

**THE BATTLE OF HEARTS AND MINDS:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE IRAQ WAR DISCOURSE IN
POLITICS AND NEWSPAPERS**

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Chapter 1 Introduction	5
1.1 Background	5
1.2 Aims and hypotheses	6
1.3 Methodology	7
1.4 Material	8
1.5 Structure of thesis	9
Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework	10
2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)	10
2.1.1 Historical background	11
2.1.2 Main assumptions and principles of CDA	13
2.1.3 Different approaches of CDA	16
2.1.4 Criticism	19
2.2 Metaphor theory	20
2.2.1 Lakoff and Johnson and their theory of metaphor	21
2.2.2 Metaphor theory and political discourse	24
2.2.3 Criticism	27
2.3 CDA and cognitive metaphor theory; any middle ground?	29
Chapter 3 The media	31
3.1 The media and discourse	31
3.1.1 The media and political discourse	33
3.2 Newspapers in Britain	35
3.2.1 Newspapers and Iraq	37
3.3 Public opinion and Iraq	38
3.4 Summary	43
Chapter 4 The ‘third way’: Blair’s international discourse	44
4.1 New Labour and the ‘third way’	44
4.2 The ‘third way’ in international politics	47
4.2.1 The impact of 11 September	52
4.3 Iraq	56
4.3.1 Security discourse	57
4.3.2 Morality discourse	61
4.3.3 Other discursive features	64
4.3.4 Post-war discourse	67

	4.4 Summary	72
Chapter 5	Newspaper analysis	73
	5.1 Pre-war discourse	73
	5.1.1 Lexicalisation	73
	5.1.2 Morality discourse	79
	5.1.3 Globalisation	85
	5.1.4 Patriotism	88
	5.1.5 Other features	90
	5.1.6 Metaphors	92
	5.2 Post-war discourse: Response to Blair's Sedgefield speech	96
Chapter 6	Conclusion	102
	Bibliography/References	106

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

On the eve of the Iraq war in March 2003, Tony Blair appeared on British television to make a sombre address to his nation. His words were firm and resolute:

...this new world faces a new threat: of disorder and chaos born either of brutal states like Iraq, armed with weapons of mass destruction; or of extreme terrorist groups. Both hate our way of life, our freedom, our democracy (TB-20.03.03).

The language of Blair is striking. Iraq is a ‘brutal state’, a country of ‘chaos’ and ‘disorder’, armed with ‘weapons of mass destruction’; a country that threatens nothing short of ‘our’ very existence. The ideological purpose is clear: to create a significant distance between ‘us’, as ‘freedom fighters’, and ‘them’ as ‘extreme terrorists’. The *means* to serve this ideological purpose is language, in this instance, both through a vivid lexicalisation and a wider ideological polarisation of ‘us’ and ‘them’.

Blair’s address came at the most critical time of his reign as Prime Minister. For more than a year the Sedgefield-born Labour leader had been trying to convince his government, his party colleagues and the British public of the need for military action against the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein. However, opposition was fierce, and Blair was in desperate need of a turnaround in public opinion; a turnaround that could justify Britain’s participation in a record fifth military operation in just over six years.

In this thesis I propose that the language of Blair and the construction of a discourse of the Iraq war played a decisive role in achieving this turnaround¹. The discourse was carefully considered; in part based on a world-view set out in the early years of Blair’s New Labour invention, and in part, carved out in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 11 September and the consequent ‘war on terrorism’². The aim was clear; to make war in Iraq legitimate and justifiable to the British people.

¹ While Blair is the primary focus in this thesis this does not imply that the Prime Minister acted alone in the creation of his discourse. In addition to the influence of Cabinet members and other party associates, Blair and New Labour have been known for its consistent use of PR-advisors and media analysts.

² New Labour is here associated with Tony Blair’s 1997 election campaign, while ‘war on terrorism’ is meant as the allied response to the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington of September 11, 2001, which started with military operations in Afghanistan.

The media played a crucial role. On the one hand, it represented the most obvious opportunity for Blair and his government to communicate directly with the British people. As a result, Blair used every chance he had to give speeches, ‘doorstep’ interviews or radio shows. In addition, media backing for the war itself, and an acceptance of the Iraq rhetoric and discourse of Blair, would indirectly help to convince people that war in Iraq was justifiable. The process was not unfamiliar to the Labour government; both Kosovo and Afghanistan had shown that the British people were not afraid to accept war if they found it justified.

Iraq was, however, different. While the wars in Kosovo and Afghanistan both had enjoyed high public support and an acceptance of government rhetoric, polls in February 2003, just one month before the war in Iraq started, showed a public opposition to war of over 50 percent. To add to Blair’s pressures, his own Labour party was split in two over whether or not war was right. At one point the so-called anti-war ‘rebels’ were even believed to be outnumbering the Labour Members of Parliament supporting Blair³.

The combination of fierce public and political opposition not only made the issue of Iraq controversial, it eventually made the debate over Iraq a battle for Blair’s political future. It was a battle where every word counted, where every turn of phrase seemed to matter. But most of all, it was a battle to win the hearts and minds of the British people.

1.2 Aims and hypotheses

The thesis is divided into two parts; first, in the identification and analysis of ideological language in Tony Blair’s speeches relating to international affairs, and, second, in the analysis of newspaper material, both articles and opinion pieces, within the ideological frame set by Blair. Accordingly, the over-all purposes of the thesis are: (a) to highlight the ideological and semantic implications of the discourse and rhetoric of both Blair/Labour and newspaper articles concerning the Iraq war, (b) to compare the discourse of Blair and the Labour government with the newspaper discourse, and (c), to compare the pre-war discourse with both government and newspaper discourse a year after the war started.

³ Reported in the *Independent*, 06.11.08. Opinion polls from ICM/*Guardian*, see Chapter 3, section 3.3.1.

More specifically, the thesis will attempt to show that:

- (a) Blair constructs an ideological discourse that attempts to morally and politically justify the war in Iraq.
- (b) the media played a crucial role in mediating the gap between government and public opinion, largely through the acceptance of the ideological language of Blair and his government. The media, thus, was a vital part in the legitimisation of the Iraq war.
- (c) the Iraq war, and the political fall-out after the initial battle was won, changed the role of political discourse and rhetoric, largely through the media and the general public's distaste for what they believed to be government 'spin'.

1.3 Methodology

In the thesis I will make use of two different approaches to political and media analyses: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and cognitive metaphor theory. Both theoretical frameworks are preoccupied with the ideological implications of language use and, thus, both approaches share a similar aim to uncover discursively produced political agendas.

Furthermore, both approaches most often take a qualitative approach to analyses. Contrary to a quantitative account of lexical items or metaphors where the emphasis is on summarising patterns or regularities through counting, the aim of a qualitative approach is to interpret the meanings of texts, both in relation to the contexts upon which they are constructed and the dependence and interaction between producer, text and consumer (Richardson 2007). Thus, the focus is not on finding patterns of language use or a consistent use of metaphors, but try to interpret *how* these patterns or metaphors might work.

The attempt to combine two distinctly different approaches makes the thesis theoretically diverse. The different approaches are also multi-faceted in themselves, influenced by media analysis, political analysis, sociology, history, critical linguistics and semiotics, to name but a few. This wide theoretical inclusion highlights the methodological complexity of political and media discourse both in relation to a wider discourse analysis, on the one hand, and metaphor analysis, on the other. Both methods of analysis are highly dependent on context; any political

and media analysis must be understood in reference to the various contexts they are based on (see also further discussion in Chapter 2).

1.4 Material

In the analysis of Blair's political discourse I have looked at a material ranging from April 1999 to March 2004 consisting of 6 speeches and 1 press conference. Of these, three are set within a time frame of one month before the Iraq war began in March 2003. The speeches and press conference transcripts are referenced by codes, which consist of the initials and the date of production. Tony Blair's opening speech at the House of Commons Iraq debate on the 18th of March 2003 is, for instance, coded as 'TB-18.03.03'⁴ (see primary sources).

The newspaper material is restricted to two different periods. The pre-war articles are taken from a timeframe of 10 days before the start of the Iraq war, ranging from the 15th to the 25th of March 2003. The post-war articles are taken from the 6th and 7th of March, 2004, in relation to Blair's Sedgefield speech on the 5th of March, almost two weeks prior to the first year anniversary of the war. The data is taken from 18 different newspapers, 9 daily papers and 9 Sunday papers (see primary sources).

The different papers can be classified into three traditional UK groups: broadsheet, mid-market and tabloid newspapers. While primarily referring to style and profile, the different papers are often marked by a clear socio-economic belonging. For instance, the *Daily Mirror*, as a tabloid (or low-market) paper, traditionally entertains a working class readership, whilst the longstanding conservative broadsheet the *Daily Telegraph*, predominantly attracts readers from the upper social classes. Additionally, and important to this thesis, the different newspapers reflect different political views of the Iraq War, some being supportive of military actions, while other stand firmly against any British involvement in operations in Iraq. The material is gathered both from online resources, searchable news archives and paper copies (Chapter 3 will provide a more thorough account of the various British newspapers).

It is important to note some limitations with respect to the source material. Firstly, the sheer volume of articles, speeches and secondary sources in relation to the Iraq war makes any attempt to make a fully complete analysis impossible. Although the newspapers do cover a

⁴ One speech by George W. Bush is also considered, referenced by the initials GB.

wide spectrum, they do not necessarily reflect all aspects of an extensive Iraq debate. Simultaneously, it is important to note the limitations in making any definite claims of how government and media discourse function, both separately and relationally. The aim must rather be to establish various important themes and discourses that are significant *parts* of the complex interdependence between political governmental rhetoric and newspaper discourse. These processes can then be applied in further research.

1.5 Structure of thesis

The thesis is structured as follows: Chapter 2 is an overview of the theoretical framework for the thesis, divided into two main sections of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (section 2.1) and metaphor theory (section 2.2). Chapter 3 focuses on the media, both in regards to the theory of media discourse (section 3.1), UK newspapers (section 3.2) and finally, public opinion with regard to Iraq (section 3.3). Chapter 4 is an analysis of the international discourse of Blair and New Labour, both in relation to the background of this discourse (sections 4.1 and 4.2) and Iraq specifically (4.3). Chapter 5 turns to the analysis of the various newspapers both before and after the start of the war, before a conclusion is provided in Chapter 6.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

As mentioned in the introduction, research in the field of political and media discourse has largely been approached through two different theoretical frameworks; the field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (section 2.1) and cognitive metaphor theory (section 2.2). I will deal with both approaches in turn, looking at the historical background, main principles and, subsequently, the criticism of these. Finally, I will discuss whether there exists any middle ground between the two frameworks.

2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Discourse has become such an often-used term in academic work that it has become a matter of discussion and debate in itself. Most scholars dealing with discourse will indeed agree that attempting to find a unifying definition probably would turn out to be a highly contentious proceeding. The reason is simply that it seems to be impossible to find a definition of what discourse exactly constitutes. Fairclough (1992: 3) admits: “discourse is a difficult concept, largely because there are so many conflicting and overlapping definitions formulated from various theoretical and disciplinary standpoints”.

But despite being difficult to define, the concept of discourse seems to be as popular as ever; it is on the one hand vague and uncertain, yet remains on everyone's lips. As H.G.

Widdowson (1995: 132) cynically remarks, discourse is “widespread but spread very thin (...) something everyone is talking about but without knowing with any certainty what it is”.

Widdowson may be right. Discourse, and perhaps especially Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), might be a trendy phenomenon. In itself, that arguably attracts criticism just as much as appraisal. Students of linguistics, however, tend to fully embrace CDA; as Toolan remarks (1997: 221) “[linguists] seem to be guarded in our embrace of CDA, but our students are not”.

The increasing popularity of Critical Discourse Analysis has manifested itself in a great variety of research over the past two decades. A main focus, however, has been the research into the mass media. Indeed, CDA has arguably become a standard framework for studying media texts, and according to Bell and Garrett (1998: 6), some 40 percent of articles published in the influential discourse journal *Discourse and Society* deal with a media corpus. One of

the primary reasons for this focus is no doubt grounded in the important role of the media in the society of today. In addition, media discourse is often easily accessible and available, while at the same time reflecting the linguistic tendencies found in society as a whole.

Chapter 3 (section 3.1) will look more specifically at the media and the mediatized discourse processes. However, it is first useful to look at the defining theoretical framework of CDA in general. Theoretically, CDA must be regarded as multifaceted. Many would in fact argue that it is best seen as a perspective or programme rather than a single, coherent theory. As Wodak remarks:

(...) heterogeneity of methodological and theoretical approaches represented in this field of linguistics would tend to confirm Van Dijk's point that CDA “(...) [is] at most a shared perspective on doing linguistic, semiotic or discourse analysis”
(Wodak 2001: 2).

Indeed, the theoretical scope and varying angles are striking. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) acknowledge up to eight different theoretical approaches within the field of Critical Discourse Analysis. Three of them have, however, been more influential than others; the social-cognitive approach of Van Dijk, the discourse-historical approach associated with Wodak, and finally, the approach advocated by Norman Fairclough and his “orders of discourse” theory⁵.

At the same time, CDA shares many main and guiding assumptions and principles. After a brief outline of the historical background of CDA (section 2.1.1), I will attempt to summarise these assumptions (section 2.1.2). Further, I will look more closely at the three main approaches of CDA proposed in this thesis, before considering the criticism of the CDA approach (sections 2.1.3 and 2.1.4).

2.1.1 Historical background

The approach of Critical Linguistics (CL) is generally acknowledged as the foundation of what is now known as Critical Discourse Analysis. CL was a theoretical approach that

⁵ Fairclough and Wodak (1997) not only identify and list several of the different approaches, they also have a thorough account of the most influential work in earlier years, with especially emphasis on Critical Linguistics of the 1970's. It is important to note that these influences still make important contributions to CDA today. Another notable omission from this thesis is the work of the “visual grammar” approach most commonly associated with Kress and Van Leeuwen.

evolved during the 1970's and is inextricably linked to pioneering linguists who either worked at or were related to the University of East Anglia in the 1970's (e.g. Fowler et al. 1979, Kress and Hodge 1979). On the one hand these critical theorists drew on a variety of social theories for inspiration; from the Frankfurt school of Jürgen Habermas, to George Orwell, and to a lesser extent Michel Foucault. Linguistically, CL based itself on Michael Halliday's theory of systemic-functional grammar.

The approach of Halliday was at the time considered by many to be the only valid alternative to Chomsky's dominant theoretical theory of transformational grammar. As Fowler has argued, Chomsky and transformational grammarians provided useful sets of terminology, but the inherent belief that language is structural and that language is genetically endowed in the human brain is highly unsuitable to critical linguistics: "Chomsky is not interested in the role of language in real use (and indeed will not allow such matters to be a valid concern of linguistics)" (1991: 5). Unable to find a place in Chomskyan linguistics, Fowler turned to Halliday and systemic-functional grammar to find a much more suitable model for critical analysis, a model that took into account the role of communicative function. In contrast to the Chomskyan paradigm, critical linguists were (and still are) concerned with a functional explanation of linguistic structure. CL's turn away from transformational grammar (and also a structuralist approach) coincided with the rise of sociolinguistic research as a whole, including several other approaches that have, though to a lesser degree, influenced CDA (conversation analysis, semiotic analysis, amongst others). In other words, CL was by no means an isolated movement, but rather part of a broader sociolinguistic turn.

Two important assumptions have been particularly influential to CDA. Firstly, Critical Linguistics views text as multifunctional, "simultaneously representing the world (ideational function) and enacting social relations and identities (interpersonal function)" (Fairclough 1995: 25). Secondly, texts are built out of choices in vocabulary, grammar and so forth. The lexical and linguistic choices are, in other words, ideological.

Although Halliday's systemic-functional grammar and what we might call 'Fowlerian Critical Linguistics' are considered the most important and influential approaches to the field of CDA, CDA-analysts draw upon an extremely varied field of theory; social semiotics, cultural-generic analysis, corpus linguistics, Labovian sociolinguistics, conversational analysis, to name but a few. As a result of this wide theoretical inclusion, it is perhaps unsurprising that also the field

of CDA itself is marked by several different approaches with regards to theoretical framework.

2.1.2 Main assumptions and principles of CDA

Before we turn to the different approaches, however, it is useful to look at the guiding assumptions and principles of CDA as a whole. Firstly, CDA is an explicitly political approach to discourse. It is discourse analysis with a clear stance, and an established worldview:

Unlike other discourse analysts, critical discourse analysts (should) take an explicit socio-political stance: they spell out their point of view, perspective, principles and aims, both within their discipline and within society at large.

(Van Dijk 1993a: 252)

As van Dijk argues, CDA is openly political. More specifically, it requires a worldview where one believes that people in power also benefit from a potential abuse of power. After all, it is this hierarchical power struggle and social inequality that CD-analysts set out to unmask. A rejection of this hierarchical worldview would obviously devaluate CDA. Further:

CDA is unabashedly normative: any critique by definition presupposes an applied ethics (...) critical discourse scholars should also be social and political scientists, as well as social critics and activists.

(Van Dijk 1993a: 253)

Van Dijk's focus on the normative presence in CDA is reinforced by Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 258); CDA does not see itself as either dispassionate or as an objective social science, but rather as engaged and committed. But as Fairclough and Wodak are quick to point out, this does not imply that CDA is less scholarly than other approaches to research: the same "standards of systematic analysis apply with equal force to CDA as to other approaches" (1997: 259). Still, the outspoken political objections, the intervention on the side of dominated or oppressed groups for instance, have made critics eager to place CDA within a socialist movement. Certainly, most would agree that there at least is a socialist element involved in CDA⁶.

⁶ Fairclough is perhaps the most open socialist in the CDA community (some even labelling him as a neo-marxist).

According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997) the critical approach to discourse analysis takes two distinctive views:

- a) CDA sees discourse – language use in speech and writing – as a form of ‘social practice’. This social practice is dialectical; it is a two way relationship in which the discursive event is ‘shaped by situations, institutions and social structures, but also shapes them’.
- b) Discursive practices may have major ideological effects: that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities.

(Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 258)

To Fairclough and Wodak, language is intangibly related to power relations. This focus on the importance of power is shared by Van Dijk (1993a: 250), who argues that CDA is concerned with “focusing on the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance”. Van Dijk’s definition of dominance, “the exercise of social power by elites, institutions or groups”, mirrors the notion of ‘power over discourse’ in the account of Fairclough and Wodak (1997). Blommaert (2005: 24) agrees, “power, and especially institutionally reproduced power, is central to CDA”. In other words, power relations, whether manifested as ‘dominance’, ‘hegemony’ or similar, constitute an integral part of CDA.

The way in which these power relations function in various discourses may, however, be difficult to uncover. Thus, CDA attempts to provide an analysis of how discourse works and to unmask the negative effects of power relations, namely those that result in social inequality (an ‘abuse of power’). This focus on social issues and inequality in turn makes CDA less preoccupied with trying to fit into any specific discourse theory.

According to Fairclough, adding the ‘critical’ in front of discourse analysis also recognises that our social practices, and in particular language uses, are not easily identifiable in discourse:

The normal opacity of these practices to those involved in them – the invisibility of their ideological assumptions, and of the power relations which underlie the practices – helps sustain these power relations.

(Fairclough 1996 cited in Toolan 1997: 222)

The ‘critical’ element is thus what makes CDA different; what makes it able to unmask and uncover social inequality. Many CDA-scholars have in turn criticised other approaches for being inadequate in its studies of the social dimensions of language use. According to Van Dijk (1993b: 131) these studies have often been ‘uncritical’ if not ‘apolitical’, having “aimed to describe the world, and ignored the necessity to change it”.

Within the CDA framework some important terms crop up again and again. As mentioned earlier, social power and dominance are terms that are inseparable from the framework. But what exactly does social power constitute? Firstly it is different to individual power; one’s ability to personally control people outside a larger social group or similar. Secondly, social power is inextricably linked to access; access to “socially valued resources such as wealth, income, position, status, force, group membership, education or knowledge” (Van Dijk 1993a: 254). This social power is not always bluntly enacted and is rarely easy to identify. Instead, dominant or prejudice discourse is often expressed subtly, and may even seem natural and acceptable, making the role of CDA to uncover these discourses even more important. Many examples are found in racist discourse, especially in the 1950’s and 60’s, in male dominance over women, etc. When a group accepts to be dominated by the powerful out of their free will, hegemony is closely linked to the analysis of dominant discourse. According to Herman and Chomsky (1988)⁷, “one major function of dominant discourse is precisely to manufacture such consensus, acceptance and legitimacy of dominance” (Van Dijk 1993a: 255).

Again, CDA reemphasises its multifunctional nature. The notion of hegemony and the acceptance of dominance cannot be straightforwardly accounted for. The lines between what is and what is not accepted discourse are not easily drawn, neither is the line between who are the villains and victims of such discourse. In the words of Van Dijk:

Indeed, we have already suggested that many forms of dominance appear to be ‘jointly produced’ through intricate forms of social interaction, communication and discourse.

⁷ See Herman and Chomsky’s *Manufacturing Consent* (1988) for a social critique of the political mass media which relates to CDA.

We hope that critical discourse analysis will be able to contribute to our understanding of such intricacies.

(Van Dijk 1993a: 255).

What is clear, however, is that one of the most important aspects of social dominance and power abuse lies in the access to, or in some cases control of, mass media and public discourse, which is almost exclusively confined to elite groups, such as politicians, journalists, scholars and so on. Thus, manipulation and dominance requires some form of access to public discourse to be influential, be it news reports, opinion pieces, political debates, television shows, etc. As mentioned earlier, Fairclough and Wodak (1997) noted that there is not only power *in* discourse but also the important element of power *over* discourse (Chapter 3 will look more closely at the specifics of media discourse).

Another important guiding principle in CDA is its inherently interdisciplinary nature.

Fairclough and Wodak elaborate:

(...) CDA is by its nature interdisciplinary, combining discursive disciplinary perspectives in its own analysis, and being used to complement more standard forms of social and cultural analysis.

(Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 271)

CDA, in other words, attempts to contribute to its analysis by making use of a variety of different research fields; although the most obvious contributions come from social theory, political theory and linguistic theory. For example, analyses of political discourse in relation to the London terrorist attack must take into account not only the linguistic properties of an anti-terrorism discourse, but also social theory, history, etc.

2.1.3 Different approaches of CDA

As was mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, CDA includes several different approaches. One of the most influential approaches within CDA is related to the scholar Norman Fairclough. Fairclough bases his work on two important influences. One is ‘Foucauldian’ critical theory and its relation to the importance of language as a form of social action. The second influence, and one that is similar to Fowler and Critical Linguistics, comes from Halliday’s systemic-functional model, which provides “the toolkit for deconstructing the socially constructed (thus linguistically constructed) machinery of power” (Chilton 2005: 21).

Although not the only CD-analyst influenced by Foucault, Fairclough is arguably the most obvious one, making use of terms such as ‘the order of discourse’ to outline discourse theory. The central notion of the ‘orders of discourse’ is that different discourses are constrained by different, although interdependent, networks; “we always experience the society and the various social institutions within which we operate as divided up and demarcated, structured into different spheres of action, different types of situation, each of which has its associated type of practice” (Fairclough 2001: 24). Consequently, orders of discourse will differ both relating to the type of discourse and the way they are structured. ‘Conversation’ can, for example, be of various types of discourse associated with various types of social situations. Whilst in a more formal proceeding (such as a court of law or similar) conversation may not have an important or appropriate role in the official proceedings but may have an highly important role in “off-stage” proceeding such as bargaining between different lawyers⁸.

Power relations are of central concern to Fairclough, and the ways in which the ‘orders of discourse’ function are determined by relationships of power. The notion of power is most easily identified through class relations and class struggles, but power relations equally apply to the power struggles between men and women, ethnic groups, age groups and other social groups that are not “specific to particular institutions” (Fairclough 2001: 28).

The assumption that social power roles and action can be deconstructed through linguistic analysis is also central to the work of Ruth Wodak. Wodak, however, differentiates herself from Fairclough in her research approach to discourse analysis. While Fairclough is brought up on the systemic-functional model of theory and thus often concentrates on rather limited amounts of research material, Wodak turns to the sociolinguistic and also ethnographical traditions for inspiration in what she calls the discourse-historical approach. One of the key notions in this approach is an emphasis on corpus-based research. As with Fairclough, the notion that language is inherently social remains a key assumption in the discourse-historical approach of Wodak (e.g. Frankfurt-school in social theory). What sets Wodak’s approach apart, however, is related to methodology:

(...) one of the most salient distinguishing features of the discourse-historical approach is its endeavour to work with different approaches multimethodically and on

⁸ See Fairclough’s *Language and Power* (2001) for a thorough account of ‘social order’ and the ‘orders of discourse’.

the basis of a variety of empirical data as well as background information.
(Wodak 2001: 65)

A third CDA-approach is the one associated with Dutch linguist Teun Van Dijk and his social-cognitive model. In several studies from the late eighties and early nineties Van Dijk outlined a framework for analysing news discourse, and especially newspapers, that have been highly influential to CDA. Similarly to Fairclough, Van Dijk acknowledges three different perspectives; text, discourse practice and sociocultural practice (Fairclough 1995). Importantly, the emphasis is on the link between textual analysis and sociocultural analysis. However, Van Dijk differentiates himself from both Wodak and Fairclough in what he calls a social cognitive framework – cognitive ‘models’ and ‘schemata’ shape both discourse production and comprehension:

Discourse, communication and (other) forms of action and interaction are monitored by social cognition. The same is true for our understanding of social events or of social institutions and power relations. Hence social cognitions mediate between micro- and macro-levels of society, between discourse and action, between the individual and the group.

