Doha, Qatar; and, the tactical view from the ground was provided by reporters embedded (Rid 2007, 151).

The embedded media program was designed to maintain the political will of the American public and to break the political will of the Iraqi regime and its supporters. These rationales were inextricably linked to the political calculus that is most relevant to this thesis: "to shield the military from anticipated political criticism of the war" (Rid 2007, 175). Even if the American's public support for the political decision to war in Iraq waned, the reputation of the men and women in uniform would not. This would shield them from the fate witnessed by those who served in Vietnam.

A portion of the press community viewed the embed experience as too cozy, where the structural conditions ostensibly made reporters focus on the horrors that faced the troops rather than the Iraqis (Bennett *et al.* 2008, 5; Linder 2008, 33). Close contact psychologically tends to lead to more

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trust and liking, as well as adopting the host's perspective (Haigh *et al.* 2006, 143; Pfau *et al.* 2004, 78; Ladd 2012, 8). Some in the media community termed it as a form of the "Stockholm Syndrome," where journalists are reliant on the soldiers for survival and as a result lose perspective. The consequence is they provide a narrow and decontextualized coverage of the war (Pfau *et al.* 2004, 76). Either way, journalists were completely dependent on the military for food, transportation, and shelter undoubtedly making objectivity and maintaining a critical distance difficult. The contracts the reporters signed included the following policies: their reports to be reviewed by military officials prior to release, they must be escorted at all times by military personnel, and dismissal is permissible at any time for any reason (Linder, 35). Thus, the social circumstances of embedding could very well have encouraged positive reporting. A 2006 study of 452 American national daily newspaper articles and a 2004 study of television news coverage found that embedded reporters produced coverage that was significantly more positive towards the military than normal (Linder 2008, 36; Haigh *et al.* 2006, 140; Pfau *et al.* 2004, 83). Embedded reporters, to put it simply, wanted their troops to succeed.

Yet, it is not to say that the military and media solely engendered a positive response to war on the onset and the rallying around the troops that persisted long after. The government did act to promote and facilitate this belief and was obviously conscious of the significance, and the media certainly celebrated the troops. Even so, Hallin argues that the public response was "to a large extent a spontaneous movement of public opinion. The media had a role in producing it, of course, but they did not create it out of nothing" (2013, 99). It is this understanding that clarifies that media coverage is, to some extent, a product of its response to public sentiments.

Conclusion

There are numerous views on military-media relations as they currently stand. Some commentators argue that the relation is orientated to cooperation and open information policies. Others argue that the shift of censorship to transparency actually masks how manipulative the military has become in its media management strategies. Embedding may have actually stifled journalistic

dissent and promoted how the military wanted to cast the media agenda. Government officials believed that embedding elicited more sympathetic reporting (Joseph 2006, 99). However, because of the close proximity of the reporters, bad policy or incompetence could not be easily hid from journalists. Reporters appeared to like embedding because of the access it gave to the frontline and the feeling of firsthand reporting (Joseph 2006, 99). Regardless, one thing is clear. The military viewed the media as a strategic enabler on public opinion as war is justified and defined through the media. This understanding brought a shift in how the military interacts with the media.

Since the Vietnam War, the military has experienced major shifts in its composition, including shrinking of its domestic footprint and detaching from domestic politics (Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2010, 124). The military on a whole is less relevant to the daily life of the average citizen, which may truly be the element preserving and increasing public trust in the military. The blame of operational and tactical military failures tended to rest with the political leadership rather than the military itself, where shared responsibility was pushed back to the civilian leaders (Hoskins and O'Loughlin, 124). Thus, military failures are conveyed as rooted in unwise political policy rather than poor military execution.

The media itself experienced its own shift in coverage that may engendered a more conducive environment for a positive confidence trend. Unlike the coverage characteristic of the Vietnam era, the national media included a "home front" sort of coverage that included "the focus on the families and home communities of soldiers deployed to the war zone" (Hallin 2013, 102). This reflected a populist development in media coverage that focused more on the individual person and a stronger attempt to connect the stories of war with the perspective of ordinary citizens. This, Hallin argues, "can be a powerful force shifting war coverage into the sphere of consensus" (2013, 102). The 'up close and personal' coverage of the war facilitated by embedding most likely facilitated a mindset where supporting the war ceased to mean supporting the political policy of the war but instead 'merely'

supporting the troops. However, research has yet to adequately address whether this coverage pattern by the media and the military's adoption of embedding actually affected favorable attitudes towards the military. It also has not addressed by how much. This thesis seeks to fill in this gap to provide a more comprehensive understanding of opinions of the military between the Vietnam and Iraq Wars.

My Niche

The existing scholarly research and literature provides an adequate answer to several important questions about the Vietnam and Iraq Wars, but it does not adequately address my question about media portrayals of the military. There has been no specific study on the effect of media and information spread through mass media on public confidence and favorable attitudes towards the U.S. military. In each of the explanations, the theories and research focused mainly on the demise of public support rather than the fall or rise of confidence in the military itself. For the first explanation, the framing, deception, and events that incurred each war are rationalized by the rally-around-the-effect for both wars. Explanations for the rise and fall of the wars have been reinforced by the literature; however, confidence trends have not. I aim to fill this gap in literature by evaluating public opinion polls and scholarly research to explain if success of framing affected the public's confidence in the military. For the second explanation, the effects of political elite opinions and dissent were heavily studied and discussed in preexisting literature. However, there are clear gaps in the literature concerning the role of political statements – in proposition or opposition – to the war in affecting public support for the military. To fill this gap in the literature, I hope to conduct a similar thematic analysis. I will look at political elite statements and how they referenced and spoke of the military. For the third explanation, the intricacies of the media and military relationship during and since Vietnam War have been greatly documented. In recent literature, the embedding relationship has been discussed as a method adopted by the military to partly inspire more positive views of the military, especially highlighted in Thomas Rid's research. However, the data has been only corroborated in a 2006 study referenced by Linder. Thus, to fill this gap in literature I aim to conduct a content analysis

of newspaper articles and op-eds, supplemented by interviews with military correspondents and officials. Overall, my thesis will address gaps and weakness within each explanation, but also address the media's effects on public confidence of the military through a comprehensive, three-pronged approach, which has not been considered adequately in any major scholarly work.

Chapter Four: Spinning the Web of War

“For all I know, our Navy was shooting at whales out there” – Lyndon B. Johnson

Hypothesis

The hypothesis this section seeks to answer is how the military and administration’s framing of the wars affected public support. I posit that a more positive confidence trend of the military was witnessed in the Iraq War because it was framed with more potent themes that encouraged the public to view the military more positively. The Iraq War triggered a stronger rally-around-the-flag that increased national solidarity around the war and the military, as a result of being framed as a ‘war on terror,’ fueled by attacks on American soil. The Vietnam War’s frame as a ‘war against communism’ may have been a less pressing threat in the eyes of the public. Furthermore, Vietnam was geographical distant and the September 11 Attacks – the impetus of the Iraq War – were not. However, I also hypothesize that in capitalizing on this effect, President Bush used his approval not only to justify the war but to generate support for the military itself, setting a strong foundation for an extended rise in positive views towards the military that was not witnessed in Vietnam.

The Bush administration succeeded in framing the war as self-defense against terror, yet the Lyndon administration was only able to frame the war as an affront against communism. Self-defense was a more powerful frame that not only promoted the war but makes it harder to impugn the military. The military in Vietnam was less immune to criticism and its framing forced the military to become more political. In the face of military scandals, the Johnson administration and military were less successful in positively framing the military than in Iraq. The failure to control framing in Vietnam in the face of atrocities committed by the troops aided in eroding public confidence in the military. In following section, I describe the methodology by which I evaluated the administration and military framing of the wars. After that, I will describe the administration framing, the media’s representation of those arguments, and what that meant for the public’s perception of the military.

Methodology

To evaluate Explanation One, I collected analyses on success of framing and public mistrust resulting from the failure of framing. For the first part, success of framing, I considered three factors: the administration's given rationale for the war at a time, what the public thought the rationale of the war was at that time, and the level of confidence/favorability that was expressed toward the military. To find the first factor, administration success, I looked at reports from the administration and speeches as well as research that elucidated how the administration chose to frame the war. I categorized these rationales according to key phrases like "self-defense," "nation-building," "prevent spread of communism," "prevent spread of terrorism," and so on. To find the second factor, public subscription, I considered public polls directly or indirectly demonstrating the public opinion of why the war was being fought. Public subscription is how much the American public believed in and supported the rationale given by the administration at any given time for the war and its continuation. I considered the trends in how well the administrations framed the wars, whether the media subscribed to those frames, and what that meant for the public's perceptions of the military.

The second part of the methodology considered how public perceptions in the face of military atrocity was a result of the failure of framing. It is true that in Vietnam, the public began to mistrust the military as the war progressed and that the pinnacle of this was My Lai. Thus, I compared the media framing of My Lai to its media equivalent, Abu Ghraib. I considered how the public reacted to the coverage of these atrocities and the interchange of framing between the media and the administration and military.

To summarize, by comparing administration success and public subscription broadly and then specifically regarding military atrocities, I tracked the success of framing of the wars and the duration of their success. I further supplemented the public opinion data and its association with frames with a review of the scholarly literature and historical events surrounding the beginning of the war. The second part of the evaluation involved comparing the framing of My Lai and Abu Ghraib. I analyzed

the results of the two studies accordingly. The underlying question of this explanation is: did the way the military handle the media and the media interaction with the military through the framing paradigm help this erosion of public confidence in Vietnam and prevent the same from happening in Iraq?

The Original Framings of Vietnam and Iraq

Framing of the Vietnam War

The Vietnam War was framed as a war to combat the spread of communism and maintain world peace. The U.S. public was sold an exaggerated formulation of the domino and credibility theories to continue U.S. military involvement in Vietnam. The domino theory posited that the fall of one nation, Vietnam, would lead to further losses. This was corroborated by claims made by the political elite at the time, including McGeorge Bundy and Secretary of Defense McNamara, the latter who said: “The fall of South Vietnam to Communism would lead to the fairly rapid extension of communist control, or complete accommodation to Communism, in the rest of mainland Southeast Asia and in Indonesia.” (Gardner 2013, 92). However, prior to the start of the war, the legitimacy of domino theory became questionable in the eyes of American scholarly institutions. As the domino theory lost credence, proponents of the war re-framed the Vietnam War with the credibility theory, especially during the end of the Kennedy administration and throughout the Johnson administration. At the time, the U.S. was part of the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), placing it under the responsibility of protecting this region from communism (Kaiser 2000, 117). This frame also propelled the notion that the U.S. was engaging in moral fight of good versus evil. The coupling of the domino theory, though questioned, and the credibility theory, as the foundation of the Vietnam War framing, raised the stake of the conflict for the U.S.

The government acts as an agenda-setter and censors what the public is privy to: this censorship changes how the public can and does perceive war. While it is not possible to exactly determine how the images or frames affected American opinion during Vietnam, the media coverage

was significant in affecting public opinion. Administration frames and stories coupled with protests and social movements all provided the fodder for transforming the national mindset.

Interestingly enough, public opinion did not seem to affect American policy in Vietnam prior to 1965. This is because most disturbing atrocities of the war, notably My Lai, had yet to occur and be reported. My Lai occurred in 1968 and was reported on in 1969 by Seymour Hersh. I will explore My Lai and its media coverage more in depth in the next section. For now, the reporting of My Lai surfaced in a time period of high protest on college campuses and the public was already weary of a prolonged war. The atrocity and visual coverage of it negatively affected the public's perception of the war, the U.S. government, and the troops.

The Vietnam Era was also characterized by an imbalance in political rhetoric. The work of framing – defining the issue – is primarily the burden of those who have the largest stake in getting the public to subscribe to their frame: the political elite. With elite discourse, the public is given suggestions on how to understand the issues in question. Frames help make sense of the information and present possibilities on what links to draw between the personal and political realms (Berinsky and Kinder 2000, 8). Yet, where there is an absence of elite discourse, this can have adverse effects on public expression. Until the mid-1960s, the elite rhetoric was heavily shifted towards the pro-war camp, the high point of disparity between the pro-war message and anti-war message being 1966 (12). By 1968, the anti-war message gained salience and eventually overpowered the pro-war message by 1970. I will analyze the discrepancies in political rhetoric in the next chapter.

It is worth mentioning that most American journalists attempt to express the position of each side in a political dispute fairly. However, when there is no perceived dispute, journalists may become more dependent on official sources and relinquish some power in setting the agenda. The likelihood “that journalists will investigate an issue and push for answers is rather low, with the result that the media agenda is set by government officials” when there is consensus among the elite sources

(Dimitrova and Stromback 2005, 403). This may result in the media unintentionally advancing the frames presented by the administration and military. This is likely what happened in the Vietnam and Iraq wars.

The media moved away from the human-interest frame that characterized the war coverage in the beginning part. Early on in the war, television reporting was upbeat, focusing on “American boys in action” stories and relied heavily on official government and military sources (Dimitrova and Stromback 2005, 406). By network correspondents focusing on American soldiers for their sources, this up-front-close-and-personal coverage lent itself to the soldier being portrayed as a hero. This will be important when we consider the media coverage of My Lai and Abu Ghraib.

While the media certainly subscribed to administration framing of the war for the most part, the largest negative transformation in the coverage was the portrayal of the U.S. troops after 1968. Prior to the Tet Offensive, Hallin found that four television stories were devoted entirely to the positive morale of the troops and zero were negative. However, after Tet, two and a half stories mentioned the positive moral of the troops, and fourteen and a half concerned negative morale (1986, 180). These negative references pertained to rampant drug abuse, disobedience, and racial conflict. Potentially, this shift in coverage suggests why the public viewed the military with decreasing confidence in Vietnam, alongside with decreasing support for the war.

Framing of the Iraq War

To contrast, the Iraq War was framed as a war against terror. The U.S. was sold on the war through a dual-focused lens: preventing the spread of WMD and retaliating to the September 11 Attacks. In an analysis of the ten largest U.S. newspapers after the September 11 attacks, Dimitrova and Stromback (2005) found that the authors of the war had created a singular narrative of this “war on terror” as a justified response to the attacks. This reflected the official government line. The media was engaged generally in “ethnocentric and patriotic storytelling” and focused on military conflict (407). Coverage was dominated by episodic battle coverage: military conflict issues, scoreboard

developments, and war strategies. Evidentially, 52 percent of Americans believed evidence was found linking Iraq to September 11, 35 percent believed weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq and 56 percent believed majority world opinion supported the war, so the *San Diego Union Tribune* reported in 2003. The U.S. once again, as in 1965, was fighting for good against evil.

While patriotism certainly aided in generating public support for the war, this rally effect cannot explain why approval itself was as high as it was. Gershkoff and Kushner (2005) argue that “the principal reason that three-quarters of the American public supported the war was that the Bush administration successfully convinced them that a link existed between Saddam Hussein and terrorism generally” (525). The media, alongside the political elite, had the ability to frame and shape public opinion through tone, content manipulation, and issue frames. However, as stated before, without the reflection of existence of opposition and debate among elites and even if citizens hold other viewpoints, a one-sided information scenario will develop. Especially in the early parts of the Iraq war this is exactly what happened.

The public will also support a costly war if the stakes demand it and a victory is promised. In the Iraq War, the stakes were high but there was no compelling account of victory. This is where the frame of war becomes important as frames decide how the public will interpret the unfolding events. The five frames that Bush employed in framing the War on Terror were based on a worldwide struggle of: “(1) civilization versus barbarism; (2) good versus evil; (3) the nature of the enemy as evil, implacable, and murderous; (4) the nature of the war as both domestic and global, and enduring; and (5) the war as being dissimilar to prior wars” (Kuypers *et al.* 2012, 98). However, as stated before, the media had its own ability to select what frames and themes it would include in their coverage. While the media did not subscribe to all of President Bush’s frames, it did frame the nature of the enemy and the nature of the war similarly (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: President and Press Frames Comparison for the Iraq War

Table 5.1. Comparison of President and News Media Themes and Frames

Themes	President's Frame	Press Frame
Good vs. Evil	Struggle of good and evil	Not mentioned
Civilization vs. Barbarism	Struggle of civilization vs. barbarism	Not mentioned
Nature of Enemy	Evil, implacable, murderers	Deadly, indiscriminant Bush administration, acting contrary to country's best interest
Nature of War	Domestic/global/enduring War	Domestic/global/longstanding War or police action
Similarity to Prior Wars	Different Kind of War	WWII or Vietnam
Patience	Not mentioned	Some, but running out
International Effort	Stated	Minimally reported

Source: Kuypers *et al.* 2012

More specifically, President Bush and his administration sustained a dialogue on Iraq that referenced terrorism at a high intensity and that these mentions of Iraq and terrorism were considerably linked. In many of the speeches, “a discussion of terrorism preceded the first mention of Iraq, giving the impression that Iraq was a logical extension of the terrorism discussion” (Gershkoff and Kushner 2005, 527). This frame had little competition in the media. In the 35 newspaper stories coded by Gershkoff and Kushner, as many of the stories that were positive were negative at this time. If stories did present oppositional frames, they concerned the policy of the war rather than its linkage with terrorism. This translated in Americans strongly supporting the war, where “more than 40 percent felt that those opposed to the war should not be allowed to speak out or hold protest marches or rallies because it might hurt the war effort” (529). Furthermore, 82 percent of Americans declared that they would support the war, regardless whether WMD were found (531). In this respect, where the media failed to include divergent viewpoints, the media acted more as a “strategic enabler” than an “operational risk” (Belknap 2002, 101). The media presented a sanitized war, focusing on military successes.

However, by two months into the war and as those frames were contested, the administration moved to defending the need for American presence of Iraq, situated in a demand to be realistic of

the consequences in abandoning Iraq now. In 2006, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld provided such a testimony in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee (Gardner 2013, 1). The frustrations that Americans demonstrated, evident by September 2007, was not at the war itself in Iraq, but how it proceeded: the terror threat still existed. Media coverage dramatically decreased after September 2007 as well: “the war virtually disappeared from the headlines” (Toshihiro 2008, 152). As the administration lost the control of the frame of the war, it lost support for the war.

Discussion

Both of these wars eventually lost their administrative framings: “just as the Vietnam War ceased to be an extension of the Cold War, the Iraq War ceased to be an extension of the war on terrorism” (Toshihiro 2008, 150). While the administration’s frame of “ridding the world of evil” and “stopping terrorism” incited support for the war and the media complacently presented those frames, they were unachievable goals. Public support eventually lost its patience for a war that never seemed to be concluded, as the metrics were never measurable. It was only Osama bin Laden’s assassination in the Obama administration that Americans got the respite they desired. In Iraq, the public became weary of the war, but fatigue did not have the ideological conviction against the war as demonstrated in Vietnam by its high level of protests.

These framing issues explain why support for the wars died down but they do not explain the correlations between one’s view of the war and one’s view of the military. As the perception of the Vietnam War turned negative, so did confidence in the military leaders. However, in Iraq, the military maintained a favorable view even despite frustrations towards the war doubled. This section demonstrates that the 9/11 frame might have engendered patriotism that kept our troops in favor. It also shows that the differences between the burdens of military service, in the end of conscription, might have affected it as well. However, the continued favor of the military may also be due to other factors including the responsibility of the Iraq War being foisted more on the government than the military. That will be determined in the next chapter about political rhetoric. Before transitioning into

that discussion, I would like to more specifically at two cases towards the end of the wars, as I looked at the Gulf of Tonkin Affair and the September 11 Attacks in the literature review. These two cases are My Lai and Abu Ghraib.

A Case Analysis of Atrocities: My Lai and Abu Ghraib

One of the most inherent challenges in political science is the battle between causality and correlation. I began this chapter with considering the differing administrative framings of the beginning of the wars: the Gulf of Tonkin Affair and the September 11 Attacks. I then transitioned to a broader discussing of administrative framing throughout the war via the media. I now would like to focus on the administration-military-media framing of two incidents that often go hand in hand in marking the fall of public support for the wars: My Lai Massacre and the Abu Ghraib Incident.

