A CYBERNETIC ANALYSIS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA'S

RELATIONSHIP WITH IRAQ

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ABSTRACT

This study applied a theory of marriage and family therapy, specifically cybernetics, to the

relationship between the US and Iraqi governments. This study also attempts to describe recent

changes in Iraq incurred during the ongoing war in Iraq as either first- or second-order change.

Taken from 2001 to 2005, 76 print media articles describing the war in Iraq from three major US

news sources were analyzed using grounded theory methodology. Four prominent themes:

Military Operation, Costs, Perceptions, and Transition, were identified and described in

cybernetic terms such as recursive processes, circular causality, and punctuation. Results

suggested that international relationships can be described cybernetically, and that many

recursive processes were evident in the war in Iraq. Results also show that determining first- or

second-order change is very difficult in large system analyses. Implications for this research are

presented and discussed.

DEDICATION

for the troops, all of them…

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The best thing about my life is the people that are in it. My life has been *filled* with wonderful people. I'd like to acknowledge a few.

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Chapter I

Introduction

We are a planet connected, knit together in the pages of past, present, and future history. The study of this connection is known as international relations in the political sciences (for examples see Allison, 1971; 2004; Morgenthau & Thompson, 1985; and Waltz, 1959). Generally speaking, on a smaller scale, marriage and family therapy (MFT) also studies social connections. Using systemic philosophies, marriage and family therapists (MFTs) have successfully described how couples and families have created, sustained, and solved problems. I believe that systemic philosophy, the backbone of MFT, can better enable us as citizen-scholars to see our international connections and aid us in promoting health and security to more than "one member of the family." To demonstrate the possible applications of systems theory to international relationships, and more specifically cybernetic applications to understanding international relationships, I intend to analyze events that have characterized the war between the United States of America (US) and Iraq, specifically focusing on the relationship between the US and Iraqi governments. I hope to describe these events cybernetically, and determine if the events of the Iraq War represent first- or second-order change.

Has the US's policy to go to war with Iraq to increase national security and to liberate the citizens of Iraq been effective? Has it achieved the desired relational change set forth by US bureaucrats and military leaders? Have there been any fundamental changes in the relationship between the US and Iraqi governments? These are important questions. These are cybernetic questions. The primary purpose of this study is to contribute to and expand the knowledge of cybernetic processes by changing the traditional unit of focus from families in counseling to nations at war. Cybernetics is useful in that it provides a framework for determining if proposed

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solutions maintain or change the problem that they are designed to address. Identifying cybernetic processes may help one to evaluate the usefulness of proposed solutions. Conversely, not identifying cybernetic processes may permit the recurrence of problem-maintaining solutions. Regardless of the findings, regardless of the presence of recursive relationships, this study will assist MFTs in determining if their systemic philosophies are applicable outside of the therapy room. I hope to give political leaders, academicians, policy experts, and citizens a cybernetic frame for discussing with adequate language, the question of "what kind of change will this be?"

Gordon Wood, in the preface of his book *The American Revolution* (2005), states that the American Revolution is to be explained and understood, not to be celebrated or condemned. This is my undertaking with this project. I write to understand the Iraq War, and I join many other authors in this endeavor. My twist is that I want to understand and explain the war systemically, specifically from a cybernetic perspective. I am looking for recursion, with the intention not of blaming the US or Iraq, but of understanding how problems are maintained and how solutions are formed.

I intend to use a cybernetic framework to analyze the relationship between the US and Iraqi governments, specifically focusing on events of the war with Iraq from 2001 to 2005. This, of course, requires accounting for the interactions of large and complex systems. Therefore, it is important for me to determine how cybernetics can explain large system dynamics. How would a cybernetician determine if a sequence of events (information) represents a first- or second-order change? The cybernetician would first delineate the problem, distinguishing between what is the problem and what is *not* the problem. The cybernetician would then describe the attempted solutions to solve the problem (Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 1974). A coherent

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description of how the problem and attempted solutions could be understood in terms of recursive processes would be a necessary step. If the problems still existed after a solution was prescribed, enacting the solution could be understood as a first-order change.