(Van Dijk 1993a: 257)

The focus on social cognition governs the process of analysis. The macro-structure of the text is its overall organization, its themes and topics. The organization of a text is thus hierarchical, with an overriding theme (the macro-structure) at the top. A news report has a headline, a lead and different ‘events’ throughout the main text, and each element corresponds to the overall theme. Unlike Fairclough and Wodak amongst others, it is through the model of social cognition we are able to unmask the role of dominance and power in discourse; the social cognitions “explain the production as well as the understanding and influence of dominant text and talk” (Van Dijk 1993a: 257).

While Van Dijk, Fairclough and Wodak represent various positions in relation to CDA, they all share a similar source of inspiration in social theory. One of the unavoidable influences is the mentioned Foucault. Another important influence is the Frankfurt school of social theory, especially with regards to Wodak and the historical-discourse approach. All the different influences make way for several interpretations and approaches to CDA. While I have only outlined some of the main assumptions in three of the approaches in particular, it is important

to keep in mind the diversity of the theoretical framework and approaches in the field of CDA.

2.1.4 Criticism

The explicit political stance of CDA is perhaps unsurprisingly one of its most obvious controversies. An approach to discourse that implies a political and ideological bias is not controversial in itself; the problem is, however, that the ideological and political stance is an initial requirement. The biggest controversy is, in other words, not the political commitment of the researcher, but the belief that this commitment is a necessity. As Hammersley (1997: 245) remarks, “the central feature of critical research is not that researchers can have political commitments and still pursue scientific research (...), but that the latter can and ought to be geared to serve the former”. According to Hammersley, Fairclough and other CD-analysts treat the legitimacy of a critical approach as obvious, and on this basis sets off on criticising more conventional modes of research. In other words, Hammersley argues that CDA fails to invalidate the conventional research methods.

CD-analysts, however, argue that many of the more conventional scholars who try to avoid any mix of ‘politics’ or opinion into academic work, are playing right into the people in power and ignoring the *misuse* of power (e.g. dominance) and denying social inequality. In many cases a more conventional approach, rather than critically examine powerful networks, works to support and legitimise the power elites and various power relations; as Van Dijk argues, “it is this collusion that is one of the major topics of critical discourse analysis” (1993a: 254).

Still, there is an inevitable tension in the work of CDA, positioning itself in between more conventional research and its social commitment; it is “work which involves a negotiation or even a compromise between critique and science, that is, between commitment and rationality (Toolan 2002: 223). The failure to acknowledge this tension is perhaps what such a committed CD-‘activist’ as Fairclough has received most criticism for. For instance, can CDA firmly argue the need and value of uncovering impartiality in discourse without acknowledging its own role as impartial related to the analytical process? As Toolan (2002) remarks, it is, however, far preferable to concede that you cannot analyse or write about power, hegemony and dominance without yourself potentially being implicated and compromised by the powerful and hegemonizing turns of your own discourse.

2.2 Metaphor theory

An alternative framework for the analysis of both media and political discourse alike can be found in cognitive linguistics and more specifically metaphor theory. Similarly to the field of CDA, modern metaphor theory is grounded in pioneering work dating back to the late 1970's. One work stands out in particular: Lakoff and Johnson's seminal *Metaphors We Live By* from 1980. In turn, the late eighties saw the beginning of metaphor research into political discourse. Again, Lakoff was a pioneering contributor, with his research into the metaphors of the First Gulf War from 1991 raising widespread attention. The work has inspired an increase in research into metaphors of political discourse and the last ten years have, in fact, been the most productive to date, including the publication of several articles related to the latest war in Iraq (e.g. Chilton 2002, Lakoff 2003, Charteris-Black 2005, Ferrari 2007) and earlier, in the late 90's, related to racist discourse in newspapers (e.g. Santa Ana 1999, El Refaie 2001).

It is perhaps striking that the analysis of metaphors in political discourse is so profoundly influenced and guided by the already mentioned work of Lakoff and Johnson. Its importance is, however, not exaggerated. In *Metaphors We Live By* Lakoff and Johnson challenge what was the conventional and traditional view on metaphor: that they simply are poetic or linguistic devices. As Lakoff remarks, the traditional view defines metaphor as "a novel or poetic linguistic expression where one or more words for a concept are used outside of its normal conventional meaning to express a similar content (1993: 202). According to the classic, conventional interpretation, everyday language is simply assumed not to have any metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson firmly set their argument against this classical interpretation, instead claiming that metaphors indeed form a large part of our everyday thinking. Metaphors are not just poetic 'twists' of language, they are an integral part of how we conceptualise difficult and abstract concepts.

The basis of Lakoff and Johnson's groundbreaking work on metaphors goes back to the work of Michael Reddy and his 1979-article *The Conduit Metaphor*⁹. While the discussion of metaphor and thought might have been touched upon briefly by other linguists, Reddy was the first scholar to challenge the conventional ideas of metaphor and put them in a cognitive perspective. The main assumptions Reddy challenged are as follows:

⁹ A work which Lakoff has consistently emphasised as the primary influence of *Metaphors We Live By*.

- (a) All everyday conventional language is literal, and none is metaphorical
- (b) All subject matter can be comprehended literally, without metaphor
- (c) Only literal language can be contingently true or false
- (d) All definitions given in the lexicon of a language are literal, not metaphorical.
- (e) The concepts used in the grammar of language are all literal; none are metaphorical.

These traditional assumptions highlighted by Reddy form the basis of Lakoff and Johnson's work. The aim was to falsify these traditional assumptions and show how metaphors constitute powerful cognitive tools that govern everyday thought processes.

2.2.1 Lakoff and Johnson and their theory of metaphor

As Lakoff and Johnson emphatically state in the 2003 afterword to the new edition of *Metaphors We Live By*:

How we think metaphorically matters. It can determine questions of war and peace, economic policy, and legal decisions as well as the mundane choices of everyday life. Is a military attack a 'rape', 'a threat to our security' or the 'defense of a population against terrorism'? ... Is your marriage a partnership, a journey through life together, a haven from the outside world, a means for growth, or a union of two people into a third entity?

(Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 243)

Whether we conceptualise a marriage as a 'journey' or 'haven', or whether we see the relationship as a 'means for growth' or not, does, of course, matter. Perhaps even more obvious is the example of whether we perceive a military attack as a 'rape' or a 'defense'. The example shows how political metaphors may work. There are 'friends' and 'enemies', 'neighbours' and 'outsiders', 'attack' and 'defense'. One may want to 'tighten the screws' or 'loosen up' a policy; or one may want to 'protect' and 'seal its borders' in some cases, while 'open them up' in others. The list seems endless.

Before we turn to political metaphors it is, however, important to look at the more general everyday metaphors that provide a good starting-point for framing the theory of metaphor

later applied to political discourse. The initial claims of Lakoff and Johnson are neatly summed up by Kövecses (2002: viii):

- a) metaphor is a property of concepts and not of words
- b) the function of metaphor is to better understand certain concepts, and not just some artistic or esthetic purpose
- c) metaphor is often *not* based on similarity
- d) metaphor is used effortlessly in everyday life by ordinary people
- e) metaphor far from being a superfluous though pleasing linguistic ornament, is an inevitable process of human thought and reasoning

Furthermore, Lakoff and Johnson suggest that metaphors are subject to a conceptual mapping from a semantic *source* domain to a semantic *target* domain. The source domains are in most cases things that are easily identifiable to people and something we can easily relate to. These source domains are often a part of our physical world and therefore familiar. As El Refaie (2001) remarks, this could, for instance, explain why we “tend to see abstract social belonging in spatial terms and employ the metaphor of a container with a clear inside and outside to conceptualise ‘us’ and the ‘others’ (e.g. boxed in, closed, tightly sealed).

Taking the example of a conceptual metaphor such as TIME IS MONEY it can be reflected in several ways. Some examples are (Lakoff & Johnson 2003: 7-8):

You’re *wasting* my time
This gadget will *save* you hours
How do you *spend* your time these days?
I’ve *invested* a lot of time in her

The conceptual metaphor TIME IS MONEY is reflected through the target domain, TIME, via the source domain, MONEY. In modern Western culture time is seen as a valuable commodity; we receive hourly wages, we pay for how long we talk on the phone; we pay interest on our loans, etc. Lakoff and Johnson argue that the TIME IS MONEY metaphor leads to the sub-categorization of concepts such as TIME IS A LIMITED RESOURCE and TIME IS A VALUABLE COMMODITY. Accordingly, when we say that someone is wasting time, we specifically refer to time as a limited resource, although it is still a part of the overriding metaphor of TIME IS MONEY. A similar example can be provided in the conceptual metaphor of ARGUMENT IS WAR. The target domain of argument is understood

in terms of the source ‘war’; “elements from war – things like attack, defence, retreat etc. - are projected on to the abstract domain of intellectual argument (Taylor 2002: 135). Some examples of the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor are (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 4):

Your claims are *indefensible*

He *attacked every weak point* in my argument

His criticisms were *right on target*

I *demolished* his argument

The metaphor implies that when agreement is reached the argument ceases to exist, as the concept of an argument, just as wars, must end in victory or defeat. Just as with TIME IS MONEY, the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor is a typical source to target domain mapping, abstract concepts are conceptualised through more specific and physical concepts. Kövecses (2002) remarks that the same source and target domains show up time and time again. The typical source domains include the human body, health and illness, animals, building and construction, sports and games, business, cooking, machines and tools to name a few. While common target domains often are emotions, desires, issues of morality, society/nations, politics, economy and other concepts which are more abstract to human beings.

The two examples of TIME IS MONEY and ARGUMENT IS WAR, as shown above, are just two of a rich number of conceptual metaphors that Lakoff and Johnson discuss in their work. These conceptual metaphors, consisting of a source and target domain, are by no means the only metaphors in existence. In addition there are also a wide range of metaphors that can be structured into a quite small group of image-schemas:

- a) Containment (i.e. *put ideas into words, be in love*)
- b) A journey and its component parts (i.e. *he’s come a long way, she’s ahead of her time*)
- c) Proximity and distance (i.e. *a close friend, keep one’s distance*)
- d) Linkage and separation (i.e. *to keep in touch, break social ties*)
- e) Front-back orientation (i.e. *look forward to the future, look back on the past*)
- f) The part-whole relationship (i.e. *split-up, break up*)
- g) Up-down orientation (i.e. *high price, low blood-pressure*)

These image schemas are “so deeply grounded in common human experience that they constitute, as it were, universal pre-linguistic cognitive structures” (Taylor 2003: 136). They are in other words a basic part of our cognitive system; some of them closely related to our

own experience of the human body (i.e. gravitation and up-down schema). Up-down orientation provides a good example of how we use these image schemas, and results in several conceptual metaphors. The metaphor of MORE IS UP/LESS IS DOWN is for instance extensively used to denote position on a scale; *high price, high speed, low rate*, etc. This can just as well be applied to the conceptual metaphor of GOOD IS UP/BAD IS DOWN, as in *high standards, high moral values, low expectations*, etc.

2.2.2 Metaphor theory and political discourse

The work of Lakoff and Johnson and conceptual metaphor theory forms the basis of metaphor research into political discourse. The role of metaphors as a cognitive mapping of abstract concepts onto the more familiar suggests that metaphors are, indeed, a valid commodity in political discourse (as was also suggested by Kövecses, section 2.3.1). If metaphors can play an important part in how we perceive things around us, how we understand such a thing as politics, the use of metaphors can become an important tool in the legitimisation process that is so crucial in political discourse. Metaphors can thus constitute an important part of a convincing argument, and serve a legitimising purpose. Interestingly, a process of delegitimation is just as an important part of political discourse. According to Chilton:

Delegitimation can manifest itself in acts of negative other-presentation, acts of blaming, scape-goating, marginalising, excluding, attacking the moral character of some individual or group, attacking the communicative cooperation of the other, attacking the rationality and sanity of the other.

(Chilton 2004: 47 cited in Charteris-Black 2005: 17)

Metaphors are no doubt used both with a legitimising and delegitimising effect, negative other-presentation vs. positive self-representation being a good example.

As mentioned, Lakoff's (1991) study of the metaphors in the First Gulf War is one of the most important works related to metaphors in political discourse; as his famous opening line argued: "metaphors can kill. The discourse over whether we should go to war in the gulf is a panorama of metaphor" (1991: 1). Despite the article often being cited as the first to raise awareness to metaphors as an important part of political discourse, it was actually Chilton and Lakoff who two years earlier outlined what they called a "first attempt to apply the theory of conceptual metaphor to the area of foreign policy"; arguing that "unfortunately, the study of foreign policy has lagged far behind research in the cognitive sciences on the nature of

metaphorical understanding (...) This is hardly an accident. Foreign policy theorists pride themselves on realism, and metaphor, in the traditional view, is taken to be anything but realistic” (Chilton & Lakoff 1989: 3-4).

Chilton and Lakoff map out what they regard as the most important conceptual metaphors that dominate foreign policy. One of the most common metaphors they found was the STATE/NATION IS A PERSON conceptualisation. The metaphor entails that nations have ‘friends’, ‘enemies’, ‘neighbours’, ‘neutral parties’, and they can in turn be ‘trustworthy’, ‘friendly’, ‘hostile’, ‘aggressive’, ‘strong’ or ‘weak willed’, ‘stable’ or ‘unstable’ and so on. Needless to say, how the ‘personality’ of a nation is characterised is crucial to how other nations perceive it. A ‘rogue’, ‘unstable’ state that tends to be ‘aggressive’ and uncooperative is more likely to be an enemy to your own nation. The conceptualisation of a state/nation as a person is closely related to a community metaphor. The community metaphor implies that different nations each constitute a part of an international ‘community’, where there are norms, values, beliefs and responsibilities. ‘Outsiders’ do not take the responsibilities of the important nations in the community, hence nations being ‘irresponsible’, ‘immature’, ‘underdeveloped’, etc. Importantly, a community also implies rules and obligations. Consequently, there are not only law-abiding nations, but also villains.

The NATION/STATE IS A PERSON metaphor also generates several spatial and physical metaphors. A good example is found in bodily metaphors connected to health, where problems inside a nation are conceptualised as diseases one must get rid of (e.g. “purge the country”, “stop the spread”, “infect other parts of the country”). In international relations one can, for instance, speak of dealing out ‘blows’, and being ‘shot down’ in diplomatic proceedings, while cross-nation relationships may be an ‘open wound’ or ‘in healing’, to name a few examples. Another physically grounded metaphor is the conception that a NATION IS A CONTAINER. A nation can ‘isolate’ and ‘protect itself’ from outsiders or it can ‘open up’ and come ‘out of its shell’. This metaphor is also often used in domestic issues such as immigration or trade where the borders are ‘closed’ or ‘open’, one can stop the ‘flow of trade’ or ‘open up to foreign investors’, etc. (see El Refaie 2001).

Foreign relations are also often a war simply on a diplomatic level (e.g. ARGUMENT IS WAR). Countries can ‘attack’ one another for their values or position, they can ‘bully’ their way, ‘manoeuvre’ around etc. Similarly, international diplomacy makes use of an equally

important metaphor, namely POLITICS IS BUSINESS, which again is related to WAR IS POLITICS PURSUED BY OTHER MEANS¹⁰. The combination of these two metaphors is one of the most important strategic metaphors that govern reasoning in international relations. They both imply that the political ‘gains’ of conflict (e.g. war) must be balanced against the ‘costs’. A well run nation should of course keep a close account of their gains and costs in the eventuality of a war or similar in close accordance with a business model. When a country then goes to war, or imposes strict sanctions on another country, it is based on a judgement that the gains are believed to outweigh the costs. A metaphorically grounded conceptualisation of politics as is seen in POLITICS IS BUSINESS is a central pillar in the diplomatic processes of international relations. Arguably it is the ultimate grounds for rational actions.

An important emphasis in Lakoff’s recent work is on the ideological implications of metaphors in politics. In his book *Moral Politics* (2002) Lakoff suggests that there are fundamental conceptual differences in conservative and liberal thought. In essence, Lakoff argues that while liberals govern their conceptual systems through an overriding conceptual metaphor of a ‘nurturing parent role’, the conservatives employ what Lakoff calls a ‘strict father’ morality. The ideological implications are fundamentally different; conservatives tend to see personal prosperity being realised through discipline and hard work, while liberals see prosperity as best achieved through a nurturing model (i.e. caring and helping for others) (see Lakoff 2002).

One of the most notable claims in *Moral Politics* is the suggestion that conservatives tend to make use of more metaphors than liberal politicians do; they, in other words, tend to be more inventive¹¹. In turn, this suggests that conservative metaphors more often become unconsciously (or idiomatically) accepted. Conservatism is thus more likely to shape our understanding of the world. An example of the ideological implications Lakoff (and Johnson) argues are for instance found in the metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR (see also criticism, section 2.3.3). As other critics also have pointed out (see for instance Tannen 1998), this conception is part of a discourse of aggression and violence, which shapes our understanding

¹⁰ Lakoff (1991) names it the Clausewitz-metaphor after Prussian general Karl von Clausewitz who famously argued that war should be perceived through a cost-benefit analysis.

¹¹ This ‘inventiveness’ is, according to Lakoff, largely due to the vast amounts of money and time the conservatives have dedicated to forming ideas and language, through think tanks and university funding (*UC Berkeley News*, 27.10.03).

of what arguments constitute; arguments become more aggressive and warlike. Our conception of arguments are indeed so deeply rooted in a war conception that any other conception, like an argument being a ‘dance’, would more than likely not be considered an argument (Lakoff & Johnson 2003: 5). The example shows how a metaphor can have unconscious ideological implications which are an integral part of how we conceptualise it.

2.2.3 Criticism

The various metaphors that are highlighted above are some of the most important and dominant metaphors that are part of an international political discourse. Some of them are indeed so commonplace that they are accepted unconsciously; while some might even be argued to have lost all their rhetoric impact. The obvious question, then, is when does a metaphor stop being a metaphor? What is metaphorical and what is not? The criticism of Lakoff has not only concerned his overtly ‘leftist’ political persuasion, but also, from the more metaphor theoretical perspective, his overemphasis on the rhetoric significance of many metaphors. Billig and MacMillan, for instance, suggest that Lakoff’s theory of metaphor is “too simple to account for the complex, rhetorical processes by which a metaphor might pass from a striking, novel comparison into an unthinking idiom” (2005: 460). What Billig and MacMillan refer to is the issue of whether metaphors can die out, or as they put it, the “diachronic passage by which a bright young metaphor becomes a dried lexical stalk” (2005: 460). Indeed, it is evident that some metaphors may become lexicalised, taking a literal rather than metaphorical meaning (i.e. passing from metaphor to idiom). The living metaphor is killed by what Billig and MacMillan call *usure*, the wearing down or usage, of the original meaning (2005: 461).

A *usure*-theory thus suggests that metaphors may turn into idioms by a process of habituation, where lexical items become conventional and, in turn, idiomatic. Such a theory is inextricably linked with a diachronic approach to language and is similar to Wodak’s emphasis on the importance of a historical approach to Critical Discourse Analysis. Metaphors are inherently linked to being ‘like’ something else, its essence is “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson 2003: 5). But what happens when a metaphor no longer shares the same common properties between the source and target domain, as it has become commonly lexicalised?

Lakoff has argued that the process where a metaphor becomes an unconscious conceptualisation becomes even more ideologically implicit, thus making it more powerful (see argument is war, section 2.3.2). Accordingly, Lakoff is able to account for the idiomatic processes of metaphors (their potential death) through the existence of cultural and ideological movement. The concept of ARGUMENT IS WAR thus becomes an important unconscious ideological tool, reflecting a discourse of violence.

However, as Billig and MacMillan argue, the effect may not be as straightforward as suggested by Lakoff. A metaphor may become so habituated by language-users that they react unconsciously in a “single, predictable way” (2005: 478). In other words, the unconsciousness may involve that the metaphor is remote from any ideological input to the language-user. A good example is found in the highly common move of declaring war on a political subject; for instance, the ‘war on drugs’, ‘war on crime’, ‘war on corruption’, etc. Indeed, such rhetorical moves are so commonly used they seem almost empty of meaning, and do not necessarily imply any real changes of policy. As Billig and MacMillan suggest, this may reflect a commercialised culture which requires inflated rhetoric, and through the “constant repetition of the idiom, the metaphorical meaning is dulled” (2005: 478).

What is and what is not metaphorical is, in other words, hard to define. Billig and MacMillan suggest that Lakoff’s political metaphor theory, although highly influential and groundbreaking, might be overemphasising the metaphorical cognitive processes. Over time, some metaphors pass from metaphors to idioms, and in this process may lose their ideological input (see Billig & MacMillan 2005). Others, however, argue that there is nothing to suggest that what we think of as idioms lack metaphorical meaning although they are frequent in use. As Gibbs remarks, “scholars often treat idioms as dead metaphors because they confuse dead metaphors with conventional ones. The position fails to distinguish between conventional metaphors, which are part of our live conceptual system (...), and historical metaphors that are no longer useful or part of how we ordinarily think” (Gibbs 1994: 22). Gibbs thus agrees with Lakoff in the suggestion that it is in fact these conventional metaphors, the unconscious and effortless, that are most significant in governing thought processes.

2.3 CDA and cognitive metaphor-theory; any middle ground?

I have broadly outlined two different approaches to analyses of media and political discourse. Although they draw on vastly different theories, one firmly set in the tradition of cognitive linguistics and one in the sociolinguistic tradition, they still share many of the same assumptions about political and media discourse. Firstly, they both share the same aim: through either critical discourse analysis or metaphor analysis respectively political rhetoric and political agendas can be uncovered. Although cognitive linguists preoccupied with metaphors of political discourse do not share the same outspoken assumptions, or even activism, of many CD-analysts, it is clear that also the study of political metaphors aims to uncover instances of prejudice, social inequality and other instances of what was mentioned as a delegitimisation process¹². Many of the metaphors that govern political discourse are no doubt unconsciously conceptualised. When a politician speaks of ‘friends’ or ‘enemies’ we unconsciously make use of the NATION STATE IS A PERSON-metaphor. When a proposition is argued to be ‘protective’ or ‘isolationist’ a NATIONS AS CONTAINERS metaphor is in work. Consequently, these metaphors become powerful rhetorical tools, and if a newly established metaphor can become an unconscious, idiomatic, metaphor, it can no doubt serve a rhetorical and ideological purpose.

Ideology is indeed highly important in both CDA and metaphor theory. Similarly to the two-fold processes of legitimisation and delegitimisation, a definition of ideology is dependent on whether the ideological assumptions are a matter of “false consciousness” or more neutrally, “a comprehensive and coherent social perception of the world”. More specifically ideology can be seen “as a systematic body of ideas, organized from a particular point of view” (Hodge and Kress 1993: 15 cited in Charteris-Black 2005: 21); it is a belief system upon which a social group “justifies its existence to itself” (Charteris-Black 2005: 21). Needless to say, such a definition makes the concept of ideology increasingly important to an analysis of media and political discourse, as ideology becomes an important resource in legitimising a certain view or policy¹³.

¹² See Chilton (2004) and Charteris-Black (2005)

¹³ (‘Self’ vs. ‘Others’ representation is a good example of such a legitimising ideology where there is an ‘us’-‘them’ polarisation often resulting in the notion that ‘we’ are good and ‘they’ are bad)

Although sharing many assumptions and objections about political and media discourse, there have been notably few attempts in trying to combine the theoretical frameworks CDA and metaphor theory into a coherent framework of discourse analysis as a whole. Most often, research in the field of political and media discourse is restricted to making use of one of the two models. This is acknowledged by Hart (2005, 2008) who argues that CDA has neglected cognitive theories of meaning in discourse. However, Hart (2008: 93) admits several compatibility problems. Firstly, the focus is different. Cognitive theorists are not occupied with individual sentences, but rather metaphorical mappings, while CDA, in contrast, focuses on concrete examples of language (actual instances of talk or text). Secondly, tension between the two theories arises with regards to the element of consciousness. In CDA, metaphors are generally considered to be ‘chosen’ by speakers, while in metaphor theory metaphors are often unconscious. Finally, there are opposing perceptions of the relation between linguistic representation and conceptual representation. While metaphor theory views linguistic structures merely as reflections of the conceptual structure, CDA entails that a “linguistic representation in discourse can determine, to some extent, conceptual representation” (Hart 2008: 94)¹⁴.

The theoretical differences between CDA and metaphor theory are on the one hand clear-cut. The cognitive framework of metaphor theory, the emphasis on cognitive and often unconscious processes, in many ways excludes a theoretical unity between the CDA-orientated approach and metaphor theory. At the same time, many of the key assumptions made about language and discourse remain. The main aim of this thesis, as was set forth in the introduction, is to highlight the ideological implications of both wider discourse processes and metaphors in both government and media discourse. Accordingly, both frameworks become useful in such an analysis. Indeed, if the different theoretical backgrounds are kept in mind, the different approaches may prove to be complementary to each other.

¹⁴ Note that Hart attempts to solve the ‘gap’ by linking metaphor theory to conceptual blending theory, an alternative to conceptual metaphor theory founded on mental space theory (see Hart 2008).