The Vietnam and Iraq wars were both cases, in a way, of American soldiers fighting an elusive enemy with a complicated cause and goal. They were marked by American soldiers committing atrocious acts. What happened in My Lai and Abu Ghraib were gross perversions of the American mission with punishments grossly lacking. In both cases, a sort of “rally-around-the-troops” effect occurred with those in the public eye – often conservatives – insisting that the soldiers were only following orders or that this was a case of a “few bad apples.” The public hesitated in accepting the horror of the atrocities that threatened American morality, an American nation routinely cast with incorrigible virtue.

The pattern was cast in My Lai. A journalist exposes the incident, officials deny until it is no longer sufficient and then conduct an investigation while segments of the public try to abscond the soldiers of the guilt, and then finally, few if any American soldiers are actually punished. The question then becomes, which American soldiers and which American military – the one in Vietnam and one in Iraq - escaped this scandal better?

The media’s role in how America perceived its troops after My Lai and Abu Ghraib is consequential. Many studies have considered the attribution of responsibility after these scandals. Here

I will examine the frames around these heinous events to discover if, perhaps, it was the coverage of these events that influenced the public to view the military less with confidence in Vietnam than in Iraq. These scandals concern the military and their perception in the face of their grossest mistakes. After all, in the context of war crimes, it is the military who ends up on the front lines.

The Framing of the My Lai Massacre

In My Lai, the U.S. military was the transgressor and its actions implicated the character of the United States, broadly taken. Yet, it appears that citizens were receptive to media frames that were “designed to downplay the incident and restore national identity,” that is: the minimization, contextualization, and disassociation of transgressors and then the reaffirmation of the nation’s identity (Rowling *et al.* 2015, 314). In 83 percent of the texts Rowling *et al.* analyzed, the military articulated minimization. Minimization, “pertains to downplaying the seriousness and scope of the deviant behavior (Marques & Paez, 1994)” (*ibid.*). In 80 to 95 percent of the texts, the White House dissociated and reaffirmed, respectively. They are defined as follows:

Disassociation seeks to preserve the moral sanctity of the in-group by distancing itself from the deviant actors. This consists of characterizing the deviants as “black sheep” (Marques & Paez, 1994) who are unworthy of group membership—for example, as “un-American”—or emphasizing material measures to punish the deviant actors (Eidelman, Silvia, & Biernat, 2006). Reaffirmation moves attention away from the transgression and toward events or aspects of the in-group that portray it more favorably (Steele, 1988; Tajfel, 1982). This involves emphasizing cherished and idealized group values and behavior (Billig, 1995) (Rowling *et al.* 2015, 314).

Furthermore, 50 percent of the *New York Times*, *Times*, and CBS News cited U.S. government and military officials and 18 percent were members of the accused (322). The My Lai incident, and as it will later be determined in the Abu Ghraib scandal, was “quickly defined and understood as an isolated incident caused by a handful of soldiers under duress that was in no way representative of the U.S. military or the nation as a whole” (324). This frame resonated with much of the American public because it was in line with the moral view of the nation. In times of war, people are more accepting

of nation-protective frames than those that put the nation in a negative light. Because of the news outlet's reliance on administration and military sources, the frame was inevitably shaped by the discourse employed by these sources. The "bad apples" trope was widely employed by administration and military officials. For example, the United States House of Representative Report concluded "it was so wrong and so foreign to the normal character and actions of our military forces as to immediately raise a question as to the legal sanity at the time of those men involved." One telling thread in elite discourse was that the Charlie Company – who had perpetuated the massacre – were considered victims in their own right: in reporting My Lai, the preface often provided was they had taken gruesome minefield casualties beforehand and thusly were motivated by revenge (Doris and Murphy 2007, 38). This is a clear example of a linguistic tool utilized by the administration and military in shifting the blame. Unintentionally or intentionally, the press adopted a deferential posture towards these official sources and amplified their chosen frames.

The reality, however, is while the My Lai massacre's prosecution only resulted in the legal condemnation of one, it was accredited as a sin of the military as a whole. The administration and military sought scapegoats in managing this scandal. They found it with Lieutenant William Calley. Of the 26 officers and enlisted men who were charged with crimes pertaining to My Lai, Lt. Calley was the only one convicted. Interestingly enough, the public did not buy it. *Gallup* poll data from April 1971 shows that, when asked whether Calley was "being made the scapegoat for the actions of others above him or not," 70 percent said "yes"; only 12 percent said "no." Furthermore, when considering the perceived role of media, a poll asked if television was wrong to "raise the whole My Lai episode", and only 47 percent thought it was right of television to press the issue. Utah's Democratic Senator Frank E. Moss was quoted in An 1 April, 1973 article in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, saying: "We as a nation cannot wipe this blemish from our national conscience simply by finding one man guilty. Lt. Calley should not go unpunished, but he alone should not be called on to pay the price." It was clear

that Democrats contested the minimization frames adopted by the administration and military and that the public understood that Lt. Calley was being scapegoated.

Senator Moss' comments seem prophetic. The public and opposition were more willing to condemn the military as a whole for the actions of a "few bad apples." In a *Gallup/Newsweek* poll in April 1971, questioning whether or not the My Lai massacre was an isolated or a common incident, 52 percent of the 522 interviews said it was a common one. As support for the Vietnam War waned, the My Lai massacre denoted a decline in public support for the soldiers themselves. As historian James E. Wright aptly put it soldiers were perceived "... rather than victims of a cruel war, they were perpetrators of a cruel war." Was this the same case in the Iraq War?

The Framing of Abu Ghraib

Prior to April 2004, media outlets gave little indication of force misconduct in Afghanistan or Iraq – the missteps of the military was not the angle they were reporting on the 'war on terror' (Braziunaite 2011, 32). Furthermore, journalists were not allowed to visit prisons in the region and thus could only report stories pertaining to them through questioning released detainees (34). Yet, on 28 April, 2004, CBS reported on the allegations surrounding Abu Ghraib. This story was held by CBS at the request of Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for two weeks before release. The military "feared that photographs of detainees being abused would worsen an already complicated situation in Fallujah and Najaf, and place in greater harm both soldiers and American civilians being held hostage in Iraq" (35). When the story broke, the wider news media actively devoted resources to investigate and report on Abu Ghraib and what lead to this abuse. Although Abu Ghraib was recognized as one of biggest scandals of the 21st century and the biggest mistake by the U.S. in Iraq, it did not lead to much public outcry or Congressional investigations as in My Lai. It is not to say that the Abu Ghraib scandal did not influence domestic public opinion concerning the Iraq War. Pew Research Center, in early May 2004 soon after Abu Ghraib was exposed, found that there was a 12 point increase of Americans who believed that the "Iraq effort is going not too/at all well" to 51

percent. Furthermore, there was a 7 point jump in Americans who believed that “military action was the wrong decision,” denoting the lowest level of confidence in the war since its beginning. However, the question I am looking at is if this limited outcry was at all directed at the soldiers themselves.

When looking at the media coverage, scholars have found that the *Washington Post* coverage of the scandal mirrored Entman’s cascade activation model when framing Abu Ghraib (Braziunaite 2011, 50). As mentioned in the literature review, due to the media’s reliance on governmental source during war, the media effectively subscribes to governmental ideologies and frames, intentionally or not. This may then lead the public to be more inclined to support governmental policies or actions. Furthermore, episodic framing of war coverage makes it more likely that audiences support military resolutions as opposed to diplomatic solutions (Iyengar and Simon 1993, 382). Iyengar and Simon came to this conclusion through an analysis of coverage in the 1991 Gulf crisis. These findings combined give way to a constructivist perspective of media, where the journalists are essentially information processors that create “interpretative packages of the positions of politically invested sponsors” (D’Angelo 2002, 877). The media produces frames that are probably biased in the view of their sources, and sources in war promote military biases.

The trajectory of a frame is dependent on two values: the level of disagreement among political elites and the cultural resonance of the frame (Rowling *et al.* 2015, 312). The cultural resonance of a frame is determined by its ability to generate receptive thoughts among the audience. In reference to the cascade model, frames that “effectively tap into the broader values, beliefs, and ideals of the citizenry—by celebrating, accentuating, or at least aligning with them—possess the most potential to cascade through the framing hierarchy and into public consciousness” (*ibid.*). During Abu Ghraib, the Bush administration utilized frames that bolstered national identity and, despite strong opposition from the Democrats, these frames were echoed by the media. Rowling *et al.* found that the Bush administration and military utilized the frames of minimization, disassociation, and reaffirmation

(2015, 314). In one telling quote, from a May 2004 interview with Arabiyya Television, President Bush said: “They don’t represent America. They represent the actions of a *few* people.”

One particularly noteworthy frame is the attribution of responsibility frame. Attribution of responsibility “can be considered the most important framing mechanism because explanations of who is responsible would change not only how the events are interpreted but also framing of the consequences and solutions” (Braziunaite 2011, 141). The question then becomes did media produce frames that portrayed responsibility as systemic of the military or as the mere actions of just a few individuals? This will affect how the military was viewed by the public. The hypothesis that Braziunaite evaluated in his research was that the media was complicit in advancing official explanations of the events if it favored individual responsibility frames (*ibid.*). To reiterate, the usage of episodic frames discourages audiences from attributing responsibility to the government or military. What Braziunaite found was that when the *New York Times* or *Washington Post* engaged in systemic responsibility frames, they either obscured the salience of these frames with the coverage of investigations or emphasized “soldiers were acting under the orders of military intelligence” (2011, 155). These news organizations also applied the human-interest frame the most, constructing appealing images of good-natured but ultimately misguided soldiers. The *New York Times* and *Washington Post* utilized the testimonies of the soldier’s family members and friends to provide accounts of their life stories, dreams, and their hard-working and good nature. The newspapers focused on “attributing responsibility to the system rather than the individuals in [their] coverage” (276). Braziunaite argues that the newspapers, by employing human-interest frames, excused the soldiers for their crimes, and ultimately framed the events of Abu Ghraib within a “support for troops” paradigm (284). When choosing between a “support for troops” frame and “human rights violations” frame, it was former that won in the end.

Discussion

When considering the media coverage of My Lai and Abu Ghraib, it is important to evaluate the source and content of political frames to determine the salience of frames in the media. Journalists overwhelmingly relied on administration and military sources in both atrocities. Clearly in the framing of these events “political messages that appeal to and serve to bolster the nation’s image, especially in moments of national dissonance, tend to gain traction within the press, even when substantive challenges to these messages are advanced by political opponents” (173). This is especially true in reference to the behavior of the military.

Unlike the fallout of the Tet Offensive and My Lai, Abu Ghraib did not affect public opinion in the same extent of finishing off overall support for the Iraq War. The Iraq War support, more likely, fell because of the grimmer perceptions of success as a result of rising casualties. Putting that aside, what characterized the media in My Lai and Abu Ghraib was a press deferential to the administration and military’s interpretation of the events and accusations. In this way, the press failed in its duty of amplifying counter-frames that would have allowed the public to more critically assess the administration and military leaders and their policies. Yet, it seemed that the public was more willing to subscribe to frames that presented the military negatively in Vietnam than in Iraq. Despite similar framing patterns by both administrations – minimization, reaffirmation, and dissociation – the events of My Lai coincided with decreasing confidence in the military and was not reduced to a case of a “few bad apples.” On the other hand, with Abu Ghraib, the public was more receptive to human-interest and nation-protecting frames that attributed responsibility to everyone but the troops.

Conclusion

What does the media framing mean in reference to the opposing trends of public confidence in the military when looking at Vietnam and Iraq? In both wars, the original administrative framings of why the U.S. entered the wars were lost. The media complacently presented the administrative frames, but they lost their salience as the public became weary of the prolonged wars and rising

causalities. It is important to understand what the prevailing frames are of a war and how willing the public is in supporting it because “positive public opinion is an ‘essential domino’ of successful military operations” (Gershkoff and Kushner 2005, 526). In both the Vietnam War and Iraq War, the public adopted the media’s presentation of the administration’s frame of the war until the public became weary of the wars. As the public subscribed less to the administration framing of the war, their support for the war itself dwindled. So, the administrations were initially successful in framing the wars until casualties began to mount and the factors of success in both wars were not met. At those points, administrative framings were not powerful enough to overcome the other facets that influence public opinion and approval. However, this does not explain why confidence in the military had reverse trends in the wars. The broader framing of the wars and their loss of salience do not explain why we saw a separation in support of the war and support of the troops in Iraq. While the September 11 Attacks might have engendered patriotism that kept our troops in favor, there are a multitude of reasons why the troops may have been considered favorably.

Before departing from this analysis of framing, I wanted to consider two specific cases, the framing of My Lai and Abu Ghraib. Arguably, these two atrocities were the largest scandals pertaining to the military during the two wars. As in the beginning of the war, it appears that the media in My Lai and Abu Ghraib was deferential to the administration and military’s interpretation of the events and accusations. In this way, the press failed in its duty of amplifying counter-frames that would have allowed the public to more critically assess the administration and military leaders and their policies. Yet, it seemed that the public was more willing to condemn and subscribe to frames that presented the military negatively in Vietnam than in Iraq. Despite similar framing patterns by both administrations – minimization, reaffirmation, and dissociation – the events of My Lai coincided with decreasing confidence in the military and was not reduced to a case of a “few bad apples.” On the other hand, with Abu Ghraib, the public was more receptive to human-interest and nation-protecting

Chapter Four: Spinning the Web of War

frames that attributed responsibility to everyone but the troops. Despite similar frames, why was the American public in Iraq War more receptive to these human-interest frames? While the types of framing inevitably influenced public confidence towards the military in Iraq, it was by no means the only factor. The favor of the military displayed in Iraq I believe might be better explained by other factors – or in addition to other factors – than just the media framing of events and their compliance with the administration’s and military’s chosen frames. Therefore, I would like to move next to political rhetoric.

Chapter Five: The Better and the Brighter

“A politician complaining about the media is like a sailor complaining about the sea.” – Enoch Powell

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter is broken up into two major parts. The first section describes the time period – sampling frame – in which I examined and analyzed data collected for the thematic analysis entailed in this chapter. The sampling frame is utilized for the two content analyses I present in the next chapter. The second section is the examination of my second explanation, political rhetoric of elites, via a thematic analysis of sixty speeches. I first introduce my methodology, then analyze the data, and come to a conclusion about my proposed explanation.

Sampling Frame for Data Collection

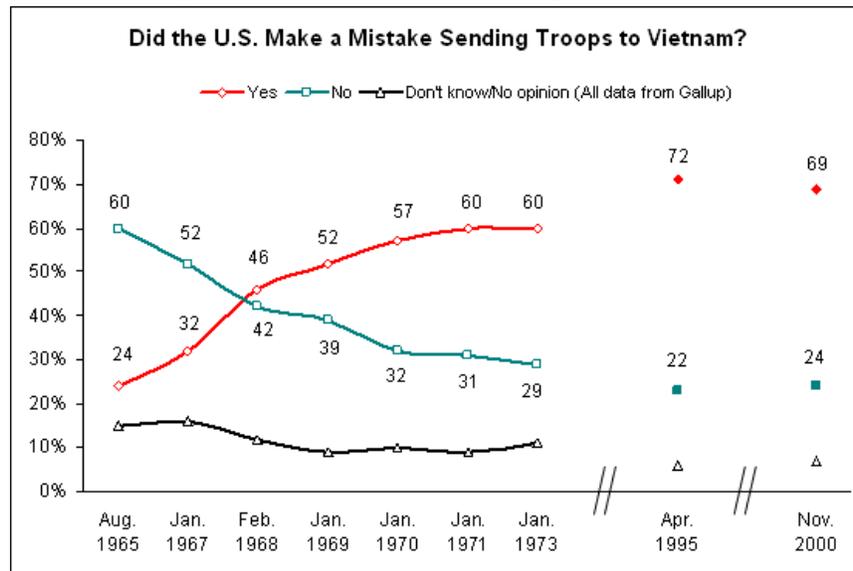
For both wars that I study in this thesis, I examined a roughly two month period during which the opinions of individuals who believe that the U.S. was right or wrong in going to war intersected and diverged substantially. These inflection points are where public support for the wars starts declining. Within that two month period, I analyzed the transcripts of the commentaries made by politicians, presented in this chapter, as well as newspaper articles and opinion-editorials, to be presented in the following chapter. When considering political rhetoric, I specifically isolated quotes about the military and the language used to discuss the military. In regards to media coverage, I chose two major print sources to examine for a content analysis of front-page newspaper articles and two major print sources to examine for an opinion-editorial analysis for each war. The methodology for the thematic analysis will be discussed in more detail in this chapter and in the next for the content analyses.

Sampling Frame for the Vietnam War

Deciding the Frame. As shown in Figure 5.1, those who believed that the U.S. made a mistake in sending troops to Vietnam and those who believed that the U.S. did not make a mistake intersected and subsequently diverged around February 1968. This is the year when the Tet Offensive

began. On 27 February, Walter Cronkite told America on the CBS Evening News that he was certain that “the bloody experience of Vietnam is to end in a stalemate.” On 29 February, Secretary of Defense McNamara left office. It is also the year where more than 500 civilians died in the U.S. massacre at My Lai (16 March) and when thousands were killed by communists during their occupation of the city of Hue. On 25 March, President Johnson met with his military advisors, who urged him to end the war. On 31 March, Johnson declined re-election in a nationwide television broadcast. On 3 April, preliminary talks began with Ho Chi Minh while U.S. troop levels in Vietnam continued to rise. By the end of April, American casualties reached 22,951. On 23 April, anti-war activists at Columbia University seize five buildings. In summary, this particular period in 1968 marks a historical shift in public opinion of the war and contains monumental events that influenced the trajectory of the war. Focusing my analysis of media coverage during this period paints a picture in the shift of public confidence in the military despite, or in accordance, to the fall in support for the war. I thus placed my Vietnam War sampling frame from 20 February 1968 to 24 April 1968.

Figure 5.1 Mistake to Send Troops to Vietnam



Source: Allen *et al.* 2009

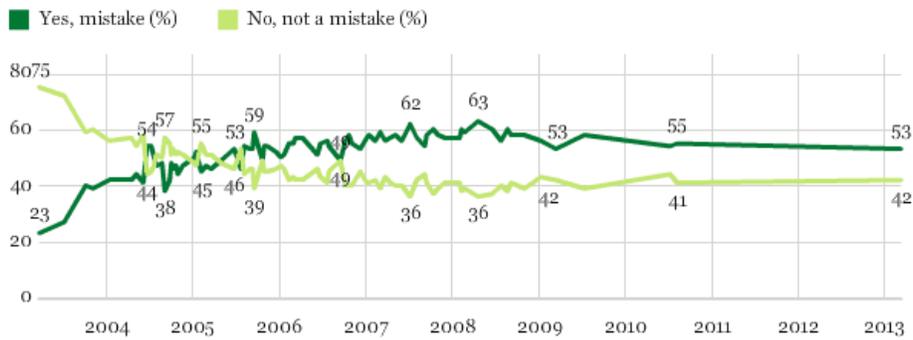
Sampling Frame for the Iraq War

Deciding the Frame. As shown in Figure 5.2, those who felt that the Iraq War was the right decision and those who felt that the Iraq War was the wrong decision intersected and subsequently diverged around December 2006. On 8 November, the day after the Republican Party suffered a sweeping defeat in the 2006 midterm Congressional elections, President Bush accepted the resignation of Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld. The Sadr City bombings, which killed more than 200 Shias occurred on 23 November. The Diyala campaign, which was a series of operations conducted by coalition forces against Iraqi insurgents, began on 25 December. On 30 December, Saddam Hussein was executed for crimes against humanity. At the end of December, American military deaths reached 3,000 since the beginning of the March 2003 invasion. The Iraq War troop surge of 2007 is announced on 10 January, 2007. In summary, this particular period in 2006 to 2007, like the frame for the Vietnam War, marks a historical shift in public opinion of the war and contains monumental events that influenced the trajectory of the war. Focusing my analysis of media coverage during this period paints a picture in the shift of public confidence in the military despite or in accordance to the fall in support for the war. This time frame is also where the view that sending troops to Iraq was a mistake actually exceeded the view it did not, and the trend lines continued remained to separate. I will thus place my Iraq War sampling frame from 7 November 2006 to 11 January 2007.

