MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS AND “OTHERING” OF THE U.N. IN U.S. MEDIA IN TIMES OF CONFLICT POST 9/11

By
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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
Edward R. Murrow College of Communication

MAY 2009

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

It is very difficult to fully capture in words all that I feel towards the many people who have made this journey possible. This acknowledgement is a very small token of honor and appreciation for all the people who helped me complete this dissertation.

The first person I am going to thank is my adviser, mentor, teacher and counselor Dr. Susan Dente Ross who ensured that I made it in the end. She was from the very beginning to the very end dedicated to my success. She has nurtured me intellectually, guided me through desperate times and, far beyond these, taught me about pride, dignity, humanity and professionalism in the process. She has inspired me with her brilliance and humility and I can only hope that in my lifetime I can be a fraction of the teacher, mentor, scholar and human being that she is.

The members of my dissertation committee were steadfast in supporting me to the very end. Dr. Jolanta Drzewiecka pushed me to look beyond the immediate and asked me the tough questions. Dr. Jeffery Peterson jumped in late and has helped me ever since with his gentle but astute suggestions. I am forever grateful for their time, effort and input.

There are many other people to thank for helping me complete this project. Lisa Hunter, academic coordinator of The Edward R. Murrow College of Communication, put up with my anxiety-filled questions with calmness and helped me with all kinds of paperwork. Dawna Akin, program coordinator at the Murrow College was always happy to give me information and perk me up with her cheer. Sue Shipman at the WSU libraries helped me throughout with my impossible requests. Jacquelyn Thompson, administrative assistant of the communication department at Stephen F. Austin State University helped me in whatever way she could in the last four months so that I could devote my time to the completion of this project.
By far the most rewarding aspect of the doctoral program has been the friends I made in this process. I owe very special and heartfelt thanks to Gitanjali, Maria, Roberto, Shantanu and Vihanga. Gitanjali has been most supportive and encouraging throughout this process and has been a sounding board for all my raves and rants over the years. Maria and Roberto went above and beyond their capacity and means to support and encourage me when I needed support the most. Shantanu and Vihanga have been quietly supporting me even at times when everything seemed hopeless.

My dearest friend Kamalika helped me keep my sanity and offered support, advice, encouragement and a shoulder to lean on at the most distressful of times.

My parents have shown me what it is to offer unwavering support throughout this journey. This degree and any other accomplishment in this lifetime are of no value without their love and support. I offer my deepest love and respect to my parents.

I thank Vikram for all that he has given me in my life. This project would not have been successful without the sacrifices he was willing to make so that I could pursue this goal. My appreciation for him will remain forever.

I thank Daniel, my partner, for being there and supporting me even when he knew that this weight was not his to bear. His honesty and clarity of thought kept me grounded at all times. I offer my love and sincerest thanks to him.

There is no one who has paid more of a price for this journey than my children. My daughter Trishala and my son Josh have endured my constant obsession even as they have given me their brightest smiles on my darkest days. They have taught me the true measures of success, and I thank them for this and all the uncountable little things they bring to my life. I love my darlings with all my heart till the end of time.
MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS AND “OTHERING” OF THE U.N. IN U.S. MEDIA IN TIMES OF CONFLICT POST 9/11

Abstract

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This study seeks to address the U.S. media representational politics in the continued discursive production of the U.S. state in post 9/11 global conflict situations. The conflict-time representations of the United Nations in the *The New York Times* post 9/11 are analyzed as a case in point to reveal how the discursive process of “othering” of the U.N. constructs the United States as a positive global political state. The study reveals how the predominantly negative representations of the U.N. and its member nations and positive representations of the United States in the U.S. media during times of conflict post 9/11 discursively favors U.S. ideologies and perpetuates U.S. values. The media discourses essentialize the U.N. to a few negative qualities and then naturalize those qualities through hegemonic discursive struggle that enacts the discursive power of the U.S. media. The U.S. media’s discursive tilt towards U.S. ideologies continue to produce the U.S. state and naturalize U.S. dominance and conflict-time global power politics while simultaneously delegitimizing the systems and processes of the United Nations.
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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my beautiful children, Trishala and Josh, who unconditionally loved me throughout the process of earning this Ph.D.

and to my wonderful parents who believed in me no matter what.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to provide a conceptual lens through which scholars and readers can utilize critical scholarship in discourse, representation, state, media and conflict to understand and critique strategies of U.S. statecraft in times of conflict post 9/11. The dissertation explores the representations of the U.N. in *The New York Times* during times of conflict post 9/11 as a case in point exemplifying, demonstrating and critiquing strategies of discursive production of the U.S. state. Borrowing heavily from critical theories of communication, this dissertation examines the U.S. media representations of the U.N., its member nations and the United States, during global conflict situations after 9/11.

In this introductory chapter, it is essential to explain the significance of analyzing media representational practices involving the United States, the United Nations and U.N. member nations in times of war. This chapter also briefly describes the chapters to follow.

Just as the world was beginning to come to terms with the socially constructed relief enabled by the post-cold war geopolitical conditions and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and gradually adjusting to the capitalist economic policies and political causes championed mainly by United States (Eisenstein, 2001), 9/11 happened. The devastation experienced by the people who bore the brunt of this attack is painfully unique to the historical time, place and economic, political and social circumstances within which it took place. Yet, 9/11 came to signify a singularly important event eclipsing the effects of tragedies and devastations transcending time and space, societies and cultures. September 11 came to signify a “persistent sense of threat” (Kull, et. al., 2007, p. 125) that had the power not only to justify far-fetched political ideologies of conflict resolution as framed and implemented by the United States
(Kellner, 2005), but also the resilience to muscle with global, transgovernmental, political groups with multiple functions like the United Nations. In this dissertation, the U.N. is performatively the world administrative body headquartered in New York with a Secretary General overseeing its processes and systems. It is simultaneously a transgovernmental forum for nation states from across the world to deliberate on questions of world security, environment, health, etc.

The representations of the United States, the United Nations and their interactions in the U.S. media become increasingly significant because these representations construct particular viewpoints about the United States, the U.N. and U.N member nations in times of conflict post 9/11. Media’s complex relationship to the state government, political parties, economic institutions and audience members from around the world magnifies the complexities of discursive representations. Media representations also reflect the conflict-time dominant ideologies of powerful political entities in a particular society at a particular time. However, as Hallin (1994) suggests, “The journalist … is not only a provider of information but also a political ideologist. Journalism gives the world political meaning … in a close if not always comfortable relation to the institutions of state power” (p. 1). Media “cannot necessarily be counted on to play the critical role of doggedly challenging the administration” (Kull, et. al., 2007, p. 125), mainly because of their information overdependence on social and political elites of the country (Entman, 2004; Wolfsfeld, 2004). Media enjoy a very powerful position in society being able to consistently and strategically construct reality through discursive representations (Fairclough, 1995; Gamson, et. al., 1992; Gilboa, 2002; Hall, 1997; Van Dijk, 1988). By analyzing the strategic and discursive means of U.S. media representations of the United States and the U.N., this dissertation attempts to extend our understanding of theories of discursive representation and the role of the media in that process post 9/11.
Media representations through discourse serve a variety of political, economic, social and cultural purposes. During times of conflict, research identifies the “rally” effect which suggests that during times of crisis media are prone to focus on the patriotic impulse and “rally” behind the U.S. president especially at times when there is elite consensus in the country (Brody & Shapiro, 1989; Hutcheson, et. al., 2004; Ross & Bantimaroudis, 2006). The events of 9/11 consistently inform the present, lingering “war on terror” and worldwide military actions and conflict resolutions initiated by the United States. The U.S. media has, consequently, represented global conflict situations and actors mostly in tandem with the policies of the U.S. government except in instances of elite dissension.

The question then arises as to what factors drive particular representations of conflicts and conflict resolution affiliates from across the world - affiliates, the United States and the United Nations in this case, that could all be arguably considered elite institutions. Another important question that arises is how such representations are constructed through textual devices in the media. The focused literature review in Chapter 2 provides the reader with just such a direction, a map that enables conceptualization of the purposes of representation of the U.N. in the media in a post 9/11 context. Theoretical contributions in the areas of discourse, the discursive nature of representation, the historical purposes of media representations, the forces of “othering” through representations, and media representation of global, transgovernmental organizations in general, are discussed. Furthermore, literature pertaining to media’s representation of war and some of the more consistent, strategic media discourses with regard to war, peace and other conflict situations that are relevant to this dissertation are also discussed. The chapter ends with the explication of the importance of analyzing the representations of the U.N. in U.S. media post 9/11 conflict situations as a case study exemplifying the processes of
statecraft, and “othering” of elite political institutions. This literature review leads to identification of the most relevant research questions for this particular inquiry.

The representations of the United States, the U.N. and its member nations are all tied to the central research questions of this dissertation. The research questions arise as a result of the identified gaps in the literature on discursive representation, statecraft and conflict, and media’s relation to these three areas within the field of communication. Moreover, the researcher’s experience and theoretical understanding based on external readings and prior research, social understanding of the context and tacit knowledge also contribute to the formulation of the research questions.

In chapter three, there is detailed account of the paradigm, methodology and method used for analysis of this inquiry. The process of conducting the inquiry is explained with specific attention to the sampling process, the search terms for collecting the data and the coding process. The researcher’s values, beliefs and the processes of acquiring tacit knowledge are also discussed at length. The method borrows heavily from Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis (CDA) (1992, 1995a, 1995b, 2001) and Van Dijk’s approach to media discourse (1988, 1991, 1997, 2001). Fairclough uses a meaning-making, constitutive view of discourse in his CDA. Fairclough (1995b) focuses on three main areas of analysis – linguistic analysis of text including analysis of phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, etc., intertextual analysis of text and selective socio-cultural analysis. These three areas of analysis are discussed at great length along with Van Dijk’s (1988) sociocognitive model that includes analysis of thematic, schematic and semantic macrostructures of media text.

In chapter four, the findings chapter, CDA is used to deconstruct the various representations of the United States and United Nations that permeate The New York Times
NYT to reveal how mediated discourse positions the U.N. in post 9/11 conflict situations. The articles that are purposively chosen for in-depth critical discourse analysis demonstrate the overarching themes and discursive trends of each of the four primary categories that emerged during the analyses. The categories emerged as a result of an iterative process of continuous data analysis through inductive reasoning informed by the researcher’s understanding of the theoretical background for the research questions posed and the systematic and thorough utilization of the method of choice (CDA). The category names are not only the indicators of the overarching patterns from the data, they are also used to specifically explain the discursive trends of these particular categories. All the categories together explain the discursive processes of representation of the United States, the United Nations and U.N. member states in the NYT.

In the fifth chapter, there is detailed discussion starting with how the different categories from the findings chapter corroborate, extend and challenge existing critical theories of representation, discourse and mediated communication. The discussions act as a bridge between the various findings and the theoretical foundation laid in the literature review chapter, and ultimately attempt to answer the research questions of this inquiry.

In chapter six, the larger sociological implications of the findings and discussion are discussed to conclude this inquiry.

Specifically, this dissertation attempts to reveal continuous processes of production of the U.S. state focusing particularly on U.S. media representations of the U.N. and its member nations in conflict-times post 9/11. This dissertation also reveals enduring U.S. political ideologies that have become important in the post 9/11 globalized, internationalized and postcolonial contexts.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

In the last several years, the United States’ involvement in conditions that led to various states of conflict around the world has emerged as a persistent social problem (Sherry, 2004). This state of affairs contributes to the proliferation of and facile access to the discourse of war in and through the U.S. media (Entman, 2004; Hutcheson, et. al., 2004; Liebes, 1992; Ross, 2003; Wolfsfeld, 2004). Post 9/11, the concept of war has taken on a broad array of meanings in the United States that no longer requires a centrally proffered narrative providing some guidance and orientation to the causes, justifications and effects of such wars (Callahan, et. al., 2006). The act of war seems to not require checks and balances because of 9/11. In the case of the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, Calabrese’s (2005) study demonstrates that major U.S. media played a foundational role in uncritically representing and naturalizing American imperialism, both domestically and abroad. The processes and practices of media representation exemplify concepts, ideas and emotions in a symbolic form that is transmitted through language and meaningfully interpreted. Representation uses language to say something meaningful about or to represent the world meaningfully to other people (Caldas-Coulthard, 2003). Given that representations happen through discourse (Hall, 1997) and that all discursive contexts are political in nature (Fairclough, 1992), representations in the media, uncritical or otherwise, function as powerful political tools to position and privilege particular groups hegemonically.

Media as a particularly powerful communicative force help create, shape and maintain representations of political institutions in world politics (Curran, 2002; Graber, 1984; Schudson, 1995), and media discourse in particular is a significant tool in the processes of such representation (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 1988). The discursive nature of media helps
construct specific representations of war, the countries involved in conflict and the global,
transgovernmental entities that interconnect and interpolate countries and wars in the complex
geopolitical environment that has emerged in the aftermath of the cold war (Mole, 2007; Wodak,
2007). This study attempts to illustrate the processes and conditions by which post 9/11 U.S.
media discourses surrounding the U.N. and global conflicts construct and reify the U.S. state and
legitimize U.S. actions in worldwide conflict situations.

In the midst of developing my own ideas about issues related to conflict and peace and
the need for people to create a more accepting and understanding society, I have followed, over
the years, the trials and tribulations of the efforts of one particular global, transgovernmental
political organization – the United Nations (U.N.). The U.N., and, particularly the U.N. Security
Council, is constructed through U.S. media discourse as an international organization intended to
facilitate cooperation in international peace and security, to engage in discourses of diplomacy
and negotiation, and to broach the idea of war as, absolutely, the last resort (Lehmann, 2005).
However, the effectiveness of this organization in facilitating such cooperative ventures depends
a lot on how its work is constructed in the media and perceived in the United States (Gilboa,
2002; Yoo, 2000). That the U.N. has its headquarters in the city of New York, that the United
States has veto power in the U.N. Security Council (UN.org) and that U.S. contributions and
dues amount to something more than 25% of the total U.N. budget for 2008 (globalpolicy.org)
all point to the complexities of the workings and existence of the U.N. not only as a world,
transgovernmental body, but also, the complexities of its representation in the U.S. media. These
complexities and the interests of various political groups as member nations of the U.N.
constantly clash and are contested in the discourses that are constructed to represent the U.N.
As with many political projects (Wodak, 2007), the conceptualization of the U.N. and the naturalized roles of its Security Council, in particular, are discursively constructed through various global, political communicative acts. There is no escaping media’s take on political organizations, especially with the rapid development of technology that makes access to media so easy (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Using theoretical contributions made in the areas of discourse analysis, media, war, statecraft and intercultural communication, this literature review paves the path to explore the positioning of the U.N. by U.S. media during times of conflict post 9/11, to add depth and nuance to the understanding and critique of media representation of multinational groups in our discursive, political, global age and to expand the field of intercultural communication to include new strategies for the production of the state.

**Discourse as theory**

Discourse means statements about a topic that give the reader specific kinds of knowledge about the topic (Hall, 1997). From a critical perspective, the kind of knowledge produced by discourse includes rules that prescribe certain ways of talking and exclude other ways. Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999) conceptualize discourse as a form of social action that plays a part in producing the social world that encompasses knowledge, social relations and specific social patterns. Thus changes in discourse, hegemonically constructed and maintained by social groups in power, are a means by which social realities are changed, and discursive struggles change as well as reproduce social realities. Discourse, in this sense, is historically and culturally specific, posing its own limits, divisions and transformations (Foucault, 1972). Discourse, according to Foucault (1972), is about language and practice; it constructs topics, defines and produces the objects of our knowledge, governs the way a topic can be meaningfully talked and
reasoned about, and influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others.

Literature on the theories of discourse is vast, but the most relevant conceptualizations of discourse for this dissertation are discussed in this section. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) introduced the concept of the “field of discursivity.” They explain that this field conditions every object as discursively constituted. At the same time, due to infinite new relational constellations that can be formed at any give time, every attempt to fix the meanings of discourses is ineffective. Every discourse thus becomes a semi-stable fixation of the field of discursivity meaning there is always something outside every discursive formation. This conceptualization of discourse has the potential to bring about social transformation because discourses are dependent and vulnerable to those meanings that are not included. Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) approach to discourse makes it possible to glean from classical Marxism a way to account for the infinite transformations, dilutions and intertextuality of discourses “in which the plurality of the social takes place” (p. 5).

In fact, for these scholars, there is nothing outside of discourse. Although they specifically examined the New Left, their discussion is particularly useful in theorizing about and analyzing discourses of new social and political formations, such as the U.N., that are working together with nation-states in various crucial areas of cooperation in this globalized world. Their theory also helps conceptualize representation as a discursive practice. However, Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) account of discourse places too much stress on the discursive constitution of all experiences in social life, making it difficult to conceptualize any non-discursive phenomenon.

Grossberg’s (1992) concept of articulation suggests that any social issue/ event/ phenomenon is an overdetermined assembly of multiple forces and discourses that are temporarily unified to achieve particular results. His concept is concerned with what discursive
practices do in the world, and how people’s mundane, everyday lives are articulated through discourse within cultures. His theory is particularly useful in the analysis of social formations and in gaining understanding of how various social contexts and structures are discursively constituted. Grossberg’s (1992) concept makes it possible to conceptualize the structures of economy and politics as discursive in nature and thereby to understand how structure itself is constituted through discursive practices within particular contexts.

Hall’s (1994/1990) concept of meaning through language is very useful to understand why language use in discourse is such an important element of the creation and maintenance of relations of power and dominance. Hall (1994/1990) explains that meaning is a dialogue always only partially understood within an unequal exchange, changing and shifting with context, usage and historical specificity. It is never finally fixed; it is always deferred. Languages construct meaning and transmit it. They are the vehicles that carry meaning because they operate as symbols which stand for or represent the meanings one wishes to communicate. Thus, language is a signifying practice and meaning is constructed by the system of representation that uses language to produce knowledge about a particular topic at a particular historical moment (discourse).

Fairclough’s (1992) notion of discourse as both constitutive of the social and constituted by and within the social makes way to conceptualize the non-discursive aspects of the social. Fairclough (1992) differentiates between discursive and non-discursive phenomena. Although it is difficult to point to a precise dividing line between the discursive and the non-discursive, Fairclough’s (1992) critical discourse analytic theory can be used to understand a phenomenon to be discursive or non-discursive based on the context within which it unfolds. For example, the economy can be viewed as non-discursive, obeying its own logic and very different from the
logic of meaning-making. However, it can also be viewed as an assembly of an infinite number of choices made by people, giving “the economy” a particular meaning at a particular time. This distinction becomes important for the purposes of this work because it creates the opening for agency, resistance, and, ultimately, social and cultural change. Resistance and change become possible because underlying economic and political structures are formations resulting from hegemonic discursive struggles that are not necessarily exclusively struggles between dominant social forces. Peripheral forces can also participate in such struggles, resulting in or raising opportunities for different social formations and structures at specific historical moments. An important question here is whether such discursive struggles or discourses from the periphery are represented adequately in our mediated world.

Fairclough’s (1992, 1995b) approach also explains how all communicative events draw on earlier events through intertextuality and interdiscursivity. He discusses the inevitably layered nature of discourse in every culture and explains how textual analysis can uncover this cultural embeddedness within texts. By looking at how specific texts draw on earlier formations of meaning and how different discourses are mixed, Fairclough investigates how discourses are produced and changed. Exploring changes through intertextuality and interdiscursivity in text creates the possibility of tracing the evolution of social and political formations and other related phenomena especially when encountered through specific representations. Fairclough’s emphasis on exploring the use of language in text highlights a very important aspect of discourse.

Van Dijk (1997, 2001) takes Fairclough’s conceptualization of discourse a step forward. His interdisciplinary approach posits that discourse is not produced in isolation. Its processes and understandings are embedded in the social. In discourse production, each actor is engaged in social action and acts both as an individual and as a member of a social group. The member
enacts the norms and values, the interests, power relations or ideologies of his or her own group as a consequence of an understanding of social phenomena that is hegemonically created. Such social actions carry traces of personal goals and models as well as other socially shared goals, frames, scripts, attitudes, ideologies, etc. For example, journalistic activities and interactions are discursive and social in nature. Such activities are discursive precisely because of the understandings and cognitions of the journalists about social, political and cultural phenomena that are already embedded in their consciousness.

The assumptions of the implicit social dimensions of language use further strengthen Van Dijk’s (1997) approach. Those assumptions include the ability for mutual understanding, the existence of similar models of interpretation, the tendency for discourse to be interpreted in social contexts, and the acquisition of knowledge and beliefs to occur through discourse in contexts of socialization, interpersonal and intergroup perception and interaction. Thus, the implicitly social nature of discourse production demonstrates the social knowledge and attitude schemata that are presupposed by the speaker as a group member.

For the purposes of this dissertation, discourse can be conceptualized much in the same radical, constitutive vein as Grossberg (1992) and Fairclough (1992), which is to say that it makes up the social world. Grossberg’s (1992) notion of the economy and politics as structured discourse offers the possibility to identify and critique strategic use of such discourse in creating and maintaining relations of domination amongst various political entities in the world. Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) discourse theory helps disclose the hegemonic nature of discourse. Fairclough’s (1992) notion of discourse accommodates the discursive moment of social processes, relations and transformations while avoiding a reduction of all of them to discourse. Particularly, Fairclough’s (1992) understanding of the layered nature of discourse helps the
researcher deal with the historical and contextual nature of media text. Van Dijk’s (1997) theory of discourse production as a result of certain presuppositions aids examination of the connection between the text and context in the media.

Discourse understood from this critical perspective creates an opening to discuss how our social and cultural experiences are largely constructed from within a multitude of conflicting discourses set within unequal relations of power of which we are a part but about which we are not necessarily aware. Thus, the connections between the use of language and the exercise of power are often not clear to people but are vitally important to the workings of power (Fairclough, 1995). However, without discourse, it would be very difficult to understand social reality, our experiences and ourselves. It follows that our ability to act strategically within society is limited by the discourses that work together with our chosen action and the complex processes of social construction that precede such action (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). No matter how different the notions of discourse within the critical tradition may be, they all have a “shared interest in social processes of power, hierarchy building, exclusion and subordination (Meyer, 2001, p. 30).” Hegemonic systems of representation is one such important process in perpetuating dominance. What then needs to be identified are the various forms of such representations being constituted around social and political phenomena around the world and the relations that are being established by such representations through mediated channels.

**Media discourse, power and ideology**

Thompson (1990) wrote that cultural phenomena and social problems and practices within cultures may be seen as symbolic communicative forms of signs/ languages embedded in structured contexts. In order to analyze such phenomena, a study of the meaningful constitution
and social structuration of symbolic forms may be necessary. These phenomena, problems and practices, Thompson (1990) wrote, do not subsist in a vacuum. They generally exist as substantial objects circulating in channels that are institutionalized. Here lies precisely the connection between mass communication and cultures. Thus the study of mass mediated communication should be approached as a central component of modern culture. The mass mediated channels of communication constitute part of what may be described as ‘modalities’ of cultural transmission by which symbolic forms are relayed beyond the contexts of their production and endowed with extended availability in time and space (Thompson, 1990).

Anderson (1991) argues that:

We know that particular morning or evening editions will overwhelmingly be consumed between this hour and that, only on this day, not that. . . . The significance of this mass ceremony . . . is paradoxical. It is performed in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull. Yet each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion. (p. 35)

**Power**

Mercer (1986) wrote that newspapers “constitute either a preamble or break in the routine of the day . . . setting a frame, a tissue of confirmations, beliefs and expectations. And they are, indeed, constructed in a ritualized way which is fully aware of this power” (p. 55). Thus, in order to consider the nature of mediated communication and its impact on modern society, politics and culture, it is fruitful for the researcher to study such communication in terms of its historical and cultural specificity and socially structured forms and processes within which, and by means of which, symbolic forms are produced, transmitted and received.

Media power, according to Van Dijk (1995b), is generally symbolic and persuasive. Van Dijk provides psychological and sociological evidence to suggest that media are particularly effective when media users do not realize the nature or the implications of such power play. In
the process, elites/dominant groups make some cultural codes more “natural” than others through hegemonic discursive struggle. It is, therefore, important to understand how news discourse contributes to social inequality, to critically examine journalism’s claim about its impartiality and objectivity, and to help link description of language with critical theories of ideology and power (Fowler, 1991). Clegg (1989) explains the connection between text and power even more clearly when he says that “power is neither ethical nor micropolitical: above all it is textual, semiotic, and inherent in the very possibility of textuality, meaning and signification in the social world” (p. 184).

Foucault (1977) establishes the inextricable connection between knowledge and power where knowledge presupposes and constitutes power relations (e.g., if you ‘know’, then you are powerful) and that power relations constitute fields of knowledge (e.g., new understandings, new formations of discourse). To Foucault, power is diffused in localized contexts and de-centered as opposed to myopic Marxism obsession with an originary center of power. Media are sites of such decentralized power play where there is a constant representation of friction, conflict and tension among social and political voices, in turn creating, rupturing, discontinuing, choosing and transforming relations through language use. The various dynamics of power (media, elite political forces, etc.) need to be identified to delineate the complex, shifting web of power enactment in mediated communicative acts. Although Foucault (1972) conceptualizes power as repressive as well as productive, within the context of media, ultimately, power enactment needs to be evaluated in a negative sense through its absences as well as its presences because mediated information is biased or concealed in such a way that may not always serve the best interest of the audience.
Van Dijk (2001) terms this form of power enactment “dominance”. He uses this term to explain processes of reproduction that involve strategies aimed at the continued preferential access to social resources, like the political elite’s access to media, and the legitimation of such inequality. He emphasizes the identification of the discursive conditions of possibility for processes of political negotiations that occur in the media representation of economic and political practices. These representations construct ‘real’ experiences like war that, in turn, create particular subject positions based on the political, economic, social and cultural context prevailing at that time and place.

The scholars’ works discussed in this section consider power through media discourse as structured in dominance. Consequently, print media discourses, just like other mediated discourses, are potent in their deployment of power (corporate, male, white, political), access, hegemony and control of context (Van Dijk, 2001). However, there is a need to identify the textual mechanisms within discourse that tilt power towards one player or the other depending on particular contexts of unrest, conflict, war, elite dissension and other conditions that create the possibility of such discourse formations. Such identification would help in further analysis of representative discourse in the particular case of the U.S. government and the U.N., both considered to be elite institutions, in times of conflict or elite dissension.

**Ideology**

Ideology is a fundamental notion that establishes a link between discourse and society. There are many different conceptualizations of ideology. Marxist scholar Althusser (1971) emphasizes the idea of ideology as an ‘imaginary transposition’, as a system of representation that sustains the misrecognition of an individual’s real relationship to his/her conditions of
existence. Althusser, and later Foucault, believed people had no control over the different subject positions they occupy as they are constantly ‘interpellated’ into those positions without realizing it, and that “the subject is not preexistent to its constitution by power or ideology.” Hall (1981), still working within the Marxist tradition, defines ideology as "those images, concepts and premises which provide the frameworks through which we represent, interpret, understand and ‘make sense’ of some aspect of social existence" (Hall, 1981, p. 31). In his analysis of how ideologies work, Williams (1981) wrote that ideologies operated by systematically promoting certain meanings and interests or obscuring others but almost always privileging dominant social groups. Larrain (1996), in steering clear of the debate on false consciousness and economic and class reductionism of the Marxian concept of ideology, explicates the role of ideology in mediating the relationship between groups that are fundamentally unequal in terms of power. Fairclough’s (2001) work indicates that language itself is ideological in nature, is a site of, and has a stake in, struggles for power. Van Dijk (1995a) finds that ideology is the basis for the social representations of groups. Those ideologies that gain prominence at specific historical moments shape the course of social and political progress at that time, and it is in this context that identification of dominant ideologies within discourse becomes all the more important.

Within a discussion of representation of voices in today’s globalized, political world, the concept of ideology remains of critical importance. Ruling groups maintain the status quo and control of the society through consent rather than military or police force, as stated by Gramsci (1971). The process of gaining such consent involves the ruling groups’ privileged access to social institutions such as the media and the subsequent percolation of ruling ideologies that create and maintain control over society. Ideology is the key element that informs understanding of the processes of hegemony (Gramsci, 1971). Gramsci suggested that it is at the ideological
level that the ruling group exercised their hegemonic power. Legitimization and acceptance of the ruling ideology as common sense, “natural,” is one of the key goals of ruling groups. The ruling groups’ ideology becomes hegemonic “when it is widely accepted as describing the way things are, inducing people to consent to the institutions and practices dominant in their society and its way of life” (Kellner, 1990, p.17).

Despite its deep implications in any given historically specific context, hegemony is neither permanent nor unalterable (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003). According to Gramsci (1971), hegemony can never be complete or final. Gramsci’s concept of hegemony helps in bringing in aspects of agency that were absent from Althusser and Foucault’s conceptualization of ideology. Hegemonic ideology can be questioned, resisted against and challenged. This becomes even more possible when there are rapid changes in society or friction among elites at any given point in time. Hegemonic ideology may become untenable under those circumstances.

Media’s role in promoting hegemony has been identified by many scholars. Deployment of power through mediated channels occurs at the level of ideology (Van Dijk, 1997). Gitlin (1980) postulated that “mass media have become core systems for the distribution of ideology” (p.2) and “such ideological force is central to the continuation of the established order” (p.9). Hall (1982) has argued that mass media are one of the principle sites where hegemony is exercised. Hall (1982) showed that by “the active work of selecting and presenting, of structuring and shaping,” the media are “making things mean” (p.64). Hallin (1987) has suggested that media play the role of maintaining the dominant political ideology while being subjected to other hegemonic processes at the same time. Shoemaker & Reese (1996) argue that hegemonic ideology is integrated into news coverage and accepted as natural by society. This concept of
media hegemony rejects the traditional propaganda mode of ideological imposition and places emphasis on the cultural and social leadership of the dominant ideology.

Fairclough & Wodak (1997) argue that hegemony occurs when differing and competing ideologies struggle for dominance resulting in negotiations of meaning where one particular meaning gains prominence. Even within existing unequal relations of power, people have the ability to use different ideologies as resources to create new formations of discourses. Discursive and cultural change can be brought about working within the concept of hegemony.

Gitlin (1979) posited that "the processional insistence that objective journalism is desirable, and that objective determinations of newsworthiness are possible, arose during the nineteenth century, albeit fitfully, as part of the sweeping intellectual movement toward scientific detachment and the culture-wide separation of fact from value" (p. 28). This ideological determination, he explained, however, functions within the limits set by the news media's inherent ties with corporate capitalism. Based on the nature of news media as a corporate entity and their dependence on advertising revenue, news media legitimize the system of industrial capitalism. While individual infractions of the core processes of the profession are condemned and dealt with as if they are the few-and-far-between instances of aberration by an unprofessional journalist, the system itself is rarely if ever questioned. Thus, an ideology of objectivity, coupled with the news media's inherent interest in a growing business environment, forms a particularly forceful and repetitive pattern of offering seemingly truthful information supportive of corporate capitalism. Thus, when dominant ideologies and principles are challenged, social institutions like the media support elite interests with a goal of managing the debate and maintaining social stability. The media support the establishment by discrediting, isolating and undercutting oppositional voices, tactics which Shoemaker and Reese (1996) call
"repair techniques" (p. 249) that would maintain the status quo. For this inquiry, the United States and the U.N. as political entities are represented within a discursive struggle in mediated channels. However, who gains prominence or what ideologies are privileged within that struggle, and what kind of “repair techniques” are systematically used to invoke instances of dominance between two or more seemingly elitist political groups, need to be explored.