Research Questions

My current interests are larger systems, more specifically international relationships and the development of US foreign policy. My overarching research question is "how can the relationship between the US and Iraqi governments be understood from a cybernetic perspective?" Can a systemic MFT theory like cybernetics effectively be used to describe the relationship between two countries, or more generally, international relations? More specifically how can particular events of the Iraq War be understood as recursive processes, and do these processes represent first- or second-order change in the relationship between the US and Iraq? For this analysis I investigated print media articles describing the war in Iraq from 2001 to 2005, including such events as the invasion of Iraq (March 20, 2003), the capture of Saddam Hussein (Dec. 13, 2003) and the deposal of his regime, and the transition toward a democratic government in Iraq. I am therefore asking two distinct though related research questions: How can the US-led invasion of Iraq, Saddam Hussein's capture, Iraq's free elections, and the establishment of Iraq's National Assembly be understood from a cybernetic perspective, and are these first- or second-order changes in the relationship between the US and Iraq? I hypothesize that because cybernetics is capable of describing relationship processes in smaller social units such as families, that it will also be capable of describing international relationship processes. Second, I hypothesize that the events constituting the US-led war in Iraq have maintained the problems they were meant to address, thus constituting first-order changes, or changes that that have kept the relationship between the US government and Iraq stable.

Chapter II

Literature Review

In this chapter, I review literature concerning the Iraq War and cybernetics. This chapter is divided into three sections. I begin by providing a historical overview of the war, describing some of the proposed causes and consequences. I then survey the scholarly literature concerning the Iraq War, summarizing and critiquing the contributions. The chapter concludes with an overview of cybernetic theory, both of its development and application.

Iraq War

After September 11, 2001, a watershed day in the history of America, the United States' government and many citizens wanted justice. The US military led by President George W. Bush soon launched a multifaceted military campaign in the mountains of Afghanistan in search of Al Qaeda's leadership and specifically Osama Bin Laden. The end result was the displacement of the Taliban regime and the installation of a new government in Afghanistan, but as of this writing, Bin Laden remains at large. Bush then turned his attention to Iraq and invaded on March 20, 2003 with help primarily from the United Kingdom. The US gave two principal political reasons for going to war against Saddam Hussein's regime. The first reason regarded national security (Hallenberd & Karlsson, 2005). Bush claimed that Hussein's link to Al Qaeda and systematic stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), allegations maintained despite evidence to the contrary (Blix: Iraq war, 2004; Davis, 2006; Fawn & Hinnebusch, 2006), put US interests at risk and would lead to future attacks. The second reason for invasion was described in humanitarian terms. It was the duty of the US to free the citizens of Iraq from a ruthless dictator, democratize Iraq, and spread democracy throughout the Middle East (Abrams & Gungwu, 2003; After the Iraq War, 2003). The US invaded Iraq to preemptively protect US

citizens from future harm and to liberate the Iraqi populace (Fawn & Hinnebusch, 2006; Pauly & Lansford, 2005).

By early April, 2003, the coalition forces led by US General Tommy Franks were moving decisively through Iraq and had reached the capital of Baghdad (DePalma, 2003). The US military experienced mixed resistance. They faced frequent suicide bombing attacks in addition to harassment from the Iraqi army (Rowe, 2003). Iraqi officials were lauding the success of Iraqi soldiers and their ability to crush American advances (Burns, 2003) while Hussein exhorted continued resistance and promised victory (Rowe, 2003). Although the US military was able to depose the Hussein regime (he was captured on December 13, 2003) and the Ba'ath Party, they were surprised by the unexpected and continued civilian resistance they encountered (Hendrickson & Tucker, 2005). This resistance is commonly referred to as insurgency or "the Insurgents" (Rubin, 2005). US and world media outlets spent much of the latter part of 2003 and 2004 writing about struggles against pockets of insurgency (Cushman, 2004; Marquis, 2004) while Middle-Eastern and non-US media sources wrote about the occupying forces and the death and destruction caused by the US military and coalition forces (Duncan, 2003; Milne, 2004; Thousands protest, 2004). Although victory was proclaimed by President Bush on May 1, 2004, as of this writing, fighting continues in Iraq. According to the National Priorities Project (2006, October 20), the price tag for the war with Iraq is over $336 billion dollars. For comparison, rebuilding the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina is estimated to cost about $200 billion dollars (Weisman & VandeHei, 2005). Civilian casualties have been high, though the exact number is debated. A report by Johns-Hopkins in late 2004 estimates that American forces have killed over 100,000 Iraqi civilians (Roberts, Lafta, Garfield, Khudhairi, & Burnham, 2004). The Iraqi Body Count project (Danchev & MacMillan, 2005) places the current civilian death count more

conservatively somewhere between 44,000 and 49,000. Gilpin (2005) argues that the US has made life in Iraq worse for Iraqi citizens, not better, and that the US's national security is in more jeopardy than ever.