Figure 5.2: Mistake to Send Troops to Iraq

Looking back, do you think the United States made a mistake sending troops to fight in Iraq?

National adults



Note: Wording from 2003-2010: "In view of the developments since we first we sent our troops to Iraq, do you think the United States made a mistake in sending troops to Iraq, or not?"

GALLUP

Source: Gallup 2010

Explanation Two: Dissent of the Political Elite

The hypothesis this chapter evaluates is the Iraq War saw higher favorable views of the military because it experienced a “differing” rhetoric among political elites as compared to the Vietnam War. Iraq War politicians adopted a different tone than Vietnam War politicians when demonstrating their opposition: though arguing against the war, they maintained respect and support for the military itself. This influenced the public to make the distinction between the righteousness of the Iraq War and their view of the American military. I evaluated the politicization of each of the wars demonstrated by the administration’s methods to control and/or influence media coverage. I also evaluated how political elites reacted throughout the wars. To do so, I conducted a thematic analysis of political speeches from the pre-determined sampling frame presented earlier in this chapter. In this section, I will discuss the methodology utilized to conduct the thematic analysis, summarize the results, and present my findings in the discussion and conclusion.

Political discourse does affect public opinion. In the thematic analysis I find there was a clear linguistic difference between the Vietnam and Iraq Wars political discourse in the time period I assessed. These linguistic differences demonstrate, according to the cascade model, there is reason to

believe that Iraqi War politicians actively spread the “support the troops” message across party line. Meaning, regardless of the trajectory or dissent towards war policy, they and the country must support and value the troops. These rhetorical patterns were absent for the most part in the Vietnam War, allowing the public to conflate the success of the war with their confidence in the troops.

Methodology

To study the portrayal of military personnel and the military as a whole, I carried out a thematic analysis using the political speeches, interviews, and public statements made by prominent American politicians, military officials, and civilians during the war in the determined sampling frames. The analysis identifies themes applied in the figures’ approach to discussing the military in the context of the Vietnam and Iraq wars, respectively. After presenting my methodology, I provide a discussion on the linguistic tools and how the language used by these figures either placed blame or none on the military and its members in varying degrees.

Thematic analysis is a foundational method for qualitative analysis that is used to identify, analyze, and report patterns and themes in the chosen data. It determines the presence of certain words and concepts within texts. Thematic analysis allows the investigator insight “into the often symbolically laden connotations used by leaders themselves in context, making it a valuable tool” (Bligh *et al.* 2004, 563). Coding is the primary process to uncover themes and it is achieved by recognizing important concepts in the data. A theme captures a patterned response that allows the assessment of the research question (Braun and Clarke 2006, 82). In my thematic analysis, I give a detailed analysis of some aspects of the data. It will be on the “latent level,” going beyond the semantic content of the data (Braun and Clarke 2006, 84). Latent themes identify underlying ideas, patterns, and assumptions; whereas, semantic themes attempt to identify the explicit and surface meanings of the data. I observe Braun and Clarke’s six phases of analysis to gather a certain amount of themes utilized for the foundation of my analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006, 87-93; Table 6.1). The coding of data proceeds as follows. First, as shown in Table 6.1, I conducted a surface-level coding of skim to

familiarize myself with the speeches and generate the initial themes (Table 6.2). After generating those themes, I recoded the speeches and create a thematic map, where I placed extracts under the each of the listed themes. Finally, I produced a report in which I analyze the specific extracts in accordance to the themes and scholarly literature to formulate an answer to my research question. The unit of analysis is the section of the speech that refers to the military as an institution or military as its members.

The predetermined criteria I had when selecting my data was that the statements had to be public and that the statements must specifically refer to the “troops/ men in uniform/ service/ armed officers” in a sustained manner. The data was taken from, but not necessarily limited to, official U.S. government websites, speeches printed in newspapers, and archives of presidential and vice-presidential speeches from the Presidential Libraries of Johnson and Bush. The predetermined criteria for which official’s statements I reviewed was that they needed either played a key role in the war, expressed vocal dissent that came to the forefront of national media, or been in a position of authority where their comments would be publicly known and discussed. As discussed in the previous section, for the Vietnam War the dates of interest were 20 February 1968 to 24 April 1968, and for the Iraq War the dates of interest were 7 November 2006 to 11 January 2006. For each of the wars, I coded 15 speeches for the administration (pro-war) and 15 speeches for the opposition (anti-war). This totaled to 30 speeches for each of the wars, thus a total of 60 speeches for the thematic analysis as a whole.

Table 5.1: Phases of Thematic Analysis

PHASE	DESCRIPTION OF PROCESSES
Familiarizing yourself with the data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Source: Braun and Clarke 2006

Table 5.2: Sample of Coding for Thematic Analysis

Table 2 Vietnam War Transcript Data from 20 February 1968 to 24 April 1968		
ADMINISTRATION SPEECHES		
PRESIDENT LYNDON B JOHNSON		
<i>Profile</i>	<i>Data Item</i>	<i>Initial Codes</i>
February 27, 1968: NYT Dallas	The Vietnam war stands at a turning point and Americans at home, like those fighting the war, must not retreat . The peace of Asia and American will turn on our unshakable and untiring resolve. I do not believe we will ever buckle.	Pro-War Resilience
March 12, 1968: Remarks at a Dinner of the Veterans of Foreign Wars	You of the VFW have been the strong right arm of many Commanders in Chief, of many Presidents. You have been a voice of conscience and responsibility for many years for many millions of Americans. I ask only that you hold straight to that course. You will help to lead your Nation and you will help to lead your world beyond danger to the peaceful day when free men know not fear, but when free men know fulfillment.	Pro-Military Responsible Trustworthy

Coding is not a linear but a cyclical process in which codes emerge throughout the research process. The two-step process of coding I took began with basic coding to distinguish themes and then follow that with interpretive coding where more specific trends and patterns can be interpreted

(Hay 2005). To illustrate the result of the coding, I have included a sample of the data (Table 5.2). As demonstrated by this table, phrases that reflect an underlying sentiment, that is, a latent theme, were highlighted and then reduced to an initial code. These codes were then translated into themes.

Themes

While familiarizing my data, I coded with my research question in mind and subsequently arrived at eight themes. Due to the scope of this thesis, I only give a limited number of extracts (relevant paragraphs from the speeches) to support these themes. I selected these extracts because they specifically provide insight about the theme and relate specifically to the research question. The dimensions evaluated in this study are the Vietnam War and the Iraq War during the predetermined sampling frames. An overview of the themes found for each of the dimensions is listed below (Table 5.3). I discovered these themes after a surface-level skim of all of the speeches I coded for while considering my research question. After compiling these themes, I analyzed their pertinence and how their espousal by political elites, or lack thereof may have effect public opinion of the military.

THEMES	EXPLANATIONS
Attribution of Blame to Military	<i>Public blame for the mistakes, actions, and progress of the war is directed to the military and the troops by extension.</i>
Attribution of Blame to Government/President	<i>Public blame for the mistakes, actions, and progress of the war is directed to the government and/or the Presidency (Executive branch/ White House).</i>
Attribution of Blame to Vietnam	<i>Public blame for the mistakes, actions, and progress of the war is directed to Asian influences, specifically South Vietnam.</i>
Pro-War	<i>The speaker speaks in favor of the war.</i>
Anti-War	<i>The speaker speaks against the war.</i>
Pro-Military	<i>The military is positively viewed and considered. This theme is a sub-theme and mutually exclusive with an attribution of blame to the military. The military is referred to positively explicitly and given characteristics beyond expressing support, such as “bravery,” “heroic,” “responsible,” and “sacrifice/selfless,” etc. There is an explicit call to support the military and troops, despite the progress of the war.</i>

Anti-Military	<i>The military is negatively viewed and considered. This theme is a sub-theme and may also be present if blame is attributed to the military, but not necessarily so.</i>
Neutral-Military	<i>There is no clear opinion of reference to the military and troops. This theme is more likely present when the war is viewed from an abstract or policy-orientated sense.</i>

Results

Table 5.4: Results of Thematic Analysis

THEME	Vietnam War Political Transcripts		Iraq War Political Transcripts	
	<i>Administration Speeches</i>	<i>Opposition Speeches</i>	<i>Administration Speeches</i>	<i>Opposition Speeches</i>
<i>Attribution of Blame to Military</i>		1		
<i>Attribution of Blame to Government/President</i>	3	4	2	13
<i>Attribution of Blame to Public</i>	1			1
<i>Attribution of Responsibility to Ally Government in Invaded Country</i>	1	3		1
<i>Pro-War</i>	3			
<i>Call for Unity</i>	3			
<i>Anti-War</i>		6		2
<i>Pro-Military</i>	8	7	15	11
<i>Anti-Military</i>		3		
<i>National Support of Troops</i>			12	12

In 28 March, 1968, President Johnson delivered remarks upon a bill signing, where he spoke of the troops as heroes: “men who were ready to do all they could, including laying their life on the line in the terrible test that we are going through in Vietnam.” Yet, throughout the speeches analyzed, Johnson never explicitly supported the troops or the war. Rather, he declared the value of the war and its need, without demonstrating much of a desire to truly provide justification. He did not demand support, he assumed it. He also proclaimed that Americans needed “whatever their personal interests or concern, to guard against divisiveness and all its ugly consequences” (Address to Nation, March 31, 1968). When Johnson did happen to discuss the troops, it was largely superficial and merely an instrument in justifying the continuance of the war. Vice President Humphrey, however, was more

particular in outlining gratitude and support for the troops, though he did not call for such reciprocity of support from the American people. At the Annual Washington Conference of the VFW, he said:

True, you do not return to the parades and brass band that have greeted many veterans in the past. Indeed, the loudest sounds you may hear are those of our democracy debating its course at home and abroad. But do not mistake the sound of democracy in action as thanklessness....No repayment is truly enough for the price America's veterans have paid in Vietnam and elsewhere.

Later on the speech he addressed the topic of the troops again:

Make no mistake about it – your government will fulfill its duty. Whatever may be your views as to whether we do the best or not, there is one thing I would think all Americans would agree on: We have over a half a million men in the field in Vietnam. I think they are worthy of our support (11 March, 1968).

The interesting trend, we will find, is that unlike Iraq War politicians, Vice President Humphrey ostensibly assumed support for the troops, despite knowing that it was not full-heartedly expressed. He assumed dissent expressed amongst the American public for the war itself would not bear consequences on support for the troops. For opposition speeches, there was recognition of the dangers faced by troops but a similar lack of outwardly expressing and demanding that the nation support them. Senator Wayne Morse, quoted by the *New York Times*, declared that “We cannot sit here in our security and our safety while American boys are dying in the jungles of North Vietnam in a war we don't dare declare” (12 March, 1968). By using phrasing like “American boys,” there is a sense of ownership over the troops conveyed which denotes empathy in the statements. It is not to say that opposition politicians were vocally against the troops, but neither they nor administration politicians truly gave reason enough to support them.

Senator Eugene McCarthy, perhaps, was the most vocally supportive of troops, calling them brave for giving their lives and assigning responsibility for the trajectory of the war away from them: “They died carrying out military operations under the orders of the President of the United States” (*New York Times*, February 22, 1968). During this time, McCarthy was launching a presidential

campaign bid against Johnson as a member of the same party. However, other politicians across partisan lines were not as forgiving to the troops, as exemplified by the statements of Diplomat George Kennan who called actions of the military as “massive miscalculations” and responsible for “suffering and destructiveness” (*New York Times*: 29 February, 1968). The more positive commonalities amongst the opposition speeches in how they referred to the troops is best summarized by the statements of Senator Robert Kennedy: “this has not happened because our men are not brave or effective, because they are. It is because we have misconceived the nature of the war” (*New York Times*, February 8, 1968). They were willing to assert blame on the presidency, willing to declare the bravery of the troops to an extent, but never explicit in declaring the difference between the war and the troops. This was echoed by the statements of those made by the administration. Though they did not admit to policy failures, Johnson and his vocal supporters in government adopted a positive attitude to a war, but never went as far as to explicitly declare a need to support the troops. Rather, it was assumed and that perhaps was where the failure of political discourse in the Vietnam era occurred.

In the Iraq War, the political and rhetorical discourse used in administration and opposition speeches is strikingly different. Markedly different than President Johnson, President Bush’s speeches were highly devoted to discussing the troops. In the President’s News Conference, President Bush asserted that “Our troops are wondering whether or not they're going to get the support they need after this election. Democrats are going to support our troops just like Republicans will” (8 November, 2006). Throughout the rest of Bush’ analyzed speeches, similar rhetoric was employed. President Bush and those among the political elite constantly found themselves explaining that the troops are the finest of citizens: they are protecting the country, America was proud of them, and that America must thank them for their bravery and service. A common sentence in President Bush’s speeches was along the lines of “I urge every American to find some way to thank our military” (23 December, 2006). However, the most telling statement made by President Bush was in his Address to the Nation, where

he said, “The situation in Iraq is unacceptable to the American people, and it is unacceptable to me. Our troops in Iraq have fought bravely. They have done everything we have asked them to do. Where mistakes have been made, the responsibility rests with me” (10 January, 2007). Here President Bush did what no one under the Johnson administration did: he actively took responsibility away from the troops, and demanded that America still support them, regardless of the trajectory of the war.

These sentiments expressed by President Bush in regards to how he characterized the troops were supported by the rest of his administration. Rumsfeld called on Americans to thank veterans and active duty soldiers, especially for their “compassion and restraint...in the face of near constant provocation from ruthless enemies, while in the unforgiving glare of a 24-hour global media” (Veterans Day Message to the Troops: 7 November, 2006). Rumsfeld spoke of the troops further as the “the best-led, the best-trained, the best-equipped. And there's never been a military like the military we have today, and it's all volunteers” (*American Spectator*: 15 November, 2006). Finally, although he acknowledged the political dissent concerning the war amongst the American public which was inflamed at that time, he admonished that “we must not confuse the political debates that take place back home with a wavering of support or appreciation for your service or for your achievements” (Town Hall: 10 December, 2006). Administration speeches were quick to separate the progress of the war from faith in the military and troops. They were equally quick to demand support for the military and pride in it regardless of the events in Iraq or success of administration policy.

Amongst opposition speeches, the trend of the speeches was to criticize the administration’s role in a war they did not support. However – and very much like the administration – they consistently declared their support for the troops. Senator Edward Kennedy demanded policy that was worthy of the “sacrifice, commitment, and valor of our men and women in uniform” and asserted that “we will always support our troops in harm’s way” (Iraq Study Group Comments: 6 December, 2006; National Press Club: 9 January, 2007). Senators Jim Webb and Barack Obama claimed that regardless of

administration policy failures, “we all have [our Marines] in our hearts and in our prayers” (Way Forward: 20 November, 2006). Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, after condemning a failing war still made it a priority to speak highly of the troops:

Our troops have performed the most difficult missions given to them in Iraq with great courage. The Congress and the American people will continue to support them and provide them with every resource they need. But our military forces deserve a policy commensurate with the sacrifices they have been asked to make. Regrettably, the President has not provided that tonight (Statement with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, and Senate Assistant Democratic Leader Richard Durbin: 10 January, 2007).

This summarizes the point of view demonstrated by the opposition politicians during the Iraq War. Despite their criticisms of the war as well as the actions and policies by the Bush Administration, the opposition speeches consistently spoke highly of the troops as well as the need to support them.

To conclude, I found the following trends. The speeches for both wars on the administration or opposition front did not significantly attribute blame or responsibility to the military, or the public. In the Vietnam War, the administration and opposition were more likely to attribute responsibility of the war to the South Vietnamese government as compared to any such attribution during the Iraq War to the Iraqi Government. Since my thematic analysis was primarily focused on considering sentiments expressed towards the military, and administration and opposition speeches are characterized by their pro-war and anti-war attitudes, I only coded for explicit pro-war and anti-war messages. Interestingly enough, the administration during the Vietnam War called for pro-war attitudes as opposed to the three other groups, which did not at all. This was mirrored by their similar predilection of calling for national unity around the war. Predictably so, opposition speeches during Vietnam and Iraq expressed anti-war sentiments, though it was more significantly expressed during Vietnam. The more compelling data, when considering the research question, arrives when considering pro and anti-military attitudes as well as calls for national support for the military. While both the administration and opposition in both of the wars expressed pro-military attitudes

comparably equally, they were more likely to overtly express this sentiment in the Iraq War. Furthermore, opposition speeches during the Vietnam War were more likely than any other grouping to express anti-military attitudes. The other three categories did not overtly express such a sentiment. Finally, of the speeches analyzed, there was no call for national support for the military regardless of anti or pro-war attitudes, during the Vietnam War. However, the majority of speeches analyzed in both camps during the Iraq War called for national support for the troops. I will discuss these findings in the next section.

Discussion

The rhetoric employed by politicians or vocal leaders is a very powerful tool that shapes public feelings and opinions about political topics. Especially in war, there is a compulsion for leaders to rally national support, and divided countries an equal desire to present an opposing case of why the war would not be good for the country. An important aspect of political discourse is to define an enemy. Administration speeches during the wars made the targets of the wars to be Communist Vietnamese and the terrorist Iraqis, respectively. However, opposition speeches made that “enemy” the administration itself. The administration became the enemy in failing to create effective policy and in dragging the country in a war, in their opinion, that should not have been fought. That being said, the greatest difference between opposition speeches in the Vietnam and Iraq war was a conscientious separation between the concepts of supporting the troops and supporting the war in Iraq. Although Vietnam War American politicians did express their support of the troops at times, it was nowhere near to the level that Iraqi War American politicians who not only expressed it but demanded it from a listening American public.

Effects flow in the direction from the government through the media and to the public, where the media “plays a passive part in transferring messages from the government to the public” (Simon and Jerit 2007, 254). The vocabularies used by politicians and how they frame an issue can create desired attitudes. While the effects of the rhetoric employed by politicians is not wholly deterministic,

in that citizens can still reason to create their own opinions that is often driven by existing political predispositions, mental connections exemplified in rhetoric can affect public attitudes. This means that the exclusive use of particular wording or phrasing “within discourse strengthens mental associations that later activate and influence judgment” (255). The citizenry will accept and reject competitive terminologies depending on their pre-existing political biases, but, at the same time, the linguistic framing adopted by politicians and passed through the media does affect judgments. The lack of focus Vietnam War politicians placed on the troops specifically may have made it easier for the public to conflate their distaste for the progress of the war as opposed to Iraq War politicians, who explicitly denied such a conflation. Elites use distinctive vocabularies to advance their political agenda, and this was observed when comparing administration and opposition speeches. However, when they portray similar vocabulary when discussing the military, as shown in the Iraq War case, it undoubtedly made it easier for people to accept the message: you can and should support your troops no matter the trajectory of the war.

Conclusion

Can you support the troops, but not the war? It appears that politicians of the Iraq War were driven to make this distinction, drawing from the experiences of the Vietnam War where veterans returned to a nation wrought with frustration about a war and that the frustration was directed at these troops. Ever since Vietnam, it appears that the effort has been made to separate the war from the warriors, and the media channeled this sentiments by broadcasting forms of political speech that articulated such.

“Support Our Troops” is a popular slogan that existed almost exclusively and across partisan lines in the speeches delivered during the Iraq War as opposed to the Vietnam War. When used by the opposition, it did not mean unquestioned support of the government’s decisions and the Iraq War though. The sentiments reflected in the speeches of Iraq War politicians reflected an understanding, ostensibly, shared by a wide community of Americans: it was not the volition of the troops to start

the war. There were simply doing their job. They did not choose the politics or what war they were fighting in: they are distinct from war.

As a result of the draft, the sacrifice experienced by soldiers of the Vietnam Era and earlier was widespread, affecting all corners of America. The war in Vietnam was longer and less justifiable than the wars past. Its horrors and atrocities were far more publicized than in any prior war and the unpopularity of the effort was directed at both the administration and the soldiers.