**Media and war**

Members of our society are dependent on the media to provide timely, legitimate, credible information about events around the world. This aspect is the key to media’s role in providing information about international affairs and conflict in particular. War is a particular kind of conflict involving the physical and material aggravated clash between countries resulting in loss of lives, property, physical and mental trauma, economic instability and countless other effects on the lives of the people involved. However, decades of study of the role of the media in ongoing conflict suggest that media rarely report conflict neutrally (Gamson et al, 1992; Noakes & Wilkins, 2002; Ross, 2003; Wolfsfeld, 1997). Scholars have studied representations of particular countries in the media during war (Bishop, et. al., 2006; Brooten, 2005; Kumar, 2006; Ross & Bantimaroudis, 2006) to find that various countries are strategically positioned with regard to the United States, more or less in line with the U.S. government discourse about that country in an effort to maintain the global status quo. In his edited volume, Miller (2004) compiles a wide variety of essays pointing at how the media took the government elite discourse against the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq and turned it into a discourse that utilized the idea of ‘war is sell’. As Ross (2006) suggests, “War not only stimulates the economy but also provides ready scapegoats to the nation’s ills” (p. 6). Specific essays in Miller’s (2004) volume also posit
how the government deliberately manipulated the media into towing the elite perspective. Effective government manipulation results in part from media’s continued privileging of the government’s construction of key issues and events stemming from strong media dependency on government sources (Gans, 1979; Kellner, 2005; Paletz & Entman, 1981; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Wolfsfeld, 1997). Wolfsfeld (1997) identified the strong media propensity toward crisis coverage as another constraint that obscures the complex historical contexts within which wars emerge. Studies of media’s role during times of conflict repeatedly focus on the nation-state and identify how media discourse consistently constructs and maintains simplistic, naturalized, negative images of the “other” (Jovanovic, 2003; Ricento, 2003). Media are constantly aligning with the nation-state in order to ‘fix’ the boundaries within which public debate is to occur (Angus & Cook, 1984). Coverage of terrorism, war and international relations in the media frequently exhibits a strong tendency towards an ethnocentric position in which news privilege government policies (Steuter, 1990). Media consistently pay attention to politics and self-defined, visible public figures in politics, in turn, systematically reinforcing political power while obscuring other influences upon political decisions (Hallin, 1986; Schlesinger, 1978) and de-legitimizing attempts by non-government/ transgovernmental organizations like the U.N. to affect international policy decisions.

Scholars like Liebes (1992) noted that when domestic military is engaged in a conflict that is geographically distant from the domestic nation, journalists tend to minimize the costs and accentuate the benefits of government-sanctioned violence. This aspect is especially important for this inquiry given the context of the United States being at war in Iraq since 2003. Ross (2006) finds that when the press look on from a distance, “it is more likely to ignore the pain and the blood in favor of coverage that frames violent conflict as a natural part of political processes
and social change” (p. 2). Such coverage assigns value judgments within the discourse, making distinctions between worthy and unworthy victims, and constructing a reality in which some groups “naturally” deserve to face the horrible outcomes of such conflicts (Karnik, 1998).

Studies have found that coverage of war is condensed to the extent that “only the techniques of war may be debated, not the question of motives,” the morality of bombings or the possibilities of other non-violent alternatives (Vincent, 2000, p. 336). Vincent argued that a primary cause of the media’s continuing role “as an organ of political propaganda” is their continued fervent and “myopic belief that objectivity is possible” (p. 341). Even if this belief in objectivity is encouraged and believed in by media organizations, there is little doubt that media discourses are biased in a nationalistic sense. On the other hand, scholars (Bishop, 2006; Connell, 1982) have observed that since media texts are subject to multiple interpretations, they do not simply exclude alternative voices. Instead they undermine the credibility of such voices with negative discursive cues that alert readers to the lack of authority of such perspectives.

Specifically, Coles (2002) found that “war and its words can be a means by which a society, including those who don’t do the actual fighting, defines its national character and legitimates its existence” (p. 588). He argued that war is a moment in which political leaders socialize the members of the nation to the definitions of who they are and what their collective role is in the globalized world. A sense of danger and the geopolitical creation of the external other (Devetak, 2001) function together to advance the strategic project of enhancing unification around the nation-state as “home” and “safe” and “known”. In the case of the U.S. national unification project, scholars have found that the country is twice as likely to engage in external conflict when the president is running for reelection (e.g., Bush was running for reelection towards the end of 2004) and the economy is in recession (e.g., after the 9/11 attacks) (Hess &
Orphanides, 2001). At these times, the construction of the “threatening other” helps dominant groups and elites to divert attention from conditions that could lead to dissension in the country.

In all this, there are very few studies that focus on media’s role in representing political entities other than the nation-state that are involved in the decisions of war in this globalized world. One such entity is the U.N. and specifically the U.N. Security Council (the United States being a permanent member of this council). As per the U.N. Charter formulated in 1945 (UN.org), the role envisaged for the U.N. Security Council was the design and implementation of a global collective security mechanism (Touval, 1994). The United States was a member nation during the formation of the Charter. Conflicts in the post-cold war period have tested the U.N.’s capacities and limits in peacekeeping operations and have led to negative assessments about the functions of the U.N. (Jo, 2006). This negativity is partly due to the media’s myopic gaze on conflict and war situations that masks any potential emerging peace situations around the globe that could be attributed to the U.N. efforts (McGowan, 2005). The primary objective of the U.N. Security Council to peacefully bring about resolution to conflict situations seems to be in conflict with dominant news values and practices such as the narrative conventions of journalism that place priority on drama; looking on conflict from a distance; the capitalist commercialized idea of ‘war sells’; and other such factors.

However, apart from these conditions, what other conditions elicit a particular discursive response from the U.S. press about the U.N., about its member nations, and the nations’ strategic positioning within media discourse need to be explored further. The concept of statecraft discussed in the next section provides the researcher with an understanding of strategies and conditions that construct, shape and maintain discourses of dominance, discursive forces that
have historically emerged from the troubled depths of the Euro-American colonial past and eventual modernity.

**Media and statecraft**

The conceptualization of the state as performatively constituted through the enactment of domestic and foreign policies, treaty-making protocols and international political and conflict engagements at the U.N. level (Devetak, 2001), is useful for this inquiry. The usefulness stems from the postmodern understanding of the state “as always in the process of being constituted, but never quite achieving that final moment of completion” (Devetak, 2001, p. 197). The question then arises as to how the ongoing, incomplete construction of the state is naturalized and how it is disseminated to its internal and external constituents.

Berger & Luckmann (1966) are key developers of the concept of social construction. Their proposition asserts that social reality is something produced and communicated, its meaning derived in and through systems of communication. Gamson et. al. (1992) very succinctly explain media’s role in social construction in society. They explain that as members of today’s society, people use media-generated images, text and talk to construct meaning about political and social issues. However, this construction happens without the realization that “the lens through which we receive these images is not neutral but evinces the power and point of view of the political and economic elites who operate and focus it” (p. 374), which makes the whole process seem normal and renders invisible the art of social construction. Media’s role in privileging the elite perspective, particularly the views of the nation-state government is an important consideration as a vehicle for the construction of the state. In this inquiry, media’s role in furthering and perpetuating the notion of U.S. state during times of global conflict needs to be
investigated. Furthermore, the functions of the U.S. media representations of the U.N. in the conflict-time production of the U.S. state need to be examined.

**Media representation and “othering”**

*Othering* is the process through which positive self-presentation is created through the complex interplay and contrast with negative other-representation (Trivundza, 2004). Trivundza explains how by reducing the complexity of social relations to a set of simplified Us versus Them oppositions, *othering* serves primarily as a discourse for articulation and naturalization of differences set within the parameters of unequal relations. Scholars from different fields have identified various forms of *othering*. For example, various forms of race and ethnicity representation occur through discourses of *othering*, bearing traces of colonialism and other forms of oppression.

Vultee (2006) used content and discourse analysis to trace the newly created meaning of the word ‘fatwa’ (in original Arabic it means a ruling by a competent authority on a question of religious law) through “a series of gatekeeping failures to a position from which its more ominous meaning is easily inferred in the media” (p. 319). ‘Fatwa’ has come to mean “call for murder over allegations of blasphemy” (Vultee, 2006, p. 319). Vultee (2006) points out that the negative use of the word occurs not only in the realm of politics but it encompasses other fields like sports and literature in the Western world. The shared meanings it reflects are the underpinnings of what Said (1978/2003) described in the 1970s and 1980s as a “pervasive Western discourse” built around a fundamental “ideology of difference.” The web of language in discourse that has transformed the meaning of the word ‘fatwa’ over time is strategically cloudy and difficult to untangle. This tangled vagueness about the ‘other’ is very much in keeping with
Said’s conceptualization where there is systematic difference between the West (superior) and the Rest (inferior); strategic meaning abstraction from representations of the “other” in discourse as opposed to relying on direct evidence from modern societies; freezing the “other” in time in order to describe it from a “Western” standpoint; and creating reasons for the West to either fear or control the Rest (Said, 1978/ 2003). However, the typifications through language in discourse are changing as discourse goes through transformations in time. What particular forms and shape they take in conditions of war involving the international, transgovernmental organization, the U.N., and its affiliate nations, are to be identified through this inquiry.

Hall (1978, 1997) conceived of stereotypes as effects of the processes of othering and noted their historical ability to represent, naturalize and essentialize black people as lazy, mindless, etc. He argues that if differences between black and white people were deemed cultural, then those differences would be open to modification. However, if they are deemed to be natural, then they are beyond history, permanent, irreversible and fixed. Thus naturalization is a strategy to fix differences, to secure discursive or ideological closure, and an attempt to halt the inevitable ‘slide’ of meaning.

Looking at the opposite end of the spectrum, Steyn’s (2001) work reveals the complex contestations of group identity formations of white people springing from various forms of othering that are historically and culturally at work in South Africa. She identifies how Afrikaner speaking white South Africans are negotiating their identity by experiencing a form of othering from their powerful, historical, global ‘white’ counterparts and the demographically powerful African Other people in the country.

Parameswaran (2002) too finds that there are issues of representational politics in narratives and discourses that have global audiences (text and images of National Geographic).
She observes that postcolonial approaches to race, nation and cultural representation in these discourses reveal that they are anchored to the troubled historical discourses of Euro-American colonial modernity. The lands and people “out there” are inevitably othered in order to produce and sustain an idea fundamental to colonial discourse: that the Western model is the norm by which other countries and peoples are to be judged (Roy, 2008).

Studies have shown that during war, opposition countries are usually discriminated against in the media using various strategies of othering. Sandikcioglu (2000) analyzed the use of metaphor in news coverage of the Persian Gulf War and found metaphors linked to Orientalism. Robertson (2004) found that with regard to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, “an attack by several Western states on one Arab state after a prolonged period of economic sanctions and an intensive political campaign aimed at discrediting its leadership and making a rational (eventually humanitarian) case for military intervention seems an almost perfect fit for Said’s (1978/2003) thesis (p. 22).”

Hall (1997) extensively discusses the power implication implicit in representational practices. He says that power in representation comes from the power to mark, assign and classify objects, images, ideas, or concepts in a symbolic manner. Power is also evident in the ability to represent objects, images, ideas, or concepts in particular ways within a certain regime of representation. Stereotyping, according to Hall (1997), is a key element in this exercise of symbolic violence (e.g., represented as fixed by nature).

Similarly Van Dijk (1991) argued that racism is not innate; racist social cognitions are acquired and learned discriminatory actions. He found that racism in Europe and North America takes the form of white group dominance and produces inequality by which minority groups, immigrants, refugees or Third World peoples are victimized. The process of acquisition of
racism in white-dominated societies is largely discursive. The dominant elite groups control the means of symbolic representation in order to project a particular representation of their own elite power and to persuade the dominant groups to maintain their dominant positions in society (e.g., to avoid consolidation within dominated groups). Thus, discourse and communication are crucially involved in the representation of this kind of elite power.

Few communication scholars have explored the representation of transgovernmental, political organizations like the U.N. in the media, especially during times of international crisis or conflict. While the particularities and workings of inter-governmental and trans-governmental organizations may be too complex to support broad general conclusions across them, studies (Kim, 2004; Lee, 2007) suggest that in the case of a specific organization, such as the IMF or the World Bank, the United States traditionally has been the largest shareholder and hence has enjoyed policy enforcing power over smaller, weaker and poorer nations. Lee (2007) argues that global gender equality is manipulated to justify the World Bank’s emphasis on global telecommunications deregulation as a path to economic prosperity for poorer nations. Debate and policy implementation focusing on women’s poverty is being framed by the ethnocentric, neoclassical economics of powerful countries like the United States. The same study found that the World Bank was non-responsive to U.N. reports that telecom development would not alleviate women’s poverty and likely would, in fact, work to the contrary and impede the advancement of women.

Kim’s (2004) multi-national comparative study found that U.S. news coverage employed the standards voiced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its construction of the meaning of international economic crises and the response of inter-governmental organizations, specifically the IMF, to such crises in the context of globalization. Media reliance on IMF,
whose economic policies in turn are heavily influenced by the U.S. government, perpetuated the spread of globalization as *the* measure of primary causes and solutions to the crises. The coverage was largely uncritical of the processes of globalization affecting the countries facing the crises.

A study by Akhavan-Majid & Ramaprasad (1998) of the United States’ and Chinese press framing of the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women and the Non-Governmental Organizations Forum in Beijing in 1995 found that instead of communicating the critical areas of concern and goals of this global feminist event to the public, the coverage focused considerably on an extended criticism of China as a communist nation. These studies exemplify how consistently U.S. media are uncritical of U.S. policies in times of global crises management and their discourse encourages adoption of U.S. policies as opposed to those forwarded by global, transgovernmental organizations.

Existing literature suggests that Western nations, specifically the United States, utilize a certain amount of discursive latitude through their media to generate conditions of *Othering* and conflict to define the specific subject positions of trans-governmental institutions and multinational groups involved in the processes of world peace. In the wake of globalization and within the complex conditions of conflict and war, the different representations creating the discourse of difference now have the opportunity to spread beyond previously conceptualized formations and strategies of representation. Discourses, and media discourses specifically, are transforming the conditions that were used to construct representations until now. Different aspects of society are contributing to representations through discourse, aspects that were previously not examined.
In the globalized yet disturbingly fragmented conditions of our society, nation-states, especially in times of conflict/crisis, and different political groups are clashing for voice in global politics. These voices and their complex mutual interactions are being represented in the media. Just as language, discourse and meaning are becoming more and more layered and representations of are becoming more and more complex and multiple. Discourse and critical media studies need to embrace newer formations of discourse and representational politics to reveal new understandings of the political nature of media constructions of global relations involving transgovernmental institutions like the U.N.

In the field of media studies, scholars need to consider what are the conditions under which Americans realize they are being spoken to (as Americans) when they consume war discourse and representations of the U.N. and the United States in the media. In the field of intercultural communications, the implications take the form of an accommodation of alternatively situated orientations to processes of representations that are politically and culturally situated, historically contextualized and socially contested. This dissertation aims to examine the hegemonic processes of representation and construction of meanings involving world conflict situations, the U.N. and its member nations, and the United States. It is the goal of this dissertation to critique the processes of representation of these political entities in the U.S. media discourse in order to identify who among these political elites is privileged in the negotiation of global ideological struggles in times of conflict post 9/11, in what contexts, for what purposes and through what textual devices. This goal and the gaps identified in the preceding literature review, together lead to the formulation of the following research questions.
**Research questions**

RQ1. What are the various representations of the United Nations in the U.S. media in the context of conflicts post 9/11 involving the United States?


RQ3. What conclusions can be drawn about representation of the United States and the U.N. in times of conflict post 9/11 and the role of media within the strategic exercise of global political powers?

RQ4. In what way do the analyses of this inquiry contribute to existing critical theories about hegemonic media representations that dichotomize the world into the “West” and the “Rest”? 
CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed communication research in the areas of discourse analysis, representational politics, and media culminating in the formulation of research questions prompted by gaps in the literature. Specifically, the research questions pertain to the discursive representation of the United Nations in post 9/11, war-time U.S. media leading to an understanding and critique of media representation of global, transgovernmental institutions in globalized, internationalized, and postcolonial contexts.

In this chapter a specific method to analyze and critique U.S. media discourses that represent the U.N. during post 9/11 times of conflict and war is identified and reasons for choosing it explicated in order to identify and critique how they are formed in the media and how they inform our understanding of critical theories of media studies and intercultural communication. An analysis of the juxtaposition of sources that are mutually, independently, elitist in nature, such as the U.N., U.N. members and affiliates and the U.S. government, may reveal ideological underpinnings and discursive struggle for hegemonic ascendancy in world politics. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is used for the analysis of data.

Before explicating the methodology, it is useful to explain the underlying assumptions behind the choice of this method. A clear understanding of the paradigmatic assumptions, permits the reader to judge the value of this inquiry and the merit of the conclusions drawn (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). This chapter begins with background on research methods and concludes with an explanation of why CDA is appropriate for the research questions posed.
Paradigm, methodology, and method: Some definitions and applicability for this inquiry

To understand the appropriateness of a research method for particular research questions, it is important to define the basic concepts of paradigm, methodology, and technique. A paradigm is a systematic set of ideas or beliefs, together with accompanying methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 15). The paradigm of this inquiry is the critical paradigm. The aim of critical research is to reveal underlying unequal relations of power and domination so as to interrogate existing conceptualizations of social practices with a concern for social justice and emancipation. From a communication perspective, a critical approach enables the researcher to identify and foreground grammars of oppression discursively constructed in our society. Based on these beliefs, critical theorists suggest an action-oriented methodology that critiques ideology (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002).

Within research paradigms, the basic assumptions pertaining to the nature of reality is known as ontology. Ontologically, within the critical paradigm, realities are simultaneous, plural and local phenomena constructed socially by and between human beings through different communicative practices. These constructed meaningful realities are symbolic and emergent in nature. In this study, the researcher explores the nature of representations of realities involving the U.N. in times of war that are constructed through mediated, communicative, globalized channels. Literature suggests that constructed realities in media discourse strategically privilege particular social groups at a historically specific time to sustain status quo in society (Van Dijk, 2001). The researcher strives to understand and critique the symbolic meanings of these constructed realities in times of war post 9/11 specific to the U.N., its member nations and the U.S. and the role of the media in the construction of these realities.
Epistemology is defined as how realities can be known. From a critical perspective, epistemologically, the researcher as the human instrument collaboratively “knows” aspects of social realities through interdependence with the researched. Claims about knowledge are always partial and positioned. Knowledge and symbols are assumed to be commodified to sustain systems of domination and alienation (Hall, 1985). For this inquiry, the researcher is keenly aware that ‘knowledge’ produced through this study and critique is situated and positioned, time and context dependent and is a particular way of understanding and critiquing the problem/evaluand in question. Specifically, the analysis of data to understand the meaning of certain ways of representing the U.N. in U.S. media discourse, is a way of “knowing” a few of the multiple realities and relations being constructed as a result of discursive, unequal interaction between the U.N., the U.S., the member nations as well as the media in the context of war post 9/11.

Axiology involves the role values play in inquiry. Axiologically, inquiry is value-bound within this paradigm. The term value-bound means inquiry is not only influenced by inquirer values but also by choice of paradigm, substantive theory and values inherent in the context within which inquiry is being conducted (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher’s values and motives for conducting the research are important to identify and position in order to adhere to Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) call for ‘confirmability’ in qualitative research. Confirmability, meaning use of methods that “render the study beyond contamination by human foibles” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 292), is the qualitative researcher’s equivalent of the conventional social science goal of ‘validity’. Therefore, the researcher must clearly state the reasons that encouraged her to identify the present direction of inquiry and choice of methodology.

Upon reflection on my personal interest in this study, I find myself thinking back to the conditions that affected me while I grew up in India – conditions and effects that are relevant in
this globalized world. Using Stohl’s (1993) theory of globalization as an open-ended process that does not have any necessary historical determination or trajectory, I feel that the conditions that helped me shape my interests and questions today are not necessarily specific to particular geographical locations, social bindings or political affiliations. Being born and brought up in India and having taken an interest in politics and processes of communication in my mid-twenties, this study is, in a sense, a reflection of what I want to understand, how I want to understand it, why I want to do what I want to do, and how that is relevant to intercultural communication scholarship. The why question is the most important one at the moment because that is the one question that allows me to be self-reflexive about my choice of research. I have always believed that communication can help solve a lot of problems in the world today. I have been a keen supporter of non-violence and an even more intense believer in the power of diplomacy and negotiation to create conditions of peace in conflict situations. Some of these beliefs stem from the feelings of being raised in a formerly colonized nation where the legacy of the non-violent movement that helped free India from British occupation still has a deep impact on society and of always being made to feel second best in the various discourses of the West. India was considered a Third World country, poverty stricken, stumbling and failing in its economic reforms, the land of the exotic and everything ancient (Lalvani, 1995). In the global politics surrounding conflict situations in the last two decades – the first Gulf war, nuclear non-proliferation for some countries and not others, bombing of Kosovo, genocide in Rwanda, invasion of Iraq in 2003, Israel – Palestine/Israel - Lebanon tensions and war, ‘possible’ genocide in Darfur, and other conflicts that have torn the world apart - I have often felt voiceless.

After 9/11, there was an urgency with which global political decisions were being made with regard to the use of force mostly initiated by the United States. I followed the peace efforts
of the United Nations (U.N.) during the post 9/11, global conflict situations and believed that conflicts could have peaceful resolutions. Through my research, I am keenly aware of media’s role in social construction through the discursive representation of various social and political entities. Everyday I am reminded of media’s omnipresent and all-pervasive nature in our society. I am also aware that as a non-U.S. citizen my “reading” of the text is influenced by my experiences and socialization. It has thus been very important for me to have a thorough theoretical understanding based on external readings and prior research and social understanding of the context helping build tacit knowledge about the issues involved in this inquiry. The understanding of certain concepts that are difficult to define in language form is referred to as “tacit” knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). All these personal beliefs and values have contributed to the choice of the research paradigm, the research questions and the methodology.

Apart from the consideration about values of the inquirer, there are considerations about the paradigmatic values of the critical paradigm that clearly assumes unequal relations of power with particular groups gaining hegemonic dominance over other groups at a historically specific time in society. Consequently, the substantive theories emerging from the critical paradigm – discourse theory, theories of media representations, social construction theory, critical theories of media -- bring their own set of values to bear upon the inquiry. Finally, values inherent in the context also have significant impact on the inquiry. The context for this inquiry is post 9/11 wartime U.S. media representation of U.N. and its member nations. The underlying power implications involving these elite institutions in world politics, engaging in discourses of power maintenance and enlargement and interacting in times of war, are contextual and value-laden in nature.
A methodology is the “analysis of the assumptions, principles, and procedures in a particular approach to inquiry” (Schwandt, 2001, p. 161) that, in turn, governs the use of particular methods. Based on analysis of the theoretical knowledge in the areas of media studies and intercultural communication, the paradigmatic assumptions of the critical paradigm, the values inherent in the different aspects of the inquiry, and the context within which this inquiry is being conducted, CDA is an appropriate method to conduct this inquiry. The reasons why CDA is an appropriate method to analyze data in accordance with the specific paradigm within which this inquiry is being conducted are further elaborated in the next section.

The process of conducting the inquiry

To gather and analyze data for a study based on the critical paradigm, the researcher uses a process involving a continuous cycle among purposive sampling, inductive analysis from intimate knowledge of situated practice, grounded theory and emergent design, iterated until redundancy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each element of this process needs to be explained to demonstrate the relevance of the chosen method to the present inquiry. To begin with, in purposive sampling, data is selected because of certain characteristics (Patton, 2002). The data for this study was generated using the search terms “‘U.N.’ and ‘U.S.’” in headline and lead paragraphs of The New York Times on the Lexis-Nexis database during the time period September 12, 2001, to September 11, 2007. The search yielded 1839 articles and editorials. This search was conducted in accordance with the paradigmatic assumption that context is critical, and that the “purpose of sampling will most often be to include as much information as possible, in all of its various ramifications and constructions” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 201). The headline and lead paragraph was stipulated based on the findings of a recent framing study where
it was inferred that the placement of key terms within the opening paragraphs of an article is representative of the significance of the terms within the entire story (Hmielowski, 2007). Therefore, the terms ‘U.N.’ and ‘U.S.’ in the headline and lead paragraphs, have likely generated a purposive sample within the time period specified for the conduct of this inquiry. This particular dataset will provide specifically viable answers to the research questions because the dataset includes articles that mention the U.S. and the U.N. involved in a variety of social, political, global issues. This gives the researcher the flexibility to thoroughly read the articles and choose the final subset of data that pertain to conflict situations. This method of selecting data for analysis is appropriate to selectively choose media text that covers a wide variety of topics on the U.N. yet refers to U.S. policies towards the U.N. especially to do with war and the representations of events and texts that combine the U.N., the U.S. and war together.

Within the initial dataset those articles that nominally discuss the U.N., the U.S. and war and that do little to illuminate our understanding of the research questions posed, were not included for further analysis. The articles that were not included in the final dataset described meetings at the U.N. General Assembly with no mention of any conflict issues, movement of personnel within the U.N. offices, obituaries about U.N. officials, discussion of fund allocation for UNESCO projects, etc. However, articles that have any mention of conflict, war, strife, combat, fight, and hostilities, were included. The final set of data had 61 articles for analysis.

Inductive analysis builds toward general patterns from specific observations. Open-ended observations are conducted by the inquirer to identify categories or dimensions of analysis in the phenomenon being investigated (Patton, 2002). For this inquiry, critical analysis of newspaper articles is going to be conducted. From specific observations within each article, general patterns will emerge, leading to open coding of particular categories that may not be mutually exclusive.
but that retain specific characteristics of the patterns such as convergence of U.N. and U.S. policies, divergence of U.N. and U.S. policies, U.N. protests against U.S. policies, etc. The patterns are identifiable based on the researcher’s understanding of the social context including the political, social and economic awareness specific to that time and place, ongoing thorough study and understanding of the different theories of media studies and intercultural communication informing the analysis and tacit knowledge based on prior experience in acknowledgment of the researcher’s function as the human instrument. There are other contextual elements that inform the decisions in determining these patterns many of which emerge as the analysis progresses through time. For example, even if the time frame for the inquiry is determined and analysis is conducted only for articles available from that time frame, information about current U.S. and U.N. policies in media discourse beyond the time frame set out at the beginning constantly sheds light on the understanding of the articles being analyzed.

Lincoln & Guba’s (1985) “tacit knowledge” becomes an important tool for the researcher. Tacit knowledge is developed over time based on the researcher’s reading of the literature as well as use of techniques. How well the researcher is informed about the theoretical background of the research questions, how well data is coded, how well the researcher connects the coded data with the theoretical knowledge, all fall within the realm of technique. Analysis using CDA method could indicate strategies for the processes of representations of the U.N. and its member nations that have not been adequately discussed in previous scholarly work. The analysis could also contribute to identification of particular ideological struggles between and within the U.N. and its member nations furthering theoretical work in the area of ideology critique.
Finally, emergent design makes it possible to take multiple contexts, meanings and realities into consideration while executing the method of analysis for a particular inquiry. For the design to emerge effectively, “the investigator must engage in *continuous* data analysis, so that every new act of investigation takes into account everything that has been learned so far” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 209). The design of this study is also emergent in nature for the following reasons. First, the indeterminacy of the social, economic and political circumstances surrounding the political entities (the U.N., the U.N. member nations, the U.S., etc.) involved in this study make it hard to project from before what exactly the analysis would reveal about the media representational politics involving them. Second, the messy nature of war as the context on the one hand and the role of media in social construction on the other, together make a case for an open-ended approach to the inquiry because the information gathered during data analysis could lead to addition or reevaluation of theoretical background and research questions.

**Approaches to discourse analysis**

There are several approaches to media discourse analysis including linguistic and sociolinguistic analysis, conversation analysis, semiotic analysis, critical linguistic and social semiotic analysis, the social cognitive model of analysis and CDA (Fairclough, 1995b).

Linguistic and socio-linguistic analysis is primarily concerned with particular types of grammatical structure in language used in the media such as syntax of headlines and the correlations between variable linguistic features and variable aspects of social context (Fairclough, 1995b). Conversation analysis explores the use of conversations and also the methods that people use to produce and interpret these conversations like interview practices in
the media. Both these approaches fail to identify connections between language use and deployment of power.

The semiotic approach to discourse considers the analysis of signs and symbols within media text as a key component of cultural analysis. Within this approach the meaning-making capacity of signs and symbols is considered to be rule-governed, learned, and constructed as opposed to natural or given in reality. This approach focuses on ideologically potent categories and classifications which are implicit in institutionalized texts like the media (Fairclough, 1995b). The critical linguistic approach recognizes the systematic role of language in structuring power relations in society. This approach highlights the importance that linguistic choices carry ideological meaning, that there is a very determinate relationship between linguistic and ideological processes and that use of discourse is within relationships of power and politics (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). In these two approaches, discourse is primarily defined as a linguistic unit meaning pertaining to use of language, lacking systematic attention to the detailed properties of texts. By focusing attention on the linguistic aspect of text, some of the implicit complexities that are posed by history, context and the ever-changing nature of politics, economics and culture in society, remain unexplored.

Foucault (1972) approached discourse as a historically and culturally specific practice that helps create knowledge about and norms and regulations around subjects. In Foucault’s critical perspective, meaningful knowledge about subjects can not exist outside specific discourse. Foucault (1972, 1980) opened up the scope of discussion of discourse beyond linguistics and ideology to identify discourse as an important part of society connecting language use and the workings of power. CDA (Fairclough, 1995b) specifically uses this aspect from Foucault’s approach to discourse – the underlying connection between language use and power.
and the strategic fixing of subject positions through the use of language in representation. How the U.N. is positioned in media text is signaled through language use that indicates the power differential between language users and producers in media text.

Van Dijk’s (1991, 1997) social cognitive approach to discourse has a social-psychological emphasis on processes of social cognition. He reveals how social relationships and processes are accomplished at a micro-level through routine practices that are part of one’s sociocognitive model. He argues that in order to understand how wider inequalities inform particular discursive or interpretative acts, it is important to understand the role of social cognitions and representations and different ways of thinking about the world that emerge from social actions and practices.

This sociocognitive model of discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 1988) is a little different from Fairclough’s CDA encompassing two main dimensions – the textual and the contextual. As Van Dijk (1988) suggests, discourse is the explicit form of the information being shared. Most other information remains implicit in nature being personally or socially shared and cognitively represented by language users. The text being analyzed is a signaling device indicating the existence of this hidden information.