Chapter 3: The Media

Chapter 2 outlined the basic theoretical framework of the thesis. Media discourse (and also political discourse) was, however, only briefly mentioned as significant in both Critical Discourse Analysis and metaphor analysis. This chapter will specifically discuss the media; first in relation to discourse processes (section 3.1), secondly, as an overview of our media research target; newspapers (section 3.2), and finally, by discussing the public opinion context of the Iraq war (section 3.3). Finally, a summary is provided (3.4).

3.1 The media and discourse

As mentioned in the previous chapter, an important assumption in discourse analysis is its ideational function. Media discourse is no exception. News reporting, whether in the form of a newspaper report or a television broadcast, is never neutral. Rather, news reports are subject to a highly selective process. For one, nothing is automatically newsworthy; every event does not make the news. Additionally, various media outlets, be it newspapers or competing television stations, report news in different ways. For instance, a newspaper such as *The Sun* will find different stories newsworthy than the *Guardian*, as will the conservative broadsheet the *Daily Telegraph* and the liberal broadsheet the *Independent*. What the consumer receives is ultimately a partial view of the world, or as Fowler (1991: 11) remarks, “the world of the Press is not the real world, but a world skewed and judged”.

Most people would find the ideological differences uncontroversial. As Fairclough (1991) remarks, these differences of ideology between various media outlets are mostly considered to be a healthy part of a democratic country. At the same time, there exists a common assumption that some news reports are in fact neutral (more than often reflected in personal opinion). Certainly, this is a potentially dangerous view of media discourse. Instead, it is important to keep in mind that all media discourse is subject to a *representation* of events.

These important assumptions about media discourse by no means become less important considering the extremely powerful social role of the media today. In fact, the media constitutes a huge part of people’s everyday lives; in print, radio, TV and on the internet. This position gives it the ability to influence knowledge, beliefs, values, social relations and social

identities (Fairclough 1995: 2). Accordingly, access to the media, whether as a writing journalist or as a skilled politician, is inextricably linked with power. This ‘power over discourse’, as argued by Fairclough and Wodak (1997, see chapter 2), is almost exclusively a matter of access. The media indeed plays a pivotal role, by (a) having the access itself and, (b), being the primary distributor of this access. This access is of course limited; not everyone can achieve the same amount of access and, accordingly, a potential lack of access is as power reducing as the opposite is enhancing.

A fundamental difference between other forms of communication and media discourse relates to communicative events. In direct speech between two people or in a group discussion the time of creation and consumption is the same. In the media, however, this relation between creation and consumption is different. A newspaper article or a TV news presentation not only consists of a communicative event when it is created, it is also an event in its production and, further, in the various times of consumption. Thus, the communicative events of media discourse are more complex than a single communicative event, and must rather be seen as a chain of communicative events (Fairclough 1995).

An important focus in this communicative chain lies in the mediation between the private and public domain. Indeed, in this mediation process the media has been a major contributor in restructuring people’s expectations of what can be regarded as behaviour for private consumption and what is public. This has gained notable criticism as having a negative effect of blurring the lines between what is public and private. A good example is found in the reporting of celebrity or gossip news, and also in how the media portray people in crisis (e.g. people in grief, personal crisis, etc.)

Importantly, feedback or consumer response is not readily available to the newsmakers. As a result, the media try to create an ideal audience: “producers postulate and construct ‘ideal’ audiences partly on the basis of guesses about audience response and various types of indirect evidence (such as programme ratings or market research)” (Fairclough 1995: 40). Consumer awareness has become more important in the last decade, perhaps as a result of fiercer competition and ratings monitoring becoming more easily obtained. There is an obvious tension connected to these advances in audience targeting, with the pressure to gain high ratings often intensifying the focus on entertainment rather than information. Accordingly, it

is fair to pose the question of whether the growing pressures of ratings may contribute to a further distortion to the mentioned processes of selection.

Going back to the role of access in the media discourse it is important to note that the media is under clear professional and constitutional control. It is more often than not hard to gain access for people outside of the power elites¹⁵, as access is subject to several hurdles such as economic interests, editors, sub-editors, to name a few. However, as early as 1995, Fairclough acknowledged processes in what he called “mitigating the unequal distribution of access”. Fairclough was referring to vox pop¹⁶ and radio phone-in programmes as having an important impact in bridging the gap in access between elite groups and the less powerful. Today, these tendencies, acknowledged by Fairclough back in 1995, have arguably grown to new heights with technological advances and access to the internet becoming more and more widespread. Almost every newspaper, TV-channel or magazine has an online version where readers can submit blogs, comment on stories and even chat with journalists and other readers. The Iraq war in 2003 was perhaps the first war when people in Europe had the possibility of accessing both Arabic and ‘western’ news broadcasts. At the same time they could learn what the Iraqi people themselves thought via the internet; they could make their opinions heard on discussion boards; and for the first time, a controversial war¹⁷ could be seen on 24-hour news channels that made extensive use of viewer response via digital teletext (see section 3.2 and 3.3).

3.1.1 The media and political discourse

Media discourse is closely connected with political discourse and rhetoric. An analysis of a newspaper report on a political speech or a debate in the House of Commons, must, for instance, take into account both processes in media discourse and political discourse. In analysing political discourse, however, there are also several distinct features that need to be taken into account. A considerable influence on the field of political discourse comes from sociology and Pierre Bordieu; Thompson (1991) sums up his position:

¹⁵ Elite-groups such as journalists, politicians, state officials etc. See earlier discussion on access.

¹⁶ Similar to what is called “man on the street” in the US (in Norway “5 on the street”). Basically, it is asking for opinions on a particular news story from people on the street.

¹⁷ The Afghanistan war that preceded the Iraq war is not forgotten. Still, the Iraq war created significantly more media attention, largely due to its controversy.

It would be superficial (at best) to try to analyse political discourse or ideologies by focusing on the utterances as such, without reference to the constitution of the political field and the relations between this field and the broader space of social positions and processes ... attempts to apply some form of semiotics or 'discourse analysis' to political speeches ... take for granted but fail to take account of the sociohistorical conditions within which the object of analysis is produced, constructed and received.
(Thompson cited in Fairclough 1995: 177)

The important implication of Bordieu is that a simply linguistically based analysis of political discourse would prove unfruitful if it is not backed up by a clear account of its sociohistorical preconditions. Bordieu acknowledges that political discourse is "doubly determined" (Fairclough 1995): On the one hand, it is an autonomous discourse which is produced and influenced within the political sphere. Speech in Parliament is, for example, a discourse internally produced within the field of politics. On the other hand, political discourse is also externally produced in that politicians must represent and respond to the public that has elected, or might consider electing them. An analysis of political discourse can, then, be two-fold. It can either look at the internal aspects of political discourse (e.g. the different discourses produced 'inside' political life such as the House of Commons or government proceedings) or it can look at the external proceedings, such as the communicative relationship between politicians and the public. Obviously, the media plays a crucial role in this relationship and thus should also be central in political analysis; a role that, according to Fairclough, Bordieu largely overlooks (Fairclough 1995: 183).

According to Fairclough an analysis of political discourse must not only be based on the various orders of discourse, but more specifically the 'order of mediatized political discourse'. The political world consists of a large amount of different voices, discourses and genres, where, according to Fairclough, the media plays a crucial role. The different voices can be divided into five categories (1995: 185-86):

- (a) Political reporters (e.g. journalists, correspondents, TV-presenters etc.
- (b) Politicians, trade union leaders, archbishops etc.
- (c) Experts (e.g. political analysts/commentators, academics.)
- (d) Representatives of new social movements (e.g. Greenpeace, Oxfam etc.)
- (e) Ordinary people

Needless to say, the different voices are often internally diverse; perhaps most notably this is the case with politicians, where there clearly are vastly different levels of influence based on access to media, hierarchical position, governmental power, etc. Discourses are, as opposed to voices, the more general political trends that are being implemented (policy, doctrines etc.) The relationship between discourses and voices is often complex, as the different voices are highly varied and rapidly prone to change. Thus, the discourses are always relational and relative. Accordingly, a conservative politician may, for instance, draw upon discourses that would have been perceived as liberal previously, and vice versa.

The different voices, discourses and genres give a complex picture of the orders of a ‘mediatized political discourse’. A number of questions arise with regards to the relationship between political discourse and media discourse. The most important is perhaps the question of how political discourses shape media reports, and, also, how the media, and the privilege of access to the media, shape the discourse of politicians.

The central concern to this thesis lies in the former. The increasingly powerful role of the mass media in politics and its position in society as a whole has been well and truly noted by political parties and politicians, resulting in vast amounts of both energy and resources being put into media management. The growing importance of being rhetorically gifted as a politician has been striking the last decade. Political leaders with a ‘gift for the gab’ have not only been able to come to power, they have more often than not, been able to stay there.

3.2 Newspapers in Britain

British national newspapers are traditionally divided into three categories: up-market/broadsheet; mid-market; and tabloid/lower-market. The split is not only a journalistic one; it is also related to lay-out. The up-market papers were traditionally all large in size, hence the name broadsheet. In recent years, however, several of the traditionally up-market papers have switched to more compact sizes (*Independent*, *The Times*) and Berliner-format (*Guardian*, *Observer*). Mid-market and tabloid papers are both of a tabloid format. The national newspapers can be divided as follows (Sunday editions in brackets / *ownership in italics*):

Up-market:

- The Daily Telegraph (Sunday Telegraph) / *David and Fredrick Barclay*
- The Financial Times / *Pearson PLC*
- The Times (The Sunday Times) / *News Corporation*
- The Independent (Independent on Sunday) / *Independent News and Media*
- The Guardian (The Observer) / *The Scott Trust*

Mid-market:

- Daily Express (Sunday Express) / *Northern and Shell PLC*
- Daily Mail (Sunday Mail) / *Daily Mail and General Trust PLC*
- Metro¹⁸ / *Daily Mail and General Trust PLC*

Tabloid

- Daily Mirror (Sunday Mirror) / *Trinity Mirror*
- The Sun (News of the World) / *News Corporation*
- The People / *Trinity Mirror*
- Daily Star (Daily Star Sunday) / *Northern and Shell PLC*
- Daily Sport (The Sunday Sport) / *Sport Newspapers Group*

Of the up-market/broadsheet papers both the *Independent* and *Guardian/Observer* must be regarded as left-wing or more liberal papers, compared to the *Times*, the *Financial Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* who are all more conservative in their political opinions. The latter is perhaps the most obvious and outspoken supporter of the Conservative party¹⁹. Within the mid-market and tabloid papers there is a similar divide with Trinity Mirror-owned publications such as the *Daily Mirror* and the *People* traditionally being Labour-supportive, while News Corporation-owned the *Sun* stand out as the most predominant Conservative-supportive paper with the *Daily Express*, and its owner Northern Shell Media, running a close second.

British newspapers also show a distinct pattern in relation to socio-economic class and readership. Chan and Goldthorpe (2007: 1110) show that the up-market, mid-market and

¹⁸ Free paper available in 14 urban centres throughout Britain and published by Associated Press. Not printed on Saturdays and Sundays.

¹⁹ Famously renamed '*The Torygraph*' in the satirical magazine *Private Eye* due to its strong ties to the Conservative Party.

lower-market papers all can be clearly divided based on the social class of their various readers. The up-market papers attract people who work in jobs with high social status and relatively high income; mid-market papers attract the highest amount of readers from the lower-middle class with medium social status and income; while lower-market papers mainly attract readers from the working class and jobs of a lower social status.

3.2.1 Newspapers and Iraq

Six of the daily newspapers were supportive of the war in Iraq: the *Times*, *Sun*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Express*, *Daily Mail* and *Daily Star*. Three papers opposed the war: *Independent*, the *Mirror* and *Guardian* (Stanyer 2004: 421). Based on circulation numbers of March 2003 the pro-war newspapers gathered a combined circulation of 9,134,294 papers opposed to a 2,584,359 circulation of the three anti-war papers²⁰. In other words, the combined circulation of pro-war dailies outweighed the anti-war ones with over 6 million copies, the anti-war papers standing for under a third of UK sales.

By many, the Iraq war has been considered to be the single biggest media event in history²¹. This was also reflected in the public interest and although newspapers were far from first in the competition to be breaking news on the events in the Iraq war, they saw a substantial boost in circulation figures in the month of March 2003 (Table 3 and 4). The most important boost in circulation came in the first week of the war, before figures steadily declined back to previous levels.

Table 3: Net Circulation of Daily Papers March 2003/2002

PAPER	MAR 2003	MAR 2002	% CHANGE
Sun	3,521,144	3,379,508	4.19
Daily Mail	2,341,999	2,318,023	1.03
Daily Mirror	1,997,846	2,089,539	-4.39
Daily Telegraph	910,725	952,622	-4.40
Daily Express	888,145	852,252	4.21
Daily Star	849,689	755,040	11.22
Times	622,592	657,113	-5.25
Financial Times	453,282	469,521	-3.46
Guardian	396,849	382,057	3.87
Independent	189,664	191,826	-1.13

Source: Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC)s from mediaguardian.co.uk.

²⁰ The *Financial Times* did not take a particular editorial stance for or against the Iraq War.

²¹ Estimations say that between 2,500 and 3,000 people were involved in the reporting of the early stages of the war. In comparison, 1500 journalists took part in the first Gulf war in the early 90's (Stanyer 2004).

Table 4: Net Circulation of Sunday Papers March 2003/2002

PAPER	MAR 2003	MAR 2002	% CHANGE
News of the World	3,849,013	3,970,726	-3.06
Mail on Sunday	2,312,905	2,277,898	1.54
Sunday Mirror	1,603,578	1,762,500	-9.02
Sunday Times	1,365,988	1,368,608	-0.19
Sunday Express	859,290	812,482	5.76
Sunday Telegraph	704,964	753,255	-6.41
Sunday Mail	619,546	662,170	-6.44
Observer	430,791	422,470	1.97
Independent on Sunday	182,719	193,809	-5.72

Source: Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC)s from mediaguardian.co.uk.

Both Table 3 and 4 show an increase in sales with several papers, most notable is the increase in circulation of daily papers the *Sun* and the *Guardian*. Several papers are also minimising the trend of decreasing sales (see section 3.1), most notably the *Daily Mail* and the *Financial Times*²². While some of the changes in circulation numbers no doubt can be attributed to events outside the war and politics in general, there is a clear overall increase in sales for March 2003; an increase which also continued into April 2003²³. In April 2003 the *Guardian* reported that all newspapers could report increasing sales the first week of the war with one notable exception in the anti-war paper the *Daily Mirror*. The *Times* reported an increase of about 5 %, The *Independent* claimed sales had risen by 9 %, while the *Guardian* claimed a 6 % increase (*MediaGuardian* 01.04.2003) Perhaps the most disappointing performance was that of the *Daily Mirror* whose harsh anti-war line clearly did not reflect well on its readership (see also discussion in section 3.3).

3.3 Public opinion

The support for military action reflected in the majority of newspapers did not, however, reflect public opinion. Opposition before the start of the war remained fierce, its absolute height being when approximately one million people marched in a demonstration in London organised by a strong coalition of anti-war organizations. Significantly, protesters were not only made up of political ‘activists’, but also a large number of ‘ordinary’ citizens. The opposition on the street of Britain’s largest cities was also reflected in opinion polls. Already

²² Down 9,79 % from January 2002 to 2003 and down 6,4 % from December 2002 to December 2001, compared to the 3,46 % decrease between February 2003 and 2002.

²³ The *Express* had, for instance, been steadily increasing their sales all year. Their high increase reflects this trend in addition to what might be argued as a slight boost due to the Iraq War. Also the *Daily Star* had a significant increase throughout the year and was only slightly up from their previous months’ average.

back in November 2002 an ICM poll for the *Guardian* showed that two fifths of voters were opposed to any military action against Iraq. The trend was reconfirmed in December and continued all the way into the final days before the start of the war, as indicated below (Table 5):

Table 5: ICM/*Guardian* poll on War in Iraq 2002/2003

Q: *Would you approve or disapprove of a military attack on Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein?*

	<u>Dec 15</u>	<u>Jan 17</u>	<u>Feb 14</u>	<u>Mar 14</u>	<u>Mar 21</u>	<u>Apr 11</u>
Approve	36 %	30 %	29 %	38 %	54 %	63 %
Disapprove	44 %	47 %	52 %	44 %	30 %	23 %
Don't know	20 %	23 %	19 %	18 %	15 %	14 %

Source: icmresearch.co.uk/guardian.co.uk

Opposition was at its height around one month before the start of the invasion. However, in the last week before the start of the war, support saw a sharp rise. The war opposed majority from March 14th was in the space of one week turned into considerable support for the war with 54 % supporting the war, 30 % were against and 15 % uncertain. In April support for the war made a further increase to 63 %. One of the leading media research companies in the UK, MORI, called the turnaround from opposition to support one of the most dramatic it had witnessed. Their polls confirmed what had been found in the ICM survey, showing a 30 % increase in the approval for military action once the war started (Stanyer 2004: 428)). The “sudden and widespread shift in public mood”, as the *Guardian* called it (25.03.03), could also be clearly seen in the approval ratings of Prime Minister Tony Blair. ICM polls conducted for *News of the World* from before and after the war show a dramatic shift in the PM's popularity:

Table 6: ICM/*News of the World* poll on Blair approval March 2003

Q: *Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Prime Minister Tony Blair is handling the current situation regarding Iraq?*

	<u>Mar 6</u>	<u>Mar 28</u>
Approve	29 %	50 %
Disapprove	53 %	39 %
Don't know	18 %	11 %

Source: icmresearch.co.uk/News of the World

One of the main reasons for the turnaround in opinion has been attributed to patriotism and a desire to ‘support the troops’. Such a ‘patriotic shift’ is not necessarily to be confused with a shift in favour of government policy. However, Blair’s approval ratings indicate that this was not solely the case. While the surge in support for the war may to a certain point hide discontent with people perhaps feeling “obliged to show support for British troops once war began”, the jump in approval for Blair shows, perhaps more clearly, how support for the war gained pace from mid-march and onwards (Lewis et al. cited in Murray et al. 2008: 8). Thus, patriotism can only be regarded as *partly* responsible and does not account for the turnaround on its own.

The indication that Iraq had ‘weapons of mass destruction’, or ‘WMD’ as it was popularly shortened, was central to the debate before March 2003. In turn, United Nations (UN) support for military action was highly dependent on whether the US/UK could prove that the Iraqis had this alleged ‘WMD’. A MORI poll conducted in January 2003 showed that 61 % of the British people would support military action against Iraq with the backing of the UN, while as much as 77 % would oppose war without the UN’s approval. The importance of UN involvement in the military operations was clearly increasing within the public; opposition to war without the UN was up 7 % from a similar survey conducted in September 2002 while support was down 10 % (Lewis 2004: 298). The British government and Tony Blair were of course acutely aware of the significance both the UN and the question of ‘WMD’ represented to public support for the war. As Justin Lewis suggests, “once it became clear that Hans Blix’s team would not turn up the ‘smoking gun’ *and* the UN would not sanction war with Iraq, they needed to persuade people that these conditions were less pivotal to the case of war” (Lewis 2004: 298). One of the efforts of government rhetoric was for instance the attack on French leaders blaming them for ruining the diplomatic process set forth in the UN Security Council. An ICM poll for *News of the World* from March 2003 showed that 59 % believed that French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac was putting French interests before the interests of the global community and 49 % supported Tony Blair in his famous statement saying that the French had poisoned the diplomatic process. Most tellingly, 58 % disapproved of the way Chirac was handling the current situation regarding Iraq (*ICMresearch.co.uk*).

Looking at the breakdown between social classes, the ICM/*Guardian* poll from February 2003 showed that opposition against war was highest within the upper middle class and middle class (58 %) and the lower working class (55 %). While opposition still was high (49

%) in the lower middle class, this was also the social group most supportive of the war. The same pattern was confirmed in polls conducted both before and after February. Another survey, again by ICM for the *Guardian*, also showed that opposition was significantly higher amongst people who read the liberal broadsheet press compared to more conservative counter-parts, while support for the war was high with the tabloid readership (Table 7):

Table 7: Reader opinion regarding Iraq

Q: Do you approve or disapprove of the Military attack on Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein? (% of readers)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	49	34	17
<i>Times</i>	55	29	16
<i>Daily Express</i>	57	26	17
<i>Daily Mail</i>	61	26	13
<i>Sun</i>	68	17	16
<i>Daily Mirror</i>	49	38	13
<i>Guardian</i>	25	66	10
<i>Independent</i>	38	55	16

Source: ICMresearch.co.uk/Guardian

Keeping in mind the political stance of the different newspapers (see section 3.2), it is only the *Mirror* which can be argued as ‘out of touch’ with their readers with respect to their views of the war. Stanyer (2004: 429) remarks that “while the readers shifted position to support the war, the paper maintained its anti-war stance throughout”. This juxtaposition between the editorial line and the readers has later been regarded as the main reason for the *Mirror*’s falling sales in the period, a decrease of 4,39 % in daily circulation numbers and 9,02 % in their Sunday numbers (see section 3.2). It is, however, not possible to prove that the *Mirror* readership actually binned their paper due to the paper’s views on the war and the coverage per se. Putting Iraq on top of the agenda might have been an equally important factor in alienating the readership, the paper moving slightly away from its usual tabloid style to more serious left-centre influenced reports²⁴. In April the paper and editor Piers Morgan deliberately took some of the emphasis away from Iraq, again focusing on more traditional tabloid stories (celebrity scandals, gossip etc.), giving their circulation numbers a badly needed boost²⁵.

²⁴ For instance, the *Mirror* included several liberal journalists such as Robert Fiske in their ‘Iraq team’. As sales continued to drop into April 2003, the paper and editor Piers Morgan moved away from their expansive war reporting to more traditional tabloid features (*Guardian*, 28.04.03).

²⁵ Piers Morgan has later explained that the *Mirror*’s commitment to the Iraq-war was partly based on their highly successful coverage of the terrorist attacks of September 11. The *Daily Mirror* was, according to Morgan, the only tabloid paper to thoroughly cover the New York attacks in the months after it happened.

Just as the *Mirror*'s new and 'serious' war reporting was to be short-lived, Tony Blair's 'Baghdad bounce' would soon turn in favour of a new rise in opposition and new lows in Blair's approval rating. A poll by YouGov for Sky News conducted in June showed that 43 % believed that Tony Blair had 'deliberately distorted information' regarding Saddam Hussein's possession of WMD, with 70 % saying it 'matters a lot' whether Blair told the truth or not (yougov.co.uk, 03.06.2003). Also, a focus group survey of so-called "switchers", former Conservative party voters who switched to Labour in 1997²⁶, in the *Financial Times* in June 2003 reported that they felt 'duped' by Blair on the war in Iraq (*Financial Times*, 17.06.03).

The scandal over the so called 'dodgy dossier' and the death of Ministry of Defence-employee, Dr. David Kelly, and the subsequent inquiry by Lord Hutton, made Blair's approval ratings even worse²⁷. In an ICM poll for the Guardian in late September, after the Hutton inquiry had begun its proceedings, 61 % of respondents said they were dissatisfied with the Prime Minister, while only 32 % responded as 'satisfied'. 53 % answered they thought the war in Iraq was unjustified (with 38 % considering it to be justified), while as much as 70 % said they believed Blair to be "too concerned with public relations and spin" (ICMresearch.co.uk). A poll by ICM for the *Sunday Telegraph* confirmed the results of the Guardian survey with 67 % of people stating that the government 'did deceive' the public about Saddam Hussein's 'weapons of mass destruction', 61 % saying they believed the dossier on Iraq's WMD was 'sexed up' as reported by the BBC, while only 29 % believed that UK and US forces would find clear evidence of WMD in Iraq.

In between the hearings of August and September 2003 and the final report of January 2004, Blair's approval rating and support for the Iraq War again rose slightly (to 38 % compared to 32 % in September)²⁸. Once the Hutton report was published, however, Blair's ratings again dropped, with 53 % stating that the PM's reputation had deteriorated and 37 % responding that he should resign. Respondents stating they were 'dissatisfied' with Blair rose to 55 % in January and a further 58 % in the ICM/*Guardian* poll for February. Still, in March 2004, a year after the start of the conflict in Iraq, 48 % answered in an ICM/*Newsnight* poll that

²⁶ Blair's first election win and the start of New Labour.

²⁷ David Kelly was named as the source in BBC's disclosure of dodgy intelligence reports regarding Iraq. Lord Hutton was asked to lead an official judiciary inquiry into the circumstances of his death.

²⁸ After the successful capture of Saddam Hussein, an ICM/New Frontiers survey also showed that 55 % believed that it was "justified" to remove the Iraqi leader from power.

military action was the right thing to do with 43 % stating it was wrong. In other words, Blair's approval ratings did not reflect public opinion on the war directly but was more likely to be linked to the Hutton inquiry and the row over allegedly 'dodgy' intelligence reports.