I postulate then, in the Vietnam War, there was no significant linguistic framework or impetus that divided, conceptually, the “support the war” and “support the troops” paradigms. Politicians did not make the effort to further separate their support out into these categories, thus conflating the two. However, the importance of doing so for overall public confidence in the military cannot be understated. Politicians in the Iraq War were enabled by this verbal and cognitive separation of these two types of support, making it easier to argue decisions of prolonging war while not dragging, so to speak, their support of the military along as well.

With an all-volunteer force and an evolved collective conscious that, regardless of one’s disagreements on policy, the soldier should not be a target of such dissent, a space to view the military differently than the war was created. Supporting the troops is no longer the same as supporting the war. Many of those who are currently in office are veterans of the Vietnam War, or at least grew up witnessing the alleged mistreatment of soldiers. That, or they were raised with a strong national regret at the mistreatment of soldiers coming home. Therefore, the rhetoric employed was perhaps a way to right that wrong, a localized cognitive effort directed at supporting the troops in spite of whatever grievances people opposed to war policy exemplifies that. The language used by Iraq War politicians shows such an overcompensation, so to speak, for the consequences of American troops face by a country that is now engaging more in wars that are not as justifiable as previous.

Democrats, composing most of the opposition speeches in Iraq, appeared to be petrified of being painted as “soft on terror” or “unpatriotic” by not supporting the troops. For those that supported the war, by offering effusive praise for the military one could feasibly distract and shield from criticism when policy failed. On the flip side, for those who voted and argued against the war, the sentiment was that their patriotism would be questioned if they both disagreed with the war and did not express their support for the troops. It was merely good politics to assert positive views of the military. As for the media, it exemplified this same fear of being accused of being unpatriotic should it present negative views of the war without the caveat, “but we still love our troops!” The conservative media portrayed itself as a cheerleader for the Bush administration and the war, whereas the liberal media had to inoculate themselves with pro-military speech when it touted negative reports on the war itself.

Ordinary Americans witnessing these trends could not but help absorb these cultural norms and wars present in the political discourse. Patriotism was conflated with lavishing troops with adulation. The political elite created such a message, the media transmitted and curated it, and the public absorbed it. Waving flags on media broadcasts, showcases of soldiers coming home, and children sending letters and care packages to those overseas, were among the many displays of patriotism Americans were cultured into displaying. While the idea may not be insidious itself, the transformation of political discourse of the political elite from Vietnam to Iraq certainly had its hand impressing these habits of almost unequivocally supporting the military on the American public. The transformation of political discourse cannot be the only the only way that public confidence in the military was fomented. Surely, this cognitive dissociation allowed the military to be less tied to negative appraisals of the war. So, if the war was going bad according to the public eye, then the military was not immediately condemned negatively in the same fashion. The war and the troops no longer were the same. This disassociation does not logically mean that the public would automatically have a

Chapter Five: The Better and the Brighter

positive view of the military. That, I believe, is where more critical attention must be paid in regards to how the media presented of the military, which derives from its interaction. To further explore this question, I turn to my third explanation: embedding and the military-media relationship.

Chapter Six: Mind the Gap

“Vietnam was the first war ever fought without any censorship. Without censorship, things can get terribly confused in the public mind.” – William Westmoreland

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter and Chapter Seven will explore my third and final explanation. The hypothesis underlining this explanation is that the Iraq War was defined by more positive views of the military itself due to a shift in how the mass media engaged with wartime coverage and how the military engaged with the media, such as through embedding. In Vietnam, there was relatively little control asserted or censorship conducted by the military on journalists covering the war. In Iraq, the majority of coverage was conducted via embedded journalists which in turn allowed the military to better frame coverage and elicit sympathy for the troops even when the public disapproved of the war itself. By controlling the media access in the invaded country, social penetration effects influenced reporters to present U.S. troops more favorably than in the Vietnam War. This inevitably influenced the public’s opinion of the military. To fully evaluate the relationship of the media and military in each of the wars in terms of the military’s methods to control and/or influence media coverage, I present two content analyses of the newspaper coverage of the wars, the first being news articles and the second being opinion editorials from the pre-determined sampling frame presented earlier in this thesis.

The conclusion I come to in this chapter is two-fold. The media content analysis suggests that front-page newspaper articles did not have an overt bias in attributing responsibility for the failure of the war to the actions of the military. It also suggests that the front page newspaper articles did not have an overt negative or positive tone towards the military. In fact, the newspaper articles mainly discussed the pros and cons of war policy for both the Vietnam and Iraq Wars, demonstrating a neutral media. However, the articles written by embedded reporters tended to favor covering soldiers and the day-to-day events within the military, which could have affected viewer’s perception of the military by exposure effects rather than media framing effects.

Moving to the second conclusion: there was a media bias in favor of the military exemplified in the opinion-editorial content analysis. In my content analysis of opinion-editorial articles the military and the government were both assigned responsibility. However, Vietnam War opinion-editorial articles were more likely to have a negative view of the military whereas Iraq War opinion-editorial articles were more likely to have a positive tone towards the military. This means that there was somewhat of a media bias surfaced in the opinion-editorial section towards the military. During the Iraq War, opinion-editorials tended to present a more favorable view of the military or at least actively separated the military from the trajectory of the war.

Media Content Analysis of News Paper Articles

Method and Coding Procedure

The initial media content analysis examined at the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* for the Vietnam War and the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* for the Iraq War. The unit of analysis and coding unit was the distinct news story, and coding was recorded electronically on an Excel spreadsheet.

In retrieving articles concerning each war, I accessed the newspapers' archives and inputted the dates of each of the respective sampling frame, as discussed in the previous chapter. For the Vietnam War the dates of interest were 20 February 1968 to 24 April 1968, and for the Iraq War the dates of interest were 7 November 2006 to 11 January 2007. For each day within the date range, I selected one article or feature from each of the sources to code. Thus, for each sampling frame, a maximum of 130 articles were selected (65 articles from each source). Because some articles were not retrievable and other articles were more than 15 pages into the newspaper, I ended up collecting 115 articles for the Vietnam War and 130 for the Iraq War. An article is a news story, which is an individual editorial news item including accompanying pictures or graphics with or without text. There is no minimum length for the item to be considered a news story. If the article explicitly notes that this

same article will be continued on another page, its continuation must be coded as well as one story. Articles that merely consist of a headline and a short bullet without further reference are not coded.

Selection Criteria

Vietnam Media Selection: Of the multitude of newspapers to choose from, I selected the New York Times and the *Los Angeles Times* to conduct this media-content analysis. The *New York Times* produced the first editorial about the rise of communism in Vietnam in January 1955. It was also home to Harrison E. Salisbury, who was the first correspondent from a major U.S. newspaper to go to North Vietnam; David Halberstam was one of the first journalists to criticize the U.S.'s involvement in Vietnam. In 1971, the *NY Times* printed the Pentagon papers that demonstrated that the government had “systematically lied” to the public about the entire war. Due to its national scope and prestige, this newspaper was selected. In 1962, the *Los Angeles Times* joined with the *Washington Post* to form the *Los Angeles Times-Washington Post News Service* to syndicate articles from both papers for other news organizations. During the 1960s, the paper won four Pulitzer Prizes, more than its previous nine decades combined. The Vietnam War Crimes Working Group was set up in the wake of the My Lai Massacre to ascertain the claims of war crimes by U.S. armed forces in Vietnam. Nick Turse and Deborah Nelson, investigative editor for *The Los Angeles Times*, created a series of articles from this to provide coverage of the event. This newspaper was chosen because of its prominence on the West Coast and its prestige.

Vietnam Data Collection: When coding the *New York Times*, I utilized the Times Machine in the specified data range. The Times Machine is browser-based digital replica of every edition of *The New York Times* published between 1851 and 1980. The article was chosen by its prominence and reference to the war, which was assumed to how close to front page the article was. For example, an article featured on page 15 would be chosen over that of one that was featured on page 17. If there is more than one article on a page, the article that is the most upper left will be selected. When coding

the Los Angeles Times, I utilized ProQuest, looking at their archives of all the LA Times articles in the sampling frame. I choose the first relevant article that returned for the particular date with preference for front page articles.

Iraq Media Selection: The second most circulated newspaper, after the Wall Street Journal, the *New York Times* is one of the leading and most influential newspapers in the United States. It was the employer of Judith Miller, a journalist who famously wrote about Iraq and the weapons of mass destruction whose stories later turned out to have been based on faulty information. The *New York Times* apologized for its coverage of Hussein's alleged weapons programs. Furthermore, they successfully won a lawsuit through the Freedom of Information Act to release 8000 pages of secret information that essentially made clear that top Pentagon officials would invite news analysts to secret meetings, and urge the analysts to speak positively of the war. The *Washington Post* was selected for the following reasons. In the months leading up to the war, the Post published more than 140 stories on its front page promoting the war. It is one of the most widely circulated newspapers in the D.C. The newspaper has won 47 Pulitzer Prizes. This includes six separate Pulitzers awarded in 2008, the second-highest number ever awarded to a single newspaper in one year.

Iraq Data Collection: When coding the *New York Times*, I went on the Front Page section of their website, and manually change the URL so the front page of the right date would appear. I picked the first relevant article. For the articles from *Washington Post*, I searched for the articles within the sampling frame on their online website with the criterion that they be from Section A (front page section). However, they did not include the page number so I cross-referenced the articles from the *Washington Post* website search return and that of those named in the ProQuest's *Washington Post* archive, which did include page numbers. I selected the most relevant article that appeared on both and had the page number closest to 1.

Creating and Using the Codebook

A codebook is “a set of codes, definitions, and examples used as a guide to help analyze interview data” (DeCuir-Gunby et al, 138). They provide a formalized operationalization of codes. This study utilized a theory-driven code, which involved first generating the code, reviewing and revising the code in the context of the data, and then determining the reliability of the code. The Coder_ID identifies who has coded each case, which is simply the initials of the coders name (ex. MC). The article identity code assigned to each article that constructs the database follows the following format: year/month/day. Newspaper abbreviation. Page number of article (ex. 1968/02/11.NY.12). The abbreviation for the *New York Times* is NY, for the *Los Angeles Times* it is LA, and the *Washington Post* is WP. The codebook first contains a breakdown of each of the pieces of data gathered during the coding process. Following that table, there are table appendixes which further elucidate the codes that are used in response to the questions asked. For each question there is a table that clarifies the possible codes and their descriptions.

Explanation of Coding Procedure

After choosing the article, the Coder ID, Article Identity Code, News Outlet, Type of Story (from the three choices provided in Appendix A), and Title of the Article was assigned. Then, in answering Question 1, the coder proceeded to read the article. As soon as the coder determined the existence of an actor responsible for the issue detailed in the article, per Semetko and Valkenburg’s determination in their content analysis of European politics, they answered Question 1 with “Y” (Semetko and Valkenburg 2000). If the coder did not determine any explicit actor, they assigned Question 1’s box with “N” and move onto Question 3. If there is an actor responsible, the coder used the choices provided in Appendix B and fill Question 2 accordingly. If there are multiple actors to whom responsibility is attributed, regardless of degree, all actors were included in the answer for Question 2. For Question 3, for the article to be considered positive, neutral, or negative it must retain

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that tone throughout the article but the degree does not matter. For example, an article will be coded as positive if it is anywhere from mildly to extremely positive. However, if there is any indication that the article may contain both positive and negative tones, the article will be coded as mixed, regardless of if the article is mostly negative or mostly positive. This is in hopes to offset any potential bias from the coder. Once the coder is finished coding the article, they reread the article and confirmed their choices once more before moving onto the next one. The codebook crafted to conduct this analysis is listed below (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: Codebook for Media Content Analysis

Column	Profile	Description
C1	Coder ID	MC, AK
C2	Article Identity Code	year/month/day.newspaper abbreviation.page number of article
C3	News Outlet	NY, LA, LM, WP, TM
C4	Type of story	See Appendix A
C5	Title of the Article	Full title written to be case sensitive
C6	Q1: Does the story suggest that an actor is responsible for an issue/problem?	Answer is Y or N. Actor is the common term for people present in the news.
C8	Q2: If yes, to whom is responsibility attributed?	See Appendix B for list of possible actors; leave blank if answer to Q1 was N. If there are two or more actors who are depicted as equally responsible, code for both.
C9	Q3: What is the tone adopted towards the military?	See Appendix C for a list of possible tones. When coding tone, the article must either be entirely positive or entirely negative for it to be coded as such. If there is a mixture in a degree of positive and negative sentiments, then the article must be coded as mixed.

To illustrate the result of the coding, I have included a sample of the data (Table 6.2). As mentioned before, the meaning associated with the numbers are described in the Appendix.

Table 6.2: Sample of Coding for Media Content Analysis

Vietnam War Article Analysis

Coder ID	Article Identity Code	News Outlet	Type of Story	Title Of The Article	Q1: Does the story suggest that an actor is responsible for an issue/problem?	Q2: If yes, to whom is responsibility attributed?	Q3: What is the tone adopted towards the military?
MC	1968/02/20.NY.1	NY	1	Foe Hurlled Back From Key Village Near Saigon Base	Y	4	4
MC	1968/02/21.NY.1	NY	1	McNamara Tells Of Secret Data On Tonkin Attack	Y	4	4
MC	1968/02/22.NY.1	NY	1	Fulbright Says McNamara Deceives Public On Tonkin	Y	2	2
MC	1968/02/23.NY.1	NY	1	Pentagon Studies A Plan To Call Up 40,000 Reserves	N		1

Analysis

In the following sections, I provide an analysis of these codes. My primary interest is testing the hypothesis stated at the outset of this chapter. Specifically, I examined the frequency of the specific codes to look for trends in attribution of responsibility and tonal shifts towards the military between the two wars. Through the results, I draw conclusions about whether there was a bias in the news reports in favor or against the military and if that bias was significant enough to affect public opinion towards the military.

Results and Analysis

Results

The first step of the data analysis process is to run the frequencies on each of the variables. For categorical variables, it is crucial to know if there are any response categories with very few responses. If there were, consideration on whether to combine two or more categories was given.

Method

Since the data was collected on Excel, all the calculations occurred in Excel to find the frequencies (countif formula), percentages (frequency/total), and frequency*data value, which was used to calculate the mean later on. The row highlighted green is the largest percent, and the row

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highlighted red is the smallest percent. The second most popular category is highlighted yellow. If there are multiple categories that have the same percent frequency and are either the largest or smallest percent, then all of the pertaining rows are highlighted. For each war, some articles blamed multiple sources for the issue/problem. Therefore, I created Table 2 and Table 3 to represent different calculations. In the first calculation, each attribution was counted separately and equally, and some articles attributed responsibility up to three groups. Therefore the totals were higher than the number of articles evaluated, which increases the importance of looking at the percent rather than simply the frequency. It also meant that the totals between the Vietnam War analysis and the Iraq War analysis were different. Thus, for the second calculation, I only counted the first group referenced so that each article corresponded with only one group. The null hypothesis is that there is no difference in the attribution of responsibility between the wars and no difference in the tone demonstrated towards the military either.

Vietnam War

Table 6.3: Vietnam Existence of Responsibility

Q1	Frequency	Percent
N	25	21.7%
Y	90	78.3%

Table 6.4: Vietnam Attribution of Responsibility (All Values Counted)

Q2	Frequency	Percent	Frequency * data value
None	25	20.0%	25
0	1	0.8%	2
1	13	10.4%	39
2	26	20.8%	104
3	3	2.4%	15
4	57	45.6%	342
5	0	0.0%	0
6	0	0.0%	0
Total	125	100.0%	527

Table 6.5: Vietnam Attribution of Responsibility (Duplicates Excluded)

Q2	frequency	Percent	Frequency * data value
None	25	21.7%	25
0	0	0.0%	0
1	14	12.2%	42
2	23	20.0%	92
3	2	1.7%	10
4	51	44.3%	306
5	0	0.0%	0
6	0	0.0%	0
Total	115	100.0%	475

Table 6.6: Vietnam Tone

Q3	frequency	Percent	Frequency * data value
0	28	24.3%	28
1	19	16.5%	38
2	12	10.4%	36
3	11	9.6%	44
4	45	39.1%	225
Total	115	100.0%	371

Table 6.7: Vietnam Means

	Mean
Attribution of Responsibility (All)	4.22
Attribution of Responsibility (No Duplicates)	4.13
Tone	3.23

Iraq War

Table 6.8: Iraq Existence of Responsibility

Q1	Frequency	percent
N	18	13.8%
Y	112	86.2%

Table 6.9: Iraq Attribution of Responsibility (All Values Counted)

Q2	Frequency	Percent	Frequency * data value
None	18	11.2%	18
0	0	0.0%	0
1	21	13.0%	63
2	51	31.7%	204
3	3	1.9%	15
4	57	35.4%	342
5	0	0.0%	0
6	11	6.8%	88
Total	161	100%	730

Table 6.10: Iraq Attribution of Responsibility (Duplicates Excluded)

Q2	frequency	Percent	Frequency * data value
None	18	13.8%	18
0	0	0.0%	0
1	21	16.2%	63
2	43	33.1%	172
3	3	2.3%	15
4	41	31.5%	246
5	0	0.0%	0
6	4	3.1%	32
Total	130	100.0%	546

Table 6.11: Iraq Tone

Q3	frequency	Percent	Frequency * data value
0	25	19.2%	25
1	35	26.9%	70
2	18	13.8%	54
3	8	6.2%	32
4	44	33.8%	220
Total	130	100.0%	401

Table 6.12: Iraq Means

	Mean
Attribution of Responsibility (All)	4.53
Attribution of Responsibility (No Duplicates)	4.20
Tone	3.08

Analysis

Unpaired T-Test Results (See Appendix A.4)

Table 6.13: P-Values of T-Test Results

Themes	P-Value
<i>Attribution of Responsibility (all values counted)</i>	0.6774; not statistically significant
<i>Attribution of Responsibility (only the first group is used)</i>	0.8375; not statistically significant
<i>Tone Towards the Military</i>	0.7447; not statistically significant

Chi-Squared Test Results (See Appendix A.5)

Table 6.14: P-Values of Chi-Squared Results

Vietnam v. Iraq	Chi-squared value	Two-Tailed P-value
<i>Actors (military v. non-military)</i>	0.251	0.6164; not statistically significant
<i>Actors (government v. non-government)</i>	3.697	0.0545; not quite statistically significant
<i>Actors (Vietnamese/Iraqi v. non-Vietnamese/Iraqi)</i>	3.458	0.0629; not quite statistically significant
<i>Tone (positive v. non-positive)</i>	3.261	0.0710; not quite statistically significant
<i>Tone (negative v. non-negative)</i>	0.573	0.4490; not statistically significant
<i>Tone (negative + mixed v. non-negative or mixed)</i>	2.193	0.1386; not statistically significant

Discussion

The null hypothesis states that there is no relationship between the variables. In order to test the null hypothesis, a 95 percent confidence interval was constructed. It determines if the null hypothesis for a relationship is true or false. If the p-value is less than .05, then the null hypothesis is rejected. T-tests tests the null hypothesis for two sample means and chi-square tests the null hypothesis involving nominal variables. I conducted three t-tests: attribution of responsibility (all values), attribution of responsibility (excluding duplicates), and tone. This looked at the entire data set, and for the three tests, the results came out to be statistically insignificant. Then, I focused on specific actors and tones using chi-square analysis with Yate's correction. I conducted three tests for attribution of responsibility: military versus non-military, government versus non-government, and Vietnamese/Iraqi versus non-Vietnamese/Iraqi. The military test results came out be not statistically

significant, whereas the government and Vietnamese/Iraqi test results were not quite statistically significant. For tone, I conducted three tests: positive versus non-positive, negative versus non-negative, and negative + mixed versus non-negative or mixed. The positive tests results was not quite statistically significant, whereas the negative and negative + mixed results were not statistically significant.