Van Dijk (1988) takes into consideration semantic macrostructures, defined as global meanings of discourse, that help in understanding the overall relationships, hierarchy and organization of local fragments of media text. Macrostructures consist of topics and macropropositions. Topics embody the most important information of a discourse. Propositions are local meaning units that are a level removed from the linguistic expression of words. Macropropositions are global propositional representation in terms that are organized hierarchically, subsuming ever-larger units of texts. Thus, macropropositions represent the
meaning of paragraphs, sections of a text, clusters of sections, and eventually the whole text itself. Both topics and macropropositions are formal counterparts of the intuitive notions of gist and summary usually found in titles, headlines, summaries, abstracts or conclusions (Van Dijk, 1972). Headlines have summary function highlighting word choices that reveal underlying dominant biases and stereotypes. Van Dijk analyzes thematic structures which is the formal organizing of global topics in news discourse, where discourse is hierarchically structured depending on the relevance of topics within it privileging particular points of view.

For this inquiry, analysis of headlines of the articles in the final data set would reveal what is the topic of a particular article, how topics are related across articles, what kind of hierarchical relationship is established within the macropropositions, how these macropropositions act to construct discursive boundaries about topics related to the U.N. and its member nations, war, the U.S., etc.. Thematically, analysis will include how is the top-down, cyclical structure of news discourse contributing to the construction of strategic positioning of the U.N. and its member nations, what is the nature of the juxtaposition of the political groups, who is gaining importance and who is losing it within the thematic structure of news. The thematic presentation of news has political relevance because, on many occasions, those conditions, consequences and participants in agreement with the newspaper’s sociocognitive model or, even in some cases, the reader’s sociocognitive model in general and recent events in particular are mentioned first. In times of war, the thematic presentations become telling in who is given prominence and who is strategically obscured.

Van Dijk also analyzes schematic superstructure where more or less fixed schematas learned during socialization manifest themselves in news discourse. Much like Fairclough’s intertextual analysis, the analysis of schematic superstructure will examine how different
schemas like military discourse citing military documents, reporting of conversations between U.N. officials and U.S. government officials, are strategically positioned within a particular article. Both the thematic and schematic analysis involve understanding of presuppositions - set of propositions assumed by the speaker to be known to the listener - that could be reproduced in the discourse in the form of journalist presuppositions involving war, global political organizations, etc.

For Van Dijk (1997), power is always oppressive and abusive. Van Dijk (1997) thus has little scope for resistance and agency or human choice and tends to take the ideological effects of texts for granted in his approach.

CDA, levels of analysis in CDA and applicability to the present inquiry

CDA

Fairclough (1995b) expands the scope of discourse to include meaning-making practices with a semiotic dimension such as spoken language, written language, images, gestures, etc. in his approach to discourse analysis. “CDA is … a theoretical perspective on language and more generally semiosis … as one element or ‘moment’ of the material social process…, which gives rise to ways of analyzing language or semiosis within broader analyses of the social process” (Fairclough, 2001b, p. 121). The goals of CDA are political; it critically investigates how discourse is structured by dominance and accepts that every discourse is historically and socially produced and interpreted. CDA assumes that all discourses are historical and that they can only be understood with reference to their context. In CDA, dominance structures are hegemonically legitimated by ideologies of powerful groups, and the effects of power and ideology in the production of meanings of reality are obscured, stabilized and naturalized.
CDA embraces the poststructuralist understanding of the dynamic role of discourse as constitutive of the social while also constituted by it. Fairclough (2001a) uses Gramsci’s (1971) concept of hegemony in understanding how power is negotiated discursively between various social groups with some groups gaining consent at historically specific moments. This conception of discursive power creates the possibility of alternate discourses or discourses of resistance. CDA raises questions pertaining to responsibility, interests, ideology, presuppositions and taken-for-granted assumptions that generally figure as implicit assumptions in discourse contributing to the producing and reproducing of unequal relations of power and domination. CDA makes it possible to critically analyze discourses generating from those in positions of power, those who are responsible for creating and maintaining power imbalance, and those who have the wherewithal to solve such problems (Van Dijk, 1991). Fairclough (1995b) identifies media as powerful institutions constructing social reality discursively.

CDA (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1995a) helps in fulfilling the aims of the present inquiry to expose larger social, political, cultural, economic practices that construct reality and representations of political entities in times of war in order to “transform ignorance and misapprehensions … into more informed consciousness” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110). The following section explicates how CDA is to be used in this inquiry for the analysis of data.

CDA – levels of analysis

CDA defines the relationship between text and context, between structures of discourse at various levels of description and various properties of the context, such as socio-cultural factors, cognitive processes, etc. that shape discourse practices in important ways. In accordance with the multifunctional linguistic theory (Halliday, 1994) and the concept of orders of
discourse, Fairclough (1995b) identifies systematic links between practices within particular contexts and texts. The practices include both discursive and socio-cultural practices. First, the multifunctional nature of text includes ideational, interpersonal and textual functions (Halliday, 1994). The ideational function pertains to questions of knowledge, beliefs and ideologies that are strategically used to construct discourses and representations. The interpersonal function pertains to questions of social relations and power that are used to create spaces for social, political and cultural representations to take shape. The textual function helps in the constitution of texts from individual sentences that in turn provide the means for language users to construct discourses privileging certain perspectives and ideologies at historically specific moments. The multifunctional nature of text reveals how it is possible for discourses to exist and function from within text.

Orders of discourse are defined as “the socially ordered set[s] of genres and discourses associated with a particular social field, characterized in terms of the shifting boundaries and flows between them” (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 58). Within orders of discourses there are genres and discourses. Genres are defined as use of language associated with some particular social practice such as media interview genre. Discourses are particular ways of speaking about social phenomena constructing particular knowledge about them, for example, Marxist political discourses or liberal political discourses. Discursive practices include the ways in which texts are produced, how texts are socially distributed and how all communicative events are intertextual or interdiscursive in nature drawing on earlier communicative events. Socio-cultural practices include situation-specific social goings-on that the discourse is part of, the institutional framework within which the discourse occurs and the wider social embeddedness of the discourse.
Fairclough (1992) brings together theories of critical linguistic studies (discourse as social action and interaction) and poststructuralist social studies (discourse as a social construction of reality, a form of knowledge) and explores the interpersonal function of language and the concept of genre (language studies) and the ideational function of language and the concept of discourses (poststructuralist theories).

The techniques of CDA include analysis of the detailed structures, strategies and functions of text and talk, including grammatical, semiotic (analysis of meaning), pragmatic (relating meaning to context), interactional, stylistic, rhetorical (analysis of persuasive content), narrative or similar forms of verbal organization of communicative events as well as analysis of visual images and sound effects (TV), written text with photos, maps and diagrams, and, layout and visual impact in the design of the written page. Absences as well as presences are analyzed and certain presences are weighed against possible alternatives.

CDA does not provide a ready-made guide book to social analysis (Van Dijk, 2001). It is very important that for each study a thorough theoretical analysis of the social inquiry is made. Even then, there are so many relevant units, levels, dimensions, strategies and other structures of discourse that there can practically be no ‘complete’ analysis of selected discourse. From within the data chosen for analysis, meaningful analysis needs to remain as relevant to the social problem being investigated as possible.

**Applicability**

This study attempts to analyze discursive media representations of the U.N. in times of post 9/11 conflict to determine the political nature of representations thus formed and to understand and critique the ways and extent to which these discourses support existing critical
theories. In particular, this study assists theory building in the field of intercultural communication and critical theory about hegemonic media representations as well as the role of media in world politics and conflict. CDA (Fairclough, 1995b) provides the tool to analyze the complex nature of this discourse in the following ways.

Fairclough (1995b) focuses on three main areas of analysis – linguistic analysis of text including analysis of phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, etc., intertextual analysis of text and selective socio-cultural analysis that is not concerned with direct analysis of production or consumption of text.

First, in the linguistic analysis, Fairclough focuses on analysis of vocabulary and semantics, the grammar of sentences, sound system, writing system, textual organization, overall textual structure, meanings and forms that carry particular ideologies and construct different relations. For the present inquiry, the linguistic analysis will assist in revealing systematic use of language in conveying dominant ideologies and in representing the U.N., the war, the relations between the different nations involved through the U.N., as well as the relations between the U.S. and the U.N. through discursive mediated channels. How the U.N. is represented at specific moments – as a whole or the sum of its parts, in this case, nations, or the pick of some of its member nations – will give us an indication as to what meanings are being constructed about the U.N. as well as the United States. Systematic use of language in media discourses through choice of words, syntax, etc. creates possibilities for processes of representation.

Second, the intertextual analysis reveals the link between text and discourse practices bringing together the concepts of orders of discourse, genres, discourses and types of discourse. This kind of analysis is more interpretive than descriptive and reveals traces of discourse practices such as editorial procedures, beats, etc. in the text. The analysis constitutes unraveling
various genres and discourses that are articulated together in text to constitute a particular representation of events. For example, the journalistic resources that are allocated to cover events related to the U.N. in times of war and the importance of those resources in news schema reveal strategic, discursive positioning of U.N. within social, political and cultural contexts.

There is another level of analysis within orders of discourse that distinguishes between choice and chain actions. Choice actions are socially conditioned external and internal choice of combination of orders of discourses, such as, combination of official and colloquial discourses. Chain actions are indications of how different communicative events that lie outside the media like conversations, debates, reports about the communicative event, are chained together. For example, the choice of source texts like presidential address, important publications, reports or books, etc., for the description of particular events related to the U.N. would reveal how the symbolic content of the source text is being used and what coded version and historical moments from the source text is being privileged.

Finally, Fairclough also identifies discourse types that are relatively stabilized combinations of genres and discourses (eg. party political broadcast combining interview, chat, oratory; hard news; etc.). Given these micro levels of analysis of various forms of text combining a variety of discourses and genres, intertextual analysis of representation of the United Nations in media discourse can occur at each of these levels. Analysis helps reveal what texts are borrowing from previous texts to form new discourses and what that means; whether there are mixing of genres and discourses and what novel discourse types are being constructed and how.

Socio-cultural analysis of text involves analysis at various levels of abstraction from the particular communicative acts being examined. This is at the level of its immediate situational context, its wider institutional context or the wider frame of the society and culture. For the
present inquiry, aspects such as the existence of the U.N. headquarters in New York, the general overwhelming bent in news discourse to selectively use reliable, official, well-known and credible persons and institutions, problematizing of various authority relations, etc., will benefit from socio-cultural analysis as exemplified by Fairclough (1995b).

For this inquiry, selective socio-cultural and cognitive analysis will be made based on a combination of the researcher’s theoretical understanding based on external readings and prior research, social understanding of the context, and tacit knowledge. CDA (Fairclough, 1995b) and parts of sociocognitive model including analysis of thematic, schematic and semantic macrostructures (Van Dijk, 1988), together will enable the researcher to understand and critique particular representations of the U.N. in U.S. media in the context of war post 9/11. Such an analysis helps in revealing the role of media in such political discourses and the role of the discourses in instances of political ‘othering.’ The analysis would then lead to a discussion of the implications of such an inquiry in the field of critical media studies and intercultural communication.

Rationalization of data choices and collection

The data collection process for analysis of media discourses entails identification of the source of the data, the context of the inquiry, the time period to be included, the textual terms to be included in order to collect the data and the finalization of the set of data to be analyzed.

Apart from the theoretical factors, there are several methodological factors that contribute to the decision to identify newspapers as the main site from which to collect the text for analysis of this inquiry. First, newspaper reports are “sensitive barometers of cultural change which manifest in their heterogeneity and contradictoriness the often tentative, unfinished and messy
nature of change” (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 60). Fairclough (1995a) emphasizes that the textual heterogeneity found in media text is a manifestation of underlying social and cultural contradictions and, thus, can be considered very important evidence for the investigation of these contradictions and their subsequent evolution.

Second, Van Dijk’s (1991) work suggests that media play a fundamental role in representation of various social groups helping position the powerful elite, notably the government and its supporting parties, sustaining status quo in society. Moreover, media also directly contribute to the construction of the definition of groups and events through their own discursive strategies, constantly lending to struggle, negotiation and renegotiation of discourses in the process. This aspect needs to be thoroughly examined in the context of the present inquiry.

Third, scholars have identified the endurance of the print record over time (Anderson, 1991) and the endurance of its accessibility. The print record uniquely influences our understanding of history, in turn, influencing particular social, cultural and political contexts.

Fourth, the heavily embedded and layered character of media discourse absorbs earlier versions of social phenomena that are transformed and recontextualized in ways that correspond to the concerns, priorities and goals of the present conditions existing in society. This aspect, when analyzed for the present inquiry, may reveal traces of previous ideological dispositions and how those discourses are being molded over time to fit into new shapes that have intricate but complex relations with both the previous and the present context.

Fifth, since the inherent narrowness and conservatism of the network of delimited, legitimimized sources, that are systematically drawn upon in media discourse can be partly attributed to the media organizations’ dependence on the status quo in terms of ownership and economic profitability (Herman & Chomsky, 1988), an analysis of the juxtaposition of sources
that are mutually, independently, elitist in nature, such as the U.N., U.N. members and affiliates and the U.S. government, may reveal ideological underpinnings and discursive struggle for hegemonic ascendancy. Finally, the nature of media discourse as both an important resource and topic for other types of discourse (Fairclough, 1995b) creates an opportunity for this inquiry to establish connections and theorize about implications in other discourses within the field.

The reasons behind choosing *The New York Times* for analysis are manifold. It is one of a handful of elite U.S. newspapers that serves as an important source of international news, providing an authoritative, elite voice for one of the most dynamic cities in the world known for its economic, political, and cultural interactions and complexities (Sassen, 2001; Shah & Thornton, 2004). It is among the largest media outlets in the United States, ranking third in terms of circulation (Audit Bureau of Circulation, 2007). On top of that, “The Times presents a higher resolution mapping of media tendencies and a more interesting, revealing object of study than other print news sources” (Goss, 2001, p. 8). This is mainly because *The Times* is considered by many scholars to be the national paper of record. Its coverage may not be typical of other newspapers, but is arguably the most influential. Hollihan (2001) explains that the nation’s leading papers, the *New York Times* included, assign several reporters to cover political issues. As a result, the volume and quality of political coverage in newspapers such as *The New York Times* is impressive and is shared with other media outlets all over the country through the *The New York Times* news service. Thus, *The New York Times* has a reach beyond just the readers of the paper. McCombs (2004) further summarizes the influence/impact of *The New York Times* when he says that “the general pattern found is that the agenda-setting influence of the *New York Times* was greater than that of the local newspapers, which, in turn, was greater than that of the national television news” (p. 50).
The interest in war as the crucible within which this inquiry is to be conducted emerges mainly from the theoretical understanding of media’s role in the discursive construction of war and groups involved in war. It also emerges from the U.S. government’s growing political influence, independently, as well as through the U.N. Security Council, in states of war and crisis globally, particularly after 9/11 (Gitlin, 1979; Wolfsfeld, 2004). This inquiry is especially relevant because post 9/11 there have been many conflict situations where both the U.S. and the U.N. have been involved (Hutcheson, et. al., 2004; Kellner, 2005). The U.S. is currently at war with Iraq. However, exactly how the media have represented the U.N. during these conflict situations has not previously been examined. This inquiry will explore these representations and their implications for the United States and the U.N. This analysis would reveal how the United Nations is being represented in the discourse, how the member nations are represented, what ideologies are working to sustain these representations, how is conflict or war shaping these representations or how is war or conflict being shaped by these representations and how these representations are informing our understanding of existing critical theories on representations, statecraft, media studies and intercultural communication.

Finally, news studies document that major, traumatic events increase media coverage of the event and related topics (Kepplinger & Habermeir, 1995; Lawrence & Bennett, 2000). News media represent crises as “crucial catalysts of … collective emotions” and further politicize and globalize trauma (Rosenthal, 2003). The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, were just such a catastrophic event that prompted the media to increase coverage of war and war-related issues (Ross & Bantimaroudis, 2006). Gamson (1992) terms such crisis events as “critical discourse moments”. Within such moments, “changes in society and culture manifest themselves in all their tentativeness, incompleteness and contradictory nature in the heterogeneous and shifting
discursive practices of the media” (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 52). Using Fairclough (1995b) and Van Dijk’s (1988) frames of analysis, the articles were open coded for further categorization.

The goal of this inquiry is to identify, critique and help transform discourse practices that exist to construct and maintain relations of domination between various political entities in times of war. This analysis is not meant to position any particular description or any particular critique of the discourses to be analyzed as ‘the true’ one, rather it is carried out in an exploratory and emergent spirit seeking to expand the direction of research in intercultural communication to encompass new strategies of statecraft, novel struggles and negotiations between discourses of representation in a shrinking, strife-torn world. This dissertation aims at encouraging readers and media practitioners to be more understanding of social, cultural and political differences, processes of representation and the need to change current conceptualization and representation of conflict and other political participants in the decisions pertaining to conflicts. It is hoped that critical understanding of discourse processes and the power of representations through discourse will lead to a more empowered understanding of politically marginalized groups involved in global political decisions with regard to war and conflict, and ultimately to weakening the arguments that promote war and human suffering.
CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS

Introduction

The inquiry, thus far, has laid out the theoretical premises on which to base the analysis of representation of the United Nations in U.S. media, more specifically *The New York Times*, in times of post 9/11 world conflict situations. Critical theories of discourse, representation, statecraft and media inform this inquiry. Moreover, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is identified as the method for analysis of data for this inquiry.

CDA, in this inquiry, combines linguistic, intertextual, selective socio-cultural (Fairclough, 1995a, 1995c) and sociocognitive (Van Dyke, 1998) analysis. The analysis of data in this chapter uses this framework of CDA in the following manner. Linguistic analysis examines choice of words, syntax, semantics, textual organization, overall textual structure, meanings and forms, each and all of which carry particular ideologies and construct different representations and relations. Since headlines are capable of shaping the understanding of the rest of the article, the headlines are examined first. Analysis of the rest of the article is undertaken at the next stage. Intertextual analysis comprises unraveling various genres and discourses that are articulated together to constitute a particular representation of events that lead to the construction of various discourse types. Fairclough (2003) defines genres as “different ways of (inter)acting discoursally” (p. 26). For example, when quotes about the U.N. are taken from a different medium, like television, and are incorporated in *The New York Times* in a strategic, normalized manner that obfuscates the secondary nature of representation of the U.N., that is evidence of intertextuality.
Selective socio-cultural analysis connects communicative acts with immediate situational context, wider institutional context or the wider frame of society and culture. For example, discourses referencing previously enacted communicative events with regard to conflicts, U.S. officials, U.N. officials and the communicative exchanges between the various participants do not always provide contextual information strategically. Without this vital information the discourses seem a-historic and isolated. Thus, a deeper insight into socio-cultural context, previous representations in the media, wider sources of information and the researcher’s intuitive understanding about the participants and events in these communicative acts provide this missing link between text and context and make the analysis deeper and richer in the process.

Selective sociocognitive analysis reveals how social relationships and processes are accomplished at a micro-level through routine practices. Sociocognitive analysis includes examination of themes that are embedded in and through the subtextual meaning of the media text, schematic (top-down structure) analysis, and semantic (meaning making) elements of media text and their connections to context. Sociocognitive elements in text can be identified in the canonical news schema structure (main events, context, background, verbal reaction, comments), in the way source texts are processed (how quotes are used, what parts of quotes are used, etc.), in the way social actors are positioned in the text (the U.N., Mr. Annan, the Unites States, Mr. Bush, etc.), and in the implicit and explicit dominant economic, social and ideological values that percolate the discourse.

This chapter uses CDA to deconstruct the various representations of the United Nations that permeate *The New York Times* in post 9/11 conflict situations. The articles that are purposively chosen for in-depth critical discourse analysis demonstrate the overarching theme and discursive trends of each section most clearly. The purposive choice is based on theoretical
background, an iterative process of selection, and the researcher’s understanding and intuitive readings of the articles. Four primary categories emerged during the analyses. The categories emerged as a result of an iterative process of continuous data analysis through inductive reasoning informed by the researcher’s understanding of the theoretical background for the research questions posed and the systematic and thorough utilization of the method of choice (CDA). Dominant patterns emerged as the process was iterated until redundancy. The category names not only are indicators of the overarching patterns from the data, they are also used to specifically explain the discursive trends of these particular categories. All the categories together explain the discursive representational processes used to represent the United States, the United Nations and U.N. member states in the NYT.

The categories that emerged and will be examined in detail below are **Shifting allies and foes**, **Shifting blame**, **Shifting voices**, and **Delegitimization of the United Nations through opinion pieces**. Each of these categories critically describes, identifies and analyzes discourses of representation of the United Nations. The first category, **Shifting allies and foes**, analyzes the ways in which the United Nations’ position in relation to the United States shifts during times of conflict. This category is discussed first because its theme permeates the dataset most consistently and substantially compared to the three other categories. The second category, **Shifting blame**, analyzes how the assignment of blame shifts between the United States and the United Nations during conflict times. This theme is also very pervasive in the dataset, but it appears more consistently during times immediately before and after conflict situations. The third category, **Shifting voices**, analyzes the shifting nature of representation of the U.N., as made overt through the statements of its member states and U.N. officials. This category shows how political voices are represented in the media. This theme recurs throughout the dataset but is
much more subtle and implicit than the first two, which often are signaled through overt textual references. It is thus more subtextual and implicit than the first two categories. The last category, *Delegitimization of the United Nations through opinion pieces*, is not quite parallel to the first three, but it is necessary as a distinct section of analysis to examine and highlight the overwhelming delegitimization of the United Nations infused in the discourse of the opinion pieces. While opinion pieces serve a different function in the newspaper (that of representing the opinions and voice of the *Times* and providing a space for select, diverse opinions generally written by social elites rather than presenting ‘objective’ news and entertainment information), scholars agree that all newspaper content should be understood as the newspaper’s authoritative and influential position on particular issues (Bertrand, 2003; Tunstall, 2008). The overwhelming ideological and political delegitimization of the U.N. in public, mediated opinion columns in the NYT is important because these pieces are understood by readers to reproduce the collective belief system and core values of the dominant society (Van Dijk, 1988).

**Shifting allies and foes – United Nations’ shifting position versus the United States**

This category demonstrates the shifting and porous nature of media representation of the U.N. and its member nations as either allies or foes of the United States. The word ally is used to capture any kind of friendly, supportive, positive association of the U.N. and some of its member nations with the United States. The word foe means an enemy, an adversary, or an opponent that has a negative relationship with the United States. The labeling of both the U.N. and some of its individual member nations is politically driven and discursively constructed. The discourse is constitutive as well as constituted within the continuous mediated negotiations of representations of the U.N. as a specific organizational entity, as the sum of its parts, and as some of the U.N.
member nations individually, particularly during world conflict situations. The “shifting allies and foes” identified in the texts demonstrates that particular labels percolate through the discourse of media representation. The word “shifting” is deliberately used in the category name to highlight the constant shifting and sliding of the U.N. and some of its member nations’ position from a pre-determined range between an ally and a foe with regard to the United States.

This shifting nature of media representation of the U.N. as an ally or a foe of the United States is very important to the discursive construction of the United Nations for four primary reasons. First, there is a compelling need to understand the underlying discursive indicators that lead to the construction of the U.N. as an ally or a foe. These discursive indicators would further illuminate the historical, social and contextual variations within which the U.N. is consistently constructed in the media during times of conflict. Second, depending on what the representation is, an ally or a foe, the U.N. is forced to occupy that discursively constructed subject position. Instances of such explicit or implicit labeling need to be identified in order to demonstrate how such subject positions can foster a false presumption about the actual conduct or processes of the U.N. in world conflict situations. Third, the ascribed subject position of the U.N. as an ally or a foe creates an opening for a discursive production of the U.S. state that needs to be revealed through analysis. Fourth, such an analysis would also expose the role of power and privilege that hegemonically determines which political entity (the U.N. and some of its member nations) is labeled what (ally or foe), and that, in turn, helps determine larger, global political outcomes for these political groups of being assigned such attributes.

In the data collected between September 2001 and September 2007, the mediated oscillation of the U.N. and many of its member nations from allies and foes to reverse positions started right after the 9/11 attacks. Noticeable in these representations were strategic use of
metaphors, quotes, imagery, sayings, etc., that constructed discourses embodying the idea of what constitutes a friend or a foe to the U.S. and how that position comes to be occupied by the U.N. and many of its member nations at that historically specific time. The member nations that are represented as friend or foe are sometimes positioned explicitly and sometimes implicitly in the discourse.

The analysis begins with headlines that do very significant summarization work in media discourse production. Because headlines strategically filter information to mitigate understanding and interpretation of subsequent information (Entman, 2004; Van Dijk, 1988, 1991), headlines are potent in their ability to structure boundaries around what may or may not be conceived about particular groups and institutions. Recurrent words like “indispensable ally” (Musharraf, the indispensable ally, grows more confident,” Burns, 2001), “partners” (“U.S. and partners quickly set sight on a post-Taliban Kabul,” Schmemann, 2001c), “team” (“Team of many nations is a U.S. success,” Slater, 2002), “together” (“America and the U.N. together again?” Boot, 2003), “coalition” (“The Coalition of the willing,” 2003) and “friends” (“How to win friends and influence small countries,” Zeller, 2003) appeared in headlines to signal positive associations of the U.N. and some of its member nations with the United States. The word “partners” reminds of groups/ friends united in a sphere of common interest. A “team” suggests a group of people/ entities that are on the same side and work together in an organized fashion. “Together” suggests a harmonious relationship between people/ groups. A “coalition” means a temporary coming together of people/ groups for a common cause. All these words indicate positive, friendly unions between the United States and the United Nations and many of its member nations. Some of these headlines do not explicitly mention the U.N. and the member nations’ by name but the implicit headline reference generally is made explicit in the very first paragraphs. Notably, even
within the grammatically shortened sentence structure of a headline, the United States and its political position almost always occupies the grammatical subject position, meaning what or whom the sentence is about and suggesting the agency of that entity. Most other political groups occupy the grammatical predicate position as objects to the main noun, and thus are acted upon by the United States.

A closer reading of the headlines and the texts of the first paragraphs of these articles reveals the shifting nature of the positive friendship label attached to the political groups. In an article titled “A growing list of foes now suddenly friends,” for example, Schmemann (2001b) writes about U.S. efforts to build political friends worldwide after the 9/11 attacks. That the article talks about the transformation of “foes” to “friends” of the United States is made clear and explicit in this headline. In fact, the word “list” provides an insight in that there are a lot of political groups involved that have the potential to be rapidly transferred from the realm of enmity to that of friendship. The second and third paragraph of this article launch a slew of descriptors using binaries, comparisons and telling metaphors that represent the nation states related to the U.N. However, the discursive construction stops short of articulating whether a specific political group is being considered a friend or a foe, whether the representation is positive or negative. It is, to the researcher, a deliberate exercise in discursive fog creation, a deliberate mystification of the criteria of the labels.

The realignments have been staggering. A few short weeks ago, Washington viewed Central Asia, if it viewed the region at all, as a nest of nasty despots; Russia was a nagging has-been doing bad things in Chechnya, and the United Nations was a bloated organization whose conference on racism had to be boycotted. The Mideast was a quagmire, but the real threats were in Asia -- the rogues in North Korea and the increasingly assertive rulers in China. (second paragraph) (emphasis added)

Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld is on his way to Uzbekistan, now critical to any punch into Afghanistan; Russia is at the front of the cheering section for an assault on Islamic zealots, and the United Nations is echoing to unceasing declarations of support for America. Some of these declarations come from governments like Sudan or Syria that figure prominently on the State Department's list of countries that harbor terrorists. (third paragraph) (Schmemann, 2001b) (emphasis added)
These two paragraphs construct multiple representations of the political groups referenced. First, derogatory descriptions are used to establish the historical position of the political groups and their ideologies in relation to the United States. The reference to Central Asia does not clarify which countries are being referenced. On top of that, all the countries that are being considered in the geographically clubbed Central Asian region are summarily dismissed from the face of the earth because the United States has not even thought it necessary to “view the region at all.” The discourse suggests that the region has not been on the U.S. radar for the longest time. Russia is constructed as a once powerful and influential but persistently annoying and “nagging has-been” of world politics with a reputation of performing “bad” deeds against Chechnya. The word “bad” is left without much qualification in this instance, leaving the connotations of the word wide open to various negative acts imaginable.

The metaphor, “quagmire,” is used to reference the Mideast. Again, which countries constitute the Mideast is left unspecified, but all these unknown countries are discursively compared to a waterlogged bog, a wasteland and an unnecessary predicament to the United States’ scheme of things. The use of “quagmire” has institutional memory for Americans. It is a term often used to describe U.S. involvement in Vietnam and, thus, in extension, the Mideast is “another Vietnam.” North Korea is represented as an unprincipled, deceitful, vicious adversary, a “rogue.” China is also represented as a bold and aggressively self-assured “ruler.” The word “ruler” invokes images of monarchy and dictatorship, ideologies on the opposite end of the spectrum from the U.S. conception of democracy.

There is an implicit threading together of all these negative descriptors of political groups from around the world to shape the idea of what and who constitutes the U.N. The countries and regions referenced are positioned as inside the U.N., as its members. Simultaneously, the U.N.
administration is also referenced separately as a “bloated organization.” The use of the metaphor “bloated” in describing the U.N. evokes images of a lifeless, maggot-infested, dead organization of very little use in world politics. Another connotation of the word “bloated” is that the U.N. is a large, fat bureaucracy that incessantly talks about things but does nothing significant. The U.N. is further derided in the text by specifying how the issues the U.N. considers important are not so important to the United States hence necessitating a boycott of the U.N. “conference on racism.” The U.N. administration referenced separately and the descriptions of the members of the U.N., together, construct a composite representation of the U.N. The text strives towards discursive closure of the multiple possibilities of ideological and institutional representations of the United Nations. The resulting discourse defines a narrow band within which the U.N. can be conceived.

The discourse continues in the next paragraph but, this time, the references swing in the opposite direction to indicate the reasons why these historically apparent foes could be considered friends of the United States given the crisis situation following the events of 9/11. Uzbekistan, representing the Central Asian region previously left unspecified, is bestowed importance because of its geographical proximity to Afghanistan and its indispensability marked by the term “critical.” Russia is constructed as being in the “front of the cheering section.” Two possible meanings of the reference to “cheering” are that Russia is satisfied to sit back and cheer while the United States does the dirty, dangerous job of assaulting the “Islamic zealots” or that Russia is relegated to the act of cheering because clearly the United States is the sole talented, influential player in world politics. There is a notable discursive “assault” on Islam and those who are assumed to be fanatically committed to Islam’s dictum.

The United Nations’ commitment to support the United States is also constructed to seem insincere and questionable. The metaphor used to describe the U.N.’s “unceasing declarations of
support” is echo. An echo is not an original sound; it is a repetition of a sound by reflection of the sounds emitted somewhere else by someone or something else. The metaphor indicates that the support provided by the U.N. is only a repetition by a mindless imitator, an organization that cannot think on its own and thus can only echo support that actually originates from particular U.N. members, like Sudan or Syria. The final part of this sentence then goes on to qualify that Sudan and Syria are countries that “harbor terrorists,” terrorists just like the ones who brought down the twin towers. And, thus, these newfound U.S. friends severely lack credibility.

In effect, the binaries constructed in this discourse corroborate that while the U.N. and its member nations do not deserve to be friends with the United States, they are being considered in that light only for political reasons. The discursive step forward by the U.N. and its member nations from foes to friends is followed immediately by shifting three steps backwards to where they started from or even worse. The second part of the discourse turns from condescension to expediency by very carefully pointing out how the United States is compelled to offer a hand of friendship to political groups that would otherwise not have made its list of friends. As the discourse runs its course, it helps shape ideas and images about the U.N. members - Uzbekistan as a means to an end, Russia as an opportunistic, cheering child, and the U.N. as a mindless parrot and a needless forum for all kinds of useless and dangerous member nations.