The war with Iraq was predicated on concerns about national security. Secondarily, the war was predicated on issues of human rights (especially after no WMD were found). An important reason promoted for going to war was liberating the citizens of Iraq from an oppressive dictator (Davis, 2006). Liberation has proven to be very expensive, in dollars and lives, particularly when some have argued that the human rights justification for the war in Iraq has been overshadowed by the suffering and oppression it has caused (Iraq: torture continues, 2005). Consider the Cold War citation by Osgood given by Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch (1974) that illustrates a similar matter:

> Our political and military leaders have been virtually unanimous in public assertions that we must go ahead and stay ahead in the armament race; they have been equally unanimous in saying nothing about what happens then. Suppose we achieve the state of ideal mutual deterrence…what then? Surely no sane man can envisage our planet spinning on into eternity, divided into two armed camps poised to destroy each other, and call it peace and security! *The point is that mutual deterrence includes no provisions for its own resolution* [italics original]. (p. 15)

Since the war with Iraq began, US national security has decreased (Abrams & Gungwu, 2003; Gilpin, 2005). Military and homeland security spending have increased while domestic spending has decreased. In addition to spending, State and Justice Department employment has also increased while employment in the domestic Departments of Education, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, Transportation and Treasury has decreased (Barr, 2005). The US

experiences continued threats of terrorism as seen by the evacuation of the New York City subway system in 2005, and greater difficulty responding to these threats and other naturally occurring homeland emergencies such as the hurricane-devastated Gulf Coast (Lack of equipment, 2005). Due to the US's troop commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq, they may be less able to respond to humanitarian disasters such as the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan and the Indian Ocean tsunami catastrophe (Mazzetti, 2005). Canadian and Mexican border security has once again become a source of contention, as has air and seaport security (Our terrorist-friendly borders, 2005). Many US citizens are reluctant to travel overseas as international opinion toward the US has continued to be poor (Knowlton, 2005). Furthermore, individual liberties within the US have been constrained by the Patriot Act. The Department of Homeland Security frequently mines public and private databases in an attempt to develop leads in suspected terrorism plots (Lichtblau, 2005), whereas passengers are thoroughly screened and randomly searched before they board airplanes and utilize mass transit (Terrorism, 2005).

Literature Concerning Iraq War

As this project proceeded, the breadth of literature concerning the US-Iraq War grew steadily. Due to the recency of these events, scholarly literature is limited. In a search of multiple databases for peer reviewed documents discussing the war in Iraq, I found seven scholarly articles, most coming from the political science literature. In addition to these, I found several scholarly reports published by the US Army War College. There are also a growing number of edited books from teams of scholars, largely international, discussing various technical aspects of the war. I relied heavily on these resources for much of the historical overview of the Iraq War. The vast majority of information about the war is in the form of single-author books. Beginning with peer-reviewed articles, I will review this literature.

Several of the articles pose questions that are similar to mine. Scholars are pondering the long term effectiveness of the US's attempt to remove the Hussein regime and establish a democratic government in Iraq. Rubin (2005) takes on this question and concludes that success in Iraq is still within reach. He posits that while post-war Iraq faces many challenges, Iraq's willingness to participate in a new political process indicates important changes. He believes that insurgency is the preeminent challenge facing the Iraqi democracy, but stops short of discussing factors that may be exacerbating the insurgency. Podeh (2005) echoes Rubin's conclusions and explores the impact of the US occupation in Iraq on the rest of the Arab world. He contends that political paralysis, or democracy getting stuck, may ultimately offset other potential positive changes in Iraq. In contrast, a group of researchers from The Brookings Institute (Pollack, 2006), contend that while the war in Iraq was a valuable undertaking, the Bush administration's policy is misguided. Those researchers state that the primary flaw in Iraq has been the lack of security, which they believe will continue unless there are significant changes in strategy. In response to the insurgency, they contend that the US should increases forces in Iraq, from the current 150,000 troops to 450,000 troops.