Thus, the results of the media content analysis suggests that front-page newspaper articles did not have an overt bias in attributing responsibility for the failure of the war to the actions of the military. It also suggests that the front page newspaper articles did not have an overt negative or positive tone towards the military. In fact, the newspaper articles mainly discussed the pros and cons of war policy for both the Vietnam and Iraq Wars, demonstrating a neutral media. However, the neutrality of the media does not necessarily negate this hypothesis. Compared to unilaterals, journalists not embedded in the military, embeds appear to focus more on the battle and coalition. While their tone may not have affected views of the military, the subject of the articles were the agents of war, that is, soldiers. Therefore, while the tone and attribution of responsibility may have been neutral, the subjects were not and that could have affected views of the military because of the innate power of human-interest frames in generating empathy through the subjects.

Nevertheless, is clear that front-page newspaper articles are among the highly read sections of a newspaper, by virtue of being at the front of the newspaper. However, editorial and opinion sections are also among the most frequently read sections of newspapers and magazines. I therefore conducted a content analysis on opinion-editorial articles to discover any bias in the media in regards to the military. The methodology and results are in the following section.

Media Content Analysis of Opinion-Editorials

Method and Coding Procedure

The initial media content analysis looked at the *New York Times* and the *LIFE* Magazine for the Vietnam War and the *New York Times* as well as the *TIME* Magazine for the Iraq War. The unit of analysis and coding unit was the distinct opinion-editorial, and coding was conducted electronically on an Excel spreadsheet.

In retrieving op-eds concerning each war, I accessed the newspapers' archives and inputted the dates of each of the respective sampling frame. For the Vietnam War the dates of interest were 20 February 1968 to 24 April 1968, and for the Iraq War the dates of interest were 7 November 2006 to 11 January 2007. For each day within the date range, I selected one op-ed from each of the two sources to code. Thus, for each sampling frame, a maximum of 130 op-eds were selected (65 op-eds from each source). Because some op-eds were not retrievable or there was no relevant op-ed published on a date, I ended up collecting 80 op-eds for each. An op-ed is a written prose piece that expresses the opinion of a named author. There is no minimum length for the item to be considered an op-ed. If the article explicitly notes that this same article will be continued on another page, its continuation must be coded as well as one story. Short responses to previous op-eds featured in the newspaper, often termed as letters to the editor, will be considered.

Selection Criteria

For the Vietnam War, the selection of the *New York Times* was explained in the media content analysis methodology. However, in addition to *New York Times* I will also code editorials from *LIFE* Magazine. *LIFE* presented a unique coverage of the war in Vietnam because of the scope of quality of its photojournalism and its transformation of attitude of the war from tentative, early supportive to tough-minded skepticism. In April 1965, it published 'One Ride with Yankee Papa 13', a famous photo story by Larry Burrows of one day in the life of a young helicopter gunner. Thus, *LIFE*

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Magazine is evidentially a suitable magazine to code from. When coding the *New York Times*, I utilized the Times Machine in the specified data range. The op-ed was chosen by its prominence and reference to the war, which was assumed to how close to front page the article was. For example, an article featured on page 15 would be chosen over that of one that was featured on page 17. If there is more than one op-ed on a page, the article that is the most upper left will be selected. When searching Life Magazine, I utilized the online archives provided by Google Books. Since only 9 magazines were printed during the sampling frame, I utilized all the articles from each magazine that referred to the war in any capacity.

For the Iraq War, the rationale for choosing *The New York Times* was described in the media content analysis selection. However, in this opinion-editorial analysis, I also considered *TIME* Magazine. An elite newsmagazine with the world's largest circulation for a weekly magazine and a readership of 20 million Americans, *TIME* arguably summarizes the dominant news and editorial emphases of the national media in the United States. On April 21, 2003 it released its second red X issue with a red X over Saddam Hussein's face. Thus, *TIME* Magazine is a suitable source to code from. When coding the *New York Times*, I went on the Op-Ed section of their website, and searched the archives, picking the first relevant op-ed. For the *TIME* Magazine coding, I utilized the ProQuest archives. Since only 7 magazines were printed during the sampling frame, I utilized all the articles from each magazine that referred to the war in any capacity.

Creating and Using the Codebook

This study utilized a theory-driven code, which involved first generating the code, reviewing and revising the code in the context of the data, and then determining the reliability of the code. The Coder_ID identifies who has coded each case, which is simply the initials of the coder's name (ex. MC). The op-ed identity code assigned to each article that constructs the database follows the following format: year/month/day.newspaper abbreviation.page number of op-ed (ex.

1968/02/11.NY.12). The abbreviation for the *New York Times* is NY, for the *Life Magazine* it is LM and the *TIME Magazine* is TM. The codebook first contains a breakdown of each of the pieces of data gathered during the coding process. Following that table, there are table appendixes which further elucidate the codes that are used in response to the questions asked. For each question there is a table that clarifies the possible codes and their descriptions.

Explanation of Coding Procedure

After choosing the article, the Coder ID, Op-Ed Identity Code, News Outlet, and Title of the Op-Ed was assigned. Then, in answering Question 1, the coder determined the existence of an actor who is responsible for the issue detailed in the op-ed, per Semetko and Valkenburg's determination in their content analysis of European politics. If there is an actor responsible, the coder answered Question 1 with "Y" (Semetko and Valkenburg 2000). If the coder did not determine any explicit actor, they assigned Question 1's box with "N" and move onto Question 3. If there is an actor responsible, the coder used the choices provided in Appendix A and fill Question 2 accordingly. If there are multiple actors to whom responsibility is attributed, regardless of degree, all actors were included in the answer for Question 2. For Question 3, for the op-ed to be considered positive, neutral, or negative it must retain that tone throughout the op-ed but the degree does not matter. For example, an op-ed will be coded as positive if it is anywhere from mildly to extremely positive. However, if there is any indication that the op-ed may contain both positive and negative tones, the op-ed will be coded as mixed, regardless of if the op-ed is mostly negative or mostly positive. This is in hopes to offset any potential bias from the coder. Once the coder is finished coding the op-ed, they reread the op-ed and confirmed their choices once more before moving onto the next one. The codebook used to conduct this analysis is below.

Table 6.15: Codebook for Op-Ed Content Analysis

Column	Profile	Description
C1	Coder ID	MC, AK
C2	Op-Ed Identity Code	year/month/day.newspaper abbreviation.page number of article
C3	News Outlet	NY, LA, WP
C4	Title of the Op-Ed	Full title written to be case sensitive
C5	Q1: Does the story suggest that an actor is responsible for an issue/problem?	Answer is Y or N. Actor is the common term for people present in the news.
C6	Q2: If yes, to whom is responsibility attributed?	See Appendix A for list of possible actors; leave blank if answer to Q1 was N. If there are two or more actors who are depicted as equally responsible, code for both.
C7	Q3: What is the tone adopted towards the military?	See Appendix B for a list of possible tones. When coding tone, the article must either be entirely positive or entirely negative for it to be coded as such. If there is a mixture in a degree of positive and negative sentiments, then the article must be coded as mixed.

To illustrate the result of the coding, I have included a sample of the data. As mentioned before, the meaning associated with the numbers are described in the Appendix.

Table 6.16: Sample of Coding for the Op-Ed Content Analysis

Vietnam War Op-Ed Analysis

Coder ID	Op-Ed Identity Code	News Outlet	Title of the Op-Ed	Q1: Does the story suggest that an actor is responsible for an issue/problem?	Q2: If yes, to whom is responsibility attributed?	Q3: What is the tone adopted towards the military?
MC	1968/02/20.NY.46	NY	In the Nation: Firepower vs. South Vietnam	Y	2 & 0	2
MC	1968/02/21.NY.46	NY	Foreign Affairs: Delayed Action	Y	6	0
MC	1968/02/22.NY.46	NY	In the Nation: Rocky, the Strike and the War	Y	2	0
MC	1968/02/24.NY.46	NY	Half-Truths about Tonkin	Y	1	3

Analysis

In the following sections, I provide an analysis of these codes. My primary interest is testing the hypothesis stated at the outset of this chapter. It is to supplement the results of the news reports. Oftentimes, opinion-editorials better reflect the sentiments that may be subconsciously portrayed in

the news reports. Specifically, I examined the frequency of the specific codes to look for trends in attribution of responsibility and tonal shifts towards the military between the two wars. Through the results, I draw conclusions about a bias in the news reports in favor or against the military and if that bias was significant enough to affect public opinion towards the military. I compared these results to what I discovered in the media content analysis of front-page newspaper articles.

Results and Analysis

Method

Since the data was collected on Excel, all the calculations occurred in Excel to find the frequencies (countif formula), percentages (frequency/total), and frequency*data value, which was used to calculate the mean later on. The row highlighted green is the largest percent, and the row highlighted red is the smallest percent. The second most popular category is highlighted yellow. If there are multiple categories that have the same percent frequency and are either the largest or smallest percent, then all of the pertaining rows are highlighted. For each war, some op-eds blamed multiple sources for the issue/problem. Therefore, I created Table 2 and Table 3 to represent different calculations. In the first calculation, each attribution was counted separately and equally, and some op-ed attributed responsibility up to three groups. Therefore the totals were higher than the number of op-ed evaluated, which increases the importance of looking at the percent rather than simply the frequency. It also meant that the totals between the Vietnam War analysis and the Iraq War analysis were different. Thus, for the second calculation, I only counted the first group referenced so that each article corresponded with only 1 group. The null hypothesis is that there is no difference in the attribution of responsibility between the wars and no difference in the tone demonstrated towards the military either.

Vietnam War

Table 6.16: Vietnam Existence of Responsibility (Op-Ed)

Q1	frequency	Percent
N	7	8.8%
Y	73	91.3%

Table 6.17: Vietnam Attribution of Responsibility (All Values Counted) (Op-Ed)

Q2	frequency	Percent	Frequency * data value
None	8	8.2%	8
0	3	3.1%	6
1	19	19.6%	57
2	36	37.1%	144
3	3	3.1%	15
4	22	22.7%	132
5	2	2.1%	14
6	4	4.1%	32
Total	97	100.0%	408

Table 6.18: Vietnam Attribution of Responsibility (Duplicates Excluded) (Op-Ed)

Q2	frequency	Percent	Frequency * data value
None	8	10.0%	8
0	2	2.5%	4
1	17	21.3%	51
2	32	40.0%	128
3	1	1.3%	5
4	15	18.8%	90
5	2	2.5%	14
6	3	3.8%	24
Total	80	100.0%	324

Table 6.19: Vietnam Tone (Op-Ed)

Q3	frequency	Percent	Frequency * data value
0	37	46.3%	37
1	8	10.0%	16
2	12	15.0%	36
3	10	12.5%	40
4	13	16.3%	65
Total	80	100.0%	194

Table 6.20: Vietnam Means (Op-Ed)

	Mean
Attribution of Responsibility (All)	4.21
Attribution of Responsibility (No Duplicates)	4.05
Tone	2.43

Iraq War

Table 6.22: Iraq Existence of Responsibility (Op-Ed)

Q1	Frequency	percent
N	3	3.8%
Y	77	96.3%

Table 6.23: Iraq Attribution of Responsibility (All Values Counted) (Op-Ed)

Q2	frequency	Percent	Frequency * data value
None	3	3.1%	3
0	2	2.1%	4
1	5	5.2%	15
2	56	57.7%	224
3	1	1.0%	5
4	22	22.7%	132
5	3	3.1%	21
6	5	5.2%	40
Total	97	100.0%	444

Table 6.24: Iraq Attribution of Responsibility (Duplicates Excluded) (Op-Ed)

Q2	frequency	Percent	Frequency * data value
None	3	4.1%	3
0	2	2.7%	4
1	11	13.8%	33
2	48	64.9%	192
3	1	1.4%	5
4	10	13.5%	60
5	2	2.7%	14
6	3	4.1%	24
Total	80	100.0%	335

Table 6.25: Iraq Tone (Op-Ed)

Q3	frequency	Percent	Frequency * data value
0	29	36.3%	29
1	23	28.8%	46
2	13	16.3%	39
3	0	0.0%	0
4	15	18.8%	75
Total	80	100.0%	189

Table 6.26: Iraq Means (Op-Ed)

	Mean
Attribution of Responsibility (All)	4.58
Attribution of Responsibility (No Duplicates)	4.19
Tone	2.36

Analysis

Unpaired T-Test Results (See Appendix B.3)

Table 6.27: P-Values of T-Test Results (Op-Ed)

Themes	P-Value
<i>Attribution of Responsibility (all values counted)</i>	1.0000; not statistically significant
<i>Attribution of Responsibility (only the first group is used)</i>	1.0000; not statistically significant
<i>Tone Towards the Military</i>	1.0000; not statistically significant

Chi-Squared Test Results (See Appendix B.4)

Table 6.28: P-Values of Chi-Squared Results (Op-Ed)

Vietnam v. Iraq	Chi-squared value	Two-Tailed P-value
<i>Actors (military v. non-military)</i>	8.036	0.0046; very statistically significant
<i>Actors (government v. non-government)</i>	7.463	0.0063; very statistically significant
<i>Actors (Vietnamese/Iraqi v. non-Vietnamese/Iraqi)</i>	0.000	1.0000; not statistically significant
<i>Tone (positive v. non-positive)</i>	7.842	0.0051; very statistically significant
<i>Tone (negative v. non-negative)</i>	8.640	0.0033; very statistically significant
<i>Tone (negative + mixed v. non-negative or mixed)</i>	2.341	0.1260; not statistically significant

Discussion

The null hypothesis states that there is no relationship between the variables. In order to test the null hypothesis, a 95 percent confidence interval was constructed. It determines if the null hypothesis for a relationship is true or false. If the p-value is less than .05, then the null hypothesis is rejected. T-tests tests the null hypothesis for two sample means and chi-square tests the null hypothesis involving nominal variables. I conducted three t-tests: attribution of responsibility (all values), attribution of responsibility (excluding duplicates), and tone. This looked at the entire data set, and for the three tests, the results came out to be statistically insignificant. Then, I focused on specific actors and tones using chi-square analysis with Yate's correction. I conducted three tests for attribution of responsibility. When comparing the attribution of responsibility of the military versus non-military categories between Vietnam and Iraq war op-eds, the results were very statistically significant. This means that the op-eds in Iraq attributed responsibility more to the military than non-military entities. The same significance was present when comparing government versus non-government. However,

when considering the attribution of Vietnamese/Iraqi versus non-Vietnamese/Iraqi, the results were statistically insignificant. This means that both Vietnam and Iraq war op-eds did not differ considerably in how much attribution of responsibility they allocated for the indigenous forces and persons in the invaded territories. What these taken together is that in op-eds, the military and government were attributed the most considerable amount of responsibility. However, it is not obviously clear what sort of responsibility these two institutions were, respectively, attributed.

To understand the type of responsibility directed at the military, I conducted three tests that looked at what tone the military was referred to in the op-eds. When comparing positive versus non-positive and negative versus non-negative, the test results came out to be very statistically significant. However, when considering negative + mixed versus non-negative or mixed, the results were not statistically significant. While most of the opinion-editorials during the Vietnam War and Iraq eras did not specifically mention the military in a way that their opinion of the troops could accurately be assessed, there was a clear difference between the editorials when the military was referenced. During the Vietnam, most editorials were neutral in their tone towards the military or mildly positive. During the Iraq War, most of the editorials were extremely positive in their depiction of the troops or presented a skeptical view of the war that produced mixed tones towards the troops. This dichotomy of positive sentiments from Iraq War editorials and neutral sentiments in Vietnam War editorials echoes the findings of the thematic content analysis. By not demonstrating an overtly positive tone towards the troops, Vietnam War editorials may have allowed a vacuum in which the public could conflate the war's progress with their opinions of the troops, thus having their opinion of them rise and fall in tandem. However, by demonstrating a positive tone specifically towards the troops, when applicable, Iraq War editorials furthered the political rhetoric that the military and the war must be evaluated separately, and the former – more often than not – positively.

Conclusion

To summarize, there was a bias in the opinion-editorial articles in assigning responsibility to the military and the government, individually. Furthermore, in opinion-editorial articles, Vietnam War opinion-editorial articles were more likely to have a negative view of the military whereas Iraq War opinion-editorial articles were more likely to have a positive tone towards the military. This means that there was somewhat of an explicit bias in the media studied that surfaced in the opinion-editorial section towards the military. In the case of Vietnam and Iraq media coverage, the absence of positive rhetoric around the troops allowed public confidence in the military to be connected to their confidence in the war, with the consequences well known. In this way, the silence in the media about the military itself and its service members spoke volumes to the public in facilitating the ease in which troops were condemned alongside the progress of the war. During the Iraq War, opinion-editorials tended to present a more favorable view of the military or at least actively separated the military from the trajectory of the war. This could be due to the military-media relationship that evolved to include embedding and more active interactions than during in Vietnam War, where the relationship was highly strained. To understand exactly why the media appeared to hold a more positive view of the military, in the following chapter I move examination of the embedding process through personal interviews that I conducted of military professionals and news correspondents.

Chapter Seven: Illuminating the Black Box

“If everybody is thinking alike, then somebody isn’t thinking” – George S. Patton

Overview of the Chapter

The goal of this chapter is to address the “black box” of this thesis: what goes on between the media portrayals and public opinion, specifically in regards to the relationship between the media and the military. The chapter reports conversations that I conducted or found with military professionals and military correspondents during the Iraq Era to flesh out this potential gap in the data from the content analyses. The interviews are not an independent test, but rather a supplement. I chose to use both quantitative and qualitative methods for attempting to substantiate Explanation Three in order to present a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the media-military relationship and its effect on public confidence in the military. The quantitative data of the content-analysis that I collected allowed me to provide a basis of determining the basic structure of my argument. The interview responses were used to first confirm the analysis of the content analysis by providing qualitative support. In the case that they did not, I would decide the relevancy of the discrepancy and then attempt to reform my understanding to explain it. The objective of this qualitative analysis, therefore, is to assess the effects of embedding on public confidence in the military through interviews with news correspondents who covered the Iraq War and military officials who were stationed in Iraq.

From these interviews and testimonies, I discuss the military objectives, purported success, and issues with the embedding program. I compare and contrast the experiences of embeds versus unilateral reporters as well. Moving forward, I consider the effect the embedding program had on the military and the media-military relationship during Vietnam, between Vietnam and Iraq, and then finally during Iraq. In the end, I conclude that the embedding program allowed the military to create support for the military but that the media was driven by collective guilt to report favorably on the military. This solidifies my argument that the media-military relationship, and its evolution, did allow

the military to be first separated in evaluation from the progress of the war and that historical, policy, and media legacies have created a basis in which the public is predisposed to view the military positively.

Methodology

The data was collected using informal, conversational interviews primarily to elucidate on the experiences of embedded journalists and military personnel who encountered them. I recruited participants mainly through connections by the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and worked from there to expand the interviewing potential.

This research was exempted from review from Tufts' Institutional Review Board. The recruitment process consists of making initial contact with the interviewee by email where I sent them a brief message (Appendix C.1) that summarizes why I am reaching out to them and the purpose of the interview. If they accepted, I scheduled a time to either call them or meet them in person. Upon that meeting, I obtained consent for the interview (Appendix C.2) and upon receiving consent, I initiated the interview. The interview itself was guided by the following questions:

1. In your own words, what is embedding?
2. What do you believe the military objectives of embedding were?
3. Why do you think that the military instituted the policy of embedding?
4. Was embedding in the Iraq War successful based on the objectives/rationale you mentioned before? Why or why not?
5. What do you think of embedding? Please state any procedural or any normative concerns.
6. Did embedding affect views of the military? In a positive, neutral, or negative way? How so?
7. Did the results of reports from embedded journalists give way to positive views of the military on the most part as opposed to reports that written via other means?
8. Does embedding increase positive views by the American public of the military?
9. How would you describe the relationship between the military and the media in Vietnam?
10. How would you describe the relationship between the military and the media since Vietnam?
11. How would you describe the relationship between the military and the media during Iraq?
12. Is there anything on the media-military relationship that you would like to say but was not asked?