However, the discourse in this text also offers a critique of the U.S. government and its representations of nation-states from across the world. The discourse has a satirical undertone where the NYT opens up the possibility for a different interpretation of the text. That the realignments that the U.S. government was engineering were clearly to garner support for its war against terrorism and not for a new-found love and understanding of other nations is made clear through the discourse.
This article appeared in the news analysis section of *The New York Times* shortly after the 9/11 attacks. Although written by an NYT journalist and not regarded as an opinion piece, the information appearing in this section is NYT’s analysis of news that has appeared in the newspaper the previous week. What appears in this article, while not labeled an opinion, is nevertheless NYT’s attempt at sense-making, a systematic and discursive attempt to theorize about U.S. relations with the U.N. and its member nations during times of crisis. As such, it is a window into the presuppositions embedded in NYT’s news making.

The discursive representations of the U.N., however, does a volte face in the next article published just a few weeks after the one by Schmemann (2001b). Here, the U.N. is given importance and Pakistan is referenced as an “indispensable ally” (―Musharraf, the indispensable ally, grows more confident,” Burns, 2001), meaning a friend without whom the United States cannot function during the war in Afghanistan immediately following the 9/11 attacks. The headline positions Musharraf, then Pakistani president, to represent Pakistan in this instance.

The shifting nature of the discourse of an “indispensable ally” and the discursive tone of warning in the headline are accomplished by the descriptions and adjectives offered in the first paragraph of this article.

For a man ruling a nation of 140 million Muslims, who is torn between a reluctant military alliance with the United States and Islamic militants who almost daily urge his overthrow for siding with “infidels,” Pakistan's president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, is radiating an impressive calm…. (first paragraph)
He will visit New York to address the United Nations General Assembly, and to see at first hand the destruction the terrorists wrought at the World Trade Center. (third paragraph) (Burns, 2001) (emphasis added)

The analysis of this text first reveals the U.N. as the site of an alliance between Pakistan and the United States. The Pakistani president was addressing the U.N. General Assembly in a show of support to the United States made possible by the crisis situation following the 9/11 attacks and the impending U.S.-led war in Afghanistan. This discourse constructs the U.N. forum as
important and Pakistan as worthy of being embraced in light of the crisis. Second, even before the circumstances of the alliance are brought forward, there are implications in this paragraph that belie and undercut Pakistan’s positive label as an ally as indicated in the headline. The declaration in the very first sentence that Pakistan is a “nation of 140 million Muslims” is a strategic one given that the 9/11 attacks were represented throughout the U.S. as the work of Muslim extremists. The deliberate allusion to the primary religious belief of the people of Pakistan as the same as that of the people who brought down the twin towers and destroyed so many lives works to construct strategic fear and distrust of Pakistan in this discourse. So, even if the headline announces Pakistan as an “indispensable ally,” the first paragraph deftly shifts the focus to distrust and fear, characteristics usually associated with that of an enemy, a foe. Third, Pakistan’s military alliance with the United States is termed “reluctant,” meaning Muslims do not side with the United States unless there are extenuating circumstances. The word also serves the function of showing that while the United States is extending an offer of friendship, Pakistan is unwilling to accept the offer because it distrusts the United States.

The “Islamic militants” who “daily urge his [Musharraf’s] overthrow” do so because of his cooperation with the “‘infidels,’” the non-believers in Islam, meaning the United States. The word “militant” works to evoke imagery of combative and aggressive groups whose extreme beliefs and ideologies are far removed from calm and civilized groups. And since the stance to “overthrow” Musharraf comes from such groups, it is automatically discredited and dismissed through this discourse. Objections to Musharraf’s siding with “‘infidels,’” therefore, is not valid or worthy of U.S. concern. Moreover, the emphasis placed on the word “‘infidels’” mocks and ridicules the “militants’” views and beliefs that are contemptuous of the United States. To accentuate the absurdity and unlikelihood of someone in Musharraf’s place being calm under
such circumstances, the text describes the Pakistani president as “radiating impressive calm.”
The image of a beaming simpleton, mindless to impending disaster, is evoked. Finally, the
discourse attempts to directly establish a connection between Muslims from Pakistan or
anywhere in the world with the events of 9/11 and to reiterate once again how reprehensible the
acts of 9/11 were. By showing the Pakistani president “first hand the destruction the terrorists
wrought at the World Trade Center,” the connection is made prominent and rubbed in the face of
Musharraf.

This shifting nature of discourse accomplishes the task of vilifying Pakistan, Muslims
and Islam despite initial indications of the possibility of friendship with the United States. There
is no kind word or hand of friendship for Islam and, in turn, its followers. The United Nations on
the other hand is given importance and constructed as a positive forum where different political
ideologies have a place to negotiate. Yet, even in this passing position of utility, the U.N.’s
function is in the service of the United States.

In contrast to these examples, in which the headlines seemingly represented the U.N. and
its member nations as friends, other headlines represented these political groups as foes and
“others.” Frequent headlines employ terminology such as “enemy” (“Enemy of my enemy,”
Safire, 2001), “skeptics” (“U.S. is putting heavy pressure on France and other skeptics for a U.N.
resolution,” Weisman, 2002), “opposition” (“Opposition is deepening to a new U.N. resolution
U.S. lacks legal basis for attacks,” Barringer, 2003b), “rest of the world” (“Challenging rest of
the world with a new order,” Cohen, et. al., 2004), “others” (“U.S. asks others to pressure Iraq to
be inclusive,” Weisman, 2005a), and “obstacle” (“U.S. hits obstacle to action by U.N. on North
Korea,” Hoge, 2006) that construct representations of alienation, exclusion and “othering” for the U.N. and its member nations. The word “enemy” is used to signify people/groups who feel hatred toward other subjects/people/groups. In a world torn by strife, and in times of conflict, hatred and enmity have a very negative connotation of people/groups not desiring of peace. These headlines, then, simultaneously distance the described enemies from U.S. beliefs and values and position the United States as an enemy of groups harboring hatred and opposing peace. Others, like France, are called “skeptics,” and their perennial doubt and distrust toward the United States discursively pushes them into the realm of the “other.” The United States is represented as “othering” France individually, when United States as a member of the U.N. backs a resolution on going to war in Iraq at the U.N. forum. The United States is also represented as “othering” the entire U.N. organization, including its administration and most of its member nations, (“The failuremongers,” Safire, 2003b) with the United States discursively separated from such an “othered” U.N. At such instances, the United States is represented as strong, efficient, patriarchal, ideologically superior and a cut above a weak, “bloated,” doubting U.N. bureaucracy and its plethora of childlike, immature, ideologically inferior member nations. The words in such headlines construct ideological definitions of what an enemy/foe/other is.

Language in the body of the articles is used as a tool to consistently and strategically extend the meaning of an enemy beyond the headlines. For example, following the 9/11 attacks, an op-ed piece exemplifies the discursive, veiled construction of “enemy” in representing U.N. member nations, Iran and Iraq, and simultaneous “othering” the U.N. The article is titled “Enemy of my enemy” (Safire, 2001) and begins thus: “Here is the modern corollary to a Middle Eastern proverb: The enemy of my enemy can be my enemy, too.” Here a modern, U.S. strategic version of an old Middle Eastern saying is used to construct “othered” representations of political groups.
from that very region. The repeated use of the word “enemy,” without qualifying who or what is being referenced, generates reader interest and curiosity. The diacopic use of the word “enemy”, where its repetition is broken up by one or more intervening words, strategically helps focus on and emphasize a key idea, the idea of an undefined and diffused enemy, in this instance. In the present article, the proverb is given a modern, U.S.-mediated, discursive twist that is clarified in the first two paragraphs of the body of the article. If a group (later identified as Iraq) is an enemy of another (subsequently identified as Iran) and Iraq is also my (the United States’, of course,) enemy, then the United States and Iran should become friends against common enemy Iraq. The conclusion being suggested here is put forth in the form of a syllogism and as such is meant to be an inescapable conclusion.

In this discursive construction, the shift from enemy to friend is as easy and precise as an algebraic formula, but constructed representations and relationships between groups are not a precise science. They only achieve precision as a discursive strategy that forcibly tries to stabilize meanings for political purposes. The use of the word “can,” which is a permissive verb that connotes possibility and potentiality rather than certainty, suggests that the process of enemy or friend construction requires steps to be taken by the United States and, possibly, some reward to the United States to justify its strategic and ephemeral realigned relationships with the U.N. and its member nations after the 9/11 attacks.

The phrase “enemy of my enemy” works in this article in two ways. First, if understood in the traditional Middle Eastern way, then Iran is an enemy of the United States as has historically been the case between these two nations. Second, if the modern corollary is to be applied, Iran could be considered a friend to the United States against their common enemy Iraq.
In the body of the article, the discursive logic of the political elite to bring the U.N. and different U.N. member nations into the fold of conditional friendship or enmity is clarified further.

Does that enmity of our enemies make Iran our friend? You might deduce that from the warm handshake extended to Iran's foreign minister by Secretary of State Colin Powell at the U.N. last week, the first such contact since the mass kidnapping at our Tehran embassy in 1979. Or from Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld when asked by Bob Schieffer of CBS about Iranian liaison with U.S. forces in Afghanistan: "You're going to see new relationships coming out all across the globe." (Safire, 2001) (emphasis added)

This text constructs the U.N. as an incidental backdrop, an almost non-existent, non-influential political body to be used as a redundant site for powerful nations to conduct autonomous decisions, as a site of questionable and self-serving acts of pseudo-friendship, as it were. The context that is strategically omitted in this representation of the U.N. is that had it not been for the function, negotiations and processes of the U.N. as an international forum, Iran’s foreign minister and Secretary of State Colin Powell might not have had the opportunity to meet for diplomatic talks. The importance of the meeting is represented in the reference of this meeting as the “first” between the two countries since 1979. Any behind-the-scenes U.N. diplomatic negotiations to make this meeting possible are discursively erased. Iran is represented both as an enemy and a friend, “othered” and embraced in the same sentence. It is important to note that the mentioning of the U.N. in this context is not incidental. The U.N. is mentioned in the context of references to enemies of the United States like Iran or Iraq once again reinforcing the strategic and shifting nature of discourse of enemy construction of the U.N.

The reference to Iran’s hand in the “mass kidnapping at our Tehran embassy” serves as a strategic reminder of Iran’s basic negative political and ideological bent. In contrast, the “warm handshake” extended by the United States to even these “bad” political adversaries constructs a benevolent, understanding representation of the United States. The contrast between the United States and Iran is represented as antithetical. While it is not possible to measure the warmth of the U.S handshake, the metaphor does a more than adequate job of constructing the U.S.
representation as benign, sincere and cordial in a way that naturalizes the strategic definition of a friend.

There is also evidence of subtle intertextuality in play through the reference to an interview with another media outlet, CBS, in the representation of the U.S. point of view about who should be a U.S. enemy. First, the CBS interview is itself a representation through the discursive process of Bob Schieffer’s interview. The CBS interview is a different genre than that of the NYT op-ed. And then, a quote from that interview is used to corroborate examples of enemy building in this article. Second, the context of the previous interview is strategically omitted and nothing is known about what else was mentioned in that interview. The use of the quote in this instance is only a partial representation of what was said in another interview and thus a strategic intertextual use.

Another aspect of the shifting nature of discourse representing the U.N. and many of its member nations is that differing labels perform different discursive functions. Examples of naming and “othering” through the labels in headlines are: “Islamists” (AP, 2006), “Muslim lands” (Barringer, 2003a), “Mideast sides” (Cowell, 2003), “Asian” (Dao, 2003), “Europeans” (Marquis, 2003), “Russia and West” (Sciolino, 2006), “isolate France” (Weisman, 2003), “West” (Weisman, 2005c), “others” (Weisman, 2005a), and “small countries” (Zeller, 2003). These nomenclatures are all strategic. However, what is intriguing is that they are not stable. Instead, they construct opposing representations of the same group depending on discursive contexts. So, while France is part of Europe and, thus, the West, there is a move to isolate it. And while Russia is part of Asia it is considered a part of the “West.” Alternately, Russia is pushed away from being a part of the “West” in a clear move – “Russia and West.” And again, in other texts Russia’s possible membership in “Asia” is unclear.
This associative/geographic ambiguity extends to U.N. member nations and which of them are embraced in friendship and which alienated. Other representations are so vague that many political groups can fit into the labels – “Mideast sides,” “small countries,” “Muslim lands,” “Islamists,” and “others.” As with the previous example, Pakistan fits into the category of a small country (compared to the United States), a Muslim land with Islamists populating the country and an “other.” But, Pakistan is tentatively embraced by the United States as an “indispensable ally” (Burns, 2001). Iran fits into all the categories Pakistan fits into and the category of “Mideast sides.”

This concurrent discursive nearing and pushing away of various political groups at various moments of particular conflicts suggests a more complex redefinition of Said’s (2003) concept of the West and the “others.” Who is part of the West and who is the “other” is blurred again and again for political reasons. Nations shift in and out of the two dichotomous categories, and the failure to name specific political groups as members of these labels also ensures discursive dismissal.

The analysis of two articles, one titled “America and the U.N., together again?” (Boot, 2003) and the other titled “U.S. and U.N. are once again the odd couple over Iraq” (Hoge, 2004c), reveals the shifting focus of the discourse from labeling the U.N. as a friend to a foe even more clearly. Moreover, U.S. ideological dominance over the U.N. and discursive production of the U.S. state is also revealed. The article by Boot (2003) is an op-ed piece meaning it is a NYT sanctioned opinion piece. In this article, Boot (2003) repeatedly endorses America’s unilateral action in waging war against Iraq.

It is easy to see why conservatives are suspicious of the United Nations. Any organization whose human rights commission could be headed by Libya hardly deserves the adulation that it receives in some quarters. America will never cede to the Security Council the exclusive authority to make decisions of war or peace. Nor would any other major nation….
There was nothing wrong with President Bush's decision to invade Iraq without United Nations blessing. (Boot, 2003) (emphasis added)

First and foremost, in this discourse, it is implied that the conservative ideologies of America are privileged over the opinions of those who bestow adulation on an undeserving U.N. In fact, U.S. ideological dominance in the U.N. Security Council is explicitly announced in this discourse where America never needs to “cede” power or surrender its authority to a forum like that of the U.N. Security Council. The discourse justifies U.S. unilateral war against Iraq, a war “without” U.N. blessing, because the U.S. has the power and the vision to do what is necessary despite the opposition of most U.N. members and, especially, members of the U.N. Security Council, like Russia and France. What is omitted in this naturalizing discourse of U.S. omnipotence is that the United States can force its will on the U.N. Security Council only because of its economic and military dominance.

The last paragraph of this article provides a very crucial twist to the discourse. “The reality is that the United Nations, while hardly a panacea, has its uses, especially in a place like Liberia where America has no intention of taking on the long-term task of nation-building” (Boot, 2003). Not only does this sentence clearly dismiss the moral position of the United Nations in light of the fact that Libya was heading its human rights commission, a red herring fallacy in the argument, the article marginalizes the U.N. further as a tool for addressing problems too trivial or irrelevant to warrant U.S. attention. As if the overwhelmingly negative representation of the U.N. was not enough, the discourse provides a patriarchal consolation for the U.N. and its role in world politics by suggesting that it can serve as subservient assistant to the U.S. agenda with regard to world conflict situations. The discourse also clarifies that the United States, with its dominant self-aggrandizing discourses of freedom and democracy, cannot
be bothered to take on nation-building exercise for countries like Liberia that, possibly, do not serve either its military or its economic interests.

The article by Hoge (2004c), which appeared as a regular news item, raises concerns about U.N. reluctance to send staff members to Iraq to help with general reconstruction and preparation for Iraqi elections. The article begins with the following paragraph that demonstrates again how the U.N. and its actions are represented with immense criticism, constructing the U.N. as being inferior, lazy and burdensome in contrast to mighty nations like the United States.

Secretary General Kofi Annan's reluctance to commit staff members to Iraq in large numbers and a series of comments he has made about the war have strained relations with the Bush administration and left many Americans bewildered, according to both supporters and critics of the United Nations. (Hoge, 2004c)

The discourse strategically omits the “comments” that the then Secretary General might have made and focuses on his “reluctance” to commit staff members “in large numbers.” The number of staff members needed is left unspecified in this discourse. The “many” Americans, who are left greatly perplexed and “bewildered” by this U.N. action represented by Dr. Annan’s decision not to commit a sufficiently large number of U.N. staff members, are not given any background about the historic political disagreement between these two groups, the United States and the United Nations, with regard to the war in Iraq. Taken out of context, this U.N. action seems illogical, thoughtless and uncooperative. Moreover, the discourse is based on the presumption that the “many” Americans are even remotely interested about the goings-on at the U.N. forum. The discourse represents the United States as desperately trying to find something positive about the U.N. so that the organization and its members and processes can be befriended. But, actions such as the one mentioned in this discourse make it very difficult for the United States to force that friendship or consider the U.N. worthy in any way. Instead, such actions only work to “strain” the relationship further. This discourse is, once again, an exercise in the construction of
foe and in the construction of the United States as righteously trying hard to work with imperfect groups like the U.N.

The representation of the U.N. and its members in this section of the findings chapter is almost reminiscent of a game of tug-of-war. The two opposing positions discussed in this section, namely friendship and enmity, are two faces of the mirror that are used strategically in media discourse to achieve particular U.S. political goals like ideological ascendance, production of the positive U.S. state and negative or confused “other” identity for the United Nations and many of its member nations. The discourses function to construct several representations of the U.N. at the same time. Sometimes the discourse seems to indicate that the U.N. or a particular U.N. member nation has all the desirable qualities to enhance its status to that of a “friend” of the United States. At the same time, there are indications that this status is contingent, is strategic and is certainly not perennial. There are always discursive indications that the status of friendship with the United States is a privileged one and that privilege cannot be taken for granted.

The discourses also construct a position of leadership for the United States simultaneously. The United States is represented as a positive and strong influence on world politics and as a patriarchal entity that has the power to decide which group should have the status of a “friend” or a “foe,” which group should be entertained, and which group should be dismissed. Throughout the discourses, the United States remains the subject, whose agency determines the roles of the others, the master who manipulates the strings of the other puppet nations and the U.N. itself.

Conflict situations are used as a tool to construct particular discursive representations of the United States and the U.N. The conflicts themselves are constructed discursively as they go
through multiple, mediated representations. What necessitated a conflict, how it happened and events following its aftermath go through discursive shaping in the media with the flow of time. Within the discourse of conflict, other discourses form - discourses that construct represent international political entities. The war in Iraq is used to represent the United States as a strong leader and the U.N. as weak and indecisive. The same war is used to construct Iraq and Iran as enemies of the United States, and the war in Afghanistan is used to construct Pakistan as a friend of the United States.

Overall, this section provides evidence of strategic relationship building by labeling the U.N. and its members as friends or foes with respect to the United States. This section also demonstrates how various media discursive strategies are used to construct situations of political alienation of the United Nations. Representations of the U.N. and its member nations as either friends or foes of the United States slide and shift as a function of the economic, political and military power of the United States constructed by and through U.S. media discourse. These representations never reach closure, remaining pliable and open to the discretion of the dominant political ideologies of the United States and its media. The analysis in the next section reveals conflict-time blame assignment between the United States and the United Nations and how this discursive shifting blame represents the conflict resolution participants.

*Shifting blame – Conflict-time assignment of blame between the United States and the U.N.*

In this category, we find evidence in media text that demonstrates how blame is assigned among the United States, the United Nations and several U.N. member nations during times of global conflict. To blame is to hold a person/ group/ institution responsible for a fault or error. It also means condemnation or censuring of the person/ group/ institution responsible for a fault or
error. The category name, *Shifting blame*, indicates that there is evidence in the text of frequently changing discursive positions with regard to who is being blamed through representation, who is being absolved, and who is represented as the one blaming “others.”

The shifting nature of the blaming process as represented in *The New York Times* articles being explored in this inquiry contributes to our understanding and critique of the United States’ relationship with the United Nations during times of conflict in three ways. First, through discourses of blame assignment particular representations of the United States, the United Nations and several other U.N. members become prominent and that need to be critically examined. Second, scrutiny of the blaming process exposes processes of “othering” working through the discursive process of blame assignment. Third, the discursive blaming process reveals underlying, politically motivated ideological struggles being negotiated between the United States and the United Nations in the context of conflicts and outcomes of conflicts.

In the examination of blaming processes among the United States, the United Nations and several U.N. member nations, the headlines function as a sieve through which strategic discourses flow. The headlines have a significant role in explicit as well as implicit blame assignment. Some headlines make explicit reference to the U.N. and member nations when blame is discursively directed towards them. For example, representative headlines include, “More *Americans* now faulting U.N. on Iraq” (Nagourney & Elder, 2003), “*U.S. overseer* blames sanctions by U.N. for Iraqi gas shortages” (Sachs, 2003), and “*Iraq makes U.N. seem ‘foolish,’* Bush asserts” (Sanger, 2002a). These headlines represent “*Americans,*” “*U.S. overseer,***” and “*Bush*” as occupying a position of power that enables them to fault the U.N. as if it was a petulant child in need of a reprimand. All three words, “*Americans,*” “*U.S. overseer,***” and “*Bush*” are used to represent the United States. However, in all three headlines, the U.N.
occupies the position of the one being blamed without the respite of any alternate term to replace its singular, fixed representatio as the blameworthy group. The repetition of “U.N.” works to singularly implicate as well as fix the blame on it. Whether the reason is as vague as a passing mention of “on Iraq” or the somewhat more specific “sanctions by U.N.” supposedly leading to “Iraqi gas shortages,” the discourse of blame is unwavering in its target, the U.N.

The first headline indicates that while there could have been a doubt earlier as to who is to blame “on Iraq,” more “Americans” have “now” found the truth about who to blame, the “U.N.” of course. The next demonstrates that it is plain even to the “U.S. overseer” that a problem like the “Iraqi gas shortage” could have arisen due to the “sanctions by U.N.” In this headline, the discourse represents the United States as delicately separated from the representations of the U.N. although the pre-war (Iraq war of 2003) economic sanctions on Iraq had been approved by the United States acting as part of the U.N. body. But, since the headline positions the blame for the Iraqi gas shortage coming from the “U.S. overseer,” the United States stands apart from the U.N.’s decision to impose the sanctions. In fact, in the third headline, the word “Iraq” is used as a tool to establish the foolishness of the U.N. The sentence is structured in such a way that “Iraq” represents both the nation-state and the disastrous handiwork of the U.N. In the second sense of the word, Iraq is represented as a mistake, a global wrongdoing by the U.N. The choice of the word “‘foolish’” in the headline, a quote from Bush’s speech used to represent the U.N., is another example of “othering.” With the word foolish, the U.N. is represented as lacking or exhibiting a lack of sound judgment resulting from lack of good sense. This representation suggests that the U.N.’s foolishness cannot be viewed in isolation because it is foolish in comparison to the more mature, intelligent, masculine and patriarchal United States.
In the article titled “Iraq makes U.N. seem ‘foolish,’ Bush asserts” (Sanger, 2002a) published during the build-up to the Iraq war, the blame takes the form of insult and insinuation directed towards the U.N. by the use of a direct quote from Mr. Bush’s speech.

"If the United Nations doesn't have the will or the courage to disarm Saddam Hussein and if Saddam Hussein will not disarm, for the sake of peace, for the sake of freedom, the United States will lead a coalition to disarm Saddam Hussein," Mr. Bush said here at a Republican rally on the site of the former Lowry Air Force Base. His comment drew prolonged cheers, as did his statement earlier in the day, in Alamagordo, N.M., that Mr. Hussein “has made the United Nations look foolish.” (Sanger, 2002a) (emphasis added)

Blaming the U.N. for lack of “will or the courage,” Bush paints the U.N. as a weak political group too afraid to make bold choices. Included in this blame are all the member nations that did not agree to the use of force to settle the Iraq disarmament problem. Lacking of “will” on the part of the U.N. seems to indicate that the U.N., with the exception of the United States, is deliberately inclined toward indecision or a decision that is ideologically and logically opposed to the U.S. solution on Iraq, which is naturalized as reasonable. Second, lacking of “courage” indicates that the U.N. sans the United States fears danger posed by an armed Iraq and lacks the confidence to take any action thereof. The strategic use of the quote from Mr. Bush’s speech discredits the U.N. for its non-action with regard to Iraq and holds back from calling the U.N. a coward, one showing ignoble fear of danger. Continued in the quote from Mr. Bush’s speech is a contrasting representation of the United States where the United States is represented as willing to defend U.S.-defined ideologies of “peace” and “freedom” bravely, fearlessly. The United States is constructed as a leader willing to carry the burden of the rest of the world and face Iraqi danger. If other political groups were to express willingness to partake in the ideologies of “peace” and “freedom” as defined by the United States and to follow in the footsteps of big brother, the United States, then such a “coalition” of followers could be nobly led by the United States.
Bush’s invocation of “peace” and “freedom,” two themes acutely resonant with the American people after the attacks of 9/11, is strategic to begin with. Its repetition in media discourse confers legitimacy to Bush’s agenda of unilateral action and, at the same time, discredits the U.N. and its member nations as fearful and deliberately disinclined to take concrete actions against Iraq. The discourse is strategic to the extent that even though the United States is an integral part of the U.N., in this instance, the United States seems to be independent of the U.N. so that the blame is effectively Shouldered by every other member nation but the United States.

Switching from a direct quote to a description of the reaction of the crowd to Bush’s speech in the very next sentence, the discourse indicates strategic use of intertextuality. By adding that Bush’s words “drew prolonged cheers,” the discourse represents the U.N. to be in a blameworthy position and represents the crowd, presumably consisting of Americans, as agreeing with Bush’s representation of the U.N. as foolish and immature. The use of intertextuality strengthens the discourse to tilt it in favor of Bush and against the U.N., supports the ideology behind Bush’s strategy, and legitimates actions being suggested by Bush.

The paragraph ends with a derogatory remark about the U.N. made by Bush in his speech earlier in the day and is used in the article as a direct quote. “Mr. Hussein ‘has made the United Nations look foolish’,” is a presumed implication made by the then Iraqi president Saddam Hussein about the U.N. that is represented by Bush in his speech. This is Bush’s representation of what Mr. Hussein is trying to do that is, in turn, represented in the media. The processes of multiple representations that are strategic and mediated construct particular viewpoints about the U.N. and its member nations (with the exception of the United States) that they are weak, powerless, childish, afraid to take tough actions, and subjects of ridicule by inconsequential and
dangerous nations like Iraq. Once the U.N. is represented in this manner, it automatically paves the way to construct the United States as the opposite – as a strong, powerful, matured political entity that is not afraid to take tough stances against rogue nations and that is to be taken seriously at all times.

Assignment of blame for the U.N. that comes from officials holding less important positions than Mr. Bush also appears prominently in The New York Times. U.N.-bashing seems not to require the blessing of any particular high-ranking U.S. official. As long as the blame is reasonably credible, it will see the light of day. For example, in the article titled “U.S. overseer blames sanctions by U.N. for Iraqi gas shortages” (Sachs, 2003), this kind of blame assignment is explicit and evident.

Jay Garner, the former lieutenant general who has been in Iraq for nearly a month with a mandate to get the country running again, blamed United Nations sanctions today for the gasoline shortages that have prompted Iraqi anger at the American occupation forces here. (Sachs, 2003) (emphasis added)

The blame comes from a “former lieutenant general” in the U.S. Army, a position important to the U.S. government and a man with the job to stop and reverse the lawlessness in Iraq. At the time of the allegation, this U.S. overseer was “nearly” completing a month of stay in Iraq. With the U.S.-led war, the text seems to suggest that Iraq has come to a standstill and needs the help of an experienced U.S. official to “get the country running again.” In this paragraph there is an overt expression of blame against the U.N. – “blamed United Nations sanctions.” However, what follows is a discursive twist away from reference to the war. Instead, the discourse indicates that the gasoline shortage “prompted Iraqi anger at the American occupation forces.” That the war itself could provoke Iraqi anger is omitted. It is important to recall that, according to earlier media representations, the war was waged without the U.N. Security Council approval. At that time, the Security Council was rendered irrelevant both by U.S. foreign policies and media
representations. But, the discourse here seems to suggest that with the gasoline shortage, the U.N. should shoulder the blame for current Iraqi anger. While the U.N. is strategically left out of decision making in the instance of war, the U.N. is forcibly blamed for not lifting the sanctions that would enable Iraqi access to gasoline. It is because of the continued U.N.-sanctions that the American forces are facing the wrath of the Iraqi people. The discourse is twisted to suit the needs of the U.S. ideologies and political agenda in Iraq, and the U.N. is made the scapegoat.

In contrast, media representation of blame directed towards the United States flows in a different direction. Consider headlines that indicate that the United States is to blame for their actions during times of conflict – “Ex-U.N. inspector has harsh words for Bush” (Hoge, 2004a), “Annan rebukes U.S. for move to give its troops immunity” (Hoge, 2004b), and “U.N. chief ignites firestorm by calling Iraq war ‘illegal’” (Tyler, 2004). As we have seen in the previous example, the U.S.-overseer in Iraq, a former lieutenant general, is represented as an important figure whose allegations are to be taken seriously. But in this first headline, the very mention of an “Ex-U.N. inspector” blaming Bush for his actions seems to undermine the importance of the source and the credibility of the blame. The “harsh words,” meaning the unpleasantly coarse tone of the blame, are, after all, coming from a has-been who does not have any authority or position of power to be taken seriously. The headline also undermines the fact that this ex-U.N. inspector was leading the search for arms in Iraq for years and could be considered an expert in that regard. In the next headline, Mr. Annan’s “rebukes” seem to be the discursive focus moving the argument away from the U.S. attempt to give “its troops immunity.” The word “rebuке” evokes imagery of a person/group – in this case Mr. Annan as a representative of the U.N. – that is sharply criticizing the United States to the point of a reprimand that implicitly conveys wrongdoing by the U.S. This imagery then becomes the problem because it indicates that Mr.
Annan has the audacity to rebuke U.S. conflict-time moves. The rebuking is represented as an act of insolent heedlessness towards the U.N. member nation that is the biggest contributor to U.N. funds and on whose soil the U.N. headquarters reside.

While the headlines represent the United Nations as blaming the United States for conflict-time U.S. actions, the first few paragraphs of these articles provide U.S. justification and the discourse employs U.N. arguments to work to the U.N.’s own detriment. This reflection of blame was lacking in articles in which the United States blamed the United Nations.

In the article titled “U.N. chief ignites firestorm by calling Iraq war ‘illegal’” (Tyler, 2004), the headline uses the metaphor of a “firestorm.” This metaphor evokes a very strong imagery of devastation caused by massive conflagrations, perhaps evoking the devastation caused by U.S. firebombing during World War II and Vietnam. To represent a person as intentionally causing immense destruction is to label that person as grossly irresponsible, possibly immoral, to exaggerate the scope and reach of the person and to increase manifold the effect of the comment he makes. The subsequent text demonstrates how arguments about blame assignment can be turned on their heads through discourse to privilege the United States.