Both McCartney (2004) and Terrill (2003) discuss how American and Iraqi nationalism, a shared set of values and beliefs, have affected US policy in Iraq. McCartney, writing about US nationalism, argues that the US believes it holds the right to change to world to be more consistent with its values. He rather derisively asserts "Bush's foreign policy is vindicationism, the urge to change the world to make it look and act more like the United States, with a vengeance" (p. 401). McCartney believes that current American nationalism represents an outdated identity that is preventing the US from meeting its national interests. Terrill, who is concerned with Iraqi nationalism, finds that anti-Hussein sentiments among Iraqis have not

translated into love for the US. Furthermore, Terrill is gravely concerned that as Iraqi nationalism undergoes redefinition, it will become increasingly anti-Western and anti-US. He argues that one reason for this possible shift in Iraqi nationalism lies with the US insistence on democracy in Iraq.

> Finally, the United States has a reputation in the Arab World of favoring democracy so long as the democratic process produces leaders acceptable to Western interests….One of the clearest ways the United States can avoid a nationalist backlash is to recognize that ousting Saddam Hussein has not earned for us the privilege of dominating Iraq for the indefinite future. If US leaders believe that it does, then the United States has truly become a colonial power that will inevitably face colonial wars. (p. 37)

Several of the scholarly articles argued, for various reasons, that the US had made a mistake in Iraq. Flockhart (2005) promoted the view that the US's mission in Iraq is bound to fail. Flockhart contends that the current efforts to promote democracy in Iraq are in effect a process of socialization on a national level. Because the US and Iraq are so disparate, the US may not be the most appropriate socializer for Iraq. This should be considered as the US designs policy for Iraq. Moreover, Flockhart notes that since conditions in Iraq remain in flux, long-term judgments of success are difficult to make. Joining Flockhart in this sentiment are scholar participants of a published round table discussion (After the Iraq War, 2003). They conclude that although the war in Iraq appears to be a very important event in the history of the Middle East, "history has taught us that you can't judge the outcome of a conflict from the status quo immediately afterward" (p. 91).

Gilpin (2005) joins the conversation, arguing that the US should have never engaged in a war with Iraq. Gilpin's thrust is that an overwhelming number of security professionals were

against the war, namely from the CIA, American military, and Foreign Service. Bush chose war

despite these opinions. Gilpin goes on to argue that Bush was responding to the desires of part

of his constituency, conservative Evangelical Christians.   Gilpin concludes his critique with

"[T]he preemptive war against Iraq, launched ostensibly to eliminate Iraq's alleged [WMD] and

its links to international terrorism, has actually greatly increased the magnitude of the terrorist

threat to the United States and other societies" (p. 5).

One of the most relevant publications to my study was a comparison of Iraq war coverage

in two different international newspapers (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2005). The authors, Swedish

scholars, conducted a content analysis using the *New York Times* (NYT) and the premier

newspaper in Sweden as their sources of comparison. They examined articles published in these

two sources during the "official war period," between March 20, 2003 and May 1, 2003 (p. 399).

They found what they considered to be important distinctions between the two news sources.

They concluded that the NYT was more objective, balanced, and neutral in its war coverage than

the Swedish newspaper. Furthermore, their content analysis revealed that the NYT relied

heavily on official government and military sources.

There are several monograph publications from the Strategic Studies Institute (SSI), a

research institute of the US Army War College. These publications generally contain some of

the most current information available. One such monograph was Beckett's (2005) publication

describing the history of insurgency in Iraq. He compares Iraq's insurgency with other

insurgencies, and contrasts Iraq's resistance movement with guerilla warfare. He concludes that

insurgency is widely thought to be an effective method achieving power and influencing political

processes. Like the aforementioned Brookings Institute report (Pollack, 2006), Beckett also

acknowledges that a successful counterinsurgency movement requires many more troops than are currently in Iraq.

Two other SSI publications arguing from different positions posit that the US has blundered in Iraq. Due to poor war planning, post-war planning, and natural consequences of war, the US squandered an opportunity to make a significant change in Iraq (Hendrickson & Tucker, 2005). The authors cite violence, a failed state, and a decimated economy as the most considerable problems in Iraq, but they fail to blame any of those problems on mistakes made by the Bush administration. Reiter (2005) argues that the war in Iraq failed to accomplish its goals. He contends that historically, preventive wars have been largely unsuccessful at reducing the proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. Reiter believes that both deterrence and diplomacy have had more appreciable results, and that furthermore, the money spent on preventive war could better be spent on security measures.