During the interview, I asked follow-up questions to the interviewee depending on their responses and to encourage a more “conversational” interview, but ultimately I was guided by the questions listed here. The scope of this interview is to gain insight on the media-military relationship, the embedding policy and its effects, as well as the influence the media has on the public’s perception of the military. For the three military officials, besides Col. Harthorn and Lt.Col Mead, I acquired their written testimonies and essays from a collection of articles titled *Perspectives on Embedded Media*, published by the U.S. Army War College.

Qualitative Interviews with Military Professionals and Correspondents

These interviews are a qualitative supplement to the media content analysis on newspaper articles and opinion-editorials. The objective of these interviews is to flesh out in more detail the conclusions that I garnered from the quantitative research. There is not much dispute over the definition of embedding. To put it short, Thom Shanker of the *New York Times*, defined it as “where a representative of the media is allowed to embed [with the military]: live with, travel with, unit activities, everything except in engaging in combat.” Commander Jose Rodriguez, Naval Reserves, wrote that the program was developed in October 2002 by Victoria Clarke, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs at the time, and her Deputy Secretary, Bryan Whitman, a former Army officer. The embedding program originally assigned more than six hundred reporters to units. While the war coverage was also covered by unilaterals, the military discouraged their presence by the battlefield for safety concerns.

Military Objectives

Among the journalists interviewed, the consensus around the military objectives of embedding were to inform the American people, have control over the “war story” as opposed to the U.S.’ adversaries, and to rectify media outrage at censorship. Thom Shanker argued that the manifest objective was to inform the American people about military operations. Furthermore, he argued that the military believed that the “story of what is carried out would be better conveyed by an independent

source – the media – and understood and trusted as such.” In this way, embedding was instituted in order to counter the lies and counter the propaganda of adversaries. John Donovan of ABC News added that embedding was partially instituted as a response to media ire. The media had a negative experience in the Gulf War and conflicts prior due to censorship practices that the military had imposed. This generated a substantial amount of negative press about the military’s practices, and that was an image the military wanted to counter in Iraq. That was the first level. Donovan, however, argues that there were two more latent objectives:

If it could encourage cooperation, it would benefit from including reporters as parts, as being attached to their units. The military began to come around a strategy of "let’s bring them inside," that they could become a part of us, we would give them ground rules and they could live with us. We don't have anything to be ashamed of, we have lots to be proud of, so rather than putting up a veil of secrecy around everything we do, let's show them what we do. Maybe on the third level, they were thinking that would win over a lot of reporters and lead to more positive coverage.

Patrick Tyler of the *New York Times*, sums up the military objective for embedding as about having control. The grand strategy of war has always been over how war is perceived, making the media critical to the success of war. Having access to the commanders and access to the line officers was important from the media standpoint. Above all, the reporters unanimously agreed that the competing objectives of control and access are what have made the media-military relationship so contentious.

Among the military personnel interviewed, the objectives of the military in instituting the embedding policy were primarily about presenting the media with the military perspective and controlling the war story. Lt. Col Nathan Mead declared that embedding was more about the military helping the media understand what was going on so that their conclusions would be informed. Lt. Col. Mead clarifies: “it was to help them understand the level of information we actually have in an airplane about a situation that is occurring on the ground and how we try to support the forces that were there.” Col. Brian Harthorn adds on the element of fulfilling a demand from the media to be

able to report what was going on with the conflict, by providing access while simultaneously ensuring the security of the reporters and the operation.

A deeper question which arose was why the military instituted the policy of embedding. In other words, why was embedding the mechanism to achieve those objectives? William Branigin responded that it was a fundamental need to counter propaganda from the enemy forces. The military believed that an independent press would be a better “counterweight to the baloney that was going to be coming from Baghdad,” than the military’s own briefings alone. Additionally, the military wanted reporters present for the families back home who wanted to know what was going on. In his experience, he “people all over the country reading stuff that I wrote because they had a relative in the unit or division I was covering and they just wanted to know what was happening with that unit.” The policy of embedding, nevertheless, was fundamentally a trade-off. Thom Shanker argues that, in having an ability to counter the lies and propaganda of the adversaries, “the risk that the military accepted was that media embeds would tell when missions went well and they would also tell when missions went badly.” But to the military, having independent observers well were worth that risk.

In Col. Harthorn’s perspective, embedding met the “demand of reporting, but at the same time, there was a larger operational, strategic level objective: there is a benefit to reporting or telling your story.” The adversary is always going to share their story, regardless of the U.S. military’s choice. As a result, embedding was to ensure that the correct story is being told as soon as humanly possible. The message, Commander Rodriguez argues, that the military wanted to get was simple: “a smaller, swifter, highly technical, fighting force engaged in liberating a people from the hands of a brutal and desperate dictator.”

The Success of Embedding

Resoundingly from both the journalists and military personnel concluded embedding in the Iraq War was successful based on the afore-described objectives. However, Donovan takes it a step forward: “if the military's objective was to generate more positive reporting than they had since WWII, the embedding program worked fantastically well.” The embedding experience during the Iraq War exceeded expectations on both sides. The military appreciated the press more and the press itself was able to understand military culture better, according to William Branigin of *The Washington Post*. Col. Harthorn builds upon the success of the objectives, stating that the US public and international community was furthermore able to receive a message of “young coalition soldiers and marines working extremely hard to accomplish strategic level objective. They saw the challenges, struggles, and hard it can be to be in war. At the same time, it was pretty inspirational to see what these kids can do on the battlefield.” Although there was controversy and obstacles throughout the program, the news organization were able to get real-time reports and reasonable freedom in collecting information to create those reports. The military was able to counter inaccurate reporting of the war “by either the Iraqi Ministry of Information or news outlets with an anti-war or anti-coalition agenda” (Commander Rodriguez). For those reasons, each side was able to successfully achieve their aims.

The Issues with Embedding

After setting the theory and policy influences of embedding in the interviews, I discussed specific concerns they had with the program. Unlike the Gulf War, there were limited attempts at censorship for most of the reporters. Branigin recounts that in his own case and observed cases, the military never attempted to censor him. Yet, that may have been because he was embedded at the lowest level possible, never meeting anyone above the rank of Colonel. The exceptions were when “reporters were embedded at a really high-level, with generals, given access to classified briefings, and they agreed in return for that level of access to submit their reports for censorship.” During his time as the *New York Times* Bureau Chief in Kuwait, Patrick Tyler elucidates that there were instances where

some of his reporters were effectively unable to report because their commanders had admonished that everything about the unit's movements was classified and not to be made public.

While there may have not been explicit censorship from the military's side, there may have been subconscious censorship from the end of the reporters. Donovan argues that a bond between the reporters and the units they were with developed as a result of spending days to weeks together in a hostile environment. With the surroundings defined by war, the reporters were heavily reliant on the troops for security, food, and communication. From this, a psychological dynamic developed in which a reporter wanted the "guys who they are with to survive. And if you want them to survive, you want them to win the battle which means the other side gets killed." Under these circumstances, Donovan believes that reporters were generally inclined to report very positive reports about their units. The exceptions were gross, criminal acts. However, until Abu Ghraib, the military acted very professionally especially in front of reporters. Therefore, Donovan confidently asserts that "it's absolutely true that the Pentagon's decision to bring reporters on board, unit by unit – a literally embedded, that is 'in bed'" had a very positive spin on the coverage.

Of the reporters I interviewed, Donovan was the only one who never embedded in Iraq. Instead, Donovan was a unilateral and was able to report on the Iraq War outside of the embedded program. He argued that the viewpoint of any one embedded reporter was incredibly narrow: "sliver of light that they were able to look upon was so small that they couldn't even know whether there were troops were gathered over the next hill." Although no single unit can declare victory, Donovan argues that was the sense that was coming back from the Middle East.

The other reporters were not so quick to declare that the social effects on reporters through embedding affected their coverage. Shanker admits that it is almost inevitable for reporters to develop a relationship with the people that they are writing about. However, as part of their occupation, it was important for reporters to maintain a professional distance so that the stories that they wrote were all

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true to the standards of their profession and news organizations. Therefore, “just as military personnel remain highly professional in their relations with the media, the reporters never or shouldn’t drop their professional standards either.” Shanker argues that is exactly what happened in Iraq: the stories that came out of embeds described when the mission went well but also “when the military screwed up with an embed.” Simply put, that kind of bias was seen in the stories less often than one might have been concerned about in his view. Tyler agrees with Shanker, in that the competitive of the news industry was that you had news journalists who were extremely hungry to perceive and experience the intensity and crucial important moments of the only war they would probably cover in their lifetimes. The likelihood of some Lt. Colonel along the way was going to convince them to spin something in the military’s way and because it was in his interest was not very high.

Michael Fumento formerly of the *Washington Times* brings a unique perspective, as he was a veteran photojournalist. During his four embeds in Iraq and Afghanistan, he felt himself to be more of an “action-embed” than a “civilian-embed,” in that everyone in his unit knew he was prior service and treated him as such. Yet, his experience was unique as most of the journalists embedded were neither veterans or even had covered wars before.

Lt. Col. Nathan Mead shared the same opinion about the professionalism distinction as expressed by Shanker and Tyler. He felt that overall, journalists are going to be committed to being professionals, and they are going to put their interpersonal relationships aside when it comes time to write the article. Col. Brian Harthorn also highlighted different concerns when it came to embedding, besides the social effects on the reporters. With embedding comes some friction in terms of what a unit can handle. There may be times where a unit can be overwhelmed with more journalists and reporters than they can handle in a certain point of time. So, Col. Harthorn argues:

Embedding [was essentially] an additional burden placed on a tactical unit staff to manage the throughput of journalists. If we are going to put it in economic terms, in demand and supply, here demands exceeds the supply -- the demand of the media to get to the tactical unit was

larger than the tactical unit's ability to handle it at times. They can't handle it simultaneously all of those reporters who wanted first-person, battlefront coverage. Furthermore, embedded reporters stayed with units at varying lengths. Some of them stayed with the unit for a couple weeks. In Col Harthorn's experience, the longest duration was a couple weeks. Even so, at the tactical level, a journalist embedded with a rifle platoon, even if they are only there for four to five days, those reporters were with that group of soldiers, 24/7. Because of this prolonged and intense interaction, reporters could not but help to form some bonds or relationships, and these bonds, Col. Harthorn said, were almost always for the positive.

Did this affect how the reporters reported? In Lt. Col. Michael Oehl's experience, the media covering his battalion were given "seamless access to the command's Marines as well as the story of combat as it unfolded, with little influence from the commander." Commanders allowed reporters to report whatever they desired with the caveat that they did not compromise operational security and it remained accurate. He supplements this claim with an anecdote. In his experience, there was one particularly disturbing story that reporters sought to publish about the deaths of some Iraqi civilians, including small children. Lt. Col. Oehl recounts that he was asked to look at the article prior to its release as a professional courtesy. If given the choice, no Marine would have wanted to see the story published: "The Marines were not proud of what happened that evening, but it was what it was. It was the ugly side of war, and the reporters reported it." Here the apparent absence of strict censorship on the military's part is shown as well as a consequence of the risk they took in advancing the embedding program. Lt. Col. Oehl had five embedded reporters and he argued that all of them showed a genuine willingness to cover combat and because of "dangers associated with combat, they developed a close relationship with the Marines with whom they moved." Traumatic experiences bond individuals together emotionally, but he never observed his reporters restrain themselves on reporting, regardless of the nature of the subject.

Embeds versus Unilaterals

Returning to a question alluded to before is the difference between embeds and unilaterals and the manifestation of any differences in their respective reporting. In his career, Branigin has been both an embedded and a unilateral reporter. However, in a war like Iraq, he argued that one could not expect a unilateral reporter to get access to US troops. It was extremely dangerous to be one because a reporter could easily get caught in the crossfire, troops would not know if the reporter was a suicide bomber, or the Iraqis could attack reporters. However, there was merit to being a unilateral, in that they were able to come in behind the embedded units and interview Iraqis about what had happened. Donovan, being a unilateral in the Iraq War, echoes this claim.

It was difficult to be a unilateral for the reasons described by Branigin, but also, in Donovan's eyes, because the military did not want unilaterals there. Donovan had to sneak across the border, through a hole in the border fence and found it difficult to navigate the territory because unilaterals lacked the safe havens that embeds naturally had every night. While the safety rationale was taken, Donovan argues that the military did not want unilaterals there because they would lose control of the story. Unlike the stories coming from embeds of Americans being welcomed into Iraq, Donovan encountered explicit hostility from the Iraqis. However, he found it difficult to get these reports on the air because "because I was outnumbered by embeds and they really didn't believe me. They didn't think I was lying, but they thought what I was seeing was some inconsequential, minor aberration." Although Donovan was seeing a thin slice of what was going on in southern Iraq, he had the freedom to move around and thus effectively saw a lot of thin slices that he could put together.

The Pentagon's goal was to create a positive narrative in bringing in a number of inexperienced reporters under their control, having them bond with the soldiers, and seeing only a very small slice of the front of the war. The military's position on the embedded versus unilateral reporter situation is somewhat obvious. If journalists were allowed to rove, even just between units, Commander

Rodriguez argues that it “may erode the basis for an improved relationship between the media and military troops”, that is, trust. Only through spending time with a single unit were reporters able to develop a trusting relationship with the troops, making it more palatable for U.S. commanders to share information with them. To Donovan, this emblemized how the embedding program worked for the Pentagon. They controlled the gaze of the reporters, obscuring the more damaging scenes of Iraq from the reporters.

It is not to say that networks did not actively combat this narrative-building. Many large news networks, like *the Washington Post* and *New York Times*, had both embedded and unilateral reporters: reporters embedded at different levels and reporters on the ground in Baghdad. Combining these things provided for pretty decent coverage, Branigin states, but the extent to which this was effectively done is questionable in Donovan’s point of view.

Embedding’s Effect on Views of the Military

When asked if embedding affected the views of the military, Shanker reiterated that the embedding process was a very useful two-way street. Many military personnel, from privates up to generals, who had not spent time with reporters did were now enabled by embedding to do so. It was a very intense time, so the reporters attained a knowledge of and a comfort level with reporters that they did not have before. When Shanker first entered the news business in the 70s, “the draft was still in place and newsrooms were full of people who had served in the military because they had to. When Nixon ended conscription, suddenly newsrooms were no longer full of military veterans.” So, the embed process let hundreds of thousands of reporters who would never spend time with the military to do exactly that and gain a lot of knowledge of its functionality. Whether it is positive or negative was based on the experience, but Shanker argued that there is no denying that “when reporters know more about the military and the military knows more about the press that’s a good thing.” Donovan has a more strict opinion about embedding positively affecting views of the military for the most part.

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He believes that embedding positively portrayed the military and without a doubt, these positive reports trickled down to the American public in creating positive views of the military.

Col. Brian Harthorn had a slightly more nuanced answer than Shanker or Donovan. In 2003, when the US first went into Iraq, the reporters wanted to get to as close to the front as possible. With the initial entry into Iraq, much of the reporting and messaging was positive. However the next deployment of Col. Harthorn was in 2007-2008 and by that point the positive messaging tapered off. There were fewer embedded reporters at that point. While he did not conclude exactly whether embedding affected the views of the military, there is a correlative property to the inference that positive reporting tapered off alongside decreased numbers of embeds.

When discussing military scandals, which inevitably will be perceived as a stain on the prestige of the military, Donovan believed that many that occurred in Iraq were viewed as one-off instances, cases of a few bad apples rather than indicative of the military as a whole. This mirrored the findings presented in Chapter Four. Furthermore, by the time Abu Ghraib came out, the American public had pretty much stopped paying attention to the war in Iraq, so a continuing positive narrative promulgated by the press everyday most likely did not have much to do at that point with the continuing favorable impression of the military. By that point, “I think that the pendulum had swung and, with inertia, it was hoisted over to positive views of the military and stayed [that way].” It became a given that every Christmas local TV news stations would do stories on the families back home and the soldiers abroad. While there were stories at this time reflecting the negative consequences of the invasion and occupation, there were also stories about soldiers coming home with bad military treatment, stories earlier on about not having good equipment, brain injury stories, and stories about families undergoing a lot of stress. It was certainly not as though as everything was positive, but “what was different was that everything was rooted around the honor and respect and the actual men in

combat which had not happened in Vietnam.” It had become an unquestioned positive that they were good people sacrificing enormously for their country and that shouldn’t be questioned.

Lt. Col Michael Oehl argues that with the media coverage, for the Pentagon leadership, became a “damned if you do, damned if you don’t” scenario. After being criticized by the media for not providing enough access to combat, the military now finds itself as the subject of criticism for allowing a level of access that is ‘too close.’” Embedding is viewed by some as skewing the objective of journalists. Even so, he believes that embedding and embedding-like programs should continue to be facilitated because it combats the distrust inherent in the media-military relationship, partly due to the vast cultural differences between the two entities.

The Media-Military Relationship

In generally describing the relationship between the military and the media, the overall conclusion is that it has improved to become a good one since Vietnam. Despite once reporting negatively on the unit he was with, Branigin still finds himself being invited to his unit’s reunions. Of the Highway incident, Branigin said the following:

Usually when I am interviewed about embedding, scholars have come at it with the premise that embedders feel beholden. And by virtue of embedded reporters being in the unit, [it] colors their reporting in a way that otherwise wouldn’t happen. And a lot of times when that story has been made, this story [I wrote] has been trotted out to rebut it. Because it was a really awful screw-up by the unit I was in, they killed a bunch of civilians. But, two seconds after it happened I knew I was going to have to report it. There was never any doubt. And the guys I was with, I was a bit nervous about it, it didn’t bother them at all because they knew it was true. It was fair.

No one in particular was held accountable in the Highway 9 case. Instead, it was chalked up to as a mistake. This was emulative of most scandals during the Iraq War, where the narrative of accountability zeroed in on individuals rather than the military as a whole. To Branigin, the success of the media-military relationship depended on individual reporters and individual commanders, in terms of positivity. This echoes the view of Tom Shanker, described earlier on. Sometimes they would

get along, sometimes the commander will have a different view of what the reporter should be doing, and sometimes a reporter will break the rules.

Shanker characterized the media-military relationship as a “dysfunctional marriage that stays together for the kids. The kids being the American public and the people in uniform.” He cites the inherent tension in the relationship, where the military wants the means to preserve operational secrecy about its planning and execution and the military by its nature wants to describe these things. Despite the glibness of the response, in that this tension will never dissipate, he believes that accommodations can be made. His advice is to build relationships not in time of crisis: “trust is the first casualty of war in times of calm and quiet.” Essentially, what needs to be done is that trust needs to be maintained. Therefore, Shanker argued that there were only three responses to a reporter’s question: “the truth, I don’t know, and I do know but I can’t tell you.”

My conversation with Lt. Col. Mead emblemizes the uptake of this advice in the military. For military personnel it is very important not to contradict the position of their superior or the operational security of the mission. Yet there is still a need to respond to the queries of the media. Therefore, in his own career, Lt. Col. Mead would ask: “What’s the topic? Can you get me the question you wanna ask me ahead of time so I can make sure I know all the guidance related to that topic before I come meet with you?” It’s not so much that the military personnel is afraid of that what they are going to say is wrong, but a concern, according to Lt. Col. Mead, of how to provide the right information to as a media person, who is trying to write a factually correct article.

The military wanted positive coverage of their troops and the troops themselves were extremely sensitive to negative publicity. Fumento recounts an instance where he witnessed troops laughing at Iraqis who fell into a drainage canal after being startled by the explosives the troops were setting off. Immediately they asked Fumento not to report that they were laughing in fear of a negative public response. Fumento did not but “doesn’t mean that they had [him] under their thumb or

anything.” While the bond reporters develop with the troops will inevitably affect one’s writing, it does not mean that the article will be filled with flag-waving. The troops also never forget, for the most part, that they are with a reporter. Fumento clarified this with the example that he never heard any swearing. When Fumento was in the military, “every other word was the F-word, it’s a noun, an adjective. These guys didn’t even swear around me, I can only imagine that they were holding their tongues because they knew I was a reporter.” The military always remained professional, and Fumento stated with conviction that there was no need on his part to fudge his reporting in any direction: he was able to report they did their jobs extremely well because they did jobs extremely well.