3.4 Summary

Both the media and public opinion figures reveal several of the important contexts of this thesis. Firstly, figures show the sheer size of the Iraq war as a media and political event. Indeed, the hunger for news of the war was insatiable; a fact reflected both in newspaper circulation and TV and radio figures. Secondly, the British public reflected rapidly changing opinions of the war. What was initially a historical opposition to war, in the matter of weeks, witnessed a dramatic turnaround in favour of Blair and his government. Numbers reveal that patriotic tendencies were likely to be part of the reason for this turnaround, but, as was mentioned, this must only be considered as one of several factors, as it fails to explain the sudden political support for the Prime Minister himself. Other important contexts that form part of this thesis are also brought up. The French/English dispute is one example, the issue of WMD another. Importantly, figures also show how the war and the events surrounding the Hutton inquiry saw Blair's popularity and approval drop to unprecedented depths.

Chapter 4: The ‘third way’: Blair’s international discourse

When New Labour and its leader, Tony Blair, came to power in 1997 it represented a new political era in the UK. The simplicity of Labour’s catch-phrase ‘a new politics for a new Britain’ clearly struck a chord within the British public; a public who had grown tired of a long Conservative reign. The change was not only prominent in domestic politics, New Labour also created a new and powerful discourse of international relations and policy. It was a discourse whose rhetoric would see Britain face more challenges on the international arena than any previous Labour government ever had. The Iraq war and the controversy and debate that preceded the military operations themselves would become the ultimate test for what has been described as Blair’s ‘third way’ in international discourse.

The Iraq discourse is founded on basic principles and assumptions that guide Blair and New Labour’s foreign policies. On the one hand these principles were set out in the early years of New Labour. On the other, they were set out in the aftermath of the events in the United States on September 11, 2001. One of the implications of the shocking terrorist attacks was that it changed many of the main assumptions of international relations. Accordingly, the international discourse had to change. This combination of the basic political assumptions of Labour and ‘Blairist’ international relations with the implications of September 11 forms the basis of the discourse on Iraq.

I will look at both the political foundations and the main characteristics of Blair’s international discourse before and after the terrorist attacks of September 11 (section 4.1 and 4.2), before turning to the main focus at hand, the discourse of the Iraq war (section 4.3).

4.1 New Labour and the ‘third way’

Language is a crucial part of New Labour. As Norman Fairclough puts it, “language has always been important in politics, but the way New Labour does politics makes it more so” (2000: vii). New Labour is a rhetorical move in itself; it is a ‘vision’ of a ‘new politics’ for a ‘new Britain’. The ‘new’ in Labour was, of course, intended to indicate change from ‘old’ Labour: New Labour was by no means to be confused with the stale ‘socialist’ and left to centre politics that allegedly had prevailed in the Labour party for such a long time. Instead it

was supposed to spark an idea of reinvention, a fresh start for Britain. And it worked. Labour won a landslide victory taking 418 seats in parliament, making it the biggest election victory Labour had ever witnessed (the Conservative party taking only 165 seats).

Since the very start of New Labour the media have been a central concern within the party. Fairclough (2000: vii), perhaps fittingly, describes New Labour's media relationship as being marked by an ever present and "notorious taste for media spin". This taste is for instance seen in the important political roles assigned to PR-experts and political advisors such as Philip Gould and Alastair Campbell²⁹. Their influence led to a firmer control and monitoring of the governmental discourse and the language of leaders such as Blair became carefully scrutinised. Conservative expressions such as 'privatisation' were much dreaded, as were typical left-wing terms such as 'socialism' (Fairclough 2000: vii). Instead, at the heart of New Labour, we find the idea of 'enterprise and fairness', a rhetoric of reconciliation between economic freedom and social justice. As Fairclough points out, the rhetoric of New Labour is full of such language, full of expressions signifying a 'not only this but also that' attitude.

Even more significant was perhaps the idea of a 'third way'. Not only was it central to New Labour ideology on both a domestic and international agenda, it is another prime example of the sort of rhetoric and political discourse the party became so fond of. The very concept of a 'third way' signifies a new political direction which goes beyond the simple left or right divide. It marks an "attempt by centre and centre-left Governments to re-define a political programme that is neither old left nor 1980s right" (TB-24.04.99). Consider, for instance, a passage from Blair's speech to the Confederation of British Industry in 1998:

This is the third way. A belief in social justice and economic dynamism, ambition and compassion, fairness and enterprise going together (...) The third way is a new politics that helps people cope with a more insecure world because it rejects the destructive excesses of the market and the intrusive hand of state intervention. It is about an enabling government that gives people the chance of a better future in which all people can play their part (Blair 1998 cited in Fairclough 2000: 10)

The key assumptions of 'enterprise and fairness' are reemphasised by Blair, along with a rejection of an intrusive state (old left) and a ridicule of the failing social welfare policy of the Conservatives (old right). The 'new' politics of the 'third way' is designed to 'help' people

²⁹ Gould has later been acknowledged as the man behind coining 'New Labour'.

who are faced with two negatives, “the destructive excesses of the market” on the one hand (the ideology of the right), and the “intrusive hand of state intervention” on the other (the ideology of the left). The positive lexicalisation echoes the ‘fairness and enterprise’ ethos; it is ‘social justice’ combined with ‘dynamism’, ‘ambition’ and ‘compassion’. The central notion is of something new and vibrant (‘new politics’), that is still accountable and realistic.

The ‘third way’ is an important metaphor. It is grounded in a POLITICS IS A JOURNEY metaphor, which in turn is closely related to a metaphor of PROGRESS IS FORWARD MOVEMENT. Within this frame, the concept of a ‘third way’ implicitly sparks notions of something ‘new’ and ‘challenging’ that emerges out of the old two-way divide between left and right. We conceptualise a cross-roads where we are left with two ‘old’ and pre-existing paths (which we have ‘gone down before’) and one new ‘third way’ which we have yet to try. A passage from the 1997 New Labour manifesto provides a good example:

The vision is one of national renewal, a country with drive, purpose and energy ... In each area of policy a new and distinctive approach has been mapped out, one that differs from the old left and the Conservative right. This is why new Labour is new (NLM-1997)

‘Drive’, ‘purpose’, ‘energy’, ‘distinctive approach’, ‘mapped out’ all relate to progress or movement. Also, the notion of ‘mapping out’ implies that this is not some remote and undiscovered political path, but planned and considered, created on a ‘vision’ of ‘renewal’. It is also a metaphor that spells ‘conviction’. Any ‘new’ path inherently involves a ‘fear’ of the unknown. Tony Blair is thus a leader who is willing to take the ‘risk’ which is required to prosper; he is a man of strong conviction.

But as much as New Labour created a language of a ‘new’ direction in politics, it was not necessarily always clear what this remake would consist of. Much of the ‘third way’ discourse and ‘protocol’ was indeed made up as it went along, trying to put “flesh on the broad idea” (Kampfner 2004: 12). Finlayson (1999: 271) agrees that the idea of a ‘third way’ appeared in Labour politics “before it had a definite content”, thus “analysts were left considering not how useful or coherent it was, but what it might actually be”. The discourse of New Labour and the ‘third way’ was, in other words, no coherent political theory, with a readily available discourse. It was rather a matter of creating a discourse that coincided with the political progress.

This was much the case with regards to creating an international discourse too. Just as on the home front, a ‘third way’ discourse of international relations would to a significant extent be carved out as it went along. Importantly, Blair and his associates had an important ideological ally in US President Clinton and his administration. Blair and Clinton were not only committed to a further development of cross-Atlantic relations, they also shared a similar domestic agenda that they wanted to broadcast to the world. This resulted in what Kampfner (2004: 13) calls a ‘third way’ roadshow that “would take like-minded politicians and thinkers to Washington, Florence, Berlin and New York”. Still, Blair was very much the instigator of this international roadshow. A key moment was his speech in Chicago in April 1999, in which he outlined what he called “a new doctrine of the international community”. The speech outlines many of the key assumptions that would guide British international politics in years to come.

4.2 The ‘third way’ in international politics

Timing was everything for Blair when he made his speech in Chicago. After a longer period of diplomatic efforts Blair had been the catalyst in NATO’s intervention into events in Kosovo, where, as Blair put it, “unspeakable things are happening ... awful crimes that we never thought we would see again have reappeared – ethnic cleansing, systematic rape, mass murder” (TB-24.04.99). To Blair, Kosovo represented a war that was based on a moral obligation to help a suffering nation:

This is a just war, based not on any territorial ambitions but on values. We cannot let the evil of ethnic cleansing stand. We must not rest until it is reversed. We have learned twice before in this century that appeasement does not work. If we let an evil dictator range unchallenged, we will not spill infinitely more blood and treasure to stop him later. (TB-24.04.99)

Blair’s primary justification for NATO intervention in Kosovo is a moral one: it is based on ‘values’. A key feature of this discourse of morality is that ‘we’, in this case the ‘Western’ international community, have a responsibility to stop the atrocities against the Kosovo-Albanians. Beneath this key notion two different discourses are present. The most salient is the historical reference to atrocities in the last century. The main rhetoric is that ‘appeasement’ did not work in stopping Nazi atrocities and will not work this time either (see

also historical association, section 4.3.2). Notably, appeasement here represents the negative effects of diplomacy, and the underlying assumption is that diplomacy is indeed a waste of time; firm action is needed.

But at the same time as Blair emphasises this firm position ('inaction is not an option' rhetoric), he still balances this against a 'costs and benefits' rhetoric as acknowledged by Lakoff in what he called Clausewitz's-metaphor (e.g. POLITICS IS BUSINESS, see section 2.3.2). The reasoning of Blair is, however, slightly different to the traditional assumptions of the Clausewitz-metaphor; that war or armed conflict is based on a simple estimate of costs and benefits. For example, Blair makes use of a 'cost/balances' assessment when he argues that if we do not act now our costs will be much greater later on: "we will have to spill infinitely more blood and treasure (...) later" (TB-24.04.99). At the same time, a simple POLITICS IS BUSINESS approach is unfulfilling when it comes to the moral obligations that face the international community. In addition to a 'Clausewitz'-assessment, there is considerable emphasis on the moral grounds for action. Accordingly, Blair repeatedly emphasises the importance of looking at what is happening in a wider context; "people want to know not only that we are right to take this action but also that we have clear objectives and that we are going to succeed". Further, Blair argues that the "principle of non-interference must be qualified in important respects. Acts of genocide can never be a purely internal matter" (TB-24.04.99). A 'new international doctrine', in other words, involves a rethink of the traditional guiding principles of international relations. To Blair, the 'new' world requires a modification of the traditional protectionist and isolationist principles of international relations. This modification entails an obligation and duty to engage and participate in the international community.

This moral obligation of intervention is a key assumption in a 'third way' international discourse. This principle of intervention is based on a governing discourse of globalisation; a discourse where a new and global world community represents new challenges. As Blair states in his 1999 speech:

I believe the world has changed in a more fundamental way. Globalisation has transformed our economies and our working practices. But globalisation is not just economic. It is also a political and security phenomenon ... We live in a world where isolationism has ceased to have a reason to exist. By necessity we have to co-operate with each other across nations. (TB-24.04.99)

To Blair, globalisation changes the pertinence of the traditional and ‘old’ way of thought in international politics. The end of the bipolar political world climate with the fall of Soviet Russia, combined with the rapid rise of several new foreign markets, changes the whole outlook of international relations. Consequently, the discourse has to change, and just as in domestic politics, the ‘third way’ represents a new way forward in international politics and a turn away from the ‘old’ doctrine of isolationism. Thus, it is a rejection of both ‘traditional’ left-wing/socialist ideas and the Conservative right. ‘Old’ thought is marked by ‘isolationism’ which arguably carries several negative notions in what Blair calls a “completely new world”³⁰. An ‘isolationist’ approach has “ceased to have a reason to exist” due to the new challenges that have surfaced on the international stage. And perhaps even more importantly, globalisation means that events on one side of the world affect the other. As Blair states, “many of our domestic problems are caused on the other side of the world”, before referring to both financial and political events with world-wide effects (TB-24.04.99).

Blair’s globalisation discourse is largely conceptualised through the idea of an international community. This way of understanding global politics is reasoned in a conceptual metaphor NATION STATE IS A PERSON, which in turn evokes an international community metaphor. As Lakoff argues:

A state is conceptualized as a person, engaging in social relations within a world community. Its land-mass is its home. It lives in a neighborhood, and has neighbors, friends and enemies. States are seen as having inherent dispositions: they can be peaceful or aggressive, responsible or irresponsible, industrious or lazy (Lakoff 1991: 3).

The ‘neighbourhood’ is, of course, the same as the community. Consequently, the global international community means that all nations are part of the same community; ‘we are all neighbours’. Thus, what was before considered too remote and far away to be a ‘threat’, must now be considered as a possible enemy³¹. Bastow and Martin (2003: 41) point out that in the ‘third way’ an emphasis on ethics is “typically accompanied by an appeal to ‘community’”, and the community is seen as an “practically cohesive moral order”. An important feature of

³⁰ More positive notions of ‘isolationism’ may be represented in lexical choices such as ‘protectionism’ or a ‘moderate’ approach. In a globalisation discourse, ‘isolationism’ represents a reluctance to participate in the world community, and to take part in diplomatic processes. As Blair himself states, “twenty years ago we would not have been fighting in Kosovo. We would have turned our backs on it”.

³¹ Perhaps unlike when Lakoff published his paper on the First Gulf War and there did not exist any globalisation discourse.

all communities is the notion of a common identity; an identity which is often ‘heightened’ by the existence of an ‘absent presence’ – a presence that ‘undermines’ or ‘declines’ the contingent factors of the community (see Bastow & Martin 2003: 41-42). This ‘notion of a common identity’ is central to the conceptualisation of a community metaphor, even at an international political level. In the community which Blair adheres to, the notion of identity is realised through common beliefs and challenges.

It is within this conceptualisation of a community in which the notion of ‘threat’ is understood. Instead of approaching ‘globalisation’ as an opportunity (e.g. the opportunity of access for the third world economy to worldwide markets), it is presented as a threat; “a set of problems to overcome” (Fairclough 2005: 45). Indeed, to Blair, effects of globalisation first and foremost lead to challenges related to refugees, drugs and finance:

Financial instability in Asia destroys jobs in Chicago and in my own constituency in County Durham. Poverty in the Caribbean means more drugs on the streets in Washington and London. Conflict in the Balkans causes more refugees in Germany and here in the US. (TB-24.04.99)

Hay and Rosamond (2002: 155) argue that the ‘threatening’ effects of globalisation that Blair sets out are founded in a globalization discourse constructed within the more familiar economic and political boundaries. Moreover, it is important to differentiate clearly between the effects of globalisation itself and the strategic employment of globalisation as a convenient justification³². Within the community metaphor there is, indeed, no ready script for constructing a negative ‘threat’ scenario to globalisation challenges. Rather, Blair’s construction of a world-view is highly dependent on context: in one economic context it is positive (free-trade, economic freedom), in another it is negative (“financial instability in Asia destroys jobs in Chicago”). In a security-context it is a most definite negative.

One of the important ways in which Blair imagines the threat of globalisation is through an ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ dichotomy. In this bifurcation, ‘us’ represents the ‘Western’ world, and includes ‘our’ moral, economic and financial systems, and subsequent political doctrines and policy. ‘We’, are then set against the antagonists, ‘them’, which constitutes a threat to ‘our’ values and belief systems. According to Van Dijk (1998: 59) this polarization is a familiar

³² According to Hay and Rosamond the “effects of having internalised popular constructions of globalisation” (i.e. the discourse) is “all too frequently” mistaken for the effects of globalisation itself (Hay and Rosamond 2002: 155).

ideological pattern, “whereby *We* are associated with positive values such as democracy, rationality and non-violence, and *They* with dictatorship, violence and irrationality”. The ideological implications of an ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ bifurcation can be translated into an ideological square where the aim is to:

- a) Emphasise our good properties / actions
- b) Emphasise their bad properties / actions
- c) Mitigate our bad properties / actions
- d) Mitigate their good properties / actions

(van Dijk, 1998: 33)

In Blair’s speech this bifurcation of the world can be easily identified through lexical choices. ‘We’ are inextricably connected to the “values we cherish”, which implicitly are based on ‘democracy’, ‘freedom’, ‘rationality’ and ‘progression’. The negative ‘other’ representation is marked by a colourful and varied lexicalisation: ‘they’ have ‘dictators’ and ‘barbarous regimes’ who are ‘dangerous’ and ‘ruthless’ and launch ‘vicious campaigns’, bringing ‘calamity’ on their own people. Blair’s lexicalisation makes use of what Fowler has described as over-lexicalisation: “the existence of an excess of quasi-synonymous terms for entities and ideas that are a particular preoccupation or problem in the culture’s discourse” (1991: 85). In the case of setting up a ‘third way’ discourse of international relations, the ‘lexical over-kill’ is meant to produce what Fairclough calls ‘discourses of malignity’ represented in “politics (e.g. ‘dictators’), law and order (e.g. ‘crime’), and religion (e.g. ‘evil’). Notably, protagonist values are not explicitly stated but rather assumed and presupposed. In contrast, antagonist features and values are relatively explicitly stated and are often highly repetitive.

The community metaphor is reinforced in the ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ polarisation. ‘Us’ refers to the ‘Western’ allies and a range of common values that are implicit; ‘them’ constitutes the ‘threat’ to those very values which are so important in a healthy community. Thus, as Blair states, “the spread of our values makes us safer” (TB-24.04.99). The best way to protect ‘our’ own values and beliefs is, in other words, by actively getting involved in conflicts that might not have been regarded as important in previous decades. As Blair continues:

Non -interference has long been considered an important principle of international order. And it is not one we would want to jettison too readily. One state should not feel it has the right to change the political system of another or foment subversion or seize pieces of territory to which it feels it should have some claim. But the principle

of non-interference must be qualified in important respects. Acts of genocide can never be a purely internal matter. (TB-24.04.99)

The rationale of Blair is clearly linked to a 'community' and 'partnership' discourse similar to a domestic 'third way' discourse. As Fairclough (2005: 49) remarks, Blair "explicitly extends the concepts of 'community' and 'partnership' from a national to an international scale". The challenge is to find a middle-way between 'isolationism' and 'interventionism'. Two important metaphors are in play. One is the already mentioned community metaphor. The other is a container-metaphor, which is important in relation to both international and domestic politics. For instance, nations are often conceptualised as containers which can be 'open' or 'closed', 'sealed'/'shut' or 'leaking' etc. In international relations an isolationist approach would entail a strong emphasis on the container, while globalisation would seek away from it. Blair advocates an 'opening up' but is careful to balance his argument by stating that "one state should not feel it has the right to change the political system of another" (TB-24.04.99)

4.2.1 The impact of 11 September

Back in April 1999 it was war in the Balkans that was the primary concern of Tony Blair and the New Labour government on the international stage. Interventionism was in its early stages; the Kosovo war indeed being one the first wars justified by a need for political intervention on foreign territory. Kosovo was a success story for Blair and combined with efforts within the European Union, Blair had set himself apart as one of the most prominent and outspoken world leaders. Then came the terrorist attacks in New York on September 11th 2001, and in the matter of one single day, the international community was shaken beyond recognition. In the Blair government there was a feeling that the world "would never be the same again" (Kampfner 2004: 111).

The attacks produced a frantic search for new discourses. Being both unprecedented and highly unpredictable there was no readily available discourse to turn to for political leaders. Nevertheless, the first attempts to frame a discourse to deal with the situation came from the main targets the United States. First, the Bush administration attempted to frame the situation simply as 'war'. But the attacks clearly did not spark the conventional notions of warfare

within the public and had to be amended to the idea of a 'war against terrorism' (indeed more similar to familiar conceptions of 'war' on 'drugs', 'crime', etc.).

As Aitchison (2003: 194) points out, there was a linguistic confusion in the international community immediately preceding the attacks, "the condemnation was clear, though the terminology required to describe it took time to evolve". Lakoff (2001: 3) agrees. The initial framing of the terrorist attacks and the metaphors used did not fit. It could not be treated simply as a crime with 'victims' and 'criminals' that needed to be 'brought to justice' and 'punished', as "the crime frame entails law, courts, lawyers, trials, sentencing, appeals, and so on". 'War', then, would perhaps fit better, fulfilling the need for vastly stronger language. But while there are 'enemies' and 'casualties', there is no enemy army, no regiments, no tanks (...) and no clear 'victory' (Lakoff 2001: 3). As a result, the Bush administration frantically searched for new metaphors to be used, some clearly not as good as others; for instance, the use of 'cowards' did not necessarily reflect well on martyrs willing to sacrifice their lives for their ideological and religious beliefs.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, Blair outlined his post-September 11 thoughts in a speech at the Labour Party Conference on October 2nd:

In retrospect, the Millennium marked only a moment in time. It was the events of September 11 that marked a turning point in history, where we confront the dangers of the future and assess the choices facing humankind (...)

Be in no doubt: Bin Laden and his people organised this atrocity. The Taliban aid and abet him. He will not desist from further acts of terror. They will not stop helping him. (...) Whatever the dangers of the action we take, the dangers of inaction are far, far greater. (TB-02.10.01)

The feeling of the post-September 11th world as something unprecedented and exceptional is inescapable. Terrorism, now solely symbolised by the terrorist attacks that took place in New York, is not only a 'threat', but also a danger to 'humankind'. Blair's choice of words gives a conception of a doomsday scenario that anticipates action. The bottom line is simple, 'if we do not act, our very existence is threatened'; "the dangers of inaction are far, far greater". The definition of a 'target', "those that finance terror, those who launder their money, those that cover their tracks", is similar to that of US President Bush and his famous catch phrase 'terrorists and those who harbour them'. The definition is not only purposely vague, it is also purposely broad. The idea of an enemy that can be 'everywhere', and could be 'anyone',

perhaps echoes an overall fear and concern in the world at the time, but significantly it also *spreads* fear within the public, resulting in a reinforced legitimisation for action.

Blair's speech is full of similar images of fear that help provide a legitimacy of the military response that would follow:

But understand what we are dealing with. Listen to the calls of those passengers on the planes. Think of the children on them, told they were going to die ... Think of the cruelty beyond our comprehension as amongst screams and the anguish of the innocent, those hijackers drove at full throttle planes laden with fuel into buildings where tens of thousands worked ... There is no compromise possible with such people, no meeting of minds, no point of understanding with such terror. Just a choice: defeat or be defeated by it. And defeat it we must. (TB-02.10.01)

The language of Blair is apocalyptic; the notion of 'a cruelty beyond comprehension' and the image of planes at "full throttle" flying "into buildings" relives the images of fear that represent the 11 September attacks. Moreover, the idea that there is no "point of understanding with such terror" has an important rhetorical function in silencing any opposition to action; the choice is simple, "defeat or be defeated by it". As Blair states, there can be no "moral ambiguity" in this matter, and any attempts to 'justify' the events of 11 September are to turn matters on its head (TB-02.10.01). Significantly, this rhetoric invalidates any attempt at constructing a more moderate approach by branding it as an attempt to justify the horrific events in New York and Washington. Indeed, any attempt to 'justify' events basically stop nothing short of what must be seen as support for the terrorist and their actions.

This 'with us or against us' rhetoric is highly similar to the discourse of the Bush administration in the US³³. However, the discourse in the UK sets itself significantly apart in its attempt to put the events of September 11 in the perspective of an 'international community' as outlined in Blair's 1999 speech on a 'new doctrine of the international community':

Today conflicts rarely stay within national boundaries ... Today a tremor in one financial market is repeated in the markets of the world ... Today confidence is global; either its presence or its absence ... (...) I have long believed this interdependence

³³ See for instance Porpora & Nikolaev (2008) and Ferarri (2007) for more recent accounts of the US discourse in relation to Iraq and the 'war on terrorism'.

defines the new world we live in (...) We can't do it all. Neither can the Americans.
(TB-02.10.01)

Here, Blair repeats many of the same ideas that are presented in his 1999 speech and puts them in the perspective of events such as Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Rwanda. The inclusion of the 'internationalist' rhetoric that Blair here asserts to is significant in that it adds the mentioned moral obligation and accountability into the post-September 11 response. Thus, the UK discourse sets itself apart from the political discourse of the Bush administration in the United States. To Blair, the campaign against terrorism must be combined with a moral obligation to protect and help a wider international community including countries outside the 'Western' alliance. The difference may have a natural explanation in the US having an obvious desire for revenge and being able to punish those people accountable. While there indeed were British casualties and certainly a desire for justice in the European community, it was still important to make any responsive action morally and rationally accountable³⁴. At the same time, it is clear that the moral accountability is much more of a fundamental pillar in the UK discourse than compared to the US discourse shaped in the aftermath of September 11. The example thus shows how the ethical and moral dimension is an intangible characteristic of the 'third way' international discourse³⁵.

If anything, September 11 entrenched the polarisation of 'us' vs. 'them', with the cruelty of the terrorist attacks signified the immoral and 'evil' nature of the antagonists. This is reinforced in the dooming and fearful imaging that is seen in Blair's lexicalisation over the attacks. The symbolic effect of September 11 would have an important discursive impact. Prior to the attacks in New York and Washington, Blair's focus on the potential threats posed by globalisation was central in his international discourse; it was an attempt to re-imagine a traditional worldview. Post 11 September this global re-imagining was quite simply taken for granted. The impact of this would become highly significant in the Iraq discourse that would follow, as I will discuss in section 4.3.1.

³⁴ 67 British citizens lost their lives in the terrorist attacks (*Guardian*, 18.09.02).

³⁵ In his research, Charteris-Black (2005: 146) found that Blair uses a word from the domain of ethics and morality once every 128 words in his speeches (in comparison Conservative PM Margaret Thatcher used one per 183 words). According to Charteris-Black this "seems to confirm the impression that ethical discourse is a particular characteristic of Tony Blair".