But Mr. Annan's radio interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation on Wednesday, in which he said for the first time that he believed the war was “illegal,” set off a tempest of reaction and raised questions in a number of capitals about why he had chosen that moment to adopt more muscular language about the war.

Iraqi officials are irritated by the timing of Mr. Annan’s remarks, diplomats said, as Iraq's interim government struggles to organize its first elections in the face of a tenacious insurgency. His statements will be seen as a signal of wavering international support, they said. (Tyler, 2004) (emphasis added)

Mr. Annan is represented as having reservations about the Iraq war for the “first time.” Without any reference to the previous historical context of this war, the words “first time” suggest that no such reservations were previously known to have come from Mr. Annan, or, by extension, the U.N. Yet prior media representations on the war in Iraq suggested that several U.N. members
had indeed protested America’s unilateral stance on the Iraq disarmament issue in 2003.

However, here Mr. Annan is represented as the head of an empty U.N. as a global administrative body sans its member nations. Thus, the sentence suggests that Mr. Annan’s reservations arise for the “first time,” without context or apparent support. This text discursively separates the administrative U.N., the U.N. as a forum for nations from around the world, and the U.N. as a forum distinct from and juxtaposed to the United States. The United States is discursively represented to fit into or contrast with each of these three functions of the U.N. depending on the context. The purpose of this discursive delineation between the several functions of the U.N. is strategic, mediated, ideological and political, quietly and hegemonically working through discourse.

The discourse represents Mr. Annan as being insensitive and irresponsible through his comment that the Iraq war was “illegal.” The United States is represented in Mr. Annan’s terms as a political group not playing by international rules and laws. The discourse turns Mr. Annan’s blaming of the United States to his disadvantage in this instance. The comment by Mr. Annan is represented as a sentiment that is completely new, insensitive and that goes against international perception about the war. Taken out of context and made specifically a-historic, the comment would seem to lack the flair of diplomacy. The omission of previous discourses about the legality of the war makes this comment stand out as an individual gripe directed towards the United States by Mr. Annan. The discourse, in fact, succeeds in representing Mr. Annan and, in turn, the U.N. as lacking loyalty towards the world cause in Iraq and turning into a snitch, incriminating the United States in the process. The blaming of the United States then becomes a moot point because the discourse has now turned towards how unfair such “muscular language” is in the face of the “struggles” of the new Iraqi interim government and the “tenacious insurgency” the
country is facing. The suggestive masculine metaphor used in “muscular language” is steeped with notions of intimidation and ideological violence. The Iraqi government is represented as progressing with difficulty amidst lingering but firm internal rebellion. The exaggeration, selection, omission and suggestive metaphor as evidenced here are instances in which sociocognitive processes in discourse construct micro and macro meanings from the text.

Also to be noted is that the timing of Mr. Annan’s comment seems to have annoyed “Iraqi officials” who are suddenly given importance in the discourse. Ironically, the mentioned “wavering international support” is misleading in the sense that there was very little international support of this war at the U.N. forum to begin with. Who or what is being referenced as “international” is quite difficult to deconstruct from this discourse. This discursive trend carves a specific representation of the U.N. While Mr. Annan is represented as blaming the United States for “illegitimate” actions, the content of the blame seems to be less important than Mr. Annan’s timing faux pas. Mr. Annan, as the representative of the U.N. administration, is projected in poor light that casts his remarks in shadow, turning around his original argument. His “poor timing” becomes the point of discursive focus to construct a representation of the U.N. as the irresponsible party that further complicates world conflict situations.

This is also an example of intertextuality where multiple sources are used in a way that obfuscates the origin of a discourse – “Iraqi officials are irritated by the timing of Mr. Annan's remarks, diplomats said, as Iraq's interim government struggles to organize its first elections.” It is unclear where the diplomats’ interpretation of the situation begins and ends and where the newspaper takes over the discourse. Furthermore, the discourse in this paragraph is based on what Mr. Annan said in an interview to BBC. That interview also has multiple representations of Mr. Annan’s words and views. The end product as we find it in this article has multiple layers of
discourse and issues that have gone through several rounds of representation from which only a selection of textual material is presented.

So far, the articles analyzed in this section involved either the United States blaming the United Nations at one end or the United Nations blaming the United States at the other. The discursive media trends and purposes differ strategically from article to article based on the context, the ideologies being espoused and the positioning of these two political groups with regard to particular conflict situations. In addition, other articles offer discourses of defense and discourses of acceptance of blame. Defensive discourses are the ones in which political groups are represented as justifying the causes that have led to a particular blame.

Headlines that signal discourses of defense or acceptance are “Bush, at U.N., defends policy over Iraq” (Bumiller, 2003), “Annan defends U.N. official who chided U.S.” (Hoge, 2005), “Powell calls his U.N. speech a lasting blot on his record” (Weisman, 2005b), and “U.S. defends rights record before U.N. panel in Geneva” (Wright, 2006). In the first headline, Bush is represented as defending his Iraq policy at the U.N. forum possibly because of questions raised about the legitimacy and effectiveness of the war. The headline does not mention the words Iraq war and instead mentions “policy over Iraq,” very strategically deflecting immediate negative imagery associated with war. In the second headline, Mr. Annan is represented as defending a U.N. administrative official who criticized the United States. The cause of the criticism is not mentioned here but the manner of the criticism is adequately explained. “Chided” is not only criticism but a particular way of criticizing very much akin to admonishing, reprimanding a child. The use of the word “chide” then tells us that the United Nations perceives the United States as a child in need of reprimand. This imagery is damaging to the ideological pride of the United States, which is repeatedly represented in the media as a mature, powerful, responsible
political group out to do good for the rest of the world. That the U.N. treats the United States as a child and Mr. Annan defends that action, is too contrary to conform to the image of the U.S. state constructed in the media and, hence, is quite counter-productive to a positive representation of the United Nations.

In the third headline, Mr. Powell, the ex-U.S. secretary of state who led the political offensive against Iraq in 2003, is represented as accepting blame for his speech at the U.N. forum. The severity of Mr. Powell’s admission is indicated by the words “a lasting blot,” an enduring stain on his reputation, a permanent disgrace. However, Mr. Powell’s acceptance of responsibility for his erroneous action of projecting Iraq as an imminent threat to world peace at the United Nations in 2003 is immediately followed by discourse that effectively removes the accountability from his shoulders. “He added that it was ‘devastating’ to learn later that some intelligence agents knew the information he had was unreliable but did not speak up” (Weisman, 2005b). “Some intelligence agents” is strategically vague and fails to really identify who compiled the erroneous information about Iraq and should, therefore, be accountable. The discursive construction gives Mr. Powell a route to transfer blame from himself to “some” vague “intelligence agents.” It reduces the severity of his deception to all the member nations of the United Nations and strategically protects the credibility and “innocence” of the United States.

At the same time, Mr. Powell is represented as having been “‘devastated’” when the error was revealed. This representation denies political manipulation and culpability, softens the impact of the judgment against Mr. Powell and projects him in sympathetic light. After all, human beings do make mistakes. The terrible human, economic and military costs of the U.S.-led war on the Iraqis are omitted from this discourse. Viewed in isolation, the discourse constructed around the acceptance of blame by Mr. Powell diffuses the enormity of the U.S.
“error” as it personalizes, to the solitary Mr. Powell, the acceptance of blame. The discourse constructs a confusing scenario of causation and culpability, and effective accountability is lost in the process.

When it comes to the U.N. defending its actions, the discourse constructs suspicion around the U.N.’s motives and its position is constructed as biased against the United States. This is evident in the article titled “Annan defends U.N. official who chided U.S.” (Hoge, 2005). Mr. Annan is represented as defensive with regard to U.N. criticism of U.S. methods of detention and torture post 9/11. While the criticism of the United States was made by a senior U.N. official and reported in this text, the discourse swiftly and subtly makes Mr. Annan’s stance look out of the ordinary and ultimately biased. “In an unusual instance of a secretary general’s singling out an individual envoy for critical comment, Mr. Annan said he was seeking a meeting with Mr. Bolton to make his point in person” (Hoge, 2005). The words “unusual instance” make Mr. Annan’s support for the official seem deliberately and strategically undertaken to systematically discredit the United States. The words introduce an element of distrust to the secretary general’s motive and the veracity of the U.N. employee’s sacrilegious remarks about the most powerful political group in the world, the United States. The incredulity of it all comes through this discourse with the deliberate introduction of Mr. Annan’s official designation as the secretary general of the U.N. in this sentence. It is introduced not as a mark of respect for or indicator of the importance of Mr. Annan’s diplomatic position but to cast doubt on the motive behind Mr. Annan’s action in trying to single out and defend a mere employee, whose role as a powerful figure within the U.N. is discursively erased.

These texts demonstrate that when the United States is represented as initiating the blaming process against the U.N., the blaming is explicit, it repeatedly appears in the headlines,
and it does not provide much discursive terrain for counter arguments. Irrelevant issues are introduced to produce a confusing discourse that distracts, diverts attention, and obfuscates the cause of a particular blame against the U.N. The United States is discursively separated from the representation of the United Nations. However, when the U.N. is represented as blaming the United States, the blaming is not as explicit, it may or may not be mentioned in the headlines, it is exaggerated, and it is usually accompanied by a justification/defense against the blame. In fact, the blames are discursively diffused and a strategic counter attack against the U.N. is constructed. In the rare occasion when the United States is represented as accepting blame for any of its actions in world conflict situations, even if the headlines indicate such an acceptance, much of the discourse in the article softens the effect of such admissions with sympathetic discourse and justifications.

Shifting blames between and among the United States and the U.N. in the media constructs a range of representations for the participants. The United States is predominantly positioned as the party that is brave, tough, responsible, masculine, patriarchal but human, after all. The U.N., on the other hand, is repeatedly represented as weak, irresponsible, biased, doubtful, crooked, childish, and, ultimately, illegitimate and inconsequential. Blame shifting enables a discursive positioning of the United States as a dominant political group that in turn constructs the “other,” in this case the U.N., as being inept, irresponsible and, ultimately, blameworthy. The ideological dominance of the war against Iraq and U.S. conflict-time policies with regard to treatment of prisoners and immunity of U.S. soldiers from international criminal proceedings is also evident in this section. The analysis of data continues in the next section where evidence of the shifting nature of voices of the United States and United Nations is revealed.
**Shifting voices – Shifting nature of representation of U.N. voices**

In the previous category, data analysis revealed how shifting conflict-time assignment of blame shaped the image of and viewpoint about the U.N. and the United States, facilitated discursive domination of U.S. ideologies and discursive “othering” of a non-dominant political group, the U.N.

In this category, *shifting voices*, voices are defined as traces of presence that are manifest in discourse (Van Dijk, 2008). The examination of the presence and absence of conflict-time U.N. voices in media discourse is necessitated for three main reasons. Absence and presence presuppose ideological and political negotiations in media discourse. An analysis of the shifting nature of these ideological and political negotiations reveals privileging for strategic, political purposes. Second, the intertextual nature of media discourse enables construction, maintenance and reproduction of the U.S. state through the interplay of difference in the representation of voices. Thus, analysis of data in this category helps unearth the representational politics of voices of the U.N. and the United States. Third, the analysis in this section also informs the understanding of how discourse works to privilege voices of dominant political groups in times of conflict and how such privileging works to “other” non-dominant political groups.

CDA enables analysis of presence and absence by identifying explicit as well as implicit references to voices in media text. References to the U.N. and its representatives, access to and space for U.N. arguments, U.N. quotes, U.N. sources, U.S. recognition of the U.N., U.S. support of the U.N., etc., are explicit means of representation of U.N. voices. Absence can be identified, felt and understood as implicit, contextual and discursive in nature. Absence can also be identified when only one group’s viewpoint is represented in the articles. The analysis begins
with headlines that serve as an ideological channeling tool that create conditions for absence and presence in the discourse to follow.

Immediately after the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. government was represented as seeking international support for “President Bush's campaign against terrorism” (Reuter, 2001). The U.N. and many of its member nations were being discursively courted for this international coalition that the United States wanted to build. The New York Times devoted op-ed space to the then U.N. secretary general Dr. Kofi Annan’s thoughts on the 9/11 attacks in an article titled “Fighting terrorism on a global front” (Annan, 2001). The Times coverage also focused on making a supporting case for the necessity of the U.N. in a global world in articles titled “House approves $582 million for back dues owed to U.N.” (Alvarez, 2001) and “U.S. moves to persuade Security Council to confront Iraq on arms inspections” (Preston & Purdum, 2002). The U.S. House of Representatives payment to fulfill the U.S. commitment is represented as a show of support for the U.N. as a useful and necessary political group. The payment represents an immense show of support from a world superpower to highlight the importance of the United Nations in times of global crisis and could be construed as an example for other nations to follow. While the headline mentions that this money was being paid to meet back dues, the headline does not mention whether this money would meet the entire U.S. debt to the U.N. The strategic omission of this information in the headline falsely represents the U.S. as having paid all its back dues to the U.N. In the next headline, the word “persuade” represents the U.S. as making an earnest request or plea to the U.N. Security Council to consider confronting Iraq on arms inspection. The headline is more conducive to dialogue and negotiation, indicating how the United States is appealing to the United Nations to make a decision about Iraq that is multilateral and involves
the other four Security Council members. This headline again indicates a representation of the United States as giving importance to the existence and function of the U.N. Security Council.

Mr. Annan’s op-ed piece, “Fighting terrorism on a global front” (Annan, 2001), represents an opinion, no doubt, but the very invitation to him and publication of the article gives an indication that Mr. Annan’s thoughts and voice in the matter of international terrorism were important to the NYT. The headline represents Mr. Annan as widening the problem of terrorism beyond the shores of the United States to most nations in the globe. The headline indicates that, therefore, the problem should be tackled on a “global front,” meaning it should be a concern for the whole world and not just for the United States. Mr. Annan’s opinion should not be considered in isolation here because he was then occupying the position of secretary general of the United Nations and, thus, was a representative of the world body. In that capacity, this opinion can be considered to be representative of the United Nations’ stand on terrorism at that historically specific moment. That representation and the U.N. voice become clear in the second paragraph of the article.

As the United States decides what actions it will take in defense of its citizens, and as the world comes to terms with the full implications of this calamity, the unity of Sept. 11 will be invoked, and it will be tested. I have expressed to President Bush and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani -- and to New Yorkers at services in churches, synagogues and mosques -- the complete solidarity of the United Nations with Americans in their grief. In less than 48 hours, the Security Council and the General Assembly joined me in condemning the attacks and voted to support actions taken against those responsible and states that aid them. Of this solidarity, let no one be in doubt. (Annan, 2001) (emphasis added)

Mr. Annan focuses on “unity” and “solidarity” of the U.N. with the United States after the heavy human, psychological and economic loss of the 9/11 attacks. Mr. Annan’s words have special significance to the city of New York because the headquarters of the U.N. reside there. Mr. Annan also clarifies that most U.N. member nations constituting the Security Council and the General Assembly were with him, the U.N. administration, in condemning the attacks and that all of them were willing to support the United States in fighting terrorism across the world. He
also emphasizes the sincerity and seriousness of this support by reiterating at the end of the paragraph that “no one” should doubt the intent of the U.N. support extended to the United States at that moment of crisis. The discourse of Mr. Annan sheds much positive light on the U.S.-U.N. relationship and is featured in the NYT opinion pages representing the U.N. as a voice that deserves to be heard.

In the article titled “House approves $582 million for back dues owed to U.N.” (Alvarez, 2001), senior U.S. government officials were prominently quoted as supporting the financial cause of the U.N. and criticizing the U.S for its delay in debt payment to the U.N.

"At the same time the United States is reaching out to nations from every corner of the globe, the United States remains the biggest debtor nation at the U.N.," said Representative Christopher Shays, a Connecticut Republican. "This is not only unacceptable, it is an impediment to our diplomatic efforts and clearly endangers our national security." (Alvarez, 2001) (emphasis added)

In this paragraph, Representative Shays’ direct quote is used to represent a position where the United States’ senior government officials accept that not paying U.N. dues was “unacceptable” and detrimental to U.N.-U.S. relations. In this discourse, U.N. voice is being represented through this direct quote that emphasizes the importance of supporting the U.N. financially. However, in the discourse, there is a subtle introduction of the purpose behind this seeming positive support and representation of U.N. voice. Analysis of the discourse reveals that the fulfillment of the financial commitment to the U.N. is only one tool to enhance the “diplomatic efforts” to garner international support during times of crisis. Without the international support, readily accessible through the U.N. forum, the United States is isolated in a dangerous world and that isolation, in turn, is risky and hazardous to U.S. “national security.”

The financial issue is touched upon again in the article titled “U.N. requires members to act against terror” (Schmemann, 2001a), but, more importantly, this article connects the representation of the U.N. voice and strategic political and ideological purpose and negotiation
behind such representation. The headline suggests that the U.N. is an important world political body with the authority to “require,” a word just short of meaning demand, its member nations to act against terror. The headline indicates that the U.N.’s voice carries weight to the degree that when a decision is arrived at multilaterally, it can oblige its members to uphold the principles of that decision and act accordingly. In the article that follows this headline, there is, however, a clear indication that while the U.N. voice should be given importance by the United States, the importance could be given without making it seem a permanent act.

A perceived neglect of the United Nations has long been criticized around the world and, under the Bush administration, has been seen as part of a drift toward unilateralism. But in the wake of the Sept. 11 attack, the United States accelerated the payment of part of its arrears to the United Nations, and the administration appears to have taken a revised view of its importance. (Schmemann, 2001a) (emphasis added)

This text gives particular recognition to the U.N. as it references longstanding worldwide criticism of U.S. “neglect” of the U.N. The discourse opens the possibility for the interpretation that the relationship might be more cordial in actuality. So, although there is acknowledgement that the United States is at the receiving end of criticism for their unsupportive stance towards the U.N., there is an immediate introduction of doubt about the whole issue of “neglect” by the use of the word “perceive.” Second, the discourse also suggests that U.S. neglect of the U.N. “has been seen” as a move towards taking global actions in its own hands, unilaterally. Again, in the discourse there is strategic mention that this move towards one-sided U.S. action in world political and conflict situations is only “seen” as such and may not actually be the case. Third, the discourse indicates that with the attacks of 9/11 there is an imperative in acknowledging the importance of the U.N. since it is an established forum that brings together nations from all over the world. This indication is inherently problematic because it then seems that the U.N. voice is only a conditional tool for the U.S. agenda. The principles on which this world body was established and its current processes do not otherwise need any “revised view” from the United
States except in situations where the United States needs to use the establishment for its own political goals. Even the “revised view” is contingent because it only “appears” so and is not represented as a phenomenon that necessarily exists.

The exact purpose for which the U.N. is given voice appears in the same article (Schmemann, 2001a) that specifies the political and ideological needs of the United States from the United Nations forum.

The United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted an American-sponsored resolution this evening that would oblige all 189 member states to crack down on the financing, training and movement of terrorists, and to cooperate in any campaign against them, including one that involves the use of force…. Diplomats said all members agreed on the resolution virtually from the outset, and the only discussion was about legal technicalities. The agreement, the diplomats said, reflected the broad support that had arisen in the United Nations and around the world for a crackdown on terrorism. (Schmemann, 2001a) (emphasis added)

These two paragraphs represent the U.N. voice through the representation of U.S. ideologies and needs. The discourse suggests that recognition of the U.N. came at a cost. The recognition was contingent upon the U.N. Security Council “unanimously” agreeing to a U.S.-initiated and proposed resolution that would, ultimately, facilitate unilateral use of force against nations harboring terrorists. The discourse constructs a representation of the U.N. voice as at one with that of the United States. But on close inspection the discourse is much more normative than any “unanimous” show of support for the “American-sponsored resolution.” After all, the resolution would “oblige,” in a way force, the “cooperation” of the U.N. member nations to curb terrorism with means “including the use of force.” The use of force seems to take precedence and has a discursive focus on it that gives it an aura of importance and that limits the function of the United Nations to diplomatic negotiations and broadens the scope of American military intervention in conflicts. The “broad support” mentioned in this paragraph is too vague to really quantify the number of nations supporting the United States initiatives or qualify the kind of support it was receiving. The words imprecisely represent “support” at the U.N. administration and in the
world. On the one hand, the discourse suggests that the U.N. voice has the power and inclination to support the U.S. initiatives. Simultaneously woven through the discourse is a strong strain suggesting otherwise. In the juxtaposition of the representations of these two competing powerful voices at a time of conflict, the discursive scale tilts ever so slightly but unmistakably toward the U.S. position. It suggests that, after all, the United States holds the power to sway support towards its position, using the representation of the United Nations voice as a tool, a mouthpiece in the process. This is a strategic shifting of voices.

The strategic shifting of voices happens repeatedly across issues and conflicts over the period of time within which this inquiry is set. For example, late in 2002, the U.S. was seeking U.N. Security Council agreement in branding North Korea’s nuclear ambitions a violation of the global Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. In an article titled, “Bush aides back effort for U.N. denunciation of North Korea” (Sanger, 2002b), the headline represents the U.N. voice as denouncing North Korea mainly because the United States constructs the North Korean issue as an international issue. So, although the U.N. voice seems present and active, it really is there as a mechanism for U.S. voice to be heard and privileged. The second paragraph of the article clarifies this process further.

In turning to the Security Council, which may seek to impose penalties, administration officials acknowledged that they were trying to counter North Korea's effort to increase pressure on the West. They were also trying to cast the issue as North Korea's international defiance, rather than a confrontation between Pyongyang and Washington. (Sanger, 2002b) (emphasis added)

The discourse represents the United States as framing the North Korean issue in its own terms as “international defiance” rather than a bi-lateral issue between the two countries. The other members of the Security Council are then represented as pushed by the United States into taking action against North Korea. The text presents an unapologetic admission of political manipulation at the behest of the United States that subjugates and bends the voice and power of
the members of the U.N. Security Council. It is important to note that within the U.N. system, the Security Council--made up of Russia, China, France, Britain and the United States as permanent members--exists to signify that all U.N. members are not equal. The shifting nature of representation of voices as demonstrated in the analysis so far further extends this unequal power relations between and among the Security Council members. The United States discursively emerges through media representation as first among equals even within the select few that make up the U.N. Security Council.

The shifting nature of representation of voices contributes to the construction of particular image of the United States as well as the U.N. Already the media discourse constructs the United States as powerful, as a peacemaker, as a big brother able to manipulate the moves of others. At the same time, the U.N. is constructed as easily subjugated and, at best, a tool for the United States in times of crisis. Other U.N. representations emerge in the article titled “Annan presses Bush to avoid a rush to war” (Tyler, 2002). In this headline, the word “presses” indicates how Mr. Annan, as the voice of the U.N., tries to influence Mr. Bush with regard to his approach to war with Iraq. The text imbues value in the voice of the U.N. Secretary General. However, the discourse moves immediately to dampen the U.N. credibility established by the headline.

After meeting with President Bush, Mr. Annan urged the White House to be “a bit patient” against any rush toward military action. If it comes, he added, military action would have to be based on credible evidence of Iraq's obstruction, and not a “flimsy” excuse to go to war. (Tyler, 2002) (emphasis added)

The orphan quotes in this paragraph, “‘a bit patient’” and “‘flimsy’” can be understood using Hall’s (1992) classic use of the terms ‘splitting’ or ‘dualism’ within the theoretical framework of West/Rest discourse. The first quote, “a bit patient,” presented as Mr. Annan’s suggestion to the U.S. government with regard to the Iraq crisis, has an underlying tone of mockery and ridicule. While Mr. Annan earnestly advocates patience on the part of the United States in dealing with
the Iraq situation, the discursive representation ridicules the very idea of patience and those who suggest it. The second quote, “flimsy”, has a similar split characteristic. It suggests incredulity that anyone could suspect the reason to go to war could be flimsy. The use of the quotation performs the dual function of indicating a direct quote and representing the meaning of the words as contested. Taken out of the original text of Mr. Annan’s message, these quotes, in a way, work to discredit his suggestions for restraint and better reasoning for war. In other words, the quotes are used discursively in representing shifting voices, in turn, shaping the U.N. image. While Mr. Annan’s voice is being represented, it is represented as doubtful, a subject of mockery, an irrelevant point of view, as someone with the audacity to suggest anything to the United States. All of these representations result from and enact the underlying process of “othering” of voices of the U.N. The juxtaposition of opposing arguments and the various representations of voices seem always to have this underlying hegemonic ideological subtext – that, ultimately, the world’s most powerful nation is the main character in the political field. Every other entity should be mindful of its presence.

The process of “othering” is accentuated in the discursive struggle for representation of the U.N. voice, or, rather, the absence of the U.N. voice in representation. In 2004, the debate raged at the U.N. with regard to relief efforts to the Darfur region of Sudan where Sudanese government-sponsored Arab militia, known as Janjaweed, were accused of terrorizing darker-skinned Africans. The United States was represented as taking a tough stand against the Sudanese government in the NYT coverage. As a result, when voting on a U.S.-backed “resolution denouncing human rights violation in Sudan” (Hoge, 2004d) was postponed by the U.N. General Assembly in November 2004, an article criticizing this action appeared in The New York Times with the headline “Danforth faults U.N. assembly on Sudan ruling” (Hoge, 2004d).
John C. Danforth, the then U. S. ambassador to the United Nations, was quoted generously throughout the article. Notably absent was any counter argument from any member nations of the U.N. or any U.N. officials with regard to the causes for the delay of the vote. The article is peppered with quotes from Mr. Danforth and U.S. initiatives with regard to the Sudan issue. It does not mention any other initiatives by other member nations, giving the impression of inactivity and lack of concern from them. Not only are U.N. voice(s) absent, abundant criticism against the U.N. is demonstrated by the first and last paragraphs of the article.

John C. Danforth, the United States ambassador, assailed the General Assembly on Tuesday, saying its decision to avoid voting on a resolution denouncing human rights violations in Sudan called into question the purpose of the Assembly. (first paragraph) (Hoge, 2004d) (emphasis added)

"It's going to be inaction, it's going to be condoning atrocities, it's going to be condoning the status quo, it's going to be failure to support the African Union, it's going to be failure to support the peace process, and most importantly it's going to be failure to support the people of Sudan, who are suffering terribly and have suffered for a very long time," he said. "And the message from the General Assembly, is very simple and it is, 'You may be suffering, but we can't be bothered.'" (last paragraph) (Hoge, 2004d) (emphasis added)

The absence of the U.N. voice is telling because the one-sided representation of the U.S. voice paves the way for the construction of an overwhelmingly negative image of the U.N. providing practically no reason for the postponement of the U.N. General Assembly vote. The use of the word “avoid” evokes an image of an irresponsible person/group trying to wriggle out of any job that entails accountability and action. And this sense of irresponsibility is constructed through the representation of Danforth’s voice as the one with the power to “assail” and violently attack the U.N. verbally. Danforth is also represented as doubting the purpose and integrity of the U.N. General Assembly with no representation of counter arguments from the U.N. The barrage of negative ascriptions directed toward the U.N. in the last paragraph of the article is not for the faint hearted. The U.N. is represented in Mr. Danforth’s words as inactive, irresponsible, tolerant of atrocities, afraid of unknown powers, afraid to help people in need, afraid to uphold the need for peace, and, overall, not caring about the fate of the Sudanese. The representation is too
damaging to the U.N. and the negativity constructed in the discourse are too many to overcome especially when there is a strategic absence of representation of the U.N. voice. This discourse constructs an insurmountable discursive distance between the United States and the United Nations and forces the public, mediated “othering” of the U.N.

Further evidence of the unequal and shifting nature of representation of U.N. voice can be found in the article titled “Security Council agrees to send troops to Darfur” (Brinkley, 2006). Despite the fact that the resolution to send troops was an initiative of the United States at the Security Council, the U.S. government very categorically refused to send any troops of its own to Darfur as part of the U.N. force.

The Sudanese government opposes United Nations troops in Darfur, and United Nations officials say it will not be easy to persuade member nations to contribute troops for the new Darfur force. The United States has no intention of sending American combat troops, officials said. (Brinkley, 2006) (emphasis added)

The words, “has no intention” (Brinkley, 2006), bring to the forefront the notion that although the success of the motion is attributed to the United States, the need to be a part of the implementation lies totally at its whim. As compared to the earlier article titled “Danforth faults U.N. assembly on Sudan ruling” (Hoge, 2004d), which mentioned many negative reasons why the voting for a U.S.-backed motion should not have been postponed by the U.N., the current article does not take the same discursive route by questioning the U.S. move to not send troops to Sudan. The article does not equitably represent the U.N. voice of frustration at U.S. lack of participation in a U.N. resolution approved by many other nations around the world. It does not represent any voices from within the U.N. questioning U.S. non-participation in building the U.N. force. The differential treatment in the representation of voices further alienates and “others” the U.N.

The articles analyzed in this category show how mediated communication repeatedly
constructs a discursive “regime” through which political voices are inequitably represented. Absences and presences, discourses of “othering”, duality or splitting of discourses, binaries and polarities – all of these flow through media discourses representing the voices of the United Nations and the United States. Post 9/11 conflict situations brought about forcible historical moments in which dominant ideological discourses were revealed through the representation of the U.S. voice. The U.N. voice is represented as shifting within the ideological boundaries defined by the dominant U.S. voice. The discursive struggle for representation of voices, especially during conflict situations, makes the mediated process hegemonic and tortuous, with the NYT itself emerging as a dominant player at times. The process of “othering” of the U.N. continues through the representation of voices. In fact, the process seems to be taking an alarming hold of the discourses consistently, systematically and strategically. The process enables devastating representation of the U.N.

The next category, *Delegitimization of the United Nations through opinion pieces*, analyzes NYT opinion pieces in order to examine how the discourses of social elites (authors of the opinion pieces) in mediated communication differ, if at all, from news discourse, what representations of the U.N. are being constructed in the opinion pieces and how these representations are being constructed. The examination will also extend to processes of “othering” in this discourse.

*Delegitimization of the U.N. through opinion pieces*

The previous three sections in this chapter focused mainly on news articles that construct pseudo-fact based representations of the U.N. Such texts are pseudo-fact based mainly because the texts adopt the position of facticity while the events and groups represented are, at the least, a
degree removed from the entirety of all the possibilities of events and groups. This level of abstraction is an inherent part of the process of representation in news discourse.

In this section opinion pieces - editorials and op-eds - of The New York Times from the dataset of this inquiry are analyzed. Editorials are written by individual New York Times editorial board members and, to the reader, reflect the opinions of the Times editorial board. The op-ed pieces feature opinion pieces written by outside contributors and The Times’s own team of columnists (The New York Times, 2009). While the editorials are deemed to be the authoritative voice of the Times and appear as anonymous pieces, the op-eds are spaces for diverse opinions and wider range of expressions by social elites, albeit chosen or invited to be published by the NYT. Although these two kinds of opinions – editorials and op-eds – have different functions, together they still represent the NYT’s authoritative position on issues, events and groups.