In addition to these scholarly publications, there are a myriad of popular books being published on the Iraq War. These largely exhibit two characteristics. The procedures for data collection and analysis used to support their conclusions are not described at all or in very little detail. Second, their conclusions generally fall into one of two camps: (a) the US was justified in invading Iraq and the world is better off without Saddam Hussein, or (b) the US was unjustified in invading Iraq and has caused incalculable damage despite the fact that the world is better off without Hussein. The sophistication of their arguments and their levels of cynicism vary widely from publication to publication. I can safely say that I found no article or book that undertook the size of data collection and qualitative analysis that I have employed. Furthermore, and harking back to the introduction, I have no interest in joining either of these two camps, though I

am sure that I have. My intention is not to blame, but to gain some small understanding of this complex international relationship, and contribute to the understanding of others.

Overview of Cybernetics

Cybernetics is the study of self-regulating, self-correcting, or self-steering systems (Nichols & Schwartz, 2001) or as Keeney (1983) describes it, the study of patterns within systems. Cyberneticians, those who study cybernetics, are interested in recursive processes that guide system functioning. A recursive process may be understood, for example, as a cycle maintained by its parts (see Table 1 for definitions of terms). Influenced largely by the work of Norbert Wiener (1954) with military munitions, Gregory Bateson (1972) was the first social scientist to apply the concept of self-regulation to human systems and families. Information is produced by the system, which is then fed back into the system in order to regulate the system and to maintain a stable condition known as homeostasis. This flow of self-regulating information is known as feedback loops. The information from past and present performance is funneled back into the system (by the system) to determine future performance, or to self-correct. Wiener described this process as learning (Keeney, 1983). According to cybernetics, feedback is required and responsible for all change, even the kind of change that is required to maintain the status quo, or homeostasis (Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 1974). The classic example of such change is when a thermostat turns on or off (change) in response to the room's temperature (feedback) in order to maintain a stable, predetermined temperature (homeostasis). The system therefore institutes change (thermostat turns on) so that stability is achieved (very little variation in room's temperature).

Table 1

Description of key terms

Term	Description
Recursive	Processes that have two or more interdependent parts whose existence is dependent on the existence of the other part(s).
Linear Causation	Generally speaking, seeing only one part of a recursive process.
Circular Causation	Recursive processes at work. Causation via a sequence of events recursively related.
Stability	A system that is generating small adaptive changes in order to maintain equilibrium or homeostasis.
Homeostasis	A stable system. Homeostatic systems are necessarily neither healthy nor unhealthy, but can be either.
Feedback	The mechanism by which information is directed back into the system so that the system can correct and maintain itself.
First-order change	Changes that systems make in order to maintain the predominate homeostatic state. First-order changes are those that maintain problems or solutions, depending on the current homeostatic state.
Second-order change	Most literally, a change in the system's way of changing, rules of the system. These are changes that lead to system

	reorganization.
Punctuation	Theoretical boundaries. Subjectively distinguishing between what something is and what it is not. Punctuation is necessary for understanding and classifying.
Redundancy	Repetitious behavior or sequences. Can be both problem and solution maintaining. Redundancy is necessary for maintaining homeostasis, but often prevents system members from being able to successfully adjust to changing circumstances.

While systems theory in general focuses on how patterns of relationships guide system organization (Nichols & Swartz, 2001), cybernetics is uniquely concerned with recursive sequences (Keeney, 1983). Recursive processes are those that have two or more interdependent parts whose existence is dependent on the other parts. A classic therapy example of recursion is the husband who withdraws when his wife nags. He says, "I wouldn't withdraw if she didn't nag." She says, "I wouldn't nag if you didn't withdraw." Both parts of this recursive sequence only exist as long as the other part exists. A therapist using a recursive frame focuses on the recursive relationship of a problem and attempts to solve the problem. The problem may be described as "anxiety." However, further investigation may show that anxiety is actually the solution to another problem, like marital conflict ("When I'm really anxious, we don't fight").