4.3 Iraq

The previous sections in this chapter outlined the basic assumptions that form the fundament of Blair's Iraq discourse. The main assumptions in Blair's international discourse were that:

- a) International relations must adopt a moral accountability to intervene when needed.
- b) Globalisation makes any isolationist tendencies futile. Engaging in the 'new' world is essential.
- c) A failure to realise and acknowledge the effects of globalisation may constitute a threat. Indeed, several aspects of globalisation must essentially be regarded as a threat.

Within these assumptions Blair attempts to frame the events of September 11. At the same time the attacks also represent new implications for the international community:

- a) Conventional ideas of international security must be reconsidered.
- b) New 'threats' reinforce the importance of a moral accountability and international engagement.

Accordingly, globalisation and the threat of terrorism constitute the two most important contexts for framing the discourse of Iraq.

I will make several useful distinctions within the Iraq discourse. Firstly, there are differences between the pre-war discourse and the discourse once the war got under way. Secondly, I propose that the pre-war discourse, primarily aimed at legitimising military operations in Iraq, can be separated into two different discourses: a discourse of security, and a discourse of morality³⁶. I will firstly look at these two main discourses (sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2), before considering other discursive features (4.3.3). Finally, I will look at the post-war discourse (4.3.4) and look at how the discourse changed a year after the war started, in accordance with what was outlined in the introduction.

³⁶ This is not, however, to say that the two discourses are independent of each other. They are rather two different parts of an overall political discourse of the Iraq war.

4.3.1 Security discourse

As was mentioned above, one of the most important discursive consequences of September 11 was an acceptance of a global world view. Consequently, the assumption that remote militant groups or regimes could pose a significant threat to domestic security became unquestionable. Accordingly, September 11 became a highly powerful rhetorical tool in the legitimisation process with regards to military operations in Iraq. In his speech in September 2002, marking the one-year anniversary of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, Blair, for instance, stated:

On September 11 last year, with the world still reeling from the shock of events, it came together to demand action. But suppose I had come last year on the same day as this year - September 10. Suppose I had said to you: there is a terrorist network called al-Qaida. It operates out of Afghanistan. It has carried out several attacks and we believe it is planning more. It has been condemned by the UN in the strongest terms. Unless it is stopped, the threat will grow. And so I want to take action to prevent that (...) Your response and probably that of most people would have been very similar to the response of some of you yesterday on Iraq (...) There would have been few takers for dealing with it and probably none for taking military action of any description. (TB-10.09.02)

Here, the discursive effect of September 11 is two-fold. On the one hand it works familiarly as an indicator of the gravity and emotional effect of the situation: the 'threat' is real and will grow "unless it is stopped". Secondly, there is an emphasis that September 11 was a turning point in international relations (September 10th indicates the 'old' way of thinking). Consequently, the new post-September 11 world requires a new approach to international relations, a line of thought reminiscent of previous Blair speeches.

Furthermore, it is within this September 11th discourse that Blair raises his concerns over the state of Iraq and the regime of Saddam Hussein. Although he might not state it explicitly, it is implicit that the failure to deal with the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein could (and is likely to) result in similar prospects such as the terrorist attacks of September 2001. While 'hard' evidence of a link between Iraq and terrorist groups such as Al-Qaida proved difficult to establish, any mention of the two together was likely to have a legitimising effect due to the emotional and justifiable impact of 11 September represented. Thus, any deliberate

‘distortion’ of roles could have a legitimising effect³⁷. In addition, the ‘interventionist’ discourse outlined back in 1999 is now an implicit part of Blair's discourse; there is no qualifying argument backing the assumption that “unless it is stopped, the threat will grow”. Accordingly, interventionism can not only be accounted for on moral grounds (e.g. Kosovo), but also on the basis of security. The association between ‘Saddam’ and September 11, although sometimes subtle, is one such basis³⁸.

The other more significant basis for a security justification lies in the link between Saddam Hussein and a chemical and biological weapons programme. The threat is clear to Blair:

I sometimes think that there is a kind of word fatigue about chemical and biological weapons. We're not talking about some mild variants of everyday chemicals, but anthrax, sarin and mustard gas - weapons that can cause hurt and agony on a mass scale beyond the comprehension of most decent people (TB-10.09.02).

Blair's persistence on the inability to comprehend how dangerous these ‘chemical and biological weapons’ really are, confirms the idea of an immediate and real threat³⁹. The discursive intention is in both cases to emphasise the threatening and dangerous implications of inaction, and add to the image of fear that is created by the threat of ‘weapons of mass destruction’. The combination of the frightening aspect of a nuclear attack and the association to September 11 make up a powerful security justification for war. The rhetorical end line is simple; we must take action to prevent it.

The security legitimisation of the Iraq war is repeated in several of Blair's speeches. Consider, for instance, Blair's speech opening the debate on Iraq in the House of Commons on the 18th of March 2003, just days before the war started:

³⁷ Polls in the United States showed that around the two-year anniversary of 11 September and almost six months after the start of the Iraq War 7 out of 10 Americans believed Saddam Hussein and his Iraq regime was involved in the attacks on New York and Washington. The misconception is likely to be grounded in the numerous links between the Iraq regime and 11 September claimed by President Bush and his administration. Although Blair was much more reluctant in his claims, there are several examples that show a ‘distortion’ between terrorist groups, the Iraq regime and 11 September (Poll conducted by the *Washington Post* between 7-11 August 2003, published September 6, 2003, washingtonpost.com).

³⁸ Although Blair is subtler than his American ally Bush, the association of Blair is arguably also partly based on a persistent focus from the US administration that the ‘war on terrorism’ is not only with the terrorist themselves but, as Bush famously stated, also with “those who harbour them” (GB-11.09.01).

³⁹ It is indeed highly similar to the image presented in the US of how the ‘smoking gun’ could turn out to be a ‘mushroom cloud’.

... the possibility of the two coming together - of terrorist groups in possession of WMD, even of a so-called dirty radiological bomb is now, in my judgement, a real and present danger ... And let us recall: what was shocking about September 11 was not just the slaughter of the innocent; but the knowledge that had the terrorists been able to, there would have been not 3,000 innocent dead, but 30,000 or 300,000 and the more the suffering, the greater the terrorists' rejoicing ... Three kilograms of VX from a rocket launcher would contaminate a quarter of a square kilometre of a city (TB-18.03.03).

Even though Blair admits that the 'association' between Iraq and terrorist groups, specifically Al Qaida, is 'loose', the association between terrorism on the scale of September 11th is repeated: a failure to act on the 'threat' of the Iraqi regime could lead to dreadful events. The association is full of rhetorical potential, very much resembling an attempt to create a self-defence scenario similar to that argued by Lakoff (1991). Based in the NATION STATE IS A PERSON metaphor, the self-defence scenario entails that war is justified on the basis of the threat alone, and is linked to what Lakoff calls a 'strict father morality', where military action is validated by the need to punish and hold the protagonists ('evil') accountable. According to Lakoff (2002), a 'strict father morality' is central to a conservative worldview (as opposed to a liberal viewpoint seen in a 'nurturant parent morality', see also section 4.3.2).

The self-defence scenario entails that a failure to act will result in the threat of terrorism becoming a reality; thus the UK will have blood on their hands. In his address to the nation on the eve of war, Blair stated:

The threat to Britain today is not that of my father's generation. War between the big powers is unlikely. Europe is at peace. The cold war already a memory ... But this new world faces a new threat: of disorder and chaos born either of brutal states like Iraq, armed with weapons of mass destruction; or of extreme terrorist groups. Both hate our way of life, our freedom, our democracy ... My fear, deeply held, based in part on the intelligence that I see, is that these threats come together and deliver catastrophe to our country and world. These tyrannical states do not care for the sanctity of human life. The terrorists delight in destroying it (TB-20.03.03).

Blair reinforces the immediate 'threat' and the self-defence scenario. Furthermore, he juxtaposes the 'old' world, "my father's generation", with the 'new' world. Underlying this juxtaposition is an important metaphor of PROGRESS IS FORWARD MOVEMENT. A changed political climate internationally requires action and the need for new politics is conceptualised partly through a metaphor where the 'old system' is 'backwards' and 'regressive', whilst Blair's more interventionist ideas are the 'way forward' and 'progressive'.

Thus, it may also explain why a self-defence scenario was impossible to ascribe to the Gulf War back in 1991, but is applicable to the Second Gulf War 12 years later (see Lakoff 1991, 2003)⁴⁰.

An 'us' vs. 'them' dichotomy is as significant as ever before. 'They' are 'tyrannical states' that hate "our way of life, our freedom, our democracy". Who 'they' actually consist of is blurred, represented as both 'terrorists' and 'brutal states like Iraq', and poses the question of whether this is part of a deliberate distortion between the two groups (the connection is almost admittedly vague: 'based partly on intelligence'). Other lexical choices such as the use of the abbreviation 'WMD' is interesting. Firstly, the term is undeniably linked to the Iraq war. In fact, using 'WMD' as short for 'weapons of mass destruction' was virtually non-existent prior to the 'war on terror' and the start of the harsher rhetoric against Saddam Hussein and Iraq⁴¹. The term shows how policy makers contribute to the lexicalisation of war; as Richardson suggests, the phrase WMD is shown to be "directly related to the propaganda of the US/UK" (Richardson 2007: 188). An 'us' and 'them' framing is central in its conception; indeed, it is only 'them' who have 'WMD', a term which carries negative assumptions. 'We' do not have 'WMD', but what is more likely to be represented as a 'nuclear programme'. In essence, the concept of 'weapons of mass destruction' and 'WMD' became a highly implicit term, conceptualising an 'us' and 'them' framing.

Further, it is interesting to note how the concept of 'WMD'/'weapons of mass destruction' is used. For instance, in Blair's press conference on 28th of February, the concept of 'WMD' is modified by either 'the threat of' or the potential 'development' of these weapons (TB-28.02.03). Interestingly, in Blair's speech to the House of Commons on the 18th of March the highly significant distinction of 'threat' is gone, substituted by a possessive pronoun: "Iraq and *its* WMD" (TB-18.03.03, emphasis added). Similarly, in his address to the nation, Blair speaks of disarming "Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction" and of "brutal states like Iraq, armed with weapons of mass destruction" (TB-20.03.03). There is, of course, a significant difference in the modification used by Blair in February and the highly implicit language he

⁴⁰ Lakoff argued that an attempt to frame the Gulf war within a self-defence scenario failed to gain acceptance with the American people (e.g. protecting American oil interests).

⁴¹ For instance, the *Times* only had 8 articles containing the abbreviation 'WMD' in 2002 (none in 2001), compared to 202 articles in 2003. The *Guardian* showed a similar pattern, the number of articles rising from 68 in 2002 to 630 in 2003, while only 7 prior to 2002 (guardian.co.uk/timesonline.co.uk).

uses in March. While he in February acknowledges that the existence of Iraqi 'WMD' is not certain (e.g. they have means to develop it), he in March directly implies existence.

The terrorism/security discourse makes use of several familiar metaphors that govern cognitive processes in understanding international politics. Clausewitz's metaphor (as modified by Blair, see section 4.2) is central in how actions are reasoned (e.g. 'we must act or it will cost us greatly later'). This Rational Actor metaphor is, however, only applicable to 'us', and legitimises potential 'damage' with regards to civilian casualties and crimes of war, as seen in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Interestingly, 'their' actions are conceptualised through a different metaphor, WAR IS VIOLENT CRIME. The implication of this metaphor is, of course, very different. As Lakoff argues, war is here "understood only in terms of its moral dimension, and not, say, its political or economic dimension" (Lakoff 1991: 1). The two opposing metaphors are central in creating and confirming the 'us' vs. 'them' bifurcation, as they spark notions that 'they' are criminals who murder, assault and rape. As Lakoff writes, "we see US as rational, moral and courageous and Them as criminal and insane" (Lakoff 1991: 2).

4.3.2 Morality discourse

The terrorism/security discourse is combined with a familiar discourse of morality. This is perhaps what has become the most significant trademark of Blair's political discourse; a combination of moral values with a moral accountability (as shown in section 4.2). A good example is seen in Blair's speech at the Labour Party Conference in October 2001:

When we act to bring to account those that committed the atrocity of September 11, we do so, not out of bloodlust ... We do so because it is just (...) So I believe this is a fight for freedom. And I want to make it a fight for justice too. Justice not only to punish the guilty. But justice to bring those same values of democracy and freedom to people round the world (TB-02.10.01).

Implicit is the idea of a moral accountability towards military action: 'we are doing the just thing' and we are bringing them 'our' good values of 'freedom' and 'democracy'. Indeed, 'we' are here implicitly presented as liberators who will free 'them' from evil, at the same time as we can 'punish the guilty'. The discourse of morality as exemplified here is based on a particular worldview which is highly similar to that of the Bush administration and American conservative ideas as outlined by Lakoff (2002). One of the important assumptions

of a conservative world-view (i.e. strict father morality) is that *evil* exists as a force in the world and must be fought. Consequently, the enemy of evil is good ('us') and, importantly, 'we' are allowed to perform 'lesser evils' in the fight for 'our' world-view (Lakoff 2001: 4). In Blair's speech from October 2001 he makes use of exactly this rationale. 'Justice' can only be gained through showing superior strength and winning a physical battle. A failure to act will, in other words, be immoral, regardless of the sacrifice. As Lakoff (2001: 4) remarks, "nothing is more important than the battle of good against evil, and if some innocent non-combatants get in the way and get hurt, it is a shame, but it is to be expected and nothing can be done about it".

This evil vs. good bifurcation (i.e. 'us' vs. 'them') is as crucial in the morality discourse as it is in the security discourse. In the aftermath of September 11 'evil' simply became the embodiment of terrorism in general ('it was a tragedy. An act of evil'). While this assumption seemed to work well with regards to the military operations in Afghanistan, it could not be as easily transcribed to war in Iraq; many people were indeed sceptical to whether the link between terrorism and Iraq was reliable. In response to this, the regime of Saddam Hussein became the embodiment of a moral 'evil' instead. As Blair states:

Looking back over 12 years, we have been victims of our own desire to placate the implacable, to persuade towards reason the utterly unreasonable, to hope that there was some genuine intent to do good in a regime whose mind is in fact evil (TB-18.03.03).

The example supports the claim by Charteris-Black (2005: 150) who argues that "the personification of evil had shifted from Osama Bin Laden to Saddam Hussein". One way of creating this 'personification of evil' is through the use of historical association, comparing the 'evil' of Saddam Hussein to Hitler or Milosevic and in turn consolidating the 'western', 'anti-fascist' alliance (see also section 4.2). In other words, the 'evil' we stand up against today can easily be transcribed to more historically familiar and accessible events and acts of atrocity (comparison with Nazi-Germany understandably creates an emotional response). For instance in his speech to the House of Commons on 18 March 2003, Blair stated:

But the only relevant point of analogy is that with history, we know what happened. We can look back and say: there's the time; that was the moment; for example, when Czechoslovakia was swallowed up by the Nazis - that's when we should have acted (TB-18.03.03).

In his speech to the Labour Party Conference in October 2001, it was Kosovo and Milosevic which was the association:

The sceptics said it was pointless, we'd make matters worse, we'd make Milosevic stronger and look what happened, we won, the refugees went home, the policies of ethnic cleansing were reversed and one of the great dictators of the last century, will see justice in this century (TB-02.10.01).

The historical examples such as the ones above not only work as highly symbolic associative notions towards Saddam Hussein, but also give Blair's 'struggle' a new moral dimension. Blair becomes a character of moral accountability and a leading figure in the fight for 'our' values in a world of 'evil'. Charteris-Black (2005: 151) notes, "Blair creates a role for himself in this epic narrative as a prophetic agent of the forces of good"⁴². This is backed up by a sometimes almost apocalyptic and biblical language.

An important way in which Blair creates a personal role for himself in the moral discourse lies in the consistent use of a first person narration. Thus, Blair's speeches are full of first person references like 'I' and 'my'. For instance, when Blair speaks of the threats that "come together and deliver catastrophe to our country and our world", it is based on "my fear, deeply held", and "my judgement as prime minister" (TB-20.03.03). Another good example of the consistent use of a first person narration is seen in the Prime Minister's speech in Spain from February 2003:

...I don't ignore the voices of people who are opposed to the course that we are taking. I understand why they take that view and I respect that view. But in the end I have got to say as Prime Minister to the country on an issue such as this what I believe and why I believe it, and I believe genuinely, passionately, that international terrorism and unstable repressive states developing chemical, biological, nuclear weapons are real threats to our security (TB-28.02.03).

The example shows how Blair sets his personal conviction in the middle of proceedings; a conviction that is both 'passionate' and 'genuine'. The focus is again taken away from the proceedings itself (which he implicitly admits are controversial) and onto Blair as a person and Prime Minister. An important underlying notion is that his job is 'all about tough decisions' which are not easy to make, but on the basis of his strong conviction he is confident that he can make them. This emphasis on his position as leader of the country

⁴² See also Lakoff (2002) for an account of the religious impact on a conservative world-view.

reinforces the importance of Blair's own personal role, and can in turn help to centre the debate onto his own personal conviction.

Another example of how Blair turns to a moral discourse is found in Blair's speech in the House of Commons when he states: "the question most often posed is not why does it matter? But why does it matter so much?" (TB-18.03.03). This focus involves an important transformation from an assertive to a directive speech act. An assertive speech act would for example state that "Iraq has WMD that it is inclined to use in terrorist activity", and would in turn allow opposition to the argument. A directive speech act, as exemplified in the case of Blair's speech to the House of Commons, is, however, more of a requesting argumentation. As Richardson (2007: 189-90) argues, "the assertive places the imagined antagonist in a relation of opposing equals within the critical discussion while the directive implies a hierarchical relation". Such a hierarchical position, almost resembling a teacher/student relationship gives way for the personal conviction rhetoric of Blair, and has an important impact on the framing of the debate onto the moral aspects of the legitimacy of war, rather than the more openly debated security issues⁴³. Thus the transformation from the assertive to the directive speech act resembles a shift in argumentative approach to "emphasise an *ethetic* mode of proof, or one that relied on the character of the arguer" (Richardson 2007: 190).

4.3.3 Other discursive features

The two discourses of security and morality must be regarded as the basis of Blair's Labour-government and his discourse on the Iraq war. In addition, several other discursive features should be considered. Take for instance the opening lines of Blair's speech to what was regarded as a crucial debate in the House of Commons on March 18 2003:

At the outset I say: it is right that this house debate this issue and pass judgment. That is the democracy that is our right but that others struggle for in vain ... And again I say: I do not disrespect the views of those in opposition to mine ... This is a tough choice. But it is also a stark one: to stand British troops down and turn back; or to hold firm to the course we have set ... I believe we must hold firm. (TB-18.03.03)

A positive self-representation (as outlined in sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2) is evident through the emphasis on the 'democracy that is our right' and that 'others struggle for in vain', and the

⁴³ The security issues and the legitimising of pre-emptive attacks were indeed controversial, with several papers questioning the evidence and intelligence that was put forward.

notion that ‘we must hold firm’ (physical metaphor of positive self-representation). There are also several familiar notions of moral accountability (‘beliefs’, ‘respect’). But as Van Dijk (2006: 377) argues, there also exists a manipulative effect in “suggesting that the UK Parliament (still) had the right to decide about going to war, although it later became clear that this decision had already been made the previous year”. The emphasis on the seriousness of the matter goes hand in hand, creating a notion that this is too serious to leave to others than Blair himself (i.e. he is a man of conviction and beliefs who would not lead his country into an unjust war).

Inevitability is another highly important notion. When Blair states that the choice is between standing “British troops down and turn back; or to hold firm to the course we have set”, he also implies that not going to war would mean a reversal of an already started process (despite himself emphasising the right of the House to debate the issue). Within a PROGRESS IS FORWARD MOVEMENT metaphor “turning back” is of course a negative physical metaphor, which triggers notions of ‘failure’ and ‘abandonment’. The notion of inevitability is, of course, closely linked to the notion that it is too late not to act which is present in most of Blair’s pre-war speeches. Consider for instance:

Our fault has not been impatience (...) That is why this indulgence has to stop. Because it is dangerous. It is dangerous if such regimes disbelieve us. Dangerous if they think they can use our weakness, our hesitation, even the natural urges of our democracy towards peace, against us. Dangerous because one day they will mistake our innate revulsion against war for permanent incapacity; when in fact, pushed to the limit, we will act (TB-18.03.03).

Blair creates the anticipation that there is no alternative to action. The damage is in fact already done (in this case making ‘they’ believe “they can use our weakness ... against us”), and the only way to make things right is by following the (inevitable) course towards war.

Another important feature is patriotism. Compared to his allies in the US, Blair does not make significant use of patriotic elements. It is however, present on the day of the start of the war: “the British people will now be united in sending our armed forces our thoughts and prayers” despite the “deep divisions of opinion”. While Blair acknowledges the difference of opinion, the effect of his patriotic assertions can clearly shape a ‘with us or against us’ frame, where criticism implies that you do not support the troops, and ultimately do not respect potential lost lives in the conflict. Consequently, Blair’s turn to patriotism plays a similar silencing role

as was discussed with regards to his speech outlining his thoughts on the aftermath of 11 September (see section 4.2.1).

Another aspect, although not playing any significant role in his various speeches, was the patriotic emotions stirred by the public dispute between Blair and his French counterpart Jacques Chirac. Just days before the war began Blair and his associates all publicly condemned France, singling Chirac and foreign minister De Villepin out as the primary sources of a UN resolution failure. In retrospect it is easy to see that the emphasis on France as the only opposition to a UN mandate was highly misleading, as several other countries including both Russia and Germany were expressing similar concerns. Kampfner argues that:

[Alistair] Campbell orchestrated a campaign of open season against the French. Newspapers, previously exhorted to show Britain at the heart of Europe and refrain from Eurosceptic xenophobia, were prompted to say whatever they wanted ... Ministers were given 'the highest authority' to lay into the French
(Kampfner 2004: 288).

A successful campaign against France and Jacques Chirac would have important rhetorical implications as it would give an impression that a UN backing was achievable had it not been for French opposition which the British were eager to emphasise as unconditional and would prevail regardless. The strong world-wide opposition ranging from Asia to Europe, and even to the UN, would then be considerably silenced. Moreover, it could also work to rally the British public around a patriotic battle with France, the relationship between the two nations always having been 'competitive', and in turn gain support for military operations. It is interesting to pose the question of why the French role in the pre-war proceedings are barely mentioned before the last week prior to the start of the war, before becoming framed as the sole reason for the failure to achieve a second resolution in the UN. In his speech to the House of Commons Blair argues that France would "veto ... whatever the circumstances" (TB-18.03.03), implying that France do not act based on conviction, but opposition alone. UK Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, stated that "sadly, one country ensured that the Security Council would not act", while the British ambassador to the UN, Jeremy Greenstock, sarcastically claimed that "one country rejected our proposed compromise even before the Iraqi government itself" (*Independent*, 18.03.03).

An 'us' vs. 'them' divide is again an important factor in creating an anti-France discourse. Putting the French alongside Saddam Hussein and implying that France is actually supportive of Iraq (albeit far from the truth) would of course have important discursive ramifications. The NATION STATE IS A PERSON metaphor also plays an important cognitive role, and paves way for an important RULER IS THE STATE metonymy: Chirac is France, Blair is the UK, Bush is the US, and not least, Saddam is Iraq. As Lakoff (1991) remarks, the metonymy is more likely to be used with regards to 'dictators' and 'rulers' of states such as Saddam (e.g. 'the battle against Saddam is a fight we cannot lose'). Still, it is also in play with regards to Chirac in the case of an anti-France discourse and is to be considered when analysing newspaper reports on the French/British dispute over Iraq.

4.3.4 Post-war discourse

A year after the war in Iraq things had by no means quieted down for Blair and the Labour government. The public scandal of the Hutton inquiry and the so-called 'dodgy dossier', combined with a deteriorating situation in Iraq itself, made Blair's approval ratings hit new lows. The discourse of the Iraq war, highly reliant on the perseverance on finding WMD, had been ridiculed in the media. Media-spin had become one of the most despised character-traits of New Labour and Blair. Consequently, the discourse had to change. But could a PM with historically low approval ratings convince the British public that war in Iraq was the right thing to do as the political situation worsened day by day?