Three main reasons necessitated this section. First, during purposive data selection, the opinion pieces stood out as constructing discourses that leaned heavily towards particular, dominant ideological stands with regard to the U.N. and its member nations. Second, while their function is supposed to differ from news articles and from each other, both news and the opinion content were found to have many significant similarities especially when considering their discursive representation of the U.N. and its member nations. Third, the editorial pieces were found to barely adhere to one of the basic tenets of journalism, the idea of fairness of representation. Many of the editorials in the dataset could be argued to satisfy the need for fairness by praising as well as criticizing U.S. foreign policies in times of conflict, and suggesting that the United States take a more multilateral approach in resolving international conflict situations. However, many of the editorials and an overwhelming number of the op-eds are heavily skewed towards delegitimization and ridicule of the U.N. Also delegitimized are
member nations that are part of U.N. conflict resolution processes. The examination of the opinion pieces reveals how this delegitimization is enabled, what ideologies are being championed, what discursive strategies of “othering” are being used and what representations are being constructed for the United States and the United Nations. These considerations prompt the inclusion of this section of findings.

As with the other sections in this chapter, the analysis begins with an examination of lexical (play of words) and semantic (play of meanings) elements in constructing discursive representations of the U.N. The structural analysis examines the placement of ideas within an article because the placement of the entire editorial and op-ed pieces within the newspaper is prefixed. Instances of intertextuality and sociocognitive process are examined in conjunction with the lexical and semantic analysis as and when evidences of these discursive strategies are identified.

The overwhelming deligitimization and marginalization of the U.N. and its member nations begin with the headlines and continue on to the discourse of the main article. Consider these headlines that work to begin a discourse of delegitimization – “A fractured Security council” (2003), “Iraq needs a credible U.N.” (2004), “A wounded United Nations” (2004), “How Bush can avoid the inspections trap” (Indyk & Pollack, 2003), “Note to the U.N.: Hands off Iraqi politics” (Mallat, 2004), and “Good reasons for going around the U.N.” (Slaughter, 2003). These headlines signal a negative discursive tone, a consistent manner of negative expressions towards the U.N. The word “fractured” used as a metaphor in this instance, constructs an image of a broken entity that cannot function without being repaired. “Fractured” also suggests internal in-fighting, diminishing the credibility of the U.N. A world body that cannot negotiate internal differences has little credibility in negotiating and resolving world
conflict situations. By stating that Iraq needs a “credible U.N.,” the headline suggests that the U.N. is not credible to begin with. The headline “A wounded United Nations” (2004) uses “wounded” as another metaphor that has synergy with the earlier metaphor “fractured,” meaning an entity that is not whole, is not at its best and does not have the capability to function effectively. The multiple health-related metaphors suggest that there are strategic references to the mortality of the U.N. What or who has inflicted the wound is left unanswered in these headlines and in the stories that follow.

The headline, “Note to the U.N.: Hands off Iraqi politics” (Mallat, 2004), not only demonstrates a discursive threat towards the U.N., but is also an explicit example of how headlines work in structuring the understanding of the rest of the article. The agency of majority speakers and groups becomes less prominent by wholly omitting any reference to such an agent, the United States, in this headline. The word “note” in this headline can be understood as a written note to the United Nations from the United States or that the United Nations should take note of the warning issued by the United States. In both these uses of the word “note” there is an underlying threat, i.e., if the warning is not heeded, there are consequences that the United States would bring about. The semicolon in this headline is used strategically to make the latter part of the headline more powerful and urgent. The words “hands off” anthropomorphize the U.N., and suggest that the United Nations should not interfere in the current political initiatives being undertaken by the United States and the Iraqi people.

That U.N. action with regard to Iraq is regarded as an interference is a telling example of how the U.N. representation is being constructed here - an inconsequential, meddlesome obstruction. This representation is in tandem with larger U.S. ideologies and strategic U.S. partnerships at work through discourse. The words also imply that Iraq is a possession of the
United States, and any political decision in Iraq is at the discretion of its invader, the United States. This introductory headline to the article figuratively shuts out the United Nations and its future role in Iraq. The headline is a preparatory discourse that clarifies what options are available and what options are not for the United Nations in the rest of the article. The function of this headline is to make it clear who is in charge with regard to the conflict situation and ensuing politics in Iraq – the United States and not the United Nations.

Another headline again employs the same strategies that mask agency and action through discursive choices. Appearing as the United States decided to go to war in Iraq in 2003 against the wishes of the U.N. Security Council and many of its member nations, the headline “Good reasons for going around the U.N.” (Slaughter, 2003), provides “good reasons” for not adhering to the U.N. Security Council mandate that largely prohibits the use of force against nations. This headline indicates that there is crystal clear logic and reason behind the unilateral approach undertaken by the United States with regard to the Iraq conflict situation. Once again the headline omits explicit reference to the United States, but the omission works to mitigate criticism of the actions of in-group members like the United States. The strategic ambiguity of the words “going around” also adds to the protection of identification of U.S. agency in this headline whereby going around avoids direct conflict or confrontation and subtly suggests that the U.S. is going in the same direction via a different route. The words “reasons for going around” mean that the U.N. is an obstacle, is static on an issue that needs action and the United States is forced to avoid the U.N. system under the circumstances. The unashamed claim of “going around” the United Nations rules and regulations not only works to discredit the United Nations but also reiterates the United States’ power to ignore the rules in the Iraq conflict situation.
The ideas provided in these headlines construct a narrow margin within which the United Nations is conceptualized – a discredited, delegitimized, and easily bullied political group that has little use in world conflict situations. In analyzing the body of the articles, both types of opinion pieces – editorials as well as op-eds – are replete with discourses of disapproval of the United Nations. Some of the most disparaging discourse about the United Nations came during the build-up to the 2003 war in Iraq. Although op-eds and editorials about the U.N. role in world conflicts became less frequent in the ensuing years, they remained predominantly negative about the United Nations’ abilities to function in a world dominated by U.S. political and military power. For example, discourses that represented the U.N. in the op-eds that appeared just before the Iraq war were scathing in their attack and, in no mean terms, rendered the U.N. quite irrelevant. One article by Safire (2002) said “… should the U.N. deny the fact of Saddam’s repeated and sustained defiance of its irresolute resolutions, the world body will henceforth play only in a little league of nations.” Here the text first mocks the effectiveness of the organization, suggesting the United Nations’ naiveté or ignorance about Saddam Hussein’s ongoing defiance of the U.N.’s “irresolute resolutions.” The lack of effectiveness of the resolutions become stark in this text because it is the fact that the resolutions were “irresolute” that would make it easy for Mr. Hussein to get away with defying the U.N. Second, the implicit discursive threat comes from the word “henceforth” in this sentence meaning from this time onward. There is no closure of the time limit given to the work of the U.N. in issues relating to “a little league of nations.” Third, the word “only” introduces the idea of “a little league of nations” that simultaneous delegitimizes the United Nations and some unnamed member nations.

The discourse works as status diminution and marginalization of the U.N. This diminution first suggests that currently the U.N. work encompasses more than just “a little league
of nations.” This phrase works as a metaphor referencing pee-wee kids’ baseball teams across the United States and suggesting that the U.N. will be allowed to participate in the kids’ league and not the major league, the major league in which the United States participates. The phrase also intertextually references the impotent and ineffective pre-WWII “league of nations” to invoke the imagery of a world body that was useless in halting the genocide of Jews at the hands of the Nazis. That this whole sentence is a strong suggestion from a U.S. perspective is implicit but quite invisible. The sentence is constructed as a statement, but the speaker of the statement is not explicit. Emphasizing the negative actions of out-group members prominently as semantic agents and syntactic subjects in the sentence leaves no doubt about the representation of the U.N., but the agency of the United States as the dominant voice suggesting an inconsequential role for the U.N. is strategically left out of the discourse. This is an example of the hegemonic workings of discourse.

The damaging discourses about the United Nations continue throughout in the op-ed pieces spanning many conflicts and the entire timeframe of the data of this inquiry. The following example appeared in an op-ed piece titled “The Asian front” (Safire, 2003a), just before the U.S.-led war in Iraq.

This means that the U.N., as now constituted, may continue humanitarian activity but need no longer function as the umbrella under which strong nations restrain aggression…. It has failed dismally before. (Safire, 2003a) (emphasis added)

This example symbolizes the NYT opinion pieces’ discursive trend towards the United Nations. The U.N. is represented as a “dismal” failure in world conflict resolution and “may” function in other areas like humanitarian help only when allowed to “continue” by the United States. The word “may” suggests strategic ambiguity in that it conveys granting of permission by the United States to the U.N. to work only with humanitarian issues or that the U.N. has the capacity only to
work in global humanitarian areas. The word “dismal” has a very strong negative sense of poor performance, miserable record and gloomy future. Although the United States is not explicitly referenced in this sentence, implicitly and in contrast, the United States is represented as a “strong nation,” a resolute nation that does not need to restrain its aggression by the mandate of the “dismal” failure of an “irresolute” political group, the United Nations.

This sentence also acknowledges a general understanding of the function of the U.N. in global conflict situations, which is that it works as an “umbrella under which strong nations restrain aggression.” The metaphor of umbrella can be understood as a shelter for the works, processes and ideologies of dominant nations from mutual aggression. However, even as this understanding is acknowledged, the discourse dismisses that role with the words “need no longer function.” The sentence constructs a loophole within the U.N. system that allows the United States to wriggle out and claim itself to be outside that system, so that in all this blaming and delegitimizing, the United States is not implicated.

The sentiment that the United States is above and beyond the U.N. system is again repeated in 2004. In considering U.N. participation in post-war government-building activities in Iraq, Mallat (2004) wrote: “Considering the organization's dismal record of silence during Saddam Hussein's 30 years of totalitarian rule, I'm not so sure.” The word “dismal” appears here again bringing with it the same imagery of a bleak institution. The word “silence” seems to suggest that somehow the United Nations has been in collusion with the Iraqi leader in bringing about untold misery to the Iraqi people and manufacturing weapons of mass destruction. The reason for any such “silence” is left out of the discourse. Logically, the “silence” of the U.N. should also encompass the United States as part of the U.N., but the discourse strategically manages to separate the United States from the U.N. The author’s acknowledgement that he is
“not sure” and is doubtful about United Nations’ capabilities to undertake large political responsibilities in Iraq is an opinion that has the approval stamp of the NYT. The discourse functions to expand this doubt beyond the Iraq conflict situation to future conflict situations as well. This damming acknowledgement can be understood to reflect the opinion of elites in society, elites who have the approval of and access to The New York Times. The sentence constructs a very negative image of the United Nations that has repeatedly proven to be of little use in resolving conflicts and curbing “totalitarian rule.”

In the context of North Korea’s nuclear ambition, the United Nations is again represented as a child open to bullying by rogue nations in the world. The very first paragraph of the article titled “Stranger than fiction” (Myers, 2005) states:

To North Korea, diplomacy is another form of war. Under the leadership of Kim Jong Il, the Foreign Ministry has bullied the United Nations into submission and outwitted the United States into providing food aid -- all the while developing a formidable nuclear arsenal. (Myers, 2005) (emphasis added)

The selective metaphors used in this instance demonstrate sociocognitive processes in discourse. While the United Nations is likened to a child being “bullied into submission,” the U.S. is represented as a matured adversary merely “outwitted” by a possibly duplicitous North Korea in the present situation. There is a big difference between being “bullied into submission” and being “outwitted.” Submission is a term used to mean obedience to a master, compliance to set rules, and surrender to a larger force. North Korea’s foreign ministry takes on the role of master, ruler, and the larger force with regard to the United Nations. However, with regard to the United States’ diplomatic relations with North Korea, a different outcome is stated – that of being “outwitted -- evokes imagery of a cunning move as enacted by North Korea in this situation. This outcome is constructed to be far less severe than the subjugation of the United Nations by the North Korean government. While the United States is represented as just lacking savvy in
handling the conniving North Korea, the representation severely weakens United Nations’
position with the imagery of someone constantly living with the unpredictable and volatile nature
of the master, North Korea. This strategic juxtaposition of the two outcomes positions the United
States apart from the United Nations. The United States is represented as carefully separate from
the United Nations and having the freedom to produce the image of a powerful, autonomous
state with agency to choose to associate or dissociate from the United Nations as it deems useful
in different global conflict situations.

North Korea is also represented as a war-mongering, dangerous nation surreptitiously
“developing a formidable nuclear arsenal.” In the first sentence, the writer is, literally, putting
words in North Korea’s mouth. There is no way of substantiating the assertion that “diplomacy”
means “another form of war” to North Korea. However, this opening sentence positions North
Korea as favoring war over diplomacy, shaping the meaning in the entire article.

In 2006, when the Sudanese-government-sponsored Arab Janjaweed militia killed and
drove many people homeless in the Darfur region of Sudan, the United Nations’ ability to
implement a peace initiative in the region was questioned in a representative op-ed piece.

For those of us who admire the United Nations, there is an uncomfortable reality to grapple with:
The U.N. has put barely a speed bump in the path to genocide in Darfur. The U.N. has been just as
ineffective there for the last three years as it was during the slaughter in Rwanda, Bosnia and Cambodia.
Once again, it rolled over. It's no wonder that anti-genocide campaigners have barely bothered protesting
at the U.N. and have instead focused their pressure on the White House.
The sad fact is that the U.N. is a wimp. It publishes fine reports and is terrific at handing out food and
organizing vaccination campaigns, but the General Assembly and the Security Council routinely doze
through crimes against humanity. (Kristof, 2006) (emphasis added)

This discourse exemplifies how a number of derogatory words about the United Nations could be
packed into three paragraphs to construct a very delegitimized and negative representation about
the U.N. The speaker poses as an “admirer” of the U.N. while discursively stabbing it in the
back. The United Nations is represented as an “ineffective,” “wimp,” asleep at the wheel, rolling
over to avoid the disturbance of conflict and dozing through situations that required its acute attention. The metaphor “rolled over” evokes the imagery of a lap dog dozing by the fire while Dresden burns. There is no attempt at mincing of words. The United Nations is explicitly called “ineffective” negating all the work the organization has done in years of conflict mitigation. Going to the extent of calling it a “wimp” challenges the U.N.’s masculine virility and evokes even more damaging images of a weak and cowardly entity that does not have the courage to take tough decisions.

The text represents the United Nations as unable to do any better than just slow the process of genocide in Darfur. Genocide has very strong implications that go back to the World War II horrors of the holocaust. Genocide also reminds of more recent atrocities in Rwanda and thus, emphasizes the enormity and urgency of the Darfur situation in this context. The metaphor of the “speed bump” suggests that where there needs to be a complete halt to traffic, the mere imposition of a speed bump alone does not suffice. This is another reinforcement of the idea that the U.N. is inflexible and incapable of quick response, a static obstacle. This article also represents the United Nations not only as having lost respect with the NYT elites or the elites in the United States - “for those of us who admire the United Nations, there is an uncomfortable reality to grapple with” – but also anti-genocide campaigners, who have very little respect for the United Nations. The word “reality” has a very important role in this discourse. In its very first sentence, the article strategically constructs a reality in which the U.N. is effectively represented as a careless bystander letting genocide take place in front of its very eyes. What is not evident in this discourse is the existence of multiple realities or that this opinion about the United Nations is just one opinion amongst many.
In this discourse, the United Nations is reduced to publishing “fine reports,” “handing out food,” and “organizing vaccination campaigns,” all of which are paltry jobs that are somehow rendered unimportant compared to the job of conflict resolution. The implication of constructing the U.N. as a producer of “fine reports” is that it is relegated to the realm of useless scholars and policy writers as opposed to real men of action who do things. It is also overtly stated that the United Nations “routinely” dozes through much more important issues like “crimes against humanity.” The metaphor “doze” reminds of a lazy and ineffectual entity, one which is caught off-guard when calamities happen. The metaphor also reminds of a doddering, old person, the U.N. in this case, an antiquated solution to a fast changing world. Since the United States is an active member of the United Nations, the negative qualities that are used to represent the United Nations, are applicable to the United States as well. However, the discourse is constructed in such a way that this inference is avoided. Mention of anti-genocide campaigners who are focusing their pressure on the “White House” represents the White House as capable of taking definitive steps to stop the atrocities while the United Nations as a collective entity is incapable of effective resolution. The personification of the “White House” or the representation of the United States by interchangeable terms such as the President or Bush, etc., is an explicit reification, institutionalization and grounding of the U.S. position and ideologies. This discursive representation singularly places responsibility on the United States/White House because it is more matured than the United Nations and is much more able to provide help in this world conflict situation.

Throughout this opinion piece, there is a predominant sense of negative anticipation about the United Nation’s ability to deal with conflict situations. Examples from two editorials help demonstrate this discursive trend. “With Saddam Hussein stalling and the United States and
its allies *quarreling*, the world seems to be *lurching toward an endgame* in which the United Nations *dithers* and the Bush administration goes to war against Iraq without broad international support” (Back to the United Nations, 2003). While the United States and its allies can quarrel about the fate of Iraq, there is no doubt that the United Nations process will “dither” in the end. The U.N. is represented as dithering, a permanently indecisive and wishy-washy organization implicitly opposed to an active United States. The allusion to quarreling also means that the United States and its close political allies can have adult disagreements about policies but the U.N. is taking baby-steps in the area of world conflict resolutions and hence dithering in the process. The term “endgame” is used to refer to the last stages in a nuclear annihilation. The metaphor of a game as used to describe the scenario in which several nations are locked in bickering debate at the U.N. forum about decisions with regard to Iraq suggests the role of politics and the view of war as part of the natural process. As the process staggers and falls well short of the finish line, the United States goes the distance alone and wins the game. The United Nations’ strength as a collective reasoning forum is suspect once again in this editorial.


> As much as the *feuding* members of the United Nations Security Council might like Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei to *settle the question of war or peace* with Iraq, these two *mild-mannered* civil servants can’t make that fateful judgment. *In our judgment*, Iraq is not. The *only way* short of war to get Saddam Hussein to reverse course at this late hour is to make clear that the Security Council is *united in its determination* to disarm him and is *now ready to call in the cavalry* to get the job done. *America and Britain* are prepared to take that step. The time has come for the *others to quit pretending* that inspections alone are the solution. (Disarming Iraq, 2003) (emphasis added)

The editorial very clearly dismisses the authority of U.N. appointed officials in providing substantial feedback and direction in a world conflict situation. The word “feuding” alludes to prolonged, sometimes violent hostility around some long-standing problem, a term often used to
refer to ethnic fighting and some intrinsic dispute and inbred ill will between and among groups. The reference to “feuding members” again repeats the representation of member nations’ lack of accord at the U.N. forum. The reference qualifies the United States’ relationship with the other members of the U.N. Security Council. It calls up representational politics amongst the members in terms of implicit binaries like passive and active members, forceful and impotent members, etc. The term “mild-mannered” is used almost to offer consolation to the two nuclear experts, Hans Blix and Mohammed El Baradei, for their inability to steer any course to the satisfaction of United States and Britain. “Mild-mannered” also means gentle and effeminate, echoing the imagery of a wimp, a powerless housewife, as opposed to the ever forceful and masculine United States. In the midst of all the chaos, there is one member nation thinking clearly, the United States. The United States is represented as a member nation that is not afraid to stand up, as opposed to “dithering,” to a menace like Iraq and that could lead the world out of the Iraq quandary. There is a historic evocation of the knights on white horses, in this case the United States in their shining jets, saving the day in the end when the words “call in the cavalry” are used in this discourse.

The sentence “In our judgment, Iraq is not” wields much discursive power, bringing the force of the elite, above-reproach NYT with it. That “we” think that Iraq is not disarming is all that matters in this sentence. The term “we” represents the voice of the United States, the ideological leanings of the West, the strong, male point of view, subsuming and including the reader within. This stance subtly, hegemonically and, hence, more effectively delegitimizes any action that the United Nations could have taken to provide a counter argument about the issue. The discourse bolsters the United States’ and Britain’s position by representing them as leaders in thought and action ready to take risks and, ironically, even start a war for the sake of world
peace. The discourse also disparages “other” U.N. member nations who are opposed to U.S. policies about Iraq by representing them as pretenders living in a utopic world where diplomatic resolutions work in global conflict situations. A pretender means someone who falsely claims or aspires to a position but, in this instance, the word also evokes imagery of the U.N. living in the world of make-believe, childlike fantasy further reducing the value of the group in conflict resolution. This is an example of marginalization and “othering” strategies where the U.N. forum is used to push away “other” member nations as pretenders while the United States and Britain emerge as the clear choice of leaders important enough to be identified by name.

Other countries that oppose U.S. policies at the U.N forum are also delegitimized repeatedly. France and Germany are countries at the receiving end of negative discursive representation in the opinion pieces. In an article titled “Vote France off the island” (Friedman, 2003a), the first paragraph does more than an adequate job of delegitimizing France.

Sometimes I wish that the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council could be chosen like the starting five for the N.B.A. All-Star team -- with a vote by the fans. If so, I would certainly vote France off the Council and replace it with India. Then the perm-five would be Russia, China, India, Britain and the United States. That's more like it. (Friedman, 2003a) (emphasis added)

The first aspect to be noted in this paragraph is that the author as a hired columnist of the NYT is explicitly endorsed by the paper. The author is empowered and takes the opportunity to discursively construct a grand “wish” of shoving France off the Security Council forum. Second, the comparison of choosing a U.N. Security Council member to that of a N.B.A. All-Star team ridicules the whole political process through which the Security Council members are chosen. That in turn ridicules the United Nations. The whole process is relegated to the realms of a popularity contest. There is an overt intertextual reference to the popular U.S. TV reality show “Survivor” where a “tribe member” is ousted to the status of non-member as a result of votes from members. Again there is a reference to in-group (the United States)/ out-group (France)
relations in this discourse. Third, the author assumes that the “fans” are social elites like himself, sharing his ideologies about the United States, the United Nations and some of its member nations, like France. These “fans” are fans of what cannot be determined from this discourse. They could be fans of militarism, unilateralism, imperialism, etc. Fourth, the replacement nation, India, is suddenly given world power status at the U.N. Security Council forum while simultaneously France is demoted and given the boot. Although this scenario constructed by the author is hypothetical, the ideological discourse is unmistakable. While France is deemed to be part of Hall’s (1992) “West” and India part of his “Rest,” the discourse here suggests otherwise. The discursive act of pushing France away and pulling India near is a strategic attempt to redefine, for the moment, traditional concepts of who belong to the haloed West and who belong to those “other” places. Another consideration that is important here is the issue of choice of India to be the preferred partner. India might be considered to be more pliable, easier to manipulate given that it is a nuclear partner with the United States and has large economic exchanges with the rise of U.S. outsourcing of work to its shores. India is also a growing economic power and hence a nation to be friends with.

At times, legitimacy is discursively extended to the United Nations through U.S.-initiated, U.S.-allowed and U.S.-blessed benevolence. Without those prerequisites, the discourses make very little room for an independent and legitimate United Nations. The following text from an editorial published in 2004 identifies the position the United Nations occupies in world politics and, also, unabashedly points out the reason why it occupies such a position.

These are difficult times for the United Nations. The Bush administration's taste for unilateral action and its doctrine of preventive war pose a profound challenge to the U.N.'s founding principle of collective security and threaten the organization’s continued relevance. (A wounded United Nations, 2004) (emphasis added) The irrelevance of the United Nations in resolving world conflict situations is represented as an effect of a particular “taste” in political ideologies, in this case unilateralism, the United States
espouses during different conflict situations. The word “taste” evokes multiple meanings. It alludes to a whimsical preference by someone who is empowered to have and make choices. There is something personal and ungrounded about this word that could only mean a transient fashion choice with no real substantive basis of fact for such a choice. Using the word “taste” emphasizes the five physical senses and the physicality or “muscularity” of the United States rather than the nerdy, academic policy makers of the U.N. The discursive use of the word “taste” belittles U.N. processes, checks and balances in world conflict negotiations, meaning that even if the group is somehow considered relevant, that myth can be easily broken with the simple change of U.S. ideological “taste.” The “difficult times” for the United Nations can be overcome if it chooses to accept the United States as a unilateral power and the ideology of “preventive war.” What the war “prevents” is not clear from the discourse. While the discourse references “collective” security as a founding principle of the U.N., that aspect is undermined by U.S. taste for unilateralism. The strategic act of calling up the issue of U.N. “relevance” undermines the group effectively.

In fact, another op-ed example demonstrates how the relevance of the United Nations might actually be increased if the United States were to invade a country, in this case Iraq, unilaterally.

By giving up on the Security Council, the Bush administration has started on a course that could be called “illegal but legitimate,” a course that could end up, paradoxically, winning United Nations approval for a military campaign in Iraq -- though only after an invasion. (Slaughter, 2003) (emphasis added)

This discourse is an example of power in use through language. There is no admonishing of the act of “giving up” on the Security Council here. “Giving up” reflects resignation and frustration in this discourse. However, the resignation, frustration and exasperation of the United States are implicitly justified because the U.N. Security Council is not partaking in U.S. political ideologies. The suggestions leave little doubt that while the war is “‘illegal’,” it is “legitimate”
because it is waged by the United States; while the U.N. approval is desired, such approval can wait until after the invasion of Iraq; and while the whole convoluted process of invading Iraq without U.N. Security Council approval is touted as an attempt to “win” approval, invading Iraq is in effect an attempt at arm-twisting the United Nations into giving approval.

Ironically, late in 2003, when the reasons for going to war with Iraq were found to be suspect, when no weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq and when different sects within Iraq were violently competing for power to control the country, the United States approached the United Nations several times to get it involved and share the military and economic burden of the invasion of Iraq. An op-ed piece published in September 2003 by Friedman references Bush’s plea to the United Nations and its response to his pleas. In representing the United Nations’ response, Friedman (2003b) constructs a colloquial discourse as if part of a dialogue between the United Nations and the United States. This is followed by a change from informal to formal language with the author’s own viewpoint about the situation.

“You talkin’ to us? This is your war, pal. We told you before about Iraq: You break it alone, you own it alone. Well, you broke it, now you own it. We've got you over a barrel, because you and your taxpayers have no choice but to see this through, so why should we pay? If you make Iraq a success, we'll all enjoy the security benefits. We'll all get a free ride. And if you make a mess in Iraq, all the wrath will be directed at you and you alone will foot the bill. There is a fine line between being Churchill and being a chump, and we'll let history decide who you are. In the meantime, don't expect us to pay to watch. We were all born at night -- but not last night.”

Oh, I suspect if the U.S. manages to secure some new U.N. resolution giving more cover to the U.S. reconstruction of Iraq, we will scrounge up a few Indian or Turkish soldiers and maybe a few dollars, but nothing that will make a real dent in the $87 billion price tag the Bush team has presented to the American people. (Friedman, 2003b) (emphasis added)

First and foremost, the discourse in the first paragraph represents the United Nations as mocking the United States. This emerges through use of words and phrases like, “You talkin’ to us?,” “pal,” “we’ve got you over a barrel,” “being a chump,” and “make a mess in Iraq.” The discourse is careful to point out that the war in Iraq was a U.S. initiative and that the cost, both military and economic, should be borne by the United States – “you break it alone,” “you own it alone,” “you
and your taxpayers have no choice but to see this through,” and “you alone will foot the bill.”

This representation is very much counter to earlier media representations of the U.S.-led war in Iraq. That the United States waged the war despite protests by other U.N. members and with the understanding that the military and economic cost of the war was primarily the United States’ responsibility were not mentioned dominantly in earlier texts. At that time, any U.N. intervention was unwelcome and delegitimized. The absence of this crucial context and the way the supposed dialogue has been constructed in this example makes it seem as if the United Nations is being disrespectful and passive aggressive. It is taking sadistic pleasure in the United States’ misery.

The United Nations is represented as a tough, uneducated confrontational taunter demonstrating the braggadocio and bluster of the truly timid and insecure. The discourse represents the U.N. as a hood, all talk and no action. However, when the United States feels the need for U.N. support, the United Nations is represented as taking advantage of the situation and the discourse in this case is constructed to show how the United Nations is uncooperative in conflict resolution.

Second, the mention of the words “free ride” questions the motive behind the existence of the U.N. forum. This discourse suggests that the United Nations along with all its members is waiting to enjoy the benefits of a safe world provided by economic and military investments made by the United States. Third, in all this, the problems facing Iraq, ravaged by strife and economic turmoil brought about by the U.S. invasion, seem to lose significance. The discourse is all about representing the United Nations as a vindictive, disrespectful group with the cheek to mock the world’s only superpower, the United States, further increasing the power distance between them. This discursive trend takes precedence over everything else.

The second paragraph continues this trend with the author’s own thoughts about the situation. The changing of genre from colloquial conversational to formal first person account
indicates use of intertextuality in discourse construction. Simultaneously, the discourse in this paragraph clearly disparages two U.N. member nations with the words “we will scrounge up a few Indian or Turkish soldiers.” The word “scrounge” evokes images of the mighty United States ending up with the rejects of the world, like soldiers from India or Turkey. The United States is represented as getting something, albeit something as trivial as a few soldiers, at the expense of these “others.” The complete lack of importance of these military contributions to the United States’ scheme of things is only too evident in this discourse. The discourse works to simultaneously denigrate the U.N. and U.S. allies.

This article was written by the same author who back in February of 2003 expressed a wish that India could be made a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, replacing France. By September of the same year, he writes disdainfully about the insignificance of India’s contribution of a few soldiers to help out in Iraq. Both articles elevating and then reducing the status of India in the world game are published as op-ed pieces in The New York Times. The discourses constructed thus bring important aspects about the media to the forefront. That the discourses are being driven by U.S. political ideology and that U.S. media partake in that ideology to a very large extent unquestioningly is undeniable in this instance.

Not only do the discourses of the opinion pieces firmly tilt toward U.S. ideologies about how conflict should be managed worldwide, they unapologetically and strongly suggest that the United Nations should fall in line with those ideologies. Examples of these discourses are:

The Bush administration is having a frustrating time at the United Nations again. After all these months, the world’s senior diplomats are still not willing to perform from Washington’s script. (The U.N.’s better idea on Iraq, 2003) (emphasis added)

Only by promoting broad United Nations reform will other countries see incentives in committing to burden-sharing where the United States needs it. And only then will the United Nations be able to tackle the world’s other trouble spots, ultimately contributing to America's goals of democratization and counterterrorism. (Khanna, 2003) (emphasis added)
The editorials and op-eds make no qualms about mentioning whose ideology is privileged in world conflict situations. The United Nations’ existence should revolve around “America’s goals of democratization and counterterrorism” and “Washington’s script.” The contributions and ideologies of any other member nations are really not worthy of such consideration, according to these discourses.

Finally, there are instances of the editorials and op-eds criticizing U.S. policy towards the United Nations and its members. Many of the texts are constructed as policy advice pointing out how a particular course of action by the United States could lead to particular consequences with regard to its relations with the United Nations and its members.

It’s good that President Bush is now talking tougher about the need for more robust military action, including increased support from the NATO alliance, to stop the killing in the Darfur region of Sudan. What would be even better would be a United States commitment to provide specialized reconnaissance and air support for the United Nations force being planned for Darfur later this year. (Beyond strong words on Darfur, 2006)

The discourse represents the United States as the masculine, strong voice formulating global conflict resolutions and, simultaneously, encourages increased U.S. commitment toward facilitating U.N. initiatives, initiatives that are in dire need of help from the world super power.

Some of the moderately critical pieces seem guarded in their criticism of the United States.

The U.N.’s troubles may bring cheer to the more unilaterally minded members of the Bush administration. But they are damaging to the larger interests of the United States. (A U.N. for the 21st century, 2004)

The discourse presumes that the U.N. is in trouble and that the alleviation of its trouble is necessary so that the U.S. position is strengthened worldwide. The existence of the U.N. is contingent upon its serving the “larger interests” of the United States. Some of the opinion pieces pose criticism through questions.