Lt. Col Mead, in his entire career, found the relationship to be positive, especially when considering Iraqi Freedom and the media embedded with the military on the ground. He boils it down to the fact that “they were allowed have a relationship. It’s all about a relationship. You can’t surge relationships.” Any hesitancy to shy away from media relations on the part of the military comes a lack of comfort level with the media. The embedding program allowed interactions with the media to become more positive because now the military could make sure that they were interacting well with them, creating an relationship and an environment where the truth of the facts are easily transmittable to people whose job it is report factual information.

Col. Harthorn echoed the sentiments of Lt. Col. Mead. The military has learned is that it can still prepare a body of soldiers with information should they happen to come across an embedded journalist. Military personnel still have to abide by some rules, such as only answering questions within their own sphere of influence. As for any tension between the two institutions, Lt. Col Michael Oehl blames it on being a clash of cultures. He writes:

The military is a fundamentally closed society; arguably more conservative than most American institutions. It is accountable to civilian leadership within the United States government, and its mission focus is on the protection of American interests. The media by comparison is considerably more liberal. It is, with few exceptions, privately owned and

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accountable to stockholders with a mission of reporting newsworthy events that will either sell newspapers, magazines, or airtime for a monetary profit. The goal of the American media is to write or present an intriguing story. That “attention-getter” translates to money.

The military, by virtue of providing a service to the country not easily quantifiable, can only prove its competence in times of conflict whereas the media consistently can prove itself through its continuous broadcasts. However, through the embedding program, Col. Glenn Starnes argues that “the military and the media overcame many barriers of distrust and antagonism.” This simple observation is enough reason to continue the program in his and most of the individuals I interviewed.

The Media-Military Relationship in Vietnam

So how did we get to the embedded media program and an improved confidence in the military? In line with much of the literature written about Vietnam, Branigin said that since the war was so unpopular, when soldiers would come back from Vietnam they felt disrespected. However, by the time of the invasion of Iraq rolled around, people and society, generally realized that had been unfair, the way Vietnam veterans had been treated. There was a “distinction drawn between what the mission was and the troops. They didn’t hold troops responsible for the disaster the invasion became.” Nowadays, veterans are quite highly-regarded. Soldiers and marines were deployed multiple times to Iraq and Afghanistan, which took a lot of out the service members and their families. A substantial amount of sympathy was generated for them. What is more is that the war in Vietnam was prosecuted quite poorly by the military. There were multiple reports about the military taking an objective and abandoning it, and maybe, Branigin posits, “that had an effect on how people viewed the military, associating the debacles of Vietnam with the military.” In the Iraq War, the invasion itself was a remarkable success, leaving aside what came after, creating an impression of formidable force: well-trained, effective. Whatever that went wrong was really blamed on the administrative end.

Donvan actually never head the reporters in his line of work, who had covered Vietnam, speak negatively of the soldiers who they referred to as “grunts.” Instead, their negativity was focused more

on the political leadership, the predicament that had been created, and the predicament the soldiers had been put into. Even so, on television every night, “scattered images came back of soldiers doing terrible acts against the Vietnamese people. These images were picked up as an image of the evil that the US was doing against the Vietnam people.” The most consequential part of this coverage was that, in the pictures, the agents of that evil were soldiers. While the reporters had good relations with the troops, there was a dearth in a counter narrative going on portraying soldiers as good guys. What this meant was that the vacuum by the absence of a counter narrative allowed for the soldiers to be portrayed and considered negatively, for protesters back in the U.S. to condemn the military and its men alongside the war.

Furthermore, in Vietnam, many fought in a war they did not want to participate in, whereas, in Iraq, everyone volunteered to serve. According to Donovan, Vietnam’s narrative of the troops that trickled down about the troops “was not about pride, it was not about accomplishment, it was not about clarity of mission at all and but on a couple of spectacularly bad incidents. It was about them acting very badly.” Back in the US, college students, turned on the service members, creating a narrative of negativity, shame and disgrace and the media had to report on that. This may very well be the foundation on which the low public confidence in the military manifested.

Patrick Tyler agrees. The difference between the Vietnam and Iraq War as that “there was an enormous amount of admiration for the army that went into Iraq, for the rank and file, many of them were absolutely the best of us.” The military, he claims, was aware that there were many pitfalls to the U.S.’s ability to liberate this population “because we were the heavy footed imperial army marching into the country.” Furthermore, there was a consecrated guilt and effort about making sure soldiers in Iraq got the recognition that they deserved for the sacrifices that they were making. In Vietnam, the draft army was caught in the middle again between poor leadership and a tenacious enemy. Since then, the military went through an enormous evolution with a new generation of leaders who rose in the

ranks of the military helped to build a more integrated, a more unified and overall better educated and skilled armed force.

From a different angle, Lt. Col Oehl cited interpersonal clashes as part of the reason of why the media-military relationship turned so sour in Vietnam. The relatively free access for the media:

Presented a challenge for Westmoreland, as the relationship between his civilian leaders and the media deteriorated. As operations began, the relationship was generally strong. When things soured, negative stories made the papers and airwaves. The military and administration, hyper-sensitive about negative war publicity, lost what little trust they had in the media, effectively throwing fuel on a fire that was already beginning to burn out of control.

The media became increasingly suspicious of the administration and the military as well, making it so that news media put forward stories that were influenced less by governmental input. The public began to share the media's skepticism that they were uninformed and that the administration and military were keeping information from them. The media moved its focus from human-interest stories "to reports of failures of the service's rifle (the M-16), poor morale amongst troops, and criticism of the South Vietnamese government," and this attributed to the decline in support for the military and the war. The failed relationship in Vietnam resulted in a bitter aftertaste that would affect how the military and media would interact in conflicts to come.

The Media-Military Relationship: The Years In Between

Branigin covered the Gulf War, where he served as a de facto embedded reporter, though it was not referred to as such during that conflict. In the years since Vietnam, there was an arms-length relationship between the military and the press when it came to covering wars. In fact, when Grenada was invaded during the Reagan administration, there was a media black-out for two days. The media could not get into Grenada for the first two days and provide any coverage on the conflict. The invasion of Panama was not much better. With Afghanistan, the military "went into it in a way that they didn't want to be tarred as invaders like the Soviets had been." Branigin recounts on how, when

his team tried to approach the American Special Forces in Jabal Saraj – north of Kabul – they seemed to run away. For the reporters covering the Gulf War, it was a frustrating experience as they were limited from information because the military refused to engage with them. As a result of this distance between the media and the US military allowed the combatants to “put out all of these kinds of false reports, saying that Americans bombed a hospital and such. There was nobody on the ground able to refute it.” After that, the military recognized that there was an information war that needed to be waged and it would need the news media’s support to win.

Very quickly the U.S. learned that the story was going to be told regardless of whether or not the military participated. The military found that it “can either be passive and allow adversary tell that story or be proactive and tell [their] side and let the public decide the balance between the two and what they believe it.” There is benefit to being proactive in engaging with the media. That is, up to a certain point: they still could not let be compromised classified information that would jeopardize American lives.

The relationship between the military and media between Vietnam and Iraq can also be characterized as a pattern of trial-and-error. Easing the restrictions from Panama and Grenada, the military instituted a pool system during the Gulf War where the Pentagon micromanaged coverage and rarely put reporters near the battlefield. Col. Starnes argues that the press pool policy was incited by fears that “reporters and cameras recording every step in a prolonged offensive ground war would create disillusionment and anti-war sentiment at home,” exemplifying how embittered the military felt after Vietnam. However, the media, Commander Rodriguez describes, found the pool system to be ineffective and did not make their complaints quiet. Responding to the frustrations of news media organizations, “the Navy and the Marine Corps began to embed reporters on ships and with Marine units on a trial basis.” The Marines found themselves receiving positive coverage, which encouraged other branches, including the Army, to embed as well. Therefore, in the words of Lt. Col Oehl, “in

Chapter Seven: Illuminating the Black Box

the thirteen years between Desert Storm and OIF, the military appears to have come to the conclusion, at least temporarily, that it needs the media.”

The Media-Military Relationship in Iraq

By the Iraq War, the media pools were a thing of the past and accompanied by innovations in technology and communications as well as the failures in media coverage of previous conflicts, the military had to re-evaluate its relationship with the media. Since communication was much easier there was really no way of censoring even if the military wanted to. Even so, the media was more respectful of the military, echoing the cultural reject of Vietnam. This strong sense of injustice that was imparted on the troops predisposed the media to have a tendency to look favorably upon the military. Donovan states, “The pendulum was swinging back the other way, in terms of showing respect and honor and respecting the sacrifice and realizing that there was training and professionalism.” In Iraq, as opposed to Vietnam, there was so much more attention paid on the positives of individual soldiers and much more “on the same team” kind of aspect that stood apart from the political questions in Iraq than in Vietnam. Furthermore, the political questions seem similar in 1990 and 2003 “because Saddam Hussein was such a bad guy and the WMD case was bought in general by the media and the public.” In Vietnam, it was far murkier what the U.S. was doing there.

Before the all-volunteer force, Lt. Col. Mead thinks there was a difference in how the military used force before and how they used force after when the military had a draft an army. So now, “we have Senators saying, I don’t support this war, but you should still support your military because they didn’t choose to be there. They are just the ones that volunteered to defend our freedoms and now this is how they are being ordered to do it.” This kind of calculus was harder to consider when considering the disciplinary situations of the two different armies. The military in Vietnam, Lt. Col. Mead says, “wasn’t a professionalized force, people used force in a way that professionals applying force should not have.” There are more of examples in Vietnam particularly where the lack of

professionalism Lt. Col Mead cities was apparent. The draft army brought a nearly complete cross-section of society, including all of its unsavory elements. On the other hand, the all-volunteer force has minimum standards. This new military did not pull a true cross-section of society, and because of the minimum standards, it appears to pull a lot less of the types of behaviors or past experiences that the draft army did.

Moving forward into Iraq, Commander Rodriguez believes that the military needed to “leverage the media in accurately depicting the coalition military and the compassionate actions of liberation.” With a tense, pre-existing media-military relationship, policy needed to be erected that balanced the free access of Vietnam and the restricted ones of Grenada, Panama, and the Gulf War. The media-military relationship improved because of the embedded program, shifting the military’s perspective of the media as an adversary to an ally. Furthermore, the military offered the media training boot camps and early embedding that allowed the media to better understand the unit and mission and generate more respect for the military’s modus of operation.

Conclusion

The distinction between the troops and the war has been made as society has evolved over time. The American public has learned the difference between the decision-making power of a 19 year old private and that of the higher-level politicians who make strategic and policy decisions.

When I posed this question to Patrick Tyler, he framed it as the media has become so much larger and sophisticated since the Iraq War came around. One can never discount how much the media and especially these larger institutions like the networks and cable companies developed a strategy to suck up the media leadership to get better access to interviews, placements, and embedding, and so on by basically offering free propaganda. For example, Tyler says, NBC would offer free skype calls to soldiers in Baghdad. They would offer these services to the military knowing that this would indebt the military to them and what they wanted was a ride on the tank leading the column to Baghdad or a

ride in a helicopter with a general, or an interview with Paul Bremer, the head of the American presence in Iraq. Tyler argues that:

Out of this propagandistic, corporate-driven, institutional strategy came a lot of the popular reaction towards troops. People saw it on TV network anchors saluting soldiers at every turn and such behavior made it so when a guy in a uniform walked onto a Delta flight from Atlanta to Houston, people stood up and clapped.

This sort of behavior was rarely or even never expressed in Vietnam. While it is important that soldiers get some sense of gratitude of service, Tyler expressed unease at seeing soldiers getting that kind of display from the general public because lots of people make sacrifices in our society – nurses, doctors -- and they take the same kinds of risks, whether that is in Southside of Chicago and in the Bronx and parts of LA. Interestingly enough, this kind of pride is important for the military. The one thing Col. Harthorn argues, that the military “have going for us, that the private has going for him is that the country is behind you can. They know that this kid is doing the best he can in his situation, the best he can for his country.” But perhaps, the pendulum has swung maybe a little too far the other way. While there is a need to honor our soldiers, Tyler argues that we do not want to honor militaries and that is what this kind of unfettered adulation can lead to. While it is important for the U.S. to take care of its military and the troops that choose to make that sacrifice, the military is an instrument that we have to use for the worst acts of humanity and it is equally important not to glorify war. What politicians have discovered it is a very popular political touchstone: to say great things about the soldiers and building up the military, and the media has taken that similar lesson in, when choosing what stories to report. .It is certainly a tough balance. As much as the United States public “have made up for the sins of our cultural treatment of militaries in the Vietnam War, I fear sometimes we have gone too far the other way,” so Tyler argues. Has it? That is a question whose answer only time will tell.

Chapter Eight: After Action Report

“The most powerful military in the history of the world can lose a war, not on the battlefield of dust and blood, but on the battlefield of world opinion.” – Timothy Garton Ash

This thesis sought to answer the following question: why did declining support for the Vietnam War also lead to a decline in favorable or confident attitudes towards the military, but in the case of Iraq, declining support for the war was coupled with rising favorability and confidence in the military? Despite public support falling for the Iraq war, Americans increasingly had confident and favorable attitudes towards the military, contrary to what was observed in Vietnam. I posited that the answer to this discrepancy lies in the coverage and actions, intentionally or not, by U.S. mainstream media.

It is almost undeniable that Vietnam created a generation of embittered officers who despised the press. Moving from then, the military sought to mediate its relation with the news media so that the “failures of Vietnam” would not happen again. However, regardless of the truth, the charge that the media lost the war through negative reporting is a legacy that erected a stone wall between the institutions, trickling down to the public. As the media-military relationship continued to evolve post-Vietnam, the military attempted many policies to weigh the balance of appeasing the press and facilitating its duty to inform as well as maintaining its own operational security and objectives. By the time the war in Iraq arrived, the embedding policy was constructed as an antidote to Saddam Hussein’s propaganda, devised as a method of increasing transparency and accountability, and construed as the best way for the military to maintain credibility.

What also characterized the Iraq media-military relationship was the paradigm in which national solidarity and patriotism was quickly linked with supporting the war. As in the early parts of Vietnam, the media appeared so eager to fall in line with the frame of the administration that rarely did they do their most essential duty as journalists: ask questions. Although military briefers and

handlers did whatever in their capacity to present the military in a positive light, the media also had a role, although not as pronounced, in engendering patriotic attitudes post 9/11. For example, hundreds of news producers around the U.S. created graphics of the American flag to wave in the background of news reports or on the corner of the screens.

This is important to note because the cascade model describes the ladder of influence which is the process by which the media frames affect public opinion. The government influences elites, which influences the media, which shapes public opinion through the framing of words and images. Visible and vigorous debate, which is directed at the citizenry, helps to keep the public informed and enables them to consider competing claims to arrive at informed decisions. However, before the wars became stymied and marked by rising casualties, such desirable debate was lacking.

My thesis demonstrated that in some very concerning ways, the media is shaped by an intense pro-military bias, in that they engage in patterns of reporting and editorializing which support the military's frame of problems and solution. For example, I showed in Chapters Four and Six the usage of thematic human-interest frames generates a more positive view of troops and can obscure the more unsavory parts of war, including civilian casualties. There was and probably continues to be a systematic bias in the American media-political culture toward war, and the press in both the Vietnam War and Iraq War emphasized pro-war voices early on in the conflicts regardless of its merits.

However, as the wars became political issues, the news media began to reflect the prevailing pattern of debate. The frustrations that were endemic to the conflict made their way into the press: the media reported on the president's assertions of progress but also provided a pessimistic counterpart. This provided evidence on why support for the wars fell, but the question of why public confidence in the military itself did not fall remained. To answer that, I considered three hypotheses: media framing, political rhetoric, and the effects of embedding on news reporting.

Explanation One: Media Framing and Public Subscription

In Chapter Four, I considered media framing through the lens of the administration and the military and how that may have affected public confidence in the military. When looking at the general framing of the wars, reporting was upbeat, focusing on “American boys in action” stories and relied heavily on official government and military sources. The media in both Vietnam and Iraq failed to include divergent viewpoints and, in that way, acted more as a “strategic enabler” than an “operational risk.” However, it did not last long. While the administration’s frame of “ridding the world of evil” and “stopping terrorism” initially incited support for the war and the media complacently presented those frames, they were unachievable goals. As a result, I found public opinion polls to suggest that the public eventually losing its patience for a war that did not have an end in sight, as the metrics were never measurable.

When looking at military scandals, the “bad apples” trope was widely employed by administration and military officials. I found that news organizations in Iraq also applied the human-interest frame the most, constructing appealing images of good-natured but ultimately misguided soldiers. What characterized the media in My Lai and Abu Ghraib was a press deferential to the administration and military’s interpretation of the events and accusations. In this way, the press failed in its duty of amplifying counter-frames that would have allowed the public to more critically assess the administration and military leaders and their policies. Yet, it seemed that the public was more willing to subscribe to frames that presented the military negatively in Vietnam than in Iraq. Despite similar framing patterns by both administrations – minimization, reaffirmation, and dissociation – the events of My Lai coincided with decreasing confidence in the military and was not reduced to a case of a “few bad apples.” On the other hand, I found that with Abu Ghraib, the public was more receptive to human-interest and nation-protecting frames that attributed responsibility to everyone but the troops.

To conclude the findings of this chapter, the administrations were initially successful in framing their respective wars until casualties began to mount and the factors of success were not met. At those points, I found that administrative framings were not powerful enough to overcome the other facets that influence public opinion and approval. However, this does not explain why confidence in the military had reverse trends in the wars. The broader framing of the wars and their loss of salience do not explain why we saw a separation in support of the war and support of the troops in Iraq. While the September 11 Attacks might have engendered patriotism that kept our troops in favor, there are a multitude of reasons why the troops may have been considered favorably.

Despite similar frames, why was the American public in Iraq War more receptive to these human-interest frames? While the types of framing inevitably influenced public confidence towards the military in Iraq, it was by no means the only factor. This moved me to consider political rhetoric.

Explanation Two: Political Rhetoric

I hypothesized next that the rhetoric of the political elite that was filtered through the media had a role in engendering the disparate patterns of public confidence in the military experienced in Vietnam and Iraq. President Johnson and his vocal supporters in government adopted a positive attitude to a war, but never went as far as to explicitly declare a need to support the troops. Rather, it was assumed and that perhaps was where the failure of political discourse in the Vietnam era occurred. Administration speeches during the wars made the targets of the wars to be Communist Vietnamese and the terrorist Iraqis, respectively. However, opposition speeches made that “enemy” to be the administration itself. The administration became the enemy in failing to create effective policy and in dragging the country in a war, in their opinion, that should not have been fought. That being said, the greatest difference between opposition speeches in the Vietnam and Iraq war was that there was a conscientious separation between the concepts of supporting the troops and supporting the war in Iraq. For example, in Chapter Five, I described how that although Vietnam War American politicians

did express their support of the troops at times, it was nowhere near to the level that Iraqi War American politicians who not only expressed it but demanded it from a listening American public.

Elites used distinctive vocabularies to advance their political agenda, and this was observed when comparing administration and opposition speeches. However, when they portrayed similar vocabulary when discussing the military, as shown in the Iraq War case, it undoubtedly made it easier for people to accept the message: you can and should support your troops no matter the trajectory of the war. Politicians in the Iraq War were enabled by this verbal and cognitive separation of these two types of support, making it easier for them to argue decisions of prolonging war while not dragging, so to speak, their support of the military along as well.

As for the media, it exemplified a fear of being accused of being unpatriotic during Iraq should it present negative views of the war without the caveat, “but we still love our troops!” The conservative media portrayed itself as a cheerleader for the Bush administration and the war, whereas the liberal media had to inoculate themselves with pro-military speech when it touted negative reports on the war itself. Being patriotic was conflated lavishing troops with adulation. The political elite created such a message, the media transmitted and curated the message, and the public absorbed it.