In his speech in Sedgefield in March 2004, regarded as one of Blair's most important and prominent speeches of his reign as PM, Blair outlined his vision of the war in Iraq. The speech was more than anything an attempt to justify what Blair called the most divisive decision he had ever had to make in politics. The discourse is markedly different from the pre-war speeches. Firstly, in the Sedgefield speech Blair plays down his own personal role in the war. For instance:

It is because it was in March 2003 and remains my fervent view that the nature of the global threat we face in Britain and round the world is real and existential and it is the task of leadership to expose it and fight it, whatever the political cost; and that the true danger is not to any single politician's reputation, but to our country if we now ignore this threat or erase it from the agenda in embarrassment at the difficulties it causes.
(TB-05.03.04)

There is no insistent emphasis on the personal ‘passion’ and ‘belief’ that was so important in the pre-war speeches. Instead Blair insists that the decision to go to war was not an issue of reputation, but of a sincere conviction that action was needed. This is not to say that Blair becomes the distanced pragmatic; he still uses his own person as an important discursive tool (largely maintaining the familiar I-narrative). But compared to the pre-war discourse, the Sedgefield speech is significantly less emotionalised and makes use of a softer tone than previously. Consider for instance the opening lines:

No decision I have ever made in politics has been as divisive as the decision to go to war to in Iraq. It remains deeply divisive today. I know a large part of the public want to move on (...) But I know too that the nature of this issue over Iraq, stirring such bitter emotions as it does, can't just be swept away as ill-fitting the pre-occupations of the man and woman on the street. This is not simply because of the gravity of war; or the continued engagement of British troops and civilians in Iraq; or even because of reflections made on the integrity of the Prime Minister. (TB-05.03.04)

In comparison to the opening lines of the speech opening the House of Commons debate on March 18 almost a year before, Blair’s discourse is remarkably more humble. The discursive attempt at silencing opposition (see section 4.3.3) is substituted by acknowledgment; their “alternative judgement” being both “entirely rational and arguable”, and the issue “stirring bitter emotions”. But perhaps more importantly, Blair tries to remove the debate from the emotionalised value conviction on to a more rational discourse: the debate is not about the integrity of the Prime Minister, but the war in Iraq. Thus, the strong conviction of Blair in favour of military action in Iraq was not made out of a personal ‘belief’, but the result of a rational and sincere political evaluation. This is highlighted in the second passage of Blair’s Sedgefield speech:

In truth, the fundamental source of division over Iraq is not over issues of trust or integrity, though some insist on trying to translate it into that. Each week brings a fresh attempt to get a new angle that can prove it was all a gigantic conspiracy. (TB-05.03.04)

The statement from Blair is perhaps ironic considering his pre-war speeches (it would indeed be fair to argue that it was Blair himself who tried to translate Iraq into issues over trust and integrity). Still, it signifies the change in discourse that took place during the first year of the war. ‘Values’ is substituted for rationale, or as Blair himself states, “the real issue ... is not a matter of trust but of judgement” (TB-05-03.04).

The new focus on the security discourse in turn allows the resurfacing of a globalisation discourse that was such an important part of Blair's vision of the 'new world' prior to September 11. In the Sedgefield speech, Blair argues how "the notion of intervening on humanitarian grounds had been gaining currency", linking Iraq to Kosovo and Sierra Leone. The comparison is strikingly different from the comparisons made in the pre-war discourse which almost exclusively alluded to more immediate threatening scenarios such as 11 September and international terrorism. The 'interventionist' discourse which was remarkably absent in the time between September 11 and the start of the Iraq war is, in other words, again deemed to be valid.

There are important cognitive differences in the metaphors used in the two different discourses of pre and post-war. A morality discourse as presented before the start of the Iraq war is largely based on a threat-scenario and makes extensive use of emotionalised metaphors with specific reference to events such as September 11 (e.g. 'we must not back down in our fight against evil', 'smoking gun, mushroom cloud' etc.). An interventionist discourse such as presented in the Sedgefield is much more reliant on metaphors of community and rational-actor metaphors. Arguably, this has important ramifications for how Blair must structure his argument. For instance, a rational-actor model makes a BUSINESS IS POLITICS metaphor more prominent, reducing the role of a competing value judgement and paving the way for the notion of community:

The essence of a community is common rights and responsibilities. We have obligations in relation to each other. If we are threatened, we have a right to act. And we do not accept in a community that others have a right to oppress and brutalise their people. We value the freedom and dignity of the human race and each individual in it. (TB-05.03.04)

The community metaphor Blair here adheres to answers exactly to the interventionist discourse that was outlined at the time of Kosovo. Still, the inescapable question is, of course, whether Iraq fits the description.

Blair further tries to distance himself from the highly controversial issue of WMD⁴⁴:

Of course the opponents are boosted by the fact that though we know Saddam had WMD; we haven't found the physical evidence of them in the 11 months since the war. But in fact, everyone thought he had them. That was the basis of UN Resolution 1441 (...) But the key point is that it is the threat that is the issue. (TB-05.03.04)

The 'threat' now being the issue is quite different from the statements made before the war. For instance, in his address to the nation Blair called Iraq a "brutal state (...) armed with weapons of mass destruction" and to the House of Commons on 25th of September 2002 Blair claimed that Saddam Hussein's WMD-programme is active, detailed and growing". Needless to say, there is an important difference in the emphasis on the 'threat' rather than the weapons themselves⁴⁵.

At the same time, Blair still testifies to many of the features that were prominent in the pre-war discourse. The lexicalization is similar: 'their regime' (not 'government') is a 'brutal dictatorship', 'they' murder their own people, 'they' are 'cruel', 'tyrannical', 'corrupt' to name a few examples. The I-narration is reduced (it was not Blair's personal conviction that was the justification for the war, e.g. 'it was not my decision', but rather based on the assessment of intelligence and threat), but is still present within a personal characterisation: his own views are described as "fervent" and "passionate". His own personal role is defended by stating that "Prime Ministers don't have the luxury of maintaining both sides of the argument. They can see both sides. But, ultimately, leadership is about deciding" (TB-05.03.04). Again, the implicit notion is of a PM who was genuine and brave in his decision. Still, Blair is markedly less forceful in his argument, claiming that "I have never disrespected those who disagreed with the decision" (TB-05.03.04).

To sum up, the arguably most important change in the discourse of Blair in the Sedgefield speech is the attempt to turn the debate away from a moral and personal accountability, rather focusing on the security aspects. Accordingly, Blair tries to play down his own role ("the true danger is not to any single politicians reputation" and rather emphasise the political process and assumptions that provided the basis for the decisions made. The discourse is thus

⁴⁴ Many considered the failure to find any chemical or biological weapons (WMD) in Iraq as proof of Blair not speaking the truth about the intelligence concerning Iraq.

⁴⁵ On the BBC's Breakfast with Frost show on January 12, 2004, Blair admitted that he was not too confident that WMD would be found: "in a land mass twice the size of the UK it may well not be surprising that you don't find where this stuff is hidden" (Daily Telegraph, 03.02.2004).

significantly 'softer' and less aggressive than the pre-war discourse; a basic aim is indeed to defend the highly criticised process that led to the Iraq war.

The change in discourse must of course be seen in relation to the political situation Blair found himself in. For one, the Iraq war was turning out to be a lot harder than expected. British and allied lives were lost every day, and the Iraqi insurgency was continuing. In addition, as was shown in Chapter 3, public opinion polls were not reflecting well on Blair. In fact, the Prime Minister had never been more unpopular than he was in the year after the Iraq war. At the same time, surveys also showed a fierce public contempt and distrust for what the believed to be misleading 'government spin' and many people felt that they had been misled by the Prime Minister himself. As several political and media analysts have been keen to point out, the events of 2003 and early 2004 resembled a 'crisis of trust' between the public and the government. Stanyer (2004: 433) remarks, "it is not surprising that the post-Hutton world is one where people are more suspicious of government communication than ever", and accordingly, "an increasing number may believe that all government communication is in essence deceitful, shaped by a team of spin-doctors and should carry a health warning". The presiding emphasis at the time was indeed the almost irreparable damage done to the relationship between the public and the government.

Within this perspective it is then perhaps unsurprising that Blair attempts to remove and reduce his own personal conviction in the Iraq discourse, and rather focus on the bigger picture (e.g. the global challenges of terrorism, etc.). Still, the change in discourse must not be exaggerated in the attempt to find change. In fact, the similarities between Blair's pre and post-war discourses are more salient than the changes. Furthermore, the changes such as the attempt to silence or background a personal conviction are only partly carried out. While Blair tries to turn the debate away from moral and a personal conviction frame (e.g. 'it is not over issues of trust or integrity'), he still consistently makes use of several familiar features of a morality/ethics discourse, such as the consistent use of an I-narration and an 'us' vs. 'them' bifurcation.

Clearly, the most obvious moral and ethical arguments were inappropriate. With a prolonged war and a large scale Iraqi resistance only seeming to grow, the idea of the UK and US as 'liberators of freedom' did not fit. But the undercurrent moral discourses and the re-emphasis

on security aspects were very much there a year later. Thus, a belief that government ‘spin’, as it was popularly called, ceased to exist as a consequence of Iraq, is certainly invalid.

4.4 Summary

This chapter has outlined the main features of the international relations discourse that the Labour government and Prime Minister Tony Blair made use of with regards to the war in Iraq. Although various discourses are intertwined and interdependent, an attempt to categorise different discourses and discursive features is useful. Accordingly, two sub-discourses of a security discourse and a morality discourse were outlined. Still, both discourses share an underlying discourse of globalisation that is crucial to how Blair and the New Labour government understand politics. In addition to these two main discourses, other, although less salient, features were established, such as historical association, patriotism, idea of ‘inevitability’, etc. These various discourse and features will in turn be applied in the newspaper analysis in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Newspaper Analysis

The present chapter will concentrate on the newspaper material, analysing both articles and opinion pieces ranging from before the war started (section 5.1) and in response to Blair's highly important speech in Sedgefield, just before the one year anniversary of the war (section 5.2). In accordance with the aims put forward in the introduction, the newspaper material will be compared with the discourse of Blair and the most salient discursive topics and features that were described in Chapter 4.

5.1 Pre-war discourse

The pre-war newspaper articles and reports are taken from a period of 10 days around the start of the war dating from the 15th to the 25th of March 2003. The analysis is divided into several categories: lexicalisation (section 5.1.1), moral conviction (5.1.2), globalisation discourse (5.1.3) and patriotism (5.1.4). One section (5.1.5) is dedicated to two themes that do not necessarily feature within any of the above categories but still must be regarded as prominent in the newspaper discourse: historical association and the concept of 'inevitability'. Finally, I will attempt a brief analysis of some of the metaphors found in the newspaper material (section 5.1.6).

5.1.1 Lexicalisation

In the previous chapter it was argued that lexicalisation played an important role in manifesting the ideological implications of Blair's discourse. Turning to the newspaper discourse, I will look at three different instances of lexicalisation in turn: over-lexicalisation/'us' vs. 'them', cross-paper polarisation, and the specific instance of 'WMD'.

Over-lexicalisation/'us' vs. 'them': The lexicalisation of the discourse of Blair was largely dependent on an 'us' vs. 'them' bifurcation. Turning to newspapers, it seems that a similar pattern of positive Self-representation and a negative Other-representation is largely maintained. Consider for instance the following passage from the *Sunday Times*:

Saddam is a dangerous tyrant who has invaded Iran and Kuwait and attacked Israel and Saudi Arabia. He has used chemical weapons, not just in the war with Iran but also against his own people. Four million people have fled his regime and tens of thousands more of his opponents are dead or in jail ... As his people have become impoverished, he has persisted with efforts to acquire weapons material from other countries. He is a danger to us all. (*Sunday Times*, 16.03.03)

The above excerpt from the leading article in the *Sunday Times* is strikingly consistent with the ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ bifurcation created in the discourse of Blair. ‘They’, signified simply by the metonymy ‘Saddam’ (ruler for state, see Lakoff 1991), have a leader who is a ‘dangerous tyrant’ and uses ‘chemical weapons’ against ‘his own people’⁴⁶. The differences are clear: ‘they’ have ‘regimes’, ‘we’ have democracies; ‘they’ have ‘chemical weapons’, we have ‘strategic weapons’; ‘they’ attack other nations and people, ‘we’ intervene. Consequently, ‘they’ are a danger to ‘us’ all.

An integral part of this bifurcation is a consistent use of an over-lexicalisation of ‘their’ properties, as suggested by Fowler (1991) to be a typical feature of ideologically motivated language (see Chapter 4, section 4.2). Again, the newspaper discourse follows a similar pattern to that of Blair. Saddam Hussein is, for instance, characterised as an ‘evil dictator’ and ‘tyrant’ (*Sun*), a ‘rogue dictator’ (*Sunday Times*), a ‘mass murderer’ (*Mail on Sunday*), a ‘monster’ who is capable of “slaughtering his own people impunity” (*Express*), a “repulsive, murderous dictator who deserves everything he gets” (*Daily Mirror*). His regime is a ‘tyranny’ (*Guardian*), ‘extremist’ (*Daily Telegraph*), ‘murderous’ (*Daily Mail*) and a ‘threat to world peace’ (*Express on Sunday*). Although the vivid lexicalisation of Saddam and his regime is perhaps more salient in tabloid papers, the broadsheet papers do not follow far behind. As the example from the *Sunday Times* and other broadsheets show, instances of over-lexicalisation are common.

Cross-paper polarisation: A difference in lexicalisation can also be drawn between the papers that were supportive of the war and those opposed. The most significant contrasts were found in the pro-war tabloid the *Sun* and the anti-war tabloid the *Daily Mirror*. Consider for instance the following passage from the *Sun*’s Sunday equivalent *News of the World*:

⁴⁶ See Van Dijk (1998) for an interesting account of the use of ‘tyrant’ as a particularly important and significant lexicalisation of Oriental leaders.

Time has run out for Saddam Hussein. For 12 years he has treated the UN with total contempt. For Saddam's comforters, like self-serving MP Clare Short and the political nonentities who set out to undermine the Prime Minister, we have nothing but disdain. (*News of the World*, 16.03.03)⁴⁷

Short was not the only 'comforter' of Saddam Hussein. The *Sun* also attacks another Labour 'rebel', Robin Cook, in a similar fashion, branding him a 'gnome' whom Blair is "better off without" (18.03.03)⁴⁸. The example from the *Sun* shows how the paper reinforces an 'us' vs. 'them' bifurcation by attempting to place the war opposing politicians in a 'them' category of Saddam's 'comforters', or in the case of the *Express* "Saddam apologists" (25.03.03). An 'us' vs. 'them' bifurcation thus becomes highly significant in a silencing of the opposition, who are nothing but 'self-serving nonentities', and in fact support the 'tyrant' Saddam.

In contrast, the *Daily Mirror* enthusiastically embraces Cook's decision to resign from the Labour party, branding him as a 'hero' restoring the 'integrity of Parliament'. The "political pariah" Clare Short is, however, vigorously attacked:

Surprise, surprise! Clare Short has found a way to solve her conscience and fill her wallet at the same time. Her decision to remain in Tony Blair's war-making Cabinet was absolutely predictable. Totally in character. And utterly despicable. She likes to be thought of as Mother Earth, going round the world doing good and patting children on the head. The truth is she is a scheming politician ready to do anything to stay in power (*Daily Mirror*, 19.03.03).

Interestingly, the over-lexicalisation that is apparent in framing the 'villain' Saddam Hussein in the case of the *Sun* is here applied to the number one enemy of the *Daily Mirror*, namely Clare Short. Being a pro-war paper the *Sun* narrates a more predictable 'us' vs. 'them' scenario where Saddam and the Iraqi regime constitute the number one enemy ('them') and the opposition (e.g. Cook) is marginalised through this framing. The anti-war *Daily Mirror*, on the other hand, narrates a villain/hero scenario of its own. Short is set up as a villain, while Cook is a hero, at the same time as the paper treads very carefully when it comes to any lexicalisation over Tony Blair⁴⁹.

⁴⁷ Clare Short was a Cabinet member who at first announced that she would resign from her position if Britain failed to achieve a UN mandate for military action. She was later convinced to stay on.

⁴⁸ Former foreign secretary, Robin Cook, resigned from his position as Leader of the House of Commons in protest against British participation in the war in Iraq (see Kampfner 2004 for a critical account of the political processes relating to Iraq).

⁴⁹ It is interesting that the *Mirror* almost exclusively ignores the most important political leader and war catalyst, Blair, whilst the negative emphasis is on Short.

There is no shortage of explicit language in the *Mirror*: Short is a “scheming politician”, “totally in character” and “utterly despicable”. Other articles are similarly harsh on Short, branding her a “shallow political creature” (18.03.03), and implying that she is greedy, “still being chauffeured around in her luxurious limousine” (20.03.03). The implicit assumption of greed on Short’s part is also present in the *Daily Mail* who cites her salary at “GBP125,000 ... amid accusations of cowardice and hypocrisy” (18.03.03). The conception of Short as trying to be “Mother Earth, going round the world doing good and patting children on the head” implies that the Cabinet member is egotistical and holds a too high opinion of herself (an image of ‘patting children on the head’ arguably gives notions of a religious leader such as the pope).

The extraordinary language of the pro- and anti-war papers constructs an ideological cross-paper polarisation, which resembles the familiar ‘us’/‘them’ scenario. In many ways, this cross-paper feud becomes a sort of battle within the real battle of the war in Iraq. Moreover, it is primarily created through lexicalisation, and indeed, as is the case with the *Sun* and the *Daily Mirror*, an over-lexicalisation. This is further supported in examples concerning a possible Labour backbench ‘rebellion’ where the anti-war camp and the pro-war camp stand in stale opposition. The *Sun*, for instance, describes the anti-war Labour MPs as both “mutinous” and “out of touch”, while Robert Kilroy-Silk of the *Express* is puzzled, “can you believe it? These dumbheads are prepared to abandon the man without whom they would not have created the modern Labour party...” (16.03.03). In comparison, the *Independent* reports of a “fresh revolt” to sign a “rebel amendment which constitutes a powerful coalition from all parties” (18.03.03). Here, the emphasis is on the adamant political conviction of the rebels rather than on the misguidance and disloyalty described by the pro-war tabloids. The examples again show how the different political stance over Iraq creates a discursive juxtaposition where there are clear differences in lexical choices.

A political polarisation is also seen in the representation of the events of war in the different papers. The *Daily Mirror* emphasises the terrifying aspects of war, in what they call the “mother of all bombings”. For instance:

The world watched in horror last night as Operation Shock and Awe was unleashed on Baghdad. Tomahawk and air launched Cruise missiles, 2000lb bunker-buster, penetrator and smart bombs took out building after building along the Tigris river (*Daily Mirror*, 22.03.03).

A leading article in the *Mirror* on the 21st of March further adds to a picture of suffering Iraqis, stating that, “we also feel a desperate sense of unease and helplessness at the fate awaiting Iraqi civilians as they lie in their homes hiding from the fearful bombardment” (21.03.03). Combining this with eye-witness accounts and an assessment of tactical assertions and military language the *Daily Mirror*’s emphasis, as an anti-war paper, is on the ‘terror’ of war and the gravity of the situation for the Iraqi people. The descriptions give negative associations; ‘horror’, ‘unleashed’, ‘unease’, ‘helplessness’, ‘fearful bombardment’ etc.

The *Sun*’s emphasis is very different. For instance:

From air, land and sea, British Forces tackle Saddam Hussein’s army head-on. As Baghdad burns after precision missile strikes, our soldiers and Marines fight a ferocious battle to reach the city of Basra (*Sun*, 21.03.03).

Here, the focus is on the British army and the strategic challenges that they face. The emphasis is on ‘precision strikes’ rather than ‘collateral damage’ and Iraqi civilians. The Iraqi people are in other words solely presented through its armed forces and Saddam’s strategic decisions. The lexicalisation is based on a battle frame: ‘tackle’, ‘strikes’, ‘fight’, ‘ferocious’, etc. There is also an important distinction of ‘our’ soldiers, as opposed to ‘theirs’. Other stories highlight this focus, such as Saddam’s plot to “poison Iraq’s water system” (20.03.03) and several reports indicating that the Iraqi republican army were about to ‘give up’, both focusing on the negative representation of ‘their’ troops.

A similar political divide is found in the broadsheet papers and their coverage of early events in the war. The anti-war *Independent* reports of “the launch of a brutal American air war” which “came at the end of a day of extraordinary drama” (22.03.03), while the *Guardian* in its leading article paints a sombre picture emphasising the gravity of the situation:

Last night, on a spring evening in the desert, the most powerful armed nation of the modern world launched an immense attack of computer-guided fire and steel on the land of one of the great civilisations of the ancient world. The outcome of last night's assault is nowhere near clear yet (*Guardian*, 21.03.03).

In comparison, the *Daily Telegraph*, writes:

Battle was joined in earnest last night, with British and American ground forces fully engaged for the first time. A colossal allied artillery and aerial bombardment preceded the final assault on a demoralised, mutinous but still numerous Iraqi army. The fall of Umm Qasr marked the first victory (*Daily Telegraph*, 21.03.03)

While the *Guardian* (and the *Independent*) emphasises both the superior power of the US and an uncertainty of whether the initial stages of the war were successful, the *Daily Telegraph* focuses on the more strategic elements of the military operations, and on the Iraqi army being “demoralised” and “mutinous”. The language in the *Guardian* is sombre, emphasizing the gravity of the situation (and not knowing the outcome). In comparison, the language of the *Telegraph* is confident, emphasizing the strategic ‘positives’ of ‘us’ and the ‘negatives’ of ‘them’.

The examples show how the different papers shape their political ideologies through lexicalisation. The pro-war papers prefer a positive emphasis, focusing on the strategic and military progress of the war, while the anti-war papers have a more negative and sombre approach where the terrifying aspects of war are stressed.

‘WMD’: Blair’s rhetorical use of the term ‘WMD’ was discussed in the previous chapter in relation to a security discourse (and the implicit ‘us’/‘them’ polarisation). It was suggested that the use of the term serves considerable ideological purposes. How then about the newspapers? As was mentioned in the previous chapter (section 4.3.1) the term was widely accepted and used in newspapers. However, more important was *how* the term of ‘weapons of mass destruction’/‘WMD’ was used. Several papers seem, like Blair, certain of the existence of ‘WMD’. The *Times*, for instance speaks of “Iraq and *its* weapons of mass destruction” (16.03.03, emphasis added), and also by using a definite article, “*the* weapons of mass destruction” (16.03.03, emphasis added). Jonathan Raban in the *Guardian* finds the threat ‘remote’, but still implies the existence of ‘WMD’ by using a possessive pronoun, “*his* WMD” (22.03.03, emphasis added). Pro-war tabloid the *Sun* speaks of “Iraq’s doomsday weapons” (18.03.03), while both the *Financial Times* (18.03.03) and the *Express* (25.03.03) speak of “Saddam’s weapons of mass destruction”. There are some notable exceptions, however. The *Daily Mirror* on the 18th of March states that they had not seen any proof of Saddam Hussein’s ‘weapons of mass destruction’, while the *Independent* claims that the issue

of 'WMD' "always had an air of unreality" (*Independent*, 16.03.03). Still, the examples show an overriding tendency in the newspapers to confirm the allegations made by Blair and government that Iraq and Saddam Hussein indeed were in the possession of 'weapons of mass destruction'. In both the case of Blair and the newspapers an implied existence is achieved through linguistic features. Although exceptions occur, the tendency supports the argument that the media "rather than investigate, analyze, or debate the rationale for war" instead offered "a dramatization of war unfolding" (Lule 2004: 187). One of the dramatisations pre-war was certainly the debate and search for Iraqi 'WMD'. But while the 'threat' aspect was perhaps questioned by quite a few papers, very few questioned the actual existence of the 'WMD' in the first place.

Considering lexicalisation three things are apparent. Firstly, the ideological bifurcation of 'us' and 'them' familiar with Blair is maintained in a large majority of newspapers, although the expression of this bifurcation varies in both frequency and persistence with regards to the political and socio-economic grouping of the newspaper in question. Secondly, the bifurcation extends to a cross-paper feud, where pro-war papers stand on one side and anti-war papers stand on the other. Both sides create a polarisation of the argument, and the 'weapon of choice' is a similar discursive bifurcation as seen in the more conventional us/them divide. Again, it is important to note the differences that occur based on the different papers and their readership profiles. The broadsheet papers are expectedly more subtle in their ideological bifurcation, while the tabloid papers are more straightforward, wilfully attempting to create what you may call ideological 'one on one's' (e.g. Blair vs. Saddam, Short vs. Cook etc, the *Sun* vs. the *Mirror*). Finally, even though sometimes unintentional, specific lexical and grammatical choices can constitute ideologically implicit meaning as was the case with the use of a phrase like 'WMD'.

5.1.2 Morality discourse

The two political approaches and their different lexical choices also have important cognitive implications. The *Sun* and the *Daily Mirror* narrate a storyline which includes a villain, a victim and a hero. A clear divide between villains and heroes sets up the implicit divide between right and wrong. This bifurcation of the debate thus becomes a cognitive narration 'helping' the reader to draw the 'right' conclusion. In the case of the *Sun* this narration is similar to the bifurcation in Blair's discourse; Saddam is the 'villain' ('them') and 'our'

political leaders and ‘our’ army are the heroes. Interestingly, it is also ‘we’ that are the potential victims (e.g. through the threat of terrorism). Despite their anti-war stance, the *Mirror* also constructs a bifurcation of ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ (e.g. Saddam is still a ‘tyrant’ and a ‘murderous dictator’). But whereas the *Sun* narrates ‘us’ as victims, the *Mirror*’s victims are the Iraqi people.

The *Guardian* and the *Daily Telegraph* follow a similar pattern. Whereas the *Guardian* constructs a scenario where the Iraqi people are the victims, and the war consequently being unjustifiable, the *Daily Telegraph* leans toward the more traditional narration similar to the *Sun*. Indeed, the war is justified through a security discourse that paves the way for a narration of ‘us’ as victims. In several reports from the war this narration manifests itself in a focus on the strategic operations, silencing the viewpoint of the ‘ordinary Iraqi people’ emphasised by the anti-war papers.

An ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ cognitive narration is here used to set up a moral discourse. According to Lakoff (1991: 4), a similar narrative construction was present back in the First Gulf War in 1991: the ‘fairy tale’ (i.e. narrative) has “an asymmetry built into it. The hero is moral and courageous, while the villain is amoral and vicious...”. Initially, there is a “crime committed against an innocent victim. This, in turn, creates a moral imbalance, and a correction of this imbalance involves a battle between the hero (‘good’) and the villain (‘evil’) (Lakoff 1991: 4). This narrative scenario is indeed remarkably reminiscent of the Iraq discourse of Blair in its moral accountability (see discussion on strict father morality in Blair’s discourse, section 4.3.2). But how does this fit with the newspaper discourse? In the example of the *Daily Mail* it seems to fit perfectly. In an article entitled “This war IS about good versus evil”, the *Mail* commentator Melanie Phillips attacks, amongst other, the church’s refusal to “differentiate between good and evil” and attacking ‘Western’ people who refuse to accept the existence of a “moral difference”. Further, Phillips argues that the west is at “war with itself”:

The battle is between those that want to build a better world and destroy the promoters of tyranny, terrorism and mass murder, and those who wish instead to appease them – composed of a startling global coalition of the far Right, communists, pacifists, terrorists, anarchists, defeatists, anti-Semites and useful idiots. These dividing lines are critical to the terrible battles ahead, and will be remembered for ever (*Daily Mail*, 24.03.03).

The moral conviction is constructed within an ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ bifurcation, setting up a polarised argument, where you are either one of ‘us’ (i.e. the implicit notions of ‘democracy’, ‘freedom’ etc.) or you are one of ‘them’ (i.e. ‘terrorist’, ‘pacifist’, ‘anti-Semites’, ‘useful idiots’ etc.). This combination of ‘us’/‘them’ and a moral argument is seen elsewhere too:

We go to war, not because we are an especially warlike people. We do so because our cause is just. We fight as we have before: because not to do so is to give victory to the barbarian (*Mail on Sunday*, 16.03.03).

Mr. Blair has firmly and resolutely led us to the brink of war because he knows this is the only way to protect Britain, not just from Saddam’s weapons of mass destruction but from any other evil regime that puts us in its sights or harbours terrorists (*Express*, 19.03.03)

... it is absurd that we have always regarded [the UN] as the sole arbiter of justice ... there is surely something repellent about the idea of “cover” for our actions, as though we were contemplating a dodgy business deal rather than setting out to disarm and depose a mass murderer (*Sunday Times*, 16.03.03).

The first two examples are more obvious, war is ‘simply’ based on the struggle against ‘barbarian’ and ‘evil’ forces in society. It is thus a fulfilment of a self-defence scenario that is realised in a combination of an imminent and potentially dangerous ‘threat’ and a moral duty to act. These examples are grounded in the cognitive frame of a struggle between ‘good’ and ‘evil’. The moral justification in the example of the *Sunday Times* is subtler. The justification does not lie within the good/evil frame, but in a moral accountability and duty to help the suffering Iraqi people. On this basis, ‘our’ actions are accountable both with regards to a security discourse (to ‘disarm’) and a morality discourse (to ‘depose’). Accordingly, there is, then, no need for any additional justification on the basis of a UN mandate, or any “cover for our actions”. We are simply doing the ‘just thing’ in bringing them ‘democracy’ and ‘freedom’. In turn, this justifies the sacrifice that war essentially entails.

In contrast, an anti-war cognitive narration does not reflect this moral accountability so easily; the sacrifice does not *necessarily* justify the means. War is a terrifying aspect, and the victims of the war in Iraq are in the end the people of Iraq. Still, the belief in doing the ‘just thing’ is appealing even to the more liberal papers. This is supported by Richardson (2007) who argues that the moral discourse strategy appealed not only to the political right who wanted to remove ‘distasteful dictators’, but also to the more liberal political wing: “the propaganda ... convinced a significant number of liberal journalists to use their columns to argue that we

have a civilising duty to ‘free Iraqis’ by bombing their country and killing potentially thousands of innocents” (Richardson 2007: 191).

But if the moral justification exemplified above was appealing, Tony Blair’s personal moral conviction was simply irresistible. Indeed, seemingly every newspaper both tabloid and broadsheet, opposed and supportive of the war, praised Blair for his conviction and integrity as Prime Minister. A look at the various leading articles from the final Sunday and weekend papers before the start of the war provides good examples:

...even those who think that Mr. Blair is wrong are in no doubt as to his honesty, his decency, his sincerity and his courage (*Sunday People*, 16.03.03)

Anybody who has seen Tony Blair in recent days will testify to the passion which drives him ... he ... knows that a real leader is required from time to time to be just that – a leader and not a follower. He won’t shy away from making unpopular decisions in what he perceives to be the national interest (*Mail on Sunday*, 16.03.03)

Mr Blair is genuine when he insists that a peaceful settlement was pursued in good faith (*Sunday Times*, 16.03.03).

In the thick of the prelude to war, one thing remains clear: Tony Blair deserves praise for pursuing the British national interest and for taking huge party political risks in doing so. It is worth noting in this context that he has received greater loyalty in that endeavour from Iain Duncan Smith than from many Labour politicians who owe their careers to him (*Sunday Telegraph*, 16.03.03)

Mr Blair knows he is risking his premiership with the stance he is taking on Iraq ... But although he faces the biggest crisis of his six-year premiership, Mr Blair is sticking rigidly to his course (*Financial Times*, 15.03.08)

[Blair] is risking his premiership on his vision of an international order that is just and legitimate, yet one which offers security against those who possess weapons of mass destruction and contemplate terrorism. Even his critics should acknowledge the remarkable leadership he is exhibiting (*Observer*, 16.03.03)

Even the highly critical *Daily Mirror* praises Blair for his “attempts to get a resolution backing the conflict”, whilst the equally critical left-wing paper the *Guardian* repeats in their leader following Blair’s speech to the House of Commons that “[historians] will look back to read an impassioned and impressive speech which may give future generations some inkling of how, when so many of his own party opposed his policy so vehemently, Tony Blair nevertheless managed to retain their respect and support” (*Guardian*, 19.03.03). Both add to the overall picture of Blair as an honest and accountable leader with a firm moral belief that

he is right. The lexicalisation consists largely of positive personal descriptions which imply a trustworthiness and accountability in Blair; he is praised not only for his ‘decency’, ‘courage’, ‘sincerity’, ‘good faith’ and the ‘passion which drives him’, but by ‘risking his premiership’ Blair also shows ‘genuine’ and ‘remarkable leadership’, which deserves ‘praise’ and ‘respect’.

Why is this so? Indeed, why is every newspaper in Britain thoroughly convinced of Blair’s integrity and sincerity in his beliefs, even though they in some cases were opposed to war?⁵⁰ The answer is more than likely to lie in the morality discourse and the personal conviction rhetoric of Blair. Clearly, it is impossible to consider the widely accepted appraisal of Blair without considering how the Labour PM displays himself in his own discourse. As was outlined in Chapter 4, Blair’s conviction is repeated in several pre-war speeches where he reflects on the ‘tough responsibilities of leadership’, ‘risking his premiership’, ‘a firm belief’, and consistently makes use of his own personal experience (using a ‘first-person narrative’, e.g. ‘I am...’). The bottom line in the speech in the House of Commons was simple and powerful: Blair was so convinced war was right that he was prepared to put his job on the line. This seemed, in turn to reflect favourably on Blair in the newspapers, the sentiment clearly being that the PM is honest and trustworthy, and, as the *Guardian* remarked, “even his critics should acknowledge the remarkable leadership he is exhibiting”.

The *Independent* seems to be an exception, although it, too, confirms how important the issue of moral values had become in that last week before war. For instance, on March 16th, 4 days prior to the war officially started, Ted Honderich wrote:

Tony Blair keeps telling us that he wouldn’t be going to war if he didn’t think it was moral ... But the seeming needlessness and irrelevance of Mr Blair’s disclosures about himself are not the main point ... The question is whether it is right to attack, invade and take Iraq (*Independent on Sunday*, 16.03.03).

The *Independent* article is a criticism of the moral ‘turn’ the debate over whether or not to go to war in Iraq had taken in the last weeks of the war. While certainly critical, the article also adds to the overall assumption that the Iraq-debate took a turn from a security debate to a moral discourse. The turn is quite clearly quite consistent with the strategy of Blair and his associates. According to Kampfner (2004: 288), the failure to gain a UN resolution resulted

⁵⁰ The question arguably becomes even more significant in hindsight, considering the nature of the Hutton inquiry and the effect it had on Blair and the government.

not only in a harsh rhetoric against the countries opposes, in particular France, but also put Blair on “the search for a ‘moral majority’ if not a legal one”.

The emphasis on Blair, the person, and *his* premiership is central in the attempt to create such a ‘moral majority’. It begs the question of whether Blair’s hints at resignation were designed to serve a rhetorical purpose. Certainly, the newspapers were not slow to pick up on this assumption. The *Financial Times*’ James Blitz headlined his story on Tony Blair by calling him “the faithful leader of a rebellious country” (15.03.03), while the leading article in the same paper three days later stated that “the Prime Minister's fall would be a tragedy” (18.03.03).

Most newspapers agreed that the most significant challenge to Blair's reign as PM was the resignation of Commons leader Robin Cook. As the *Daily Mirror* remarks, “who knows where this ministerial rebellion will lead? Is it the end for Mr Blair?” (18.03.03). Other papers vehemently attacks Cook, and most significantly the *Sun*:

Mr Cook has been storing this bile up for years. Iraq was the excuse he needed to let it all out ... [The Americans] will watch on TV news as Mr Cook gets a standing ovation from fellow MPs and wonder if - with our troops poised to attack in the desert - Britain has gone mad (*Sun*, 18.03.03)

The *Times*, meanwhile, argue that Cook’s position on the war is contradictory, as “Mr Cook as foreign secretary endorsed the military campaign against Milosevic but somehow could not see the similarities in the Iraq conflict”. Accordingly, Blair can not “afford to alter policy to prevent his departure” (18.03.03). For the *Sun* it is personal; implying that Mr Cook is using Iraq as an excuse to vent his frustration against Blair, having stored “this bile up for years”. The *Times* are less direct, but still assess the situation through the personal role and political future of Blair; the overriding assumption being that Blair could simply not afford to listen to Cook.

The newspaper material shows how the media help frame the debate within a moral discourse. The personal emphasis of Blair in his speeches, his strong conviction and integrity, becomes a significant part of the debate over Iraq. It is indeed striking that in the last week before the war the debate on Iraq is so focused on the morality aspects of the war and the role of the Prime Minister. Here, it is important to note the differences between the pro-war and anti-war

papers. While the pro-war papers, and especially the tabloid ones, are more than ready to turn to a morality discourse of ‘right and wrong’, ‘good vs. evil’, etc., the anti-war papers show fewer examples of similar attitudes. The conviction of Blair is, however, assumed by every paper regardless of political stance.

5.1.3 Globalisation

The basis of Blair’s international discourse is founded in his views on globalisation as was shown in Chapter 4. Several examples indicate that a similar globalisation discourse exists in the various newspapers. For instance, the *Guardian* calls Blair’s vision for an international order “just and legitimate” (16.03.03), while the *Financial Times* emphasises how badly Blair “wanted to hold the community together” (18.03.03). Indeed the conceptualisation of an international community through the metaphors of NATION STATE IS A PERSON is highly salient. Countries are friends or enemies based on their allegiance, ‘we’ (Britain) have an obligation to intervene against atrocities, ‘we’ have a role as one of the leading countries of ‘our’ community. The diplomatic efforts preceding the war give several examples: the main allies, Spain and the US, are the ‘friends’ of Britain, while Iraq is, of course, the enemy. Countries opposed to the invasion but still are political allies such as France and Germany are letting Britain down, putting their ‘friendship on the line’. The *Sun*, for instance, remark that the allies backing war are the “true friends” of Britain (20.03.03). Within the same conceptualisation Britain is also given several ‘personal’ qualities which are favourable. The *Daily Telegraph* remarks that Britain is a country “which has never shirked its obligation to try and preserve peace in the world and defend the interests of the West against its enemies” (18.03.03), while the *Sunday Times* defends Blair’s strategy to “keep America engaged in the world” through an international community model, arguing that “it would have been easy after September 11 for the United States to have become aggressive and isolationist...” (16.03.03). A central notion in the community metaphor framing is unity. A strong community must be ‘united’ in its policies and beliefs, and when the *Daily Mirror* remarks that “Europe is now split” this suggests a damaged community.

The conceptualisation of a community is an acknowledgment of a globalisation discourse which extends the idea of an international community to a global arena (e.g. ‘in a new, global world we are affected by events that previously were too geographically remote). This allows for the ‘threat’ scenario of Blair to grow. As the *Sun* says, “the burden [Blair] carries is the

knowledge his critics refuse to believe –that there is a real and present danger to the national security of Britain” (*Sun*, 19.03.03). Indeed, a prerequisite for a statement similar to that of the *Sun* in this case, is an acknowledgment of the effects of a ‘new international doctrine’⁵¹.

It is not only the idea of an outside ‘threat’ (making use of a conception of ‘community’ as a container) which gives rise to a community frame. The ‘friends and enemies’ notion of a community (‘neighbourhood’) is clearly present in the remarkable war of words that took place between Britain and France in the week before the war started. Newspapers were full of articles on the dispute between the nations, and especially the tabloid papers gladly attacked what they regarded as French hostility. The *News of the World* led from the front, branding President Chirac a “nauseating fair-weather friend”; The *Express* followed up calling Chirac the “spiteful anti-American - and anti-British – President of France”. The *Sun* took it one step further when they launched a public stunt handing out French editions of their paper in Paris. Reports the day after were full of characterisations of both Chirac and the French people:

The Sun hit Paris yesterday to show the world our disgust at the cowardice of President Jacques 'The Worm' Chirac for wriggling out of his responsibilities to the West ... Sadly but predictably, the poor misled French people backed their spineless president to the hilt (*The Sun*, 21.03.03)

The lexicalisation is vivid; with Chirac conceptualised as a ‘worm’, ‘wriggling’ his way out of responsibility; the ‘poor’ French people being ‘misled’ by a ‘spineless’ President. The underlying conceptualisation is found in an international community metaphor; France resembles a ‘responsible friend’ who refuses to cooperate with the rest of the community, and instead try to shy away from their responsibilities⁵².

Similar reports condemning France and President Chirac continued in several papers, often spiralling out of control, as the suggestion that Chirac was attempting to plot a “safe haven for Saddam” is a good example of (23.03.03). And the attacks were by no means confined to the tabloids. The *Daily Telegraph* claims there was “nothing to admire in Chirac’s venal posturing”; while the *Financial Times* claims that some MPs had been “encouraged by France's obdurate stance” in making their decision to back war. Understandably, the approach

⁵¹ This is not to imply that Blair’s vision of a new world is controversial or limited to his own ‘doctrine of international community’. Rather, it is a commonly held view shared by most leaders in the last decade.

⁵² It is interesting to note that the rest of the ‘community’, in particular other countries that were opposed to war, are disregarded. What constitutes a ‘community’, in other words, is clearly subject to context and point of view.

to the French/British dispute was governed by the war-stance of the various papers. In contrast to rivals the *Sun*, the *Daily Mirror* praised the French for their persistence in wanting a diplomatic route:

The concerted attack on France is shameful and degrading. Cabinet ministers yesterday toured TV and radio studios to condemn President Chirac and accuse the French of being responsible for war. This is hypocrisy run riot and double-think of scandalous proportions. You expect it from newspapers with no principles or morality, but we are entitled to something better from Tony Blair's government (*Daily Mirror*, 17.03.03).

Notably, the *Daily Mirror* uses the issue to make a snipe at the *Sun*'s coverage of the war-diplomacy as both 'unprincipled' and 'immoral'. Shared is, however, the use of the international community metaphor. To the *Sun*, French opposition is conceptualised as a betrayal of the 'friendship' between the two nations; to the *Daily Mirror* it is a principled 'friend' with the right of opinion. Thus, the *Sun* focuses on the loyalty of a community, whilst the *Mirror* focuses on the democratic principles held in a 'Western' community model.

The examples show how the community metaphor works as a readily available tool in the conceptualisation of international relations (e.g. diplomacy, security). This is in turn conceptualised through a globalisation idea where responsibilities must be shared and, as in a local community, loyalty is an admirable quality. At the same time, the globalisation framework does not reflect favourably to government policy in every instance. Consider, for instance, how the framework of a terrorism threat is used by the *Mirror*'s Brian Reade:

And on that backdrop you could sketch the next piece of retaliation in what will surely be a downward descent. The Muslims' revenge. As the crimson red clouds spread across the dark canvas, you could see the blood of future martyrs. Next time the skies could be on fire over London or Liverpool (*Daily Mirror*, 22.03.03).

Here, the *Mirror* uses a legitimising argument of Blair, the threat of terrorism, as a reason *against* going to war. The 'threat' frame is similarly constructed in the *Mirror* and the *Sun*, both applying a similar view of a global international community as projected in Blair's discourse. But instead of embracing the idea of pre-emptive warfare, the *Mirror* implies that it is rather war in itself that increases the likelihood of Islamic terrorist attacks⁵³.

⁵³ It also confirms an 'us' vs. 'them' bifurcation present in the *Mirror* just as much as in the pre-war discourse of Blair and the pro-war newspapers.

Ultimately, the examples show the powerful implications of the community metaphor. For one, the self-defence scenario, the idea of a security threat, is worthless without a community conception of the effects of globalisation. Similarly, the hostile reaction, the conceptions of French hostility and their ‘poisonous’ behaviour, is impossible to comprehend without applying the same metaphorical mapping. This supports the suggestion from the previous chapter on Blair’s discourse that the community and globalisation discourse is the background and basis of the consequent discourses of security and morality. Indeed the acceptance of the security and morality discourses is impossible without an acknowledgement of the wider globalisation discourse. Just as the diplomatic dispute with France and its consequent use of language, is impossible to comprehend without the conceptualisation of an international community metaphor.

5.1.4 Patriotism

The French/British dispute mentioned above is closely connected to the feature of patriotism. In the Blair discourse this was argued not to be very directly expressed. Newspapers, however, are less subtle in the expression of patriotism, an expression that increased significantly in the immediate days before the war started. For instance:

Our troops need our support for the difficult and dangerous task which lies ahead ... Make no mistake. Whatever misgivings many people in this country have about this war, our brave boys must not be demoralised by backbiting at home (*Sunday People*, 16.03.03).

As you read this, young men and women are poised to risk their lives in an alien land for OUR future safety. When the call comes we are sure they will acquit themselves with honour (*News of the World*, 16.03.03).

The contrast between the courage of the men and women who stand ready to risk their lives in the Gulf and the babble of professional diplomats at the UN could not be sharper (*Sunday Telegraph*, 16.03.03).

After the start of the war, patriotism prevailed. After the first British lives were lost the *Express*, under the headline “we must ensure a victory worthy of our tragic heroes”, argues: “we must never lose sight of the point of this war” (*Express*, 22.03.03), while the *Sun* launches a yellow ribbon campaign with “pride in our young men and women fighting far from home” (30.03.03). In reference to Blair’s address to the nation the *Daily Telegraph*

argues that “the simple, unadorned patriotism of the Prime Minister’s broadcast will have reassured his country, at least, that our forces are not being committed in an unworthy cause” (21.03.03).

The papers that were opposed to war were subtle in showing signs of patriotism. Interestingly, the anti-war paper the *Mirror* seems to tread very carefully on the subject of the British troops in relation to their views of the war itself. Indeed, the paper found it necessary to point out that “the war is insane, troops our heroes” in their leader (21.03.03), and undoubtedly a fear of being misconceived as unpatriotic led columnist Paul Routledge to write:

And now comes the big pressure here at home. Overnight, it is deemed unpatriotic - or worse - not to support this illegal and immoral war. Just because Tony Blair has sold himself into unpaid political and military slavery to President George Bush, everyone must shut up ... But this is not a time for faint hearts, either on the battlefields of the Middle East or right here where the British people must be free to make up their own minds (*Daily Mirror*, 21.03.03).

If anything, Routledge’s column shows the patriotic tendencies that became more and more salient as the war came closer to a reality. The rise of a patriotic discourse does perhaps follow a predictable pattern where there is a significant boost in ‘support for the troops’ once the fighting actually starts. Routledge acknowledges the silencing effect this has; the *Mirror* clearly does not want to be seen as unpatriotic by its readers.

The Anglo-French dispute is highly likely to be a contributing factor in the rise of patriotism as well. Taking the example of the *Sun*, it, for instance, uses the metaphor that “France has stuck a knife into Blair and George Bush and given it several nasty twists”, and further claiming that President Chirac “despises Britain” (21.03.03). This conceptualisation, that the French have betrayed Britain (‘stabbed them in the back’), not only creates hostility against the imagined ‘enemy’ but also raises national spirit and patriotic feelings. France is portrayed as ‘hostile’ towards Britain, acting out of ‘spite’ and ‘personal’ interest (international community metaphor again in play), rather than rationality.

How then does the role of patriotism in the newspapers work in comparison to the discourse of Blair? While there are some elements of patriotism in Blair’s speeches, perhaps most specifically in his address to the nation before the war, it would be wrong to argue that Blair’s

discourse is distinctly patriotic⁵⁴. Still, it is important to note the positive effect patriotism is likely to have provided for Blair as war was coming closer. Interestingly, the newspapers seem to be more concerned with patriotism, or to be more exact, a concern not to be patriotic enough. This is perhaps most strongly indicated in the examples from the *Daily Mirror* who were indeed very insistent on their opposition to war not being mistaken for ‘unpatriotic tendencies’.

5.1.5 Other features

This section considers two themes that were prominent in the newspaper discourse and potentially played an important role in shaping opinion. One of them is the notion of ‘inevitability’. Consider, for instance, some of the comments made on the day of the so called ‘war summit’ in the Azores:

It's too late for talking: Prime Minister Tony Blair, US President George Bush and their ally Spanish PM Jose Maria Aznar knew the time for talking is over ... this is a council of war (*News of the World*, 16.03.03)

In a build up to any conflict, a moment is reached when military imperatives start to dictate political actions rather than vice versa. That moment has come, as the daily images of troops in the gulf make powerfully clear (*Sunday Telegraph*, 16.03.03)

Nobody wants war. As that fine warrior the Duke of Wellington observed: 'Next to a battle lost, the greatest misery is a battle gained'. There will be casualties on both sides ... (*Sunday Times*, 16.03.03)

All the examples above involve some elements of ‘inevitability’, a central notion being that the time for talking (i.e. that is discussion and debate) has passed. This is quite obvious in the examples from the *News of the World* and the *Sunday Telegraph*. Arguably, the last example taken from the *Sunday Times* is just as convincing in forming an idea of inevitability, considering ‘casualties’ and further consequences of going into action. The move from a discussion of whether or not to go to war to a discussion on how the war will be fought is an important semantic step, which becomes especially important when one considers the timing. Indeed, this was on the day Bush, Blair and the Spanish Prime Minister, Aznar, met in the Azores to discuss the Iraq crisis and further action within the UN, and two days before the

⁵⁴ In his address to the nation Blair for instance states that “as so often before, on the courage and determination of British men and women, serving our country, the fate of many nations rests” (TB-20.03.03).

House of Commons were to debate whether Britain should be involved in action despite the expected failure to gain UN support.

In comparison the anti-war papers focus on the possibility of further diplomatic efforts, although they admit that war is highly likely. The *Mirror* uses their leader on the day of the Azores summit to argue that there is still “a chance for peace”, although they acknowledge the paradox of ministers “trying to soften up the public to the inevitability of war, while proclaiming there is still time to avert it” (16.03.03), while the *Guardian* insist that “UN unity can still be achieved” (16.03.03). A day after the Azores summit, the *Independent* argues in their leading article:

For all the warmongering predictions, the emergency US-British-Spanish summit held in the Azores yesterday provided a necessary opportunity to cool rapidly overheating hearts and heads (*Independent*, 17.03.03).

The *Independent*’s emphasis on the possibility of further diplomatic efforts is, however, in contrast to other papers, The *Sunday Times* writing that “the talking *finally* stopped yesterday” (emphasis added) (18.03.03), and the *Daily Telegraph* leader of the same day, titled “beyond debate”, argues that “debate ought rather to centre on the dangers and benefits of war”.

Another feature present in the newspaper discourse is historical association. In particular the association with the Second World War is prominent. For instance:

The hand of history will lie heavily on the shoulders of the leaders of Britain, America and Spain when they meet in the Azores today. It may not rank alongside the Casablanca summit of January 1943, when Franklin D Roosevelt and Winston Churchill met in Morocco to demand the unconditional surrender of Germany and Japan. But it is the pivotal moment in the Iraq crisis (*Sunday Times*, 16.03.03)

The path to war is often strewn with fear and doubt. This was so before the second world war, as it is now. The solid patriotism that epitomises that war did not come until later. Then, like now, our country was deeply divided ... (*Sunday Express*, 16.03.03).

The lesson we should learn from history is that weakness in the face of a tyrant is the surest way not to peace, but to conflict (*Sun*, 19.03.03).