… Those much-ridiculed U.N. inspectors were right. (But Hans Blix appears to have gone down the memory hole. On Tuesday Mr. Bush declared that the war was justified -- under U.N. Resolution 1441, no less -- because Saddam "did not let us in.") … So where are the apologies? Where are the resignations? Where is the investigation of this intelligence debacle? All we have is bluster from Dick Cheney, evasive W.M.D.-related-program-activity language from Mr. Bush -- and a determined effort to prevent an independent inquiry. (Krugman, 2004)
And some are severely critical of U.S. moves with regard to the United Nations and world conflict situations.

If Colin Powell and George Tenet had walked out of the administration in February 2003 instead of working together on that tainted U.N. speech making the bogus case for war, they might have turned everything around. They might have saved the lives and limbs of all those brave U.S. kids and innocent Iraqis, not to mention our world standing and national security. (Dowd, 2007)

The criticism towards the United States is not nearly as widespread and overwhelming as the criticism towards the United Nations. The hegemonic ideological function of the opinion pieces remains steady throughout when it comes to delegitimization and marginalization of “other” political groups. However, when it comes to questioning and criticizing the political moves of the United States with regard to the United Nations, the discursive line is all over the place, from mild to severe, few and far between. Any particular discursive trend is difficult to identify amidst a substantial range of criticism appearing only rarely. In fact, criticism of particular actions appears years later, in retrospect. This happens when some current event is reminiscent of a similar event gone wrong a few years back. The entire gamut of criticism leveled at the United States paints a confusing and conflicted picture that budges the U.S. superpower image very little. When the opinion articles are critical of the United States they are not as overt and explicit as they are about delegitimizing the United Nations and its associated members.

Overall, the opinion pieces are heavily skewed towards representing the United Nations as an unnecessary political body. By representing it in this manner, the opinion pieces strongly suggest that the United Nations is a lazy, ineffective, wimp of a messy bureaucracy that depends on the United States for its sustenance and, yet, has the audacity to refuse U.S. requests during conflict situations. On the other hand, the United States is perpetually extricated from this negative characterization of the United Nations through strategic discourse. This extrication is necessitated lest any of the negative qualities of the U.N. be associated with the United States in
view of the fact that it is also a member of the United Nations. Finally, when the opinion pieces offer criticism of the United States, critical views are couched in cautious discourses and appear too infrequently to make any lasting impression. The representation that sticks is that of a strong, responsible, mature leader who can mostly do no wrong and who has the unenviable task of managing a lazy and belligerent entity called the United Nations.

Findings in this section demonstrate three discursive trends of representation. First, the opinion pieces together construct a discourse that predominantly delegitimizes and marginalizes the U.N. and its member nations. Second, the delegitimization of the U.N., in turn, facilitates the construction of the United States as patriarchal and a legitimate source for world political views espousing particular ideologies like unilateralism, freedom and liberation during times of conflict. This process sharpens and fixes the representations of the “other” political party, the United Nations and many of its members. Third, some of the editorials introduce arguments to support the United Nations and its processes in conflict resolution. The articles criticize dominant U.S. ideologies in dealing with world conflict situations. However, these articles are few and far between and work to muddy the water more than clarify any issues pertaining to the United Nations. Put together, the opinion pieces represent the United Nations as a lazy, overrated bureaucracy with very little usefulness in a world dominated by U.S.-led policies and politics. The few times that the U.N.’s usefulness in post 9/11 world conflict situations is demonstrated, the discourse remains confusing and counter-productive in legitimizing the U.N. in the end.

Conclusion

The analysis of the data in the findings chapter reveals four categories that together work to represent the United States, the United Nations and U.N. member nations, champion U.S.
ideologies, “other” the U.N. through discourse and demonstrate the power of mediated communication in producing the U.S. state through discourse. The categories are *Shifting allies and foes, Shifting blame, Shifting voices,* and *Delegitimization of the United Nations through opinion pieces.*

The first category, *Shifting allies and foes,* provides evidence of strategic relationship building by labeling the U.N. and its members as friends or foes with respect to the United States. The representation of the constant pushing and pulling of the U.N. renders its communicative and performative processes confusing, pliable and open at the discretion of the dominant political ideologies of the United States and its media. The strategic “othering” of the U.N. and its member nations also became evident in this section.

The second category, *Shifting blame,* shows how blame shifting enables a discursive positioning of the United States as a dominant political group that in turn constructs the “other,” in this case the U.N., as being inept, irresponsible and, ultimately, blameworthy.

The third category, *Shifting voices,* shows how mediated communication repeatedly constructs a discursive “regime” through which political voices of the U.N. and the United States are inequitably represented through absences and presences, discourses of “othering”, duality or splitting of discourses, binaries and polarities.

The fourth category, *Delegitimization of the United Nations through opinion pieces,* suggests that for the most part American supremacy in world conflict situations is unquestioned and taken-for-granted. Any thought of the United Nations playing a significant role in global conflict scenarios seems to have a prerequisite of American leadership, American economic, military and political gains and how America thinks the United Nations should operate.
The artificial segregation of the findings into these four themes increased the ease of discussion of the intricate details and finer points of the data. Interconnections among the categories and the interactive, composite impact of these discourses will be explored in the next chapter. The discussion chapter articulates how these categories interact, combine, contradict and overlap with each other. The chapter draws out the complexities of the categories when viewed as a whole.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this inquiry investigating the U.S. media representations of the United Nations post 9/11 conflicts involving the United States, the four categories in the findings chapter together suggest five meta-discursive elements. These meta-discourses are a result of integration and synthesis of the separate and compartmentalized findings in the previous chapter.

First, the NYT discourse represents the United Nations in a variety of shifting ways: as an authoritative international voice and also as a loose and internally conflict-riddled assemblage of motley and sometimes renegade nations and as the party at fault in failing international cooperation and U.S. initiatives in times of conflict. These representations construct the U.N. as illegitimate, inconsequential, and ultimately burdensome that should be relegated to international humanitarian work and not involve itself in resolutions that entail important policy-making pertaining to conflicts. The representations of the U.N. remain fluid throughout the findings, enabling the media discursive force to move the U.N. strategically in response to U.S. policy objectives and ideological standings about specific conflict issues. In contrast, the United States is represented as powerful and dominant in control of its resources and faculties, making rational and beneficial decisions with regard to global conflict resolutions. These representations of the United States are much more fixed than those of the U.N., consistently positive and stable, and having the power to dictate international conflict-time policies with or without participation at the U.N. forum. The U.S. representations have implications at the national, international and the collective (as part of the U.N.) level.
Second, the findings suggest that in times of conflict post 9/11 the U.S.-U.N. relationship is structured in dominance. While the representations of the United States and the United Nations gradually form in and through the NYT discourse, the overall representation of the interactive relationship between the two groups consistently positions the United States as having a dominating influence over the United Nations. Moreover, the intricacies of the representation of this relationship tilt predominantly in favor of the United States even when the United States is represented as making foreign policy mistakes at the U.N. forum or owning up to such mistakes. This domination is enacted discursively by representing the United States as the political group deciding when the U.N. is a friend and when a foe to the United States, when to blame the U.N. and when to deflect a blame from the U.N., when to give voice to the U.N. and when to silence it, and finally, when to delegitimize the U.N.’s functions thoroughly.

Third, the findings display a remarkable and strategic shuffling of the U.N. and its member nations from positions that could be termed the “West” to those that could be termed the “Rest” (Hall, 1992; Said, 1978/2003) and vice versa. The U.N. and its member nations are strategically “othered” in the NYT discourse in order to first delegitimize and reduce the importance of the organization and its particular members and then to represent them in contrast to and in support of the privileged U.S. state.

Fourth, the work of media discourse in representing the U.N. and the United States in conflict situations is extremely crucial as evidenced in the findings. The discursive strategies used to locate and fix the representations of the United Nations and to characterize the relationship between the U.N. and the United States include extensive use of metaphors, binaries, comparisons, repetition, substitution, exclusion, inclusion, exaggerations, intertextuality and interdiscursivity. Mixed with these are cognitive processes were the NYT passes judgment on the
U.N. injecting personal or institutional opinions, using socially accepted subtextual thematic propositions to convey particular meanings and using the canonical schematic structure of news development to guide the positioning of information within news articles to shape and convey subtle cues about importance and authority.

Fifth, the findings suggest that the representation of the United States, the United Nations, the U.N. member nations, the relationships between the U.N. and the United States, and the conflicts themselves all demonstrate considerable and consistent media discursive power. The NYT news and opinions together wield substantial power in representing the United States and the U.N. The media construction of each and all of these is part of a process of aggrandizing U.S. political, economic, military, and ideological stature in the world. The functioning of media power is evident in three ways. First, media power is evident in the strategic representation of the United States as powerful and dominant in world conflict situations. Second, the workings of power are palpable in the way the status and prominence of the United Nations and its member nations are consistently raised and lowered depending on U.S. ideological positions and needs. And finally, this complex ideological work is accomplished imperceptibly by the media through the ongoing and multifaceted engineering of multiple representations of so many complex groups simultaneously.

The findings necessitate detailed discussion starting with how they corroborate, extend and challenge existing critical theories of representation, production of state, discourse and mediated communication. The discussions act as a bridge between the various findings and the theoretical foundation laid in the literature review chapter, and ultimately attempt to answer the research questions of this inquiry. The discussions begin with elaboration of the meta-discourses
just outlined, connecting them to the key theoretical terms that finally lead to answers to research questions.


The literature review suggests that representation is a symbolic process through which social elites assign meanings to objects, events, concepts, etc. (Hall, 1997; Van Dijk, 1991). Representation involves understanding how language and systems of knowledge production work together to produce and circulate meanings. Discourse, as defined by Fairclough (1992, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c, 2001a, 2003) and Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), is a particular way of constituting knowledge about a topic, event or concept at a historically specific moment through language. In this inquiry, theories of mediated discursive representation help understand the processes of construction of the state as an important part of the production of the U.S. state in relationship to the U.N. during global conflict situations post 9/11.

The findings demonstrate that through the lens of NYT discourse, the United Nations repeatedly comes under the focus of harsh negative light. In each of the four findings categories, this negativity comes through with clarity. Whether the U.N. is called a foe or it is blamed for some fault or its voice is silenced or it is delegitimized through the opinion pieces, a thread of negativity sews the whole picture together. The U.N. is projected as a weak, scheming, bureaucratic, resource-draining organization providing cover to mostly useless nations. The U.N. is likened to a dead and bloated organism, a physically fragile, doddering, old person who is prone to getting injured, a child, and an effeminate partner. It is also shown as being afraid, lacking mettle, easily bullied and needing overall direction by a group that is matured enough to deal with tough world conflict situations.
United Nations’ conflict-time suggestions and those of many of its members are shown to be irrelevant, inconsequential, lacking maturity and reeking of insincerity. These suggestions are strongly undermined because they are represented as originating from nerdy, academic policy makers who have no real world experiences to guide their conflict-resolution strategies. Ultimately, the United Nations is delegitimized repeatedly so that anything it might have to suggest, add, initiate, or argue for, can be easily dismissed and disregarded if this serves strategic advantage. Many of the U.N. member nations also come under fire. Russia is represented as a wasted has-been; France and Germany are unnecessary problem stirrers; Iran, Iraq and North Korea are perennial problems; the Middle East is a cunning, scheming collection of nations; and Central Asia is not even there on the U.S. political radar.

The findings suggest that the U.N. is constantly interpolated into particular representations. These representations range from a friend to a foe, from irrelevant to consequent when in alignment with U.S. political and ideological positions, and ultimately illegitimate in comparison to the United States. The representations to which the U.N. is pinned implicate all the member nations individually as well as the United Nations as a collective. Although the United Nations is a complex organizational group comprising a collection of distinct and disparate nations from around the world, NYT representations of the U.N. construct and pin the U.N representations to a few inescapable positions, most of which are dictated from an U.S. ideological standpoint. In contrast, the United States is represented as a just, brave, matured superpower who should not have to justify its actions to any political group simply because no other political group even comes close to the power and status enjoyed by the United States worldwide. The United States is represented to have desirable qualities such as being unafraid to take conflict-time actions, masculine, strong, resolute, wealthy and possessing economic and
military might. The representation continues in this strain, demonstrating time and again that for the United States there is no dithering when it comes to tough decision making and that the United States is quite capable of quick response in times of conflict. The representation constructs a world ideological scenario where fast-acting agents are more in need and appreciated as opposed to antiquated, long-winded and cumbersome solutions like the diplomacy offered by the U.N. forum.

The United States also occupies another telling position: it can and will “go it alone;” the times it chooses to name friends (in the form of the U.N. and its member nations) and international partners are the times that the United States considers its political position to be weak or in severe disagreement with “other” nations across the world. At most other times, the United States stands tall amongst political contemporaries as a frontrunner and is usually the one dictating who gets what help and in what form in world conflict situations. If the U.N. even happens to stand in the way of the United States, its feeble protests are brushed aside discursively to bring about conflict solutions that satisfy the ideological taste of the United States.

Overall, the media representations enable the United States a positive national, international and collective image, bolstering its position to its internal constituents and to the overall world political audience. The representations help U.S. self-preservation by enabling the United States to define who “we” (positive) are as opposed to who “they” (the U.N., negative) are. The representations also help call up, reinforce and reify enduring U.S. cultural values and norms commonly held by its internal members (Hutcheson, et. al., 2004), such as being hardworking, active, responsive, masculine, doer, etc. The representations reinforce stabilized and normalized hegemonic ideologies about U.S.-style freedom and democracy and help
propagate these ideologies worldwide as naturalized processes that should be embraced by countries far and wide. These constructed U.S. representations evoke a sense of power and dominance over “other,” lesser forms of political entities, the U.N. being one such entity.

The status enjoyed by the United States as a result of the NYT representations stretch beyond its national borders to take on international implications. Most of the desirable and positive qualities lie with the United States under the representational regime revealed in the NYT analysis of this inquiry. The representations, then, construct these legitimate positions as aspirations that countries around the world could and should dream of achieving or occupying. The international U.S. representations work to construct binary oppositional representations of the U.N. as well.

The U.S. membership within the U.N. system avails the United States another form of collective affiliation as a part of the U.N. The NYT representations of the United States construct its dominant representations within the U.N. forum, representations that dictate policies and procedures of the U.N. and that are powerful enough to bestow friendship, construct enemies, place blame, silence voices and shield U.S. conflict-time actions from criticism. U.S. representations also enable it to extricate itself discursively from the collective U.N. binding to position itself as outside the U.N. in order to maintain its strategic power and dominance over the U.N. forum.

Taken in total, the characteristics of representations of the United Nations, some of its member nations and the United States revealed through analysis of the data of this inquiry suggest that media discourse is heavily skewed towards construction of a negative image of the United Nations. The consistent bent towards negativity shatters the possibilities of the United Nations being taken seriously in world conflict situations. The U.N. is positioned as a
mouthpiece for the United States. These representations curtail the possibilities of the U.N. assuming or occupying other global roles mainly because of the depth, extent and both explicit and implicit pessimistic images constructed in the discourse about the U.N. The ineffectiveness and the powerlessness of the U.N. are naturalized to the extent that the negative qualities appear at most times as normal descriptors when the U.N. is talked about or referenced in media discourse. At the same time, the U.S. assumes a powerful position to dominate and control discourses with regard to the U.N. and its member nations.

The findings also reveal a complex representation of the relationship between the United States and the United Nations. The U.N. is projected as disloyal to the United States with the audacity to challenge U.S. ideologies. The United States’ relationship with the United Nations is represented as strategic, at times adversarial but at almost all times as unequal, with the United States discursively gaining an upper hand in the relationship. The relationship goes through various stages, from friendship to enmity, from blaming to receiving blame, from challenging the United States, to subjugating the United Nations, but the United States is virtually always in the dominant, active and superior position.

The United States as the biggest financial contributor to the United Nations complicates the relationship between these two political groups even further. The media discourses project a definite sense of entitlement in the way the United States is represented as successful when it refuses to justify its unilateral actions and when it demands U.N. actions align with U.S. ideologies in times of conflict. This sense of entitlement is a powerful tool used in the representation of the United States in media discourse. This tool enables the U.S. position to be delicately disentangled from the U.N. position every time the U.N. is represented as ineffectual and illegitimate. The result is that while the U.N. is labeled as an irrelevant, inconsequential,
bureaucratic behemoth with no credibility, the United States is represented as its opposite. The United States is a part of the United Nations only at its own choosing, and the U.S. can easily choose not to be a part of the U.N. depending upon the particular U.S. ideological leanings with regard to particular conflicts and contexts.

Another aspect that appears consistently in the data is the shifting nature of discourse whether used to label the U.N. and its member nations or to blame the U.N. or to represent its voice during times of conflict. As the four categories discussed in the previous chapter show, all the categories contribute to the representation of the U.N. as well as the United States. The complexity arises because while the United States is represented as a positive, strong, male, world superpower in its own right, provision is made for it to shift to a position of affiliation with the U.N. However, the United Nations is also availed a shift, but the shifts available to the United Nations are limited to the U.S. mediated definitions and occur in relation to the United States. The United Nations does not achieve stand-alone representations that are positive in nature. Instead, most of the representations of the U.N. have negative connotations. The positive positions that the U.N. occupy come in relation to the United States. The shifts in the U.N. representations are strategically executed in discourse and mostly in relation to the United States. This characteristic of U.N. representation can be explained in part by ideology and its relationship to discursive power and domination (Van Dijk, 2008) but not entirely.

The conflict situations are also strategically used to represent the U.N. and the United States. In conflicts where the United States has vested interest, like the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States is represented as carving out its own position outside of and often in opposition to its membership within the United Nations. In conflict situations where the United States does not have any direct participation or interest, like the peacekeeping resolution
in Sudan, the United States is represented as effortlessly becoming a dominant voice in the U.N. Security Council, formulating policies that affect “other” nations in the world. At times the U.N. is represented as having the desirable qualities of a friend to the United States, or being in a position to help the United States logistically and economically for the war in Iraq. When the United States is represented as having made a conflict-time mistake, the U.N. is represented as blaming the United States, a relative communicative act of power. The United Nations’ voice is also represented as an important one when the United States is in need of support from all the nations that comprise the U.N. in the U.S. war against terrorism after the 9/11 attacks. While Coles (2002) has found that politicians use conflict situations discursively to define the collective identity of a nation, this inquiry further suggests that through mediated discourse the United States employs particular conflicts like the war in Iraq to reiterate its strategic production of state, and it uses other conflicts like the peace-keeping negotiations in Sudan to merge and submerge itself within the larger membership of the United Nations. This is not the work of U.S. government agency alone, although that does indeed work in the discourse at times. Rather, this process is also the work of media discourse that enables strategic transitioning of the U.S. between and among multiple representations. This demonstrates the complicit elite position of media in U.S. society and its power to construct discourses that produce the U.S. state. The United Nations, on the other hand, does not have this latitude and freedom to choose which representation it would like to be a part of at a particular point in time in the context of a particular conflict.

Taken together, the discourses suggest that when an international conflict is resolved favorably through U.N. intervention it is because the United States was an indispensable part of that negotiation. However, when the intervention fails and the conflict remains unresolved, it is
because the U.N. is a bloated, meddling bureaucracy of rank amateurs that is incapable of listening to the U.S. professionals. And, it is in and through the media that this discourse is supported and made possible/plausible by allowing or even promoting the shifting representations without apparent contradiction.

Throughout the analyzed texts, media discourse attempts to fix the representations of the U.N. based on the ideologies being favored by the United States at specific times. There is a discursive struggle for control of knowledge about the U.N., what it is and what it should be. Ultimately, dominant ideologies espoused by the United States and the power of the U.S. media reign supreme in this process. Moreover, the open, fluid, multiple, predominantly negative representations of the U.N. are particularly and consistently strategic precisely to perform the relative fixedness of the power of the U.S. state as dominant, controlling, masculine, positive, etc. This preceding discussion about the various representations of the U.N. and the United States provides answers to RQ1 of this inquiry - what are the various representations of the United Nations in the U.S. media in the context of conflicts post 9/11 involving the United States.

The overall function of the representations in the media is to perpetuate the naturalization and dissemination of the positive ideological U.S. state in times of conflict with the U.N. providing a conceptual discursive tension against which the edifice of U.S. positivity is built. Simultaneously, the representations function to delegitimize the U.N. conflict-time actions of negotiation, diplomacy, peace making, etc., in order to bolster U.S. solution to conflicts and to undermine U.N. member nations’ conflict-time interventions and suggestions. This later function of delegitimization utilizes processes of “othering” that perpetuate the worldview of the “West” and the “Rest.”
The literature review suggests that dominant groups in society assume the power to give meaning and to reify dominant ideology through discourse. Media serve as sites of strategic political and ideological contests between and among such dominant groups in society (Gitlin, 1979). For this particular inquiry, both the United States and the United Nations are considered to be dominant political entities negotiating discursively in complex twists and turns their representations in elite media space such as the NYT.

Throughout the dataset, the relationship between the U.N. and the United States is represented as unequal. All four sections of the findings chapter suggest that the relationship between these two elite political groups is dominated by U.S. ideological aspirations. Domination is enacted sometimes overtly and sometimes covertly through discourse. Domination is also identifiable in the explicit and implicit construction of meanings through discourse strategies. While the United Nations is constituted by many nation states from around the world including the United States, the United States is predominantly represented as the political group with the means to control the processes of the United Nations with or without the explicit approval of the rest of the U.N. members, especially in conflict situations. The United States is represented to have the discursive power to legitimize or delegitimize, pull forward or push backward, assign praise or blame, or even give or take away the voice of the United Nations collectively or that of any of its other member nations individually.

The findings indicate that there are other simultaneous discursive occurrences in the dataset that work to construct a position of dominance for the United States vis-à-vis the United Nations. First, the United States is strategically represented as occupying a position where it has the freedom to be friendly to or alienate the United Nations based on its own political and
ideological terms. During times of conflict, media coverage represents U.S.-tied ideologies, such as freedom, democracy, war and peace, as taking precedence over others. In times of conflict, the United States is represented as defining these ideologies in terms of what they include and what they exclude. Once defined, the ideologies are sufficiently fixed to exclude a variety of perspectives from nations around the world.

The U.N. provides the opportunity to bring together various ideological perspectives. However, the usefulness of the United Nations in bringing together these variety of perspectives is evaluated on the basis of whether these perspectives are in synergy with the U.S. definition or not. If the U.N. and its member nations agree to the U.S. ideology, they are represented as U.S. political allies. But when they disagree on basic ideologies or even strategies to advance specific ideological goals, the U.N. and its member nations are positioned as foes. Theory suggests that such a socially shared, interest-driven ideological framework is hegemonically dispersed through elite discourse and communication (Van Dijk, 2008). The analysis in the findings of this inquiry corroborates this theory and also offers some extension to this theory. The ideologies are not simply dispersed through elite discourses; they dominate diverse political groups to the extent that the ideological workings are invisible in the discourse and to the extent that these dominant ideologies are able to dictate terms of discourse in world conflict situations.

The constant discursive pushing away and pulling near of political groups as represented in the media place these political groups in a permanent state of uncertainty, weakening their overall position in world politics. The process discursively bolsters the U.S. material position in world politics because the United States is represented to stand firm and to possess the power to engineer this whole process. Power can not work in a vacuum and needs counter-power and resistance for its manifestation and effectiveness (Van Dijk, 1993). Therefore, the U.N. is
strategically positioned in media discourse to bring out the might of U.S. world power during times of conflict. The discourse suggests that the United States needs the U.N. to act as a foil, as a tension to reify and maintain its superiority in world conflict-time politics.

The uncertain and shifting nature of the U.N.’s relationship with the United States jeopardizes the credibility of the U.N. during conflict situations. Since the United States is represented as the party able to direct who occupies the position of friend and who a foe, this power gives the U.S. political confidence and bravado. However, being at the receiving end of always being shuffled around from positions of friendship to that of enmity with the United States, the U.N. fails to muster political confidence to enforce its own rules and resolutions. The failure to stop the United States from unilaterally going to war in Iraq in 2003 is discursively constructed as an example of such a lack of confidence in the U.N.’s own processes, checks and balances.

Second, U.S. dominance is enacted when the United States is represented to be in a position to assign blame to the United Nations. By blaming the United Nations for its ineptitude, inefficiency and ineffectiveness repeatedly, the United States constructs a relationship of dominance over the U.N. that works in two ways. The United States dominates the way in which the United Nations is framed through the blame. The United States also shields itself from any blames it could receive from the United Nations in the future. The United Nations has the unenviable position to be under a negative spotlight and is pushed into defending itself even before it can make an argument to hold the United States accountable for conflict-time faults. Once the United Nations is discursively pinned into a position where it has to defend itself, what it has to say about the United States becomes irrelevant precisely because of its lack of credibility in world politics.
In the few occasions that the United Nations is represented as directing blame towards the United States, the discourse makes space for U.S. justification and defense. In fact, even while accepting blame the United States is represented as a group with noble intentions, a group that has the courage to take actions. It is also represented that these noble actions sometimes can have undesirable effects. The discourse frames U.S. faults as necessary evils in a dangerous world. The logic is that had these “other” dangerous groups not been there, then these mistakes and faults would not have been necessitated. The same courtesy is not extended to the United Nations in terms of access or space for justification or defense. The discourse then becomes one-sided when the blame is directed towards the United Nations. With little to counter the blame, the United Nations is discursively forced to accept the fault for which it is being blamed.

U.S. domination is also evident through the representation of U.N. voices. The appearance or presence of U.N. voice in NYT discourse arises almost entirely in conjunction with U.S. need for the U.N. forum. Immediately after 9/11, there are articles that prominently featured the U.N. voice because, at that time, the U.N. took a tough stance towards terrorism, an ideology that the United States was propagating as well. But, during the build-up to the Iraq war, when the U.N. administrative body (represented by Mr. Annan and U.N. Security Council members France and Russia) protested the unilateral U.S. move to wage war against Iraq, the U.N. voices disappeared in the NYT discourse rapidly. In other conflict situations, like the uranium enrichment program of Iran and the genocide in Sudan, the U.N. voice was made subservient to the U.S. ideologies through discourse. The U.N. voice of dissent was consistently marginalized and silenced. The U.N. voice then becomes only an echo, a puppet; it does not really speak for itself unless its criticism of the United States, for example, provides a strategic opportunity for
the United States to deflect fault. The power to silence the U.N. and render its voice mute suggests representational politics in the U.S. media.

Finally, the influential opinion pieces of the *NYT* represent the U.N. as irrelevant and archaic, constructing a position for the United States to dominate with its political aspirations, ideologies and viewpoints in world conflict situations. The opinion pieces ridicule the U.N. consistently and represent it as inconsequential in conflict resolution and peace processes. U.S. dominance is evident even when the opinion pieces are critical of U.S. conflict-time policies. The criticism positions the United States as the country willing to take risks and stretch itself to help others and save entire nations from dangerous elements. In the process, if the U.S. policies are criticized, the criticisms are constructed to reveal only tactical mistakes and small errors of judgment. The opinion pieces suggest that the rectifications of these problems are only an arm’s length away. In contrast, the U.N. is represented as unwilling to commit to larger conflict-time issues, and suggestions are made that the U.N. should concern itself with lesser commitments like humanitarian issues and leave the more masculine and important decision-making jobs to the United States. Such criticism of the United States acts to retain the U.S. authority and control over raising and/or lowering the power of the United Nations.

The positioning of the U.N. in the global political system in times of conflict post 9/11 with respect to the United States is that of a dominated group whose political functions are strategically and systematically denigrated to enable the United States to have the power to carve a relevant niche for the United Nations at U.S. discretion. The dominated position is dependent on U.S. ideological and contextual positioning with respect to specific conflict situations. This underlying relation of domination between the United States and the U.N. percolates all the four
categories of the findings of this inquiry and provides an answer to the first part of RQ2 - how do U.S. media representations strategically position the United Nations.

The discourses of domination use the conflict issues and situations as tools to construct positions of inequality between political groups. The findings suggest that the positioning of the U.N. in relation to the United States mostly depends on the United States’ views and ideological position about various conflicts in the world. Consequently, the representations are discursively made fluid so that the U.N. could be moved around like a pawn at the hands of an expert chess player to fit the U.S. ideological needs for specific conflicts. The discourse then fixes the positioning of the U.N. in a way that suggests the conditionality of its relationship with the United States, such that “you are a foe when you go against ‘us’,” “you are a friend if you are with ‘us’,” or, even, “we’ are with you for the purposes of,” etc. For example, after the 9/11 attack, the United States was represented as softening its stance towards the United Nations because the United States needed the U.N. forum to garner support for the U.S. war against Afghanistan. Then again, as the focus turned towards the disarmament of Iraq in 2002, the conflict itself was constructed in discourse in a way that helped represent the United States as the savior of the civilized world. The United Nations’ opposition to the war in Iraq was then dismissed as the discursive strength of the United States increased with the increase in the amount of fear generated through media discourse about the capability of Iraq to destroy the world with its unknown, unfounded weapons of mass destruction.

An important point to be noted here is that although 9/11 is the discursive catalyst to construct the necessity of the war in Iraq, its discursive prominence imperceptibly fades in discourse until Iraq replaces 9/11 as the discursive entity generating fear. In this sleight of hand substitution, the U.S. suggestion at the U.N. forum of war as a preventive measure against Iraq
then made perfect discursive logic. As a result, U.N.’s protests are futile, dismissed in media discourse in keeping with the new-found discursive logic of war against Iraq. In order to dismiss U.N. protests, a position of U.S. domination was constructed using the discursive construction of the wars and fear generated by unknown dangers.

Each new conflict after 9/11 borrowed from the discourses about 9/11 as a tool to justify further U.S. offensive actions or points of view, and each new conflict represented the United States’ unique position about that conflict as a basis for any further arguments about that conflict issue. Thus, while the conflicts are constructed discursively, those very discourses are used as tools to construct a position of U.S. dominance of the U.N. and its member nations. These aspects answer the second part of RQ2 – under what circumstances do U.S. media representations strategically position the United Nations post 9/11.

**Media discourse**

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is the method utilized to analyze the data of this inquiry. CDA attempts to locate, describe, understand, interpret and explain nuances of various forms of social inequality and injustice. CDA analyzes unequal relations of power, forms of dominance, hegemony, marginalization, exploitation, etc. through an analysis of language in discourse. It seeks to illuminate how forms of social injustices are initiated, hidden, transformed, reproduced, and legitimized through discourse. It also identifies the agents that have the power to generate, normalize, mystify, alter or change discourses at historically specific moments. Finally, CDA unearths the links between discourse and wider socio-cultural, political, historical, ideological and institutional contexts (Fairclough, 1992, 1995a, 1995c; Van Dijk, 1988, 1995a, 1995b, 2001). In this inquiry, *New York Times* representations of the United States and the
United Nations in post 9/11 conflict situations from September 12, 2001, to September 11, 2007, were analyzed to identify, understand and critique representational processes of these two political entities.