I found a clear linguistic difference between the Vietnam and Iraq Wars political discourse in the time period I assessed. These linguistic differences demonstrate that, according to the cascade model, there is reason to believe that Iraqi War politicians actively spread the “support the troops” message across party line. Meaning, that regardless of the trajectory of the war or dissent towards war policy, they and the country must support and value the troops. These rhetorical patterns were absent for the most part in the Vietnam War, allowing the public to conflate the success of the war with their confidence in the troops. Yet, this did not clear up exactly why the public viewed the military favorably, and continues to do so, during Iraq. The political rhetoric simply provided a mechanism to separate the opinion of the war and the opinion of troops and suggested that the latter must always be

considered positively. To understand why the public may have, in the end, held such favorable views of the military, I turned finally to media coverage and the media-military relationship.

Explanation Three: The Media-Military Relationship

The media content analysis I conducted suggested that front-page newspaper articles did not have an overt bias in attributing responsibility for the failure of the war to the actions of the military. It also suggested that the front page newspaper articles did not have an overt negative or positive tone towards the military. In fact, the newspaper articles mainly discussed the pros and cons of war policy for both the Vietnam and Iraq Wars, demonstrating a neutral media. However, the articles written by embedded reporters tended to favor covering soldiers and the day-to-day events within the military, which could have affected viewer's perception of the military by exposure effects rather than media framing effects.

Yet, when I conducted the second content analysis, I found a media bias in favor of the military exemplified in the opinion-editorials. In both wars, opinion-editorial articles assigned the military and the government responsibility. However, Vietnam War opinion-editorial articles were more likely to have a negative view of the U.S. military at the time, whereas Iraq War opinion-editorial articles were more likely to have a positive tone towards the military. This means that there was somewhat of a media bias surfaced in the opinion-editorial section towards the military. During the Iraq War, opinion-editorials tended to present a more favorable view of the military or at least actively separated the military from the trajectory of the war.

To further explore this explanation, I interviewed military professionals and journalists involved in the Iraq War, as demonstrated in Chapter Seven. The grand strategy of war has always been over how war is perceived, making the media critical to the success of war. Having access to the commanders and access to the line officers was important from the media standpoint. Above all, the reporters unanimously agreed that the competing objectives of control and access are what have made the media-military relationship so contentious.

By the time Iraq rolled around, it became a given that every Christmas local TV news stations would do stories on the families back home and the soldiers abroad. While there were stories at this time reflecting the negative consequences of the invasion and occupation, there were also stories about soldiers coming home with bad military treatment, stories earlier on about not having good equipment, brain injury stories, and stories about families undergoing a lot of stress. It was certainly not as though as everything was positive, but it had become an unquestioned positive that they were good people sacrificing enormously for their country and that shouldn't be questioned.

The most consequential part of Vietnamese war coverage was that, in the pictures, the agents of that evil were soldiers as John Donovan of *ABC News* observed. While the reporters had good relations with the troops, there was a dearth in a counter narrative going on portraying soldiers as good guys. What this meant was that the vacuum by the absence of a counter narrative allowed for the soldiers to be portrayed and considered negatively, for protesters back in the U.S. to condemn the military and its men alongside the war. And so they did. In the years following, the media was more respectful of the military, echoing the cultural reject of Vietnam. This strong sense of injustice that was imparted on the troops predisposed the media to have a tendency to look favorably upon the military. The pendulum had swung back. The troops were once again viewed favorably. While data will never be able to show how much the media pushed the pendulum, the conclusion remains that push it did. Despite public support falling for the correctness of the war, Americans increasingly had confident and favorable attitudes towards the military, contrary to what was observed in Vietnam. This discrepancy lies in the coverage and actions, intentionally or not, by U.S. mainstream media and its relationship with the government and military.

Therefore, declining support for the war was coupled with rising favorability and confidence in the military in Iraq, a trend not witnessed in Vietnam, was enabled by the media-military

relationship. Subconsciously or not, the media did have a role in separating the troops from the war, and providing the public with frames and rhetoric as to why we must support our troops.

Moving Forward

Given a more extensive timeframe and resources, I would improve this study in two significant ways. The first would be to analyze the role and characteristics of pro-war and anti-war protests and movements that marked the Vietnam era. I would contrast them with the lack of public protest movements during the Iraq era. I would, for example, study the extent to which protesters expressed negative views of the military or simply negative views of the war and how they specifically referred to the troops. The confidence trend in Vietnam and Iraq may have been reversed because of differences in the predominance of social movements and status of conscription.

The second change I would make is to conduct a media content analysis of television during the Vietnam and Iraq era instead of relying on the work of other scholars. While I included many references to television effects, I could have also evaluated the physicality of war news reporting in a more explicit manner. Without considering the impact of visuals, only a portion of the causal story about media framing effects on viewer's emotions is understood. The public tends to utilize visual experiences as the most prevailing method of learning (Damasio, 199). This is in part due to the centrality of the visual cortex within the brain which intimately associates the process of sight with cognition. Since sight is the most highly developed of all senses it is the fastest and most efficient, with the brain processing images at such a rapid pace that affective responses occur before the individual is conscious of their occurrence (Barry 2005; Pfau et al. 2008, 304). As a result, television media content analysis could describe another mechanism by which the media may have influenced public perception of the troops, as well as how.

Final Thoughts

To conclude, one of most fundamental shifts in the military recently is its detachment from domestic politics. Military accomplishments were crucial in the political rise of American presidents,

beginning with Washington and extending to Eisenhower. The military has become less relevant in the life of the average citizen. With civil-military relations pushing much of the decision-making responsibility to civilian leaders, the military holds the blame for poor execution of policies rather than the policies themselves. Furthermore, the military has successfully characterized itself as an unselfish service, putting themselves in danger and sacrificing for the “betterment of the country” while holding themselves accountable in the face of scandal. Since Vietnam, the military has worked to re-position itself as an honorable institution. As demonstrated throughout this thesis, our military is experiencing an incomparable level of support from the American public that has filtered to almost every corner of America. While support in itself is desirable, the level to which it has risen in that it has become almost unquestionable remains suspect.

Has this pendulum swung too far? Does the adulation of the troops cost the objectivity of the media, its ability to report accurately, or the objectivity of the public, in analyzing the war and troops accurately? What are the consequences of having a military that is the most respected institution in our country, far beyond our executive or legislative branches? How will the media-military relationship manifest in future wars, and will we have truly learned from the lessons of not only Vietnam, but Iraq? These are questions this thesis does not answer, but begs to consider.

Appendices

Appendix A: Data, Media Content Analysis of Front-Page Newspaper Articles

Appendix A.1: Type of Story

Code	Description
1= “News story/ reportage/ background”	A news story is the most frequent type: factual news report, report of events of what has happened. Reportage is a feature article that describes the individual experience of the author; Background story is a longer article that combines factual reporting, looking behind the scenes, and is analytical.
2 = “Editorial/ commentary/ interview”	Editorials are clearly defined to give evaluations and express the standpoint of the author who speaks for their newspaper. Commentaries are often written by an external source where the official position is often given as well. Interviews are articles that contain at least two interview questions.
0= “Other”	Does not fit in one of the five aforementioned categories.

Appendix A.2: Attribution of Responsibility to Actors

Code	Description
1= “US Military”	Pentagon, US Army, Navy, Air Force, Generals, Troops, any actor who is actively associated with the military.
2= “US Governmental Actors”	The President, Executive Branch, Congress, US Departments, any organ or representative of the US Government (including Secretary of Defense)
3 = “US Non- Political Actors”	Ordinary citizens, non-political organizations
4= “Vietnamese or Iraqis”	Any actor associated with either North or South Vietnam, including political leaders, military, rebellion factions, and civilians. Any actor associated with Iraq, including political leaders, military, rebellion factions, and civilians.
5= “Media”	Journalists, reporters, news organizations and distributors, any actor who is explicitly associated with the media.
6= “International Actors”	Countries and heads of countries excluding the United States and Vietnam.
0= “Other/Not Applicable”	Any organ to which responsibility is attributed to but does not fit in one of the aforementioned categories.

Appendix A.3: Tone towards the Military

Code	Description
1= “Positive”	The attitude towards the military appears to be positive: it depicts a favorable, approving, and/or supportive view of the military.
2= “Mixed”	The attitude towards the military appears to have elements of positivity and negativity. Different viewpoints are expressed in the article that have different tones towards the military.
3= “Negative”	The attitude towards the military appears to be negative: it depicts an unfavorable, disapproving, and/or critical view of the military.

4= “Neutral”	The attitude towards the military appears to be neutral. The military is merely referenced in a factual way and no particular opinion of the military can be distinguished.
0= “None”	There is no reference towards the military. Instead, the article may simply discuss the war at a policy level.

Appendix A.4: Unpaired T-Tests Results

Attribution of Responsibility

All values counted

- P value and statistical significance:
 - The two-tailed P value equals 0.6774
 - By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.
- Confidence interval:
 - The mean of Vietnam minus Iraq equals -4.50
 - 95 percent confidence interval of this difference: From -27.21 to 18.21
- Intermediate values used in calculations:
 - $t = 0.4249$
 - $df = 14$
 - standard error of difference = 10.590

No duplicates are counted (only the first group is used)

- P value and statistical significance:
 - The two-tailed P value equals 0.8375
 - By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.
- Confidence interval:
 - The mean of Vietnam minus Iraq equals -1.88
 - 95 percent confidence interval of this difference: From -21.12 to 17.37
- Intermediate values used in calculations:
 - $t = 0.2089$
 - $df = 14$
 - standard error of difference = 8.974

Tone towards the Military

- P value and statistical significance:
 - The two-tailed P value equals 0.7447
 - By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.
- Confidence interval:
 - The mean of Vietnam minus Iraq equals -3.00
 - 95 percent confidence interval of this difference: From -23.52 to 17.52
- Intermediate values used in calculations:
 - $t = 0.3371$
 - $df = 8$
 - standard error of difference = 8.899

Appendices

Appendix A.5: Chi-Squared Test Results

To compute a P value from a 2 x 2 contingency table, I ran a chi-squared test with the Yates' continuity correction, which was designed to make the chi-square approximation better.

Actors

	Frequency (all values counted, military)	Frequency (all values counted, non-military)
Vietnam	13	112
Iraq	21	140
Difference	8	28

Chi squared equals 0.251 with 1 degrees of freedom. The two-tailed P value equals 0.6164. The association between rows (groups) and columns (outcomes) is considered to be not statistically significant.

	Frequency (all values counted, government)	Frequency (all values counted, non-government)
Vietnam	26	99
Iraq	51	110
Difference	25	11

Chi squared equals 3.697 with 1 degrees of freedom. The two-tailed P value equals 0.0545. The association between rows (groups) and columns (outcomes) is considered to be not quite statistically significant.

	Frequency (all values counted, Vietnamese/Iraqi)	Frequency (all values counted, non-Vietnamese/Iraqi)
Vietnam	57	64
Iraq	57	104
Difference	0	40

Chi squared equals 3.458 with 1 degrees of freedom. The two-tailed P value equals 0.0629. The association between rows (groups) and columns (outcomes) is considered to be not quite statistically significant.

Tone

	Frequency (positive)	Frequency (non-positive)
Vietnam	19	96
Iraq	35	95
Difference	16	1

Chi squared equals 3.261 with 1 degrees of freedom. The two-tailed P value equals 0.0710. The association between rows (groups) and columns (outcomes) is considered to be not quite statistically significant.

	Frequency (negative)	Frequency (non-negative)
Vietnam	11	104
Iraq	8	122
Difference	3	18

Chi squared equals 0.573 with 1 degrees of freedom. The two-tailed P value equals 0.4490. The association between rows (groups) and columns (outcomes) is considered to be not statistically significant.

	Frequency (negative + mixed)	Frequency (non-negative or mixed)
Vietnam	14	101
Iraq	26	104
Difference	12	3

Chi squared equals 2.193 with 1 degrees of freedom. The two-tailed P value equals 0.1386. The association between rows (groups) and columns (outcomes) is considered to be not statistically significant.

Appendix B: Data, Media Content Analysis of Op-Eds

Appendix B.1: Attribution of Responsibility to Actors

Code	Description
1= “US Military”	Pentagon, US Army, Navy, Air Force, Generals, Troops, any actor who is actively associated with the military.
2= “US Governmental Actors”	The President, Executive Branch, Congress, US Departments, any organ or representative of the US Government (including Secretary of Defense)
3 = “US Non-Political Actors”	Ordinary citizens, non-political organizations
4= “Vietnamese or Iraqis”	Any actor associated with either North or South Vietnam, including political leaders, military, rebellion factions, and civilians. Any actor associated with Iraq, including political leaders, military, rebellion factions, and civilians.
5= “Media”	Journalists, reporters, news organizations and distributors, any actor who is explicitly associated with the media.
6= “International Actors”	Countries and heads of countries excluding the United States and Vietnam.
0= “Other/Not Applicable”	Any organ to which responsibility is attributed to but does not fit in one of the aforementioned categories.

Appendix B.2: Tone towards the Military

Code	Description
1= “Positive”	The attitude towards the military appears to be positive: it depicts a favorable, approving, and/or supportive view of the military.
2= “Mixed”	The attitude towards the military appears to have elements of positivity and negativity. Different viewpoints are expressed in the article that have different tones towards the military.
3= “Negative”	The attitude towards the military appears to be negative: it depicts an unfavorable, disapproving, and/or critical view of the military.
4= “Neutral”	The attitude towards the military appears to be neutral. The military is merely referenced in a factual way and no particular opinion of the military can be distinguished.
0= “None”	There is no reference towards the military. Instead, the article may simply discuss the war at a policy level.

Appendix B.3: Unpaired T-Test Results
Attribution of Responsibility

All values counted

- P value and statistical significance:
 - The two-tailed P value equals 1.0000
 - By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.
- Confidence interval:
 - The mean of Vietnam minus Iraq equals 0.00
 - 95 percent confidence interval of this difference: From -17.16 to 17.16
- Intermediate values used in calculations:
 - $t = 0.0000$
 - $df = 14$
 - standard error of difference = 8.000

No duplicates are counted (only the first group is used)

- P value and statistical significance:
 - The two-tailed P value equals 1.0000
 - By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.
- Confidence interval:
 - The mean of Vietnam minus Iraq equals 0.00
 - 95 percent confidence interval of this difference: From -14.54 to 14.54
- Intermediate values used in calculations:
 - $t = 0.0000$
 - $df = 14$
 - standard error of difference = 6.777

Tone towards the Military

- P value and statistical significance:
 - The two-tailed P value equals 1.0000
 - By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.
- Confidence interval:
 - The mean of Vietnam minus Iraq equals 0.00
 - 95 percent confidence interval of this difference: From -16.71 to 16.71
- Intermediate values used in calculations:
 - $t = 0.0000$
 - $df = 8$
 - standard error of difference = 7.246

Appendices

Appendix B.4: Chi-Squared Test Results

To compute a P value from a 2 x 2 contingency table, I ran a chi-squared test with the Yates' continuity correction, which was designed to make the chi-square approximation better.

Actors

	Frequency (all values counted, military)	Frequency (all values counted, non-military)
Vietnam	19	78
Iraq	5	92
Difference	14	14

Chi squared equals 8.036 with 1 degrees of freedom. The two-tailed P value equals 0.0046. The association between rows (groups) and columns (outcomes) is considered to be very statistically significant.

	Frequency (all values counted, government)	Frequency (all values counted, non-government)
Vietnam	36	61
Iraq	56	41
Difference	20	20

Chi squared equals 7.463 with 1 degrees of freedom. The two-tailed P value equals 0.0063. The association between rows (groups) and columns (outcomes) is considered to be very statistically significant.

	Frequency (all values counted, Vietnamese/Iraqi)	Frequency (all values counted, non-Vietnamese/Iraqi)
Vietnam	22	58
Iraq	22	58
Difference	0	0

Chi squared equals 0.000 with 1 degrees of freedom. The two-tailed P value equals 1.0000. The association between rows (groups) and columns (outcomes) is considered to be not statistically significant.

Tone

	Frequency (positive)	Frequency (non-positive)
Vietnam	8	72
Iraq	23	57
Difference	15	15

Chi squared equals 7.842 with 1 degrees of freedom. The two-tailed P value equals 0.0051. The association between rows (groups) and columns (outcomes) is considered to be very statistically significant.

	Frequency (negative)	Frequency (non-negative)
Vietnam	10	70
Iraq	0	80
Difference	10	10

Chi squared equals 8.640 with 1 degrees of freedom. The two-tailed P value equals 0.0033. The association between rows (groups) and columns (outcomes) is considered to be very statistically significant.

	Frequency (negative + mixed)	Frequency (non-negative or mixed)
Vietnam	22	58
Iraq	13	67
Difference	9	9

Chi squared equals 2.341 with 1 degrees of freedom. The two-tailed P value equals 0.1260. The association between rows (groups) and columns (outcomes) is considered to be not statistically significant.

Appendix C: Forms for Interviews

Appendix C.1: Recruitment Form

RECRUITMENT FORM

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Manal Cheema and I am currently a senior at Tufts University. I am writing a political science honors thesis on media military relations. My focus is to compare a particular juncture during the Vietnam War and Iraq War. I am inquiring about military-media relations in each war. Specifically, I seek to consider this by evaluating why when the media became a critic of the war in Vietnam concurrently also became a critic of the military, but in Iraq this does not appear to be the case in terms of media-military relations. To do so, in the case of Iraq, I would like to look at the experience of embedding within the context of the evolution of the media-military relationship from the two wars.

Due to your experience as [INSERT CLAUSE], I believe that your insight on embedding and media-military relationship would be of significance to my research. As a result, I would like to conduct an interview, either in person or over the phone, with you about your experiences and opinions on this topic. It would take no longer than an hour. If you would like to remain anonymous but still like to provide a response that can be arranged as well.

If you are open to being interviewed, please do let me know as soon as you are able and when would best suit you. I would be extremely grateful for the opportunity. I can be contacted at [INSERT EMAIL] or at [INSERT PHONE NUMBER]. If there is any information that you need or questions you have, please let me know as well.

Thank you so much for your time.

Very Respectfully,

Manal Cheema
Tufts University, Class of 2017

CONSENT FORM

STUDY TITLE: Media Portrayals of the Military during the Vietnam and Iraq War

INVESTIGATOR: Manal Cheema

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE: I am asking you to take part in research for my senior honors thesis. The purpose of the thesis is to compare a particular juncture during the Vietnam War and Iraq War. I am inquiring about military-media relations in each war. Specifically, I seek to consider this by evaluating why when the media became a critic of the war in Vietnam concurrently also became a critic of the military, but in Iraq this does not appear to be the case in terms of media-military relations. To do so, in the case of Iraq, I would like to look at the experience of embedding within the context of the evolution of the media-military relationship from the two wars.

PROCEDURE: The format of the interview will be a discussion that is guided by a series of pre-determined questions on embedding and the military-media relationship. I expect that the interview will take no longer than 1 hour. With your permission, I will audiotape the interview solely for the purpose of accurately transcribing the conversations. The audiotape will be stored securely in Tufts Box.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND RISK: I do not foresee any risk involved in conducting this interview. However, if you wish to use a pseudonym or remain anonymous to protect your privacy and confidentiality, I will be happy to do so. Alternatively, if you wish to be quoted by name on anything in particular, I will gladly accommodate this request. You do not have to answer any questions or discuss any topics that make you feel uncomfortable.

WITHDRAWAL OF PARTICIPATION: Should you decide at any time during the interview or discussion that you no longer wish to participate, you may withdraw your consent without prejudice.

COSTS BENEFITS TO YOU: There are no direct costs involved with participation, although you may miss an hour of work and possibly pay for that time. There are also no direct benefits to you. However, your participation and response will contribute to a greater understanding of the media-military relationship and the effects of embedding on public confidence in the military. My thesis will be presented in the spring and your responses will bring greater attention to this phenomenon.

REQUEST FOR MORE INFORMATION: You may ask more questions about the research and thesis at any time. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Tufts University, so you may contact the SBER IRB Administrator, Dr. Lara Sloboda, at the Office of the Institutional Review Board.

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