Although the *Sunday Times* remarks that the Azores summit perhaps is not as prominent as the famous Casablanca summit of 1943, the historical association still plays an important role

in conveying a message of the importance and responsibilities the leaders are left with. Moreover, the assertion of a “heavy hand of history” has important implicit notions of the challenges that face the ‘Western’ world in regards to Iraq. The *Express* example is more explicit, comparing the divide of opinion over Iraq with the short-term reluctance to engage in war with Nazi-Germany, thus placing the anti-war ‘camp’ in the same historical position as those who did not take the threat of the Nazis seriously enough. Another historical association is present with regards to Blair. For instance:

With passion in his voice and fire in his belly, Tony Blair won his place in history alongside Churchill and Thatcher (*Sun*, 19.03.03)

The Churchillian tone of Tony Blair’s plea to the House of Commons to support war against Saddam Hussein was entirely appropriate. Like his Second World War predecessor, the Prime Minister is standing at the threshold of an uncertain new era (*Express*, 19.03.03)

Both examples make comparisons with former prominent British leaders, thus placing Blair as one of Britain's most important leaders in history. The *Express* also compares the situation of Blair to the challenges that faced Churchill in the Second World War, further emphasising the great leadership Blair is showing.

As was shown in the previous chapter Blair, himself, often makes use of historical association in an attempt to emphasise the importance and prominence of the situation and its requirements. The Second World War is a good example, and it is also an often made association in the newspaper discourse. The association is arguably unsurprising taking into account the significance of the last world war in ‘Western’ history. Great leaders, ferocious battles, and great military achievements, were all part of the Second World War, thus making it especially useful for positive comparisons such as the association between Churchill and Blair seen in the example above.

5.1.6 Metaphors

So far, metaphors have only been mentioned with regards to the international community metaphor and its important role in conceptualising a discourse of globalisation. Needless to say, these are far from the only metaphors that play an important part in the Iraq discourse of

the newspapers. Consider, for instance, the example provided in the *News of the World's* coverage of the Commons vote:

In the Commons, Blair's opponents, the useless Tories, lounge in front of him. More deadly enemies crouch behind him on the Labour benches. And some of the PM's most cunning foes, members of his own Cabinet, even sit alongside him. The coming battles has brought these Old Labour rebels out of the woodwork, hoping that if things go badly wrong and lots of brave British servicemen and women come home in bodybags, they can at last get rid of the leader they've always hated.

An overriding metaphor is the conceptualisation of POLITICS IS WAR; a political issue is a 'battle' in the war. Within this conceptualisation there are 'opponents', 'enemies' and 'foes', where things can turn out to be 'deadly'. Implicitly, an opposite group is also present, where 'friends' and 'allies' try to prevail in the political 'battle' set forth⁵⁵. To the 'opposition' the ambition is to 'get rid of' the leader, while, in this case Blair's, ambition is the struggle to overcome the challenge to power. The power struggle ('battle') is also physically conceptualised through spatial metaphors that place Blair at the centre of proceedings; "the useless Tories lounge in front of him", while "more deadly enemies crouch behind him". Here, it is quite clearly not the "useless Tories" that are the real threat to Blair, but rather the "deadly enemies" that are "behind him". This conception sparks a familiar uncertainty and inability to 'see' what is 'behind you', thus implying a potential 'threat' that is unknown, and perhaps more significantly, unexpected.

The two metaphors illustrated here, POLITICS IS WAR and the spatial metaphors conceptualising political positions, are common in politics in general and are a key way of understanding and conceptualising the diplomatic and bargaining processes that constitute modern politics. The metaphor of politics as a battle or war is central to how we conceive conventional political decision-making and political events. Several examples from the newspaper material support this conception. The *Financial Times*, for instance, writes that the allies are "ready to accelerate Middle East peace effort in a last-ditch push to overcome entrenched opposition to its threat to attack Iraq". Here the POLITICS IS WAR metaphor is conceptualised through a battlefield scene of opposition being firmly placed in their 'trenches', thus, reluctant to change their opinion. The battle conception is also present in

⁵⁵ A POLITICS IS WAR metaphor is common to most areas of political debate. The issue of whether or not to go to war in Iraq is, however, special as it also entails the familiar lexicalization of war in addition to the metaphorical struggle to win the 'argument'. Thus, the notion of consequences going 'badly wrong' with servicemen coming home in bodybags might, indeed, work on two levels, metaphorically and realistically.

several papers in relation to the House of Commons vote on the war, will Blair be able to ‘survive’ and ‘outlive’ the debate? Will he come out ‘wounded’ or even ‘dead’? Or as the *Sun* believes, is he “braced for bruising? (18.03.03). The same battle conception is present in relation to the Iraq war itself. The *Sunday Times*, for instance, writes that “a war of ‘shock and awe’ that turns into a bloody, protracted siege could leave [Blair] mortally wounded” (16.03.03). Similarly, France’s decision to block a UN resolution is “like a stake to the heart” although Blair and his team for weeks had “refused to let diplomacy die” (16.03.03). The *Financial Times* finds it “hard to imagine that [Blair] will come through unscathed”, while the *Sunday Times* gives credit to the United States for not “lashing out like wounded animal at its enemies in periodic raid and then retreating to its own shores” (16.03.03). All these examples share a battlefield conception which is part of a wider POLITICS IS WAR conception.

The metaphor of PROGRESS IS FORWARD MOVEMENT plays a similarly important role. Political progress and decision making is very often a conception of ‘going forward’, while the effects are nothing but negative in the opposite, ‘going backward’, ‘back-peddalling’, ‘regressing’, etc. Interestingly, several of the pro-war newspapers make use of this metaphor in support of government policy. For instance, the *Sun*, turns to a similar use of metaphor as Blair:

If we back away now, if we talk but never act, we will tell the terrorists and the despots that we are feeble and faltering. Future conflicts would be infinitely worse and more devastating in their consequences (*Sun*, 19.03.03).

The spatial conceptualisation is clear: the only way to tackle the problem of terrorism is through action (progression), while to back away would make the problem worse (regression). As was shown in chapter 4, Blair’s discourse makes use of similar spatial metaphors to indicate that his policies indicate change and progress. This spatial conception seems to be a central feature in political discourse. The *Financial Times* finds Blair “sticking rigidly to his course”, and believe he has “been ahead of his party”; the *Express* believes Blair “has firmly and resolutely led us to the brink of war” (19.03.03) and reports of the “end of the road for diplomacy” (18.03.03); while the *Sunday Mirror* remarks that the “courageous decision would be to pull back now” (16.03.03). All the examples conceptualise the debate on the war as a journey where there is forward and backward movement. Within a war framing, this concept of movement arguably becomes even more significant as it also refers to battlefield

manoeuvres in themselves where forward movement is tantamount to progress. A forward movement conception of the decision-making process concerning going to war may certainly have important rhetorical implications. Within a journey frame turning back is more than often symbolic of failure. Thus, forward progress becomes positively conceptualised, while the 'going backwards becomes essentially negative.

Looking back at the example from the *News of the World* an even more controversial metaphor is found in the remark that the situation has brought "these Old Labour rebels out of the woodwork". In real life, 'vermin' are usually the ones who hide in the woodwork and eventually might 'crawl' out. Thus the metaphor used here of the Old Labour rebels implicitly brands them as 'vermin' who have simply been waiting for their chance to undermine their leader and Prime Minister. A similar conceptualisation is found in the *News of the World's* characteristic that the enemies "crouch behind him". Again, the conception of 'crouch' is that of an animal trying to hide, in waiting to attack its prey. A framing of events such as this one, giving the 'other' group animal characteristics, is certainly a powerful rhetorical move. Suddenly, the protagonist Blair, the man at the centre of proceedings, is the man under attack, the victim. He is indeed trying to fight off the attacks that threaten his very existence.

A metaphor discussed within the 'us' and 'them' conceptualisation in Chapter 4 was the juxtaposition between a Rational Actor metaphor and a WAR IS VIOLENT CRIME metaphor. In Blair's discourse the implication of these metaphors were to further highlight an 'us' vs. 'them' divide. How, then, about the newspapers? As was shown in section 5.1.1, the lexicalisation of war was varied both in regard to socio-economic classification and political view on the war. The use of a WAR IS VIOLENT CRIME can be argued to play a similar role. Consider, for instance, the pro-war paper the *Daily Mail*. The allied military operations are described as an "awesome firepower" striking "key targets" with "surgical" precision. The Iraqi army is, however, different; it is described through the alleged "parading of terrified American prisoners of war on Iraqi television, and by the disgusting footage of the bodies of other captives, at least two of whom had been shot between the eyes" (24.03.03). The example supports Lakoff's (1991) suggestion that the Rational Actor metaphor is first and foremost conceptualised through a strictly political frame, while the WAR IS VIOLENT CRIME conception is understood through a moral frame. 'We' are, in other words, rational, while 'they' are insane.

The latter example has obvious semantic implications, as do the animal metaphors in the example from the *News of the World*. Other examples such as the PROGRESS IS FORWARD MOVEMENT metaphors and the POLITICS IS WAR metaphors are less salient, thus resembling the critique put forward in Chapter 2 (section 2.3.2) on the significance of political metaphors. For instance, do we really conceptualise the metaphor of Blair as potentially ‘mortally wounded’ in its original meaning, his ‘death’ as a politician? Or has the POLITICS IS BATTLE frame become so habitualised and subject to a wearing down of meaning, that the metaphorical meaning is dulled? (Chapter 2, section 2.2.3).

5.2 Post-war discourse: Response to Blair's Sedgefield speech.

As was argued in the previous chapter (section 4.3.4) Tony Blair's speech in Sedgefield was significantly different from his speeches from before the start of the Iraq war. Things had changed: Iraq was in turmoil even though the Americans had declared victory as early as May 2003, largely due to terrorism inside Iraq. Meanwhile, Britain had just witnessed a highly public inquiry into intelligence reports prior to the decision to participate in military operations in Iraq was made. Subsequently, the media, at least parts of it, had started to question the integrity of the PM. The Sedgefield speech was according to the *Times* the “most important since he sought the support of MPs going to war a year ago”, and evidence that Iraq remains the “central issue in British politics” (06.03.04).

One of the most important features recognised in the Sedgefield speech (see section 4.3.4) was the re-emphasis on a discourse of globalisation and the continuing importance of a strong international community. This viewpoint also reflected the newspaper coverage. For instance:

... [Blair] has sensibly chosen ... to try to set his government's foreign policy within a newly defined world order ... The threat of terrorism, he argued, requires the international community to be able to use pre-emptive force. Again, we support this view ... his call for a new world compact based on shared international beliefs and interests is a vision that supporters and critics alike should support (*Observer*, 07.03.04).

The *Observer* is here fully supportive of the rationale behind Blair's ‘doctrine of international community’ which was so important back in 1999, and less so in the pre-war discourse. It is interesting that the discourse of a ‘new world’ and the responsibilities of the international community were surprisingly absent from the last week of the Iraq debate but seem to

resurface again a year after the war started. Here, however, the notion of a ‘common identity’ is emphasised by the idea of a ‘new world compact’ based on ‘shared international beliefs and interests’. It is indeed a ‘vision’ of how the world community should function.

The renewed interest in the responsibilities of the international community goes hand in hand with the issue of domestic security concerns, or more accurately, the ‘threat’ of terrorism. The best example is provided in pro-Blair paper the *Sun*, who under the headline “we face mortal danger” states that “there are madmen who would love to blow you and your family to pieces” (06.03.04). This is not only an acceptance of the global discourse of Blair, but also plays on central features in the security discourse. Interventionism and the security discourse seem to be the most significant point of discussion again. As the *Times* remarks, the central argument in Sedgefield was “less to do with the justification of going to war – where he put many of the recent controversies into their proper perspective – than in explaining the gravity of their general threat from terrorist groups” (06.03.04).

The emphasis on the threat of terrorism and a security discourse is crucial in Blair’s speech for one reason: the attempt to turn the debate away from the morality discourse that was so important in the lead-up to the war (see chapter 4, section 4.3.4). It seems to work with the *Observer* (emphasising the broader debate of a “new world compact”), and the *Sun* (emphasising the domestic ‘threat’ of terrorism). This emphasis arguably takes the spotlight off one of the most important features of both Blair and the pro-war papers’ pre-war discourse, namely the moral justification of going to war. But why was the turn *away* from a moral discourse so important? For one, the Iraq war was not going as smoothly as had been hoped. The rising Iraqi insurgency meant that coalition forces were still very much in a war where soldiers were being lost. Thus, talk of doing ‘the right thing’, bringing ‘democracy’ and ‘freedom’ was quite inappropriate. More significantly, Blair needed to distance himself from exactly the idea that Iraq was the right thing to do, an idea he had no doubt embraced before the war.

While several papers allowed Blair a reframing of the debate, the *Independent* provides an exception, headlining their leading article on the 6th of March with “Mr Blair is wrong: the Iraq war was a matter of judgement and trust”:

The real issue, Mr Blair says is ‘not a matter of trust but of judgement’. No, Mr Blair, it is both. By taking this country to war without a demonstrably imminent threat, you betrayed the trust of millions of voters. As for your judgement, we may understand a little better why you acted as you did, but we beg most profoundly to differ (*Independent*, 06.03.04).

Indeed, the *Independent* emphasises the paradoxical element of Blair’s attempt to turn the debate into ‘a matter of judgement not trust’. ‘Trust’ was clearly an integral part of Blair’s campaign to go to war in Iraq; he was a trustworthy leader and a man of strong conviction and strong moral values. A year later, scarred by the events surrounding the Iraq war, people were beginning to question this picture of Blair, which is also seen in Blair’s own emphasis on the war as a matter of ‘judgement’ and not ‘trust’. In this respect, the *Independent*’s point is one of few attempts to dissect what arguably is an important rhetorical move from Blair; attempting to remove the debate from Iraq and a moral justification (and a personal conviction frame) to a debate on terrorism and the threats that face Britain.

The framing of the discussion on security issues is seen in several papers. The *Times*’ Peter Riddell states that, “the continuing debate about why we went to war has distracted the attention from these broader security dangers”, arguing that the failure to find physical evidence of WMD “in no way undermines the reality of the threat” (06.03.04); The *Guardian*, although they condemn the Iraq war, agrees that ‘Islamic fanatics’ constitute the “gravest of all threats to global security” (06.03.04); the *Daily Telegraph* states that “[Blair] was quite right to say that the philosophy of [the Westphalia treaty] – don’t mess with a country until it messes with you – no longer applies in the age of international terrorism” (06.03.04); while the *Sun* claims that “all the legal nit-picking by the Left totally misses the point. What mattered was that Saddam Hussein was an unstable lunatic intent on building a deadly arsenal to threaten the West” (06.03.04).

The *Sun*’s appraisal of Blair’s discourse is the extreme example. Most other papers are less convinced of Blair’s justification. For instance:

[A] glaring flaw in his argument was the mis-match between the threat from new forms of terrorism and the action taken. The question, since the summer of 2002, has been: why Iraq? Mr Blair came no closer to answering it... (*Independent on Sunday*, 07.03.04).

Much of Mr Blair’s speech was right. We are in danger from rogue states, religious fundamentalists and weapons of mass destruction ... All the more tragic then that Mr

Blair is bogged down in the aftermath of the war in Iraq, a country that was certainly run by a monstrous dictator, but one in which there is no evidence of weapons of mass destruction or that it had ever been a haven for Al-Qaida... (*Sunday Mirror*, 07.03.04).

Blair is also attacked for his association between September 11 and Iraq:

Mr Blair is far too willing to use the horror of September 11 2001 as a substitute for argument. There simply was no connection between that attack and Iraq, though you may think so from Mr Blair's words (*Mail on Sunday*, 07.03.04).

Mr Blair draws a direct line from 11 September to Saddam Hussein which we simply cannot accept. All attempts by the US administration to connect the perpetrators of these atrocities with Iraq have come to nothing (*Independent*, 06.03.04).

The examples shown above highlight the rise of a more prominent critical awareness with the newspapers. At the same time, it reaffirms the framing of the Iraq debate onto a security domain. In turn, this helps in taking some of the focus off Blair's most pressing political challenge with regard to Iraq, his own trustworthiness. A debate on the security concerns, the 'new' challenges of the 'new world', and the continued work to prevent 'dangerous' nations from obtaining 'weapons of mass destruction', allows Blair the possibility to rid himself of a morality discourse which he would struggle to gain support for. In other words, newspapers, while apparently more critical of Blair's discourse, still seem to be governed by an agenda set by Blair's discourse, although some newspapers discuss the very observation itself. The *Independent* again provides a notable exception, pointing out that "for months, the war debate has focused on whether Mr Blair acted dishonestly. He wants the questions raging about the war to relate to his judgement" (06.03.04).

For Blair, the framing of the debate on to a security domain also allows him more manoeuvre with regards to a personal conviction rhetoric. As was argued in the previous chapter (section 4.3.4), while Blair on the one hand distanced his own person from the proceedings within a morality aspect, he still makes use of a trademark personal involvement into his speeches. This is also reflected in the newspapers, who are clearly interested in Blair, the person. The *Sun* call the Sedgefield speech a "spirited defence"; the *Guardian* calls it "thoughtful" and "coherent"; the *Daily Telegraph* calls it an "eloquent case for going to war"; while the *Sunday Mirror* argues that "Tony Blair is clearly sincere...". Others are less convinced. Peter Riddell in the *Times* claims that "the defence is reasonable, but only to a point", while the *Express* is more vigorous:

... a real arrogance seems to be emerging. Mr Blair has told us, in effect, that because he is Prime Minister, we must do as he says. This does not inspire confidence ... Within two years, come the election, the people of this country will have the chance to reply to Mr Blair's little homily. If he carries on like this, it might be a reply he has no desire at all to hear (*Express*, 06.03.04).

The *Express* correspondent Robert Kilroy-Silk follows this up by asking "what is the matter with the Prime Minister? Why does he not trust us?" (07.03.04), referring to Blair's refusal to publish the General Attorney's controversial opinions on the legality of the war. The examples from the *Express* do not reflect well on the Prime Minister and his own personal conviction of going to war, bringing up the issue of 'trust', which Blair tries to avoid. The other examples show that Blair still is widely considered to be genuine in his beliefs.

At the time of Sedgefield, it was not so important whether Tony Blair was right on Iraq; he desperately needed to be seen as trustworthy. In this respect, it was only his most vehement critics, such as the *Express*, who created the real threat to his leadership. Most other papers accepted a reframe of the debate onto a security domain. On the one hand, this was a positive refocus in relation to the debate on the issue of Iraq. On the other, it in many ways let Blair off the hook. In essence, the reframe to a security discourse was Blair's chance to sound reasonable and trustworthy again. Indeed, in the response of the speech, the newspapers almost exclusively praised Blair for a reasonable and considerate argument. This reflection is likely to be grounded in Blair's turn to a discourse more reminiscent of the pre-11 September discourse of a wider 'international doctrine' (as shown in Blair's 1999 speech, Chapter 4, section 4.2).

To sum up, the examples of the newspaper discourse show two things: One, that Blair was pressured by the events of an Iraqi war he was finding it harder and harder to justify. Consequently he had to turn the debate away from a personal conviction to a wider security discourse. Second, that within the security discourse Blair was again able to project himself as accountable and trustworthy; a process that was crucial to his reign as PM in the aftermath of the Hutton inquiry and the allegations of false intelligence reports.

At the same time the newspapers are also more critical of Blair and the decision to go to war. Several papers openly criticise the Prime Minister for being dishonest and deceptive with

regard to the war in Iraq. Thus, an assumption that the Iraq war changed the role of political discourse due to public and media distaste for government 'spin' is only partly right. The Iraq war may have changed how the discourse was constructed, but it did not change its important role in the politics of Blair.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

I have tried to show three things in the present thesis. Firstly, it was suggested that Blair's discourse served an ideological purpose to justify and legitimise war in Iraq. I have proposed that Blair did this through the creation of both a moral and political justification. It was built on an idea that Britain not only *needed* to act, but also was *right* to act. The justification was thus partly constructed on a security discourse where it was argued that Britain needed to act out of self-defence in line with the wider political ideology of interventionism, and partly constructed on a moral duty to share responsibilities in an increasingly global world where engagement is crucial. In both cases, the legitimisation lies in the worldview of Blair: the world requires a different approach. In turn this is based on a view of a 'new world', or as the former Prime Minister stated in his address to the nation; "the threat to Britain today is not that of my father's generation" (TB-20.03.03).

The second claim was that the media played a crucial role in aiding Blair in achieving the legitimisation and justification he needed for going to war. In essence, the media played a mediating role between the government and the public by largely accepting the Blair discourse and the agenda it set. Several examples support the argument. For instance, the newspapers largely maintain an 'us' vs. 'them' bifurcation and an over-lexicalisation of 'their' properties; the threats of globalisation and a self-defence scenario of interventionism is largely accepted; and the 'friends and enemies' roadmap drawn by Blair is adopted (e.g. French hostility). Perhaps most importantly, however, the newspapers accept and mediate the personal conviction rhetoric emphasised by Blair. Thus, the focus is largely on Blair as a person and politician, rather than on the matter of Iraq itself.

In many ways, Blair was not looking for overwhelming support for his actions, but rather mere acceptance. This may in turn explain why the moral framing seemed to be so successful, playing an important role in the rapid shift in public opinion in favour of going to war. Indeed, as was shown in Chapter 5, the personal conviction of Blair became a highly significant topic in the last week of the Iraq debate, with every newspaper, for or against war, emphasising their faith in the integrity and honesty of the Labour-leader. Accordingly, the emphasis of newspaper articles and opinion pieces related to the House of Commons debate on March the

18th was rather on the power struggle between Blair and his party associates, not on the actual debate issue.

This is, however, not to say that every word, every description, or every discursive turn, that turns up in both the political discourse and, then, in the newspaper reports, necessarily suggests any link or serves any rhetorical purpose. As was also discussed in relation to the metaphors found in the newspaper material (section 5.1.6), the existence of a shared political discourse of both media and politicians/government or similar must be taken into account. It is important to pose the question of whether this shared discourse, of both metaphors and lexicalisation in general, is so conventionalised that it is in effect idiomatic. Does it then serve any ideological purpose?

Nevertheless, Blair's ability to set the news agenda, both through lexicalisation and discourse themes, is obvious. Moreover, it is evidence that supports the hypothesis that the media played a crucial role in aiding Blair in a legitimisation of war. The process is by no means straightforward. As was briefly discussed in Chapter 3, the media is arguably as influential in setting political agenda as vice versa. Thus, the mediation between politicians (e.g. government) and media is a complex process which takes into account bilateral political and institutionalised pressures and discourses. But in the case of the Iraq war there is significant evidence which suggests that Blair and his Cabinet have, largely through language, been able to shape the news agenda and the framing of the Iraq debate.

So what about a year after the war? What had changed? The third claim was that the events after the war, the controversy that surrounded the alleged 'dodgy' intelligence reports and Blair's rapid decline in personal approval ratings, resulted in scepticism and disapproval of what was called 'media-spin'. Firstly, as was shown in both the analysis of Blair's Sedgefield speech and the subsequent newspaper reports, there were clear indications of a changing discourse. In the case of Blair this was most significantly seen in the absence, or at least reduction, of a moral discourse and the attempt to play down the personal conviction rhetoric. At the same time, several newspapers were openly critical of Blair, and what they regarded as a 'deception' of the public.

Still, Blair's reframing of the debate away from a morality discourse back to a security discourse and globalisation discourse seemed to strike a chord with the papers. Indeed, Blair

is by most papers applauded for his ability to see the wider picture and trying to frame a considered and thoughtful approach toward the challenges in the international 'community'. As was suggested in Chapter 5, it is within this wider picture that Blair has the ability to regain his trustworthiness and accountability. An hypothesis claiming that the Iraq war made the media more sceptical and wary of what is often described as government 'spin' is thus only partly right when one considers the newspaper reports of Blair's Sedgefield speech a year after war broke out.

The most obvious critique of the media discourse must relate to the ease in which Blair and the Labour government were able to frame the news debate. In the week around the start of the war this was manifested in the turn away from a security discourse onto a moral discourse. In respect to the Sedgefield speech, it is manifested in the turn away from the moral discourse back onto the security discourse. These discursive turns are inextricably linked to linguistic features. As I have shown in the thesis, the different discourses reflect different ideological frames; for instance, a security discourse makes use of one set of metaphors, while a moral discourse makes use of a different set. Accordingly, the language of the different discourses shape different opinions.

Looking back on the events of the Iraq war and the remarkable build-up that took place in the early months of 2003, it inevitably invites a sense of what was then. The political context that led to the war is remarkable; the post-11 September trauma, the 'war on terrorism', the threat of terrorist acts, the 'axis of evil', the 'weapons of mass destruction' all contributed to a world community that was shaken beyond recognition. Certainly, language became immensely important in the build-up to the war. The effort put into creating a discourse that would legitimise a decision to go to war is as remarkable as the context upon which it was constructed. The events of the war combined with the political fall-out of the Hutton inquiry did, however, leave the public feeling that they were given 'deceiving' information with regards to the Iraq war.

Blair felt this distrust of government communication in his approval ratings. In fact, he had never been as unpopular as he was in the year after the start of the Iraq war. His resurrection had to be based on regaining the distrust of the people. His main tool: recreating a discourse that would allow him to again be seen as a leader of conviction and integrity. While the Iraq war may to some extent have changed media and public opinion in relation to the British

government, it would by no means change Blair and New Labour's reliance on political rhetoric to shape his politics.

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