The dominant metaphors in the NYT evoke images of the U.N. as physically inept, injured, broken organization; a lap dog at the beck and call of powerful nations or rogue nations; a wishful child; etc. Examples of binaries are U.N. “bullied into submission” – U.S. “outwitted;” U.N. dithers - U.S. quarrels; U.N. mild-mannered/passive – U.S. feuding/active; etc. Repetition of words like “enemy” and “allies” reinforces the ideological associations and meanings of these words. Proxies for the United States include words such as “White House,” “Bush,” “West,” etc. that anthropomorphize positive qualities of the symbolic meaning of the White House or the President of the United States or the imperialism of the West to describe the entire United States. On the other hand, the United Nations is represented at times by Mr. Annan or some of its member nations but their substitutive representation is fractured, divided, and multiple in a negative sense. In using exaggerations, U.N. faults and U.S. praise were the focus.

Media discourses draw a vicious discursive cycle of deletimizing the United Nations. The discourses work in two layers here. One does the basic work of discrediting and delegitimizing the United Nations. Then the other layer represents the United Nations as a discredited and delegitimized group. The aspect that is of significance in the layering of discourse is that not only does the layering happen across multiple articles, i.e., one article referencing the other and building upon the previous one, but, many times, the layering occurs within the same article. For example, at the beginning of an article, the U.N. credibility is destroyed by repeatedly representing the group as unreliable and untrustworthy with a bunch of bumbling buffoons charting its course. Then, at the end of the article, the lack of credibility is used as a premise to
dismiss and discredit the United Nations as a weak, prohibitively bureaucratic organization that simply does not have the intellectual, economic, political, military and ideological credibility to initiate or sustain world conflict resolution processes. Both of these discursive processes occur simultaneously, but unless the texts are carefully and critically analyzed over an extended period of time, these processes are almost invisible. The layered effect that helps construct and propagate U.S. conflict-time dominance of the United Nations is only visible through the long, slow accretion of discursive repertoires across months and years.

Discourse is both the object of the struggle for domination and the tool with which this struggle is conducted. Although Fairclough (1995a, 1995c) identifies the layered nature of discourse through intertextuality and interdiscursivity, the process of layering that is identified in this inquiry extends the concept further to include the rapidity with which discourses build upon one another within the same news article, rendering the detection of the process very unlikely. These various strategies and devices used in media discourse satisfy the third part of RQ2 of this inquiry – through what devices do U.S. media representations strategically position the United Nations or any of the member nations constituting the United Nations during conflict situations.

**Redrawing the “West” and the “Rest” boundaries (or is it?)**

There is significant evidence in the findings chapter indicating marginalization of the U.N. in U.S. media discourse. Discourses of marginalization are aspects of the system of representation used to “other” groups. This is done mainly in order to construct a positive self-representation in opposition to the negative “other” representation as well as to exemplify difference that enables self preservation of dominant groups and domination of minority groups. In this inquiry, first instances of “othering” can be found in the shifting allies and foes category
where the U.N. and its member nations are repeatedly referred to as obstacles, failure-mongers, critics, foreign, opposition, etc. U.N. member nations opposed to U.S. conflict-time ideologies are “othered” and represented as alien to the core values of the United States. France and Germany were “othered” because they were opposed to a U.N.-backed resolution to disarm Iraq using force. The U.N. administration was “othered” because its Secretary General Mr. Annan expressed his grave reservations about U.S. strategies of war with Iraq. Once the U.N. and its member nations commit to a position of opposition to the United States, the discourses of “othering” become predominant.

Second, the process of “othering” was also evident in the Shifting voices category where the absence of the representation of U.N. voices accentuated the devastating reach of the process. The U.S. point of view, the U.S. needs, the U.S. anger, the U.S. frustration – these were represented time and again. However, the U.N. predicaments did not receive as much attention and at times were not represented at all. The difference in representation of voices indicates workings of power and domination. It also demonstrates a U.S. media function of playing it safe by supporting the status quo. If the voices of dissent and criticism are represented with equal authority as the voices touting U.S. conflict-time ideologies, then that poses a danger to status quo.

Third, the process of “othering” was predominantly evident in the opinion pieces as the social elites made their disdain of the organization and its processes amply clear. The documented influence of the opinion pieces in shaping public opinion and politics makes the “othered” representation of the U.N. even more potent. In the opinion pieces, the U.N. is delegitimized, represented as irrelevant and inconsequential, as childish and effeminate metaphorically, as dim-witted and intellectually wanting, as scared and impotent, as unable to
take tough decisions, as incompetent, and as a group waiting to take advantage of all the hard
work the United States was doing for worldwide conflict negotiation. All these representations
construct similarly grim and negative images. Moreover, the repetition of these representations
across opinions, conflicts, times and spaces normalizes and naturalizes them to the extent that
whenever the U.N. is referenced, these are the representations that are recalled.

This deep-seated “othering” process that keeps working in media discourse positions the
United States as an economic, military and political superpower that needs to manage its global
political adversaries through the discursive negative positioning of the U.N. The media
discourses enable the United States to assume a form of cultural and political power over the
U.N. to dominate the organization discursively, both from within as part of the U.N. and, when
needed, from without as an individual state discursively dissociated from the membership of the
U.N. The U.N. then becomes both an object of knowledge and an object of power where the
media representations constitute a regime of truth about the U.N., truths that claim to
successfully represent the U.N.

As the findings suggest these representations depend on sets of binaries between the
United States and the U.N. and, at most times, work to the detriment of the U.N. The constant
behind-the-scenes discursive work in the media fixes and re-fixes the boundaries between U.S.
cowardice, U.S. loyalty to peace, freedom and democracy and U.N. loyalty to indecision and
inaction. The media discourses even go to the extent of suggesting that the U.N. cannot speak for
itself, and it is the job of the U.S. media to represent them. It is this implicit assumption of
knowledge about the U.N. that legitimates the exercise of U.S. political power.
What is problematic in the media representation of the interaction, interrelation and disagreements between two elite political groups, the United States and the U.N., during times of conflict is not simply that the U.N. is being pinned to negative representations or that positive representations are being constructed for the United States. The crux of the problem is that some of the most significant and enduring values, themes and central ideas of the U.S. cultural tradition are being generated, reiterated, maintained and reproduced as a product or through the representation of constant, elaborate, complex but obscure conflict-time interactions with a transgovernmental political organization, the U.N.

In this inquiry, the findings also suggest shifting position of the U.N. and its member nations in relation to the United States in the global geopolitical graph. Exactly what constitutes the “Rest” and what constitutes the “West” is left strategically vague in the findings despite the evident discourses of “othering” of the U.N. and its members. First, the U.N. Security Council, consisting of France, Britain, China, Russia and the United States, forms an elite group even within the United Nations forum. Three of the members, Russia, Britain and France, are part of Said’s initial conceptualization of the West. Yet, the United States is represented as “othering” the Security Council with regard to the Iraq war as well as the Sudan genocide issue. Second, Iran, Iraq and India are all part of the original Rest, but they are discursively befriended and welcomed as part of “us” by the United States at various conflict moments. Iran was befriended right after the 9/11 attacks because the United States needed its support for the war in Afghanistan; Iraq was invaded because the poor nation needed a U.S.-defined democracy; and India’s friendship was desirable because it is represented as a gullible but fast-developing nation whose strategic political and military support the United States was seeking. Third, Russia and
France, at the very core of the assumption of the traditional Western powers belonging to the age of colonialism, are individually alienated in more than one occasion.

The continuous shifting of positions, the shifting and stretching of geographical boundaries of what was once the basis of the “West” and the “Rest” discourse, and the shifting dichotomizations are discursively enabled by and through the shifting allies and foes, shifting blame, shifting voices and overall delegimization of the U.N. evidenced in the findings. The open and redefined boundaries are strategic, are historically and contextually specific, are used by powerful groups to dominate less powerful groups, and are not stable. The redefined boundaries work to destabilize the global political position of the U.N. and its member nations, placing them in the uncomfortable and constant shifting and sliding into conditional and provisional positions. The instability created by shuffling political groups between still existing but blurred dichotomized lines demarcating the “West” and the “Rest” simultaneously works to stabilize and reify the powerful status of the United States in world politics, and, as part of the preceding discussion, provides answers to RQ3 - in what way do the analyses of this inquiry contribute to existing critical theories about hegemonic media representations that dichotomize the world into the “West” and the “Rest.”

**Media power**

At the heart of this inquiry lies the role of media in the representation of the U.N., U.N. member nations and the United States. The findings indicate that U.S. media consistently represents the U.N. in a negative way that enables radical shifting of the U.N. from one position to its polar opposite and simultaneously delegitimizing and destabilizing the U.N. global conflict-time functions and processes. Theory suggests that media work as a mirror to society in
its representational capacity. However, these reflected representations are sometimes seriously distorted. Media objectivity in recording and describing reality and neutrality in reporting facts and stories are limited for the most part. However, media attempt to reflect the limited aspects of the world within their sphere “objectively,” and the varied limitations of humans and media necessarily distort by elimination, exclusion and selective emphasis while simultaneously performing the project of any elite institution. Media, as the purveyors of social capital and the vendors of market goods socially construct reality based on professional and personal ideologies, corporate interests, cultural and organizational norms and values (Hackett and Zhao, 1998; Van Dijk, 1988, 1991).

The findings suggest that theories of media’s social construction may be usefully applied to transgovernmental political organizations like the United Nations. They are constructed through the politics of representation in which the media maintain and reinforce existing systems of inequality. But that does not mean that journalists and editors try to consciously marginalize and denigrate the United Nations. Journalists and the media they produce are not the only participants in this social construction. There are other complex and contradictory systems of social structures, practices and discourses that mitigate the offerings of the media (Henry & Tator, 2002; Riggins, 1997). The focus is not only on individual journalists’ prejudicial discourse in the media contributing to skewed representations of political groups. The focus is also on ideologies and the historical, political, cultural, and institutional contexts within which the representations occur and within which media function. In this inquiry, U.S. ideologies percolate the human, cultural and institutional character and are precisely the reason why they affect the U.S. media representations.
The way the United States and the United Nations has been represented in the data of this inquiry indicates deep-rooted and unquestioned assumptions, values, norms and practices of the U.S. dominant, cultural ideologies and the ideologies of U.S. media organizations. Media power derives from these unquestioned beliefs and the hegemonic dispersal of these beliefs in turn. Some of the enduring values and beliefs that are espoused in this inquiry and through which power flows, are the values of freedom, democracy, justice, hard work, etc. These values are reified through the representation of the United States and the counter representation of the United Nations as denouncing these values. The need to reify these values does not arise at the moment of discourse production in the media but much before that. These needs arise at the cognitive level, at the sociological level, the political level and at the cultural level. These values are represented as desirable and enduring and media protect these unquestioned ideologies if they are threatened or violated by “other” beliefs and groups. With enough repetition through the binary representation of the United Nations as essentially negative and the United States as powerful and positive, the ideologies take on the form of undeniable myth and defines what is considered to be truth (Foucault, 1980).

The use of quotation marks in the text of the data brings to the forefront a very strategic positioning of the NYT in the discourse. Using quotation marks separates words or phrases from their context signals importance or raises uncertainty about certain sources, comments or contexts and enables the NYT to distance itself from the text, allowing the NYT simultaneously to present and to contest the statement. This strategy is noticeable when select words or phrases in Mr. Annan’s comments have been strategically placed within quotation marks by the author of the news article or opinion piece to focus on a particular word or to contest its meaning or appropriateness. The power to exercise this strategy has profound implications for the
representation of the U.N. and is potent precisely because of its simplicity. The strategy constructs boundaries around a group and its ideas to help the formation of particular representations of groups, in this case positive representation of the United States and negative representation of the United Nations, almost effortlessly and imperceptibly.

Finally, this inquiry is based on the basic assumption that media power in representational politics presupposes that media play a central role in shaping public opinion and influencing social elites (Van Dijk, 1993). Accordingly, it is all the more telling that the United Nations is dismissed several times as a capable world political group. The implications are far-reaching in the sense that if readers do not have access to other sources of information and belief formation, these representations of the United Nations and the United States would perpetuate the inequality of the relationship between the two groups. The variety of powerful roles of the media in issues of representation of the U.N., the United States, the U.N./U.S. relationship and the conflicts themselves all of which predominantly favor U.S. ideological standpoint and discursively produce the U.S. state, help us answer RQ4 - what do the findings suggest about the role of the media within the strategic exercise of global political powers.

The five meta-discourses outlined at the beginning of this chapter inform the understanding of how media discourses, working within a system of dominant U.S. ideologies, represent the United Nations in a way that perpetuate the production of the U.S. state, reify enduring U.S. values, aggrandize U.S. power and status in world conflict situations, marginalize the U.N., and construct strategic and shifting dichotomies between the “West” and the “rest” involving the U.N. and its member nations. Working from within larger social, economic, cultural and political systems, the meta-discourses demonstrate the complicit elite position of media in U.S. society and its discursive power in representing political entities like the U.N., the
United States and U.N. member nations. The larger sociological implications of the findings and discussion will be explored in the next chapter which will conclude this inquiry.
CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Implications of the analysis

The present study reveals how U.S. media perform and deploy the power of the U.S. state through discursive representation of the U.N. to further global dominance of U.S. conflict-time ideologies. U.S. media representations construct, maintain and reify the U.S. state during times of global conflict in and through the discourses of delegitimization of the U.N. The study reveals how predominantly negative representations of the U.N. and its member nations and positive representations of the United States during times of conflict post 9/11 discursively favor U.S. conflict-time ideologies and enduring U.S. values that naturalize U.S. dominance and conflict-time power politics in the U.S. media. In this chapter, conclusions are drawn from the previous discussions of the theoretical, sociological, and cultural implications of the identified meta-discourses.

First, the findings and discussions demonstrate that during times of conflict U.S. media representation discursively fixes the United States’ representations to reflect positive and strong qualities and reify and maintain U.S. state power in world conflict situations. Comparatively, the representations of the United Nations are constructed in discourse as negative and fluid, which effectively diminishes and eclipses the value of the United Nations in world conflict resolution. Second, the discursive representation of the U.S./U.N. relationship is structured in dominance that limits the functions and possibilities of the U.N. and enhances and extends those of the United States in times of conflict. The discourses of domination use conflict issues and situations as tools to construct positions of inequality between the United States and the U.N. and its member nations and systematically reinforce U.S. political power and obscure motives and
structures behind the conflicts. Third, the representations of the United States and the U.N. indicate that the U.S. media perform the power of the U.S. government hegemonically to constitute and maintain U.S. statecraft at a global level. The U.N. is primarily represented to position the United States in a positive sense. Fourth, the use of telling metaphors and rapid and sophisticated intertextuality in the media discourse obscures the U.N.’s present and future functions in the world and the reproduces and legitimizes U.S. conflict-time ideologies and values. Finally, there are evidences in the findings that the discursive shuffling of the U.N. and its member nations from positions that could be termed the “West” to those that could be termed the “Rest” (Hall, 1992; Said, 1978/2003) and vice versa serve to silence, marginalize, and delegitimate the U.N., to dominate the U.N. member nations, and to reify and legitimate the power and global position of the United States.

Taken together, the discursive stability of the United States in the U.S. media positions the United States strategically as a positive, active, wealthy political alternative to the U.N. in world conflict situations. The U.N. is strategically and discursively positioned as a weak and negative counter-power and resistance to the United States whose very ineffectiveness heightens and manifests the scope and power of U.S. ideologies and values in world conflict situations. The various forms of dominance in media discourse about the U.N. and its relationships with the United States during conflict times result from the aforementioned representations. The representational politics of the discourses construct relations of inequality between the United States and the U.N., performing the subjugation, marginalization and silencing of the diverse U.N. voices and bolstering positive U.S. image at multiple levels – national, international and as part of the U.N.
The hegemonic presence of U.S. agency in the media discourses indicate how the concept of an ideologically and territorially-defined U.S. state formulates in opposition to the “other” transgovernmental concept of the U.N. Devetak’s (2001) contention that the postmodern understanding of the “state as performatively constituted, having no identity apart from the ceaseless enactment of the ensemble of foreign and domestic policies,… and representational practices at the U.N.” (p. 197), takes on a more complex meaning in this study. The work of statecraft through representational practices that Devetak (2001) references, is not only performed at the U.N. forum, it is performed in and through the representational practices of the U.S. media where the U.N. becomes a vital, discursive piece of that work. The construction of the U.N., which is as much a performative constitution as the United States, as the “other,” then, becomes necessary to fulfill various U.S. needs including the need for reinforcement of the U.S. state at a global stage. At times, the need is constructed to metaphorically take on the shape of a U.N. as a friend or a foe, the U.N. as a mouthpiece, the U.N. as a scapegoat when blames are exchanged, and the U.N. as a forum for “legitimate” diplomacy. Then again, the U.N. is represented as a foil with which to emphasize binaries: the U.S. representations of a modern, technologically advanced, action-oriented, relevant, professional, masculine state versus the U.N. representations of an archaic, bureaucratically bloated, world administrative body that comprises a feminine, motley crew of “minor league” of nations (amateurs) with no real powers in world conflict situations.

Moreover, U.S. media discourse represents the U.S. government as a self-defined unit (Connor, 1978; Hutcheson, et. al., 2004) by calling up, reinforcing and reifying enduring U.S. cultural values like hard work, active engagement, responsibility, masculinity, etc. The U.S. representations as an international player are discursively reinforced as strong, decisive,
legitimate, etc. The United States as an international player sometimes is represented to work in tandem with the U.N. as part of a collection of distinct and disparate nations from around the world. However, the United States as an international player is also represented in opposition to and dominating both the complex organizational group that comprises the U.N. and the U.N. as a multinational forum for negotiations on issues including conflict, politics, economics and culture. Although the United States straddles multiple representations - governmental, international player and member of the collective organization of the U.N. – it is consistently represented in fixed, positive light, showing enduring U.S. values as desirable. Yet, the media discourses are flexible enough to allow the United States to justify its conflict-time hegemony.

On the other hand, the multiple U.N. representations – as a world administrative body, as an organizational collection of nations, as a forum for negotiations – are predominantly negative in comparison to the United States. The U.N. as a global bureaucratic administrative body is represented in the media discourses as lazy, inactive, unreliable, feminine, etc. The U.N. as an organizational collection of nations is represented as a chaotic, irrelevant, unnecessary diversity of voices that need direction and leadership of the United States. The negative qualities of individual U.N. members are sometimes discursively used to represent the U.N. as a collective. Finally, the U.N. as a world forum for negotiations is represented as irrelevant when not in alignment with U.S. conflict-time ideologies and as a forum to exercise U.S. domination when in alignment with U.S. ideologies.

Alongside the apparent fixedness of the positive U.S. versus the negative U.N., another layer of representational politics is manifest in these media discourses. The United States was consistently represented as stable in its positive multiplicities and power to call up either the positive or the negative image of the United Nations. The discursive processes of shifting the
U.N.—from friend to foe, from blaming the U.S. to receiving blame from the U.S., from being acknowledged by the U.S. to being dismissed and silenced—happens in alignment with U.S. conflict-time ideologies. These representations discursively ensure the reification and perpetuation of U.S. power in world conflicts and foreign policy negotiations. They also perform the objectification of the U.N., positioning it as a pawn to be moved to accomplish a variety of U.S. goals such as serving as a shield to protect U.S. conflict-time actions from international protests; acting as a mouthpiece for U.S. ideologies and policies; functioning as a tool to further U.S. conflict-time ideologies; and serving as a negative binary to showcase positive U.S. state.

As suggested by scholars like Coe et. al. (2004) and Gitlin (1979), these strategic functions, in turn, serve to unify internal U.S. constituents and provide direction to U.S. public opinion.

This inquiry increases the depth and nuance of understanding of the discursive processes of unification of internal constituents through the play of binaries involving the U.N. The inquiry identifies post 9/11 hegemonic processes of naturalization of U.S. conflict-time ideologies in the U.S. media that help shape both U.S. public opinion and influence and shape the international stature of the U.N. and international interactions with the U.N.

This inquiry further suggested that the conflicts made overt in these media texts are used as discursive tools to support U.S. ideologies and highlight the ideological disparity between the United States and the United Nations (Coles, 2002; Devetak, 2001). While the U.N. is discursively represented as lethargic or embroiled in the minute details of addressing the immediate needs arising in and from conflicts, the U.S. is represented as full of determination to take definitive action to resolve the short-term as well as long-term conflicts. These representations position the United States as an alternative to the U.N. in conflict situations and establish the primacy of U.S. ideological and military interests. Only in conflict situations where
the United States does not identify vested interests is the United States represented as a part of
the U.N., which makes the U.N.’s authority and the relevance of its checks, balances and
processes conditional upon U.S. approval. Thus, even in media representations that vest authority
in the U.N., the U.S. discursive power is enacted again and again.

The discursive media constructions of the U.N., the United States, U.N./U.S.
relationships and conflicts independently and collectively represent the United States
consistently and strategically as a dominant political group using the conflicts, influencing the
U.N. processes and shuffling the U.N. representations to enact and maintain a global position of
power. The complex interactions between the United States and the U.N. and its member nations
in times of conflict are represented from a U.S. perspective and, as a result, the U.N. and many of
its member nations are subjugated discursively. The U.N. is emasculated and rendered irrelevant
in representation and, in contrast, the United States is represented to have the means and the
moral superiority to engage as a leader in world conflict resolution.

In this inquiry, the discursive use of conflicts adds to the literature on how U.S. media
consistently align with and naturalize the U.S. conflict-time ideology in ways that ‘fix’ the
boundaries within which public debate about the conflict and the role of the United Nations and
its members may occur (Angus & Cook, 1984). Steuter (1990) contends that coverage of
terrorism, war, and international relations in the media frequently exhibits a strong tendency
towards an ethnocentric position in which news privilege government policies. This inquiry
corroborates Steuter’s (1990) work by demonstrating that the discursive use of conflicts in the
media exhibits a strong tendency towards an ethnocentric position in which U.S. news privileges
U.S. conflict-time ideology and dismisses the international conflict resolution capabilities of the
United Nations.
While the discursive shuffling of the U.N. representations performed in alignment with the U.S. conflict-time ideologies continues to appear in the media, another layer of identities is added when the findings display the moving back and forth of the U.N. and its member nations to and from the dichotomized positions of “West” and the “Rest” (Hall, 1992; Said, 1978/2003). This representational process has multiple implications in the form of silencing and marginalizing a delegitimized U.N., dominating the U.N. member nations, and reifying and legitimizing positive representations of the United States. The complex processes of representation of the U.N. and its member nations as now a part of the “West” and now a part of “Rest” help keep the political players in a permanent guessing game as to where they stand with regard to the United States and what their powers and positions are depending upon U.S. prerogatives and perspectives. The discursive “othering” of the U.N. and its member nations accomplished through these representational practices functions to construct a positive U.S. self-presentation through the complex interplay and contrast with negative other-representation (Trivundza, 2004). It also functions to build upon the “ideology of difference” (Said, 1978/2003) strategically positioning the U.N. as inferior to U.S. powers, which discursively provides a reason for the United States to control U.N. processes. The “othering” perpetuates Said’s (1978/2003) framework that helps define how the U.S. perceives and relates to the U.N. and its member nations as the “other” in global politics, a discourse that creates categories and typologies within which the U.N. and its member nations can be distributed. Another function of this process of “othering” of the U.N. is to construct an essentialized and naturalized conception of the U.N. (Hall, 1978, 1997) as a lazy, irrelevant, illegitimate, powerless, etc. world body perpetually in need of U.S. assistance. Another important function of this discursive “othering” is that through these representational practices, dominant U.S. elite power is shown to control the
means of symbolic representation of the U.N. in order to project a strong, masculine representation of its own elite status. The complexity of the discourses, the representations, the tools of power and dominance, render the process of “othering” hegemonic in nature and perpetuate dominant views of the “other,” the U.N. in this case.

The strategic discourse of the U.N. and its member nations as “others” at historically specific conflict moments uses the concepts of fluidity, multiplicity, and overlapping of representations to maintain and perpetuate a dominant U.S. vision of a world where the U.S. is represented to reserve a static, positive, Western, colonial position for itself. The “othering” of the U.N. and its member nations in times of conflict undermines the international diversity of voices with regard to global security and co-operation. The present inquiry adds two distinct threads to the understanding of the process of “othering.” First, the discursive shifting, crossing and re-crossing of U.N. and U.N. member nations’ across the “West” and the “Rest” dichotomies poses new challenges in identifying processes of “othering.” Second, even as the “West” and the “Rest” boundaries are dismantled discursively to fit the U.N. and its member nations into various “othered” positions, the underlying boundary of the “West” and the “Rest” thrives as the processes of “othering” continue to surface in the media. It is only with the understanding of the underlying fundamental ideological assumptions of the “West” and the “Rest” that the discourses of “othering” can work while the boundaries between the “West” and the “Rest” are strategically blurred, erased and maintained for political purposes.

The power of media discourse is evidenced by the repeated use of metaphors, refined use of intertextuality, strategic use of syntax, strategic use of quotations, etc. in order to naturalize and legitimize U.S. conflict-time ideologies and values as well as to predominantly denigrate, discredit and silence the U.N. This inquiry adds to the body of work by Fairclough (1992, 1995a,
1995c) and Van Dijk (1988, 1995a, 1995b, 2001) on the power of discourse and use of metaphors and intertextuality. However, a very quick layering of discourses, one referencing the other within a matter of a few paragraphs in news articles, is repeatedly found in this inquiry. The rapidity of the layering process deeply embeds one discourse in the other, increasing the subtlety of the production of meaning and perpetuating U.S. ideological hegemony in the process. The layering functions to obscure the enactment of power through discourse.

In this inquiry, the media representations maintain and reinforce existing systems of inequality and perpetuate deep-rooted and unquestioned assumptions, values, norms and practices of dominant, U.S. and media ideologies through the politics of representation of the elite groups, the U.N. and the United States in times of conflict. The media representations of the United States and the U.N. demonstrate how the media function to maintain and reinforce the status quo in society. The United States is represented as a powerful state in world politics, dominant in its interaction with the U.N., positive in contrast to the U.N., part of the ideological “West” as opposed to the “Rest,” and ideologically superior to the U.N. in times of conflict. The United States is also represented as perpetuating enduring U.S. values that add to the U.S. moral superiority with respect to the U.N. The U.S. media discursively trivializes the fluid, transnational, dialogic approach of the U.N. during conflict situations. The juxtaposition of representations of the United States and the U.N. demonstrate how “media operate as a means for the expression and reproduction of the power of the dominant class” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 51) and have a strong influence over the way in which issues, events and groups are examined in the press.

The U.S. media are complicit in the production, reification and maintenance of the positive U.S. state. This complicity is evidenced in the form of media power to constrain article
content (Fairclough, 1989) to the extent that the discourses in the article favor positive interpretations of U.S. conflict-time actions and exclude alternative interpretations. The U.S. conflict-time strategies, ideologies and worldviews about international conflict situations take precedence over alternatives offered by the U.N. in media discourse. The marginalization of U.N. ideologies work symbolically and persuasively (Van Dijk, 1995b) by repeated and strategic inclusion of arguments favoring the U.S. position. The U.S. media discourse essentializes the U.N. as a less-involved and reticent political group, as opposed to a more active and engaged United States. The essentialization of the U.N. to a few negative qualities and then the naturalization of those qualities through hegemonic discursive struggle demonstrates the discursive power of the media (Fowler, 1991). The findings in this inquiry suggest a rethinking of the media as a state apparatus performing the power of the state. Media have greater power to perform statecraft because they are unaware to a large extent that they indeed produce the state through discursive representational politics. And they do it better than the U.S. government could because their discursive power is hidden behind the legitimacy of the “objective” media.

The domination of the U.N. by the United States in U.S. media representational politics adds to Van Dijk’s (2001) work on media power and dominance. Specifically, this inquiry shows how media as an elite institution in society function as a part of the U.S. ideological framework with regard to U.S. conflict-time policies. The alignment of the media with U.S. conflict-time ideologies enables it to discursively position one elite political group, the United States, as dominating another, the U.N.

The U.S. media representational practices involving the U.N. in times of conflict post 9/11 raise a troubling question as to how international organizations addressing global issues, like the U.N., would have discursive space for resistance and articulation of diverse voices. The
lack of representation of U.N voice restricts U.N. present and future functions in world conflict situations. Although the U.N. is considered an elite political entity, it continues to be a victim of representational politics in the U.S. media.

Theory suggests (Van Dijk, 1988, 1995a, 1995b, 2001) that there are several factors in the media that filter out alternative viewpoints and ideologies including journalists’ , editors’ and newspaper owners’ sense of social location, their experiences, values, interests and positionalities. Not everything that appears in the media is a result of the ideologies of the media producers as witnessed in media text. In fact, to claim that the predominantly negative representation of the U.N. is a result only of discourse construction, is to reduce all factors pertaining to the construction of specific identities and subject positions of the U.N. to the text. Media text is just a part of the whole process of discursive social interaction (Fairclough, 1989). The researcher’s paradigmatic assumptions and particular, oppositional reading of the text is also part of the process of discursive social interaction.

A critical examination of post 9/11 conflict-time media discourse has shown that representational politics is inexorably tied to ideological struggle between the U.N. and the United States. The media representations are problematic because although world conflicts are localized phenomenon and are a product of historical, cultural, political clashes pertaining to specific groups of people, there is a need for a forum for dialogue and not a monolithic ideological standpoint of any one country directing solutions far removed from the conflict.

**Limitations**

There are many limitations to this inquiry that need to be addressed here. First, the researcher’s limited experience of some of the U.S. cultural contexts prohibits the revelation of
deeper layers of meanings in the findings and the conclusion. Some of these cultural references are not familiar to the researcher mainly because of the researcher’s birth and upbringing until adulthood in a different cultural background. Second, since the researcher’s ontological and epistemological positioning and beliefs fall in the critical paradigm, the interpretations of the data are similarly under the critical microscope. A researcher from a different paradigmatic position would have had a different understanding and reading of the data and would have come to different conclusions. Third, the researcher as the human instrument is well aware of the indeterminate nature of the inquiry and the imperfections of the researcher’s own performance in the interpretation of the data. This performance is constantly going through refinement, adaptability and improvements as the researcher’s experiences grow. Fourth, the conclusions of this inquiry can not be generalized beyond the context and the parties involved in the conflict situations analyzed.

The findings and conclusions are meant only to be useful as opposed to providing the final word in the analysis of such complex media representational practices as witnessed in this inquiry. The findings and conclusions are meant to add to the body of work in processes of representations, media power and discourse that strategically encompasses discourses of “othering,” and the “West” and the “Rest.” The present analysis does not intend to generalize findings beyond the situated nature of the texts investigated. However, to imagine that everything that appears in the media is a result of the ideologies of the media producers as witnessed in media text leads to a shallow understanding of media power and the politics of representation. Thus, the present analysis is more meant to provoke thoughts and dialogues about the political, social and cultural conditions that enable the U.S. media to systematically engage in
representational politics and processes of U.S. statecraft by negative discursive construction of the U.N. that has global conflict-time engagements.

**Directions for future research**

The present inquiry opens up possibilities for future research that would include a comparative study of U.S. media discourse with that of other countries in order to examine whether the representations of the United Nations identified in this study manifest themselves in media discourse of other countries as well. The theoretical contributions of such studies could be explored in the future. The implications of this line of research in the fields of critical media studies and intercultural communication can also be studied in depth. Future studies can explore how the findings and conclusions of the present study can be made meaningful to scholars, media practitioners and readers in general. Finally, it would be worthwhile to investigate how global technological advances in mediated communication affect representational practices, discourse construction and other relevant social problems.
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