Although some describe cybernetics as a theoretical influence from marriage and family therapy's past (Nichols & Swartz, 2001), others describe it as an epistemology, or an overarching philosophy of knowing (Bateson, 1972; Keeney, 1983). For Bateson and later

Keeney, this epistemology is one of circular causality, which attempts to describe the causation of phenomena via a sequence of events that are recursively related. Contrast this with linear causality, which focuses on one distinct part of the recursive process. Cybernetics incorporates the reciprocal nature of causation into the analysis of systems.

Cybernetics upholds that all systems seek stability or *homeostasis*, but does not assume that homeostasis is problematic. Homeostasis is a description of stability rather than health, and therefore a homeostatic system could be either healthy or unhealthy, but it must be stable. Mental Research Institute (MRI) pioneers Watzlawick, et al. (1974) draw a distinction between *difficulties* and *problems*. From a cybernetic perspective, difficulties are those everyday challenges that all systems face without loss of homeostasis through adaptation. They refer to these challenges as *perturbations*, which constitute external opportunities to adapt. Conversely, problems develop as systems fail to adapt to these perturbations, thus remaining static. If the system is unable to adjust to these environmental changes, generally, problems develop. Problems interrupt feedback that the system uses to regulate itself. While the information needed to drive the system toward healthy functioning is interrupted, information driving negative feedback (changes maintaining stability) increases or becomes more reinforcing of the problem. This is accomplished by recursively looping change-reducing information through the system. For example, consider the depressed person. People suffering with depression (symptom) often exhibit decreased social contact and lethargy. Depression often convinces sufferers that they are too tired to exercise and spend time with other people (negative feedback). Therefore they withdraw from two changes that are useful in countering depression – physical activity and social contact. It is no wonder that even in the face of intense pressure and pain, systems often will continue to reproduce the same problem-maintaining behaviors.

All systems are perturbed yet seek to remain unchanged (homeostatic). This resistance to certain perturbations can generate problems. As systems seek homeostasis in the face of significantly changing environmental conditions, solutions become problems. In the aforementioned example of a depressed person, a problem-maintaining solution was to respond to lethargy with inactivity and social withdrawal. Yet, these solutions inadvertently maintain the problem. A person may very well believe that he or she needs to rest or be alone in order to get better, however both of these only work to sustain his/her depression. The solution to remain the same, or the solution to do more of the same, soon becomes the problem of inflexibility and lack of resourcefulness when change is necessary.

First-order change

Cybernetics proposes two forms of change known as first- and second-order change (See Table 2 for descriptions). Both are critically important to system functioning, depending on needs and goals of the system. System stability is maintained through first-order change. This is accomplished by negative feedback – information created and used by the system to promote stability and preserve the status quo. It is important to remember that negative in this case does not necessarily mean bad; it simply refers to the kind of feedback used to resist change. Therefore, it is accurate to conceptualize the adaptive system as undergoing change that promotes stability. This may seem paradoxical; how can change produce *not change*? As Cadwallader (1959) contends:

> Some kinds of stability do negate certain kinds of change. What has been overlooked is
>
> that at least one category of stability depends upon and is the consequence of change.
>
> Just this kind of stability is the prime interest to cybernetics. (p. 154-155)

He refers to these systems as "ultrastable systems" (p. 155).

Maintaining stability through adaptation is critical for understanding first-order change. Without first-order changes, the system/organism/person/family cannot maintain itself in its environment. The system must undergo first-order change in response to external perturbation in order to maintain stability. However, without second-order change, the system/organism/person/family has no chance to survive and grow in the presence of significant external perturbation. In the context of Hurricane Katrina's effect on families in New Orleans, some families were much more able to make the necessary first-order changes, including gathering sufficient supplies and evacuating or seeking appropriate shelter. Those families able to make these first-order changes without exhausting their resources, were better able to make the necessary second-order changes, including temporary or permanent relocation, extended sustenance of supplies, and reconstruction.

Described above, first-order change is the kind of change that allows a system to maintain stability through small, adaptive changes. These are systemic adjustments necessary to resist perturbations. System members may change or act differently, but if the system maintains homeostatic functioning, the change was first-order. Consider the rebellious teenager (problem) who belongs to the controlling (problem) family. In an attempt to "crack down" on the teen, the family becomes more rigid (first-order change). In response, the teen become more rebellious (first-order change), which works to maintain the system's stability.

Second-order change

Cyberneticians believe that healthy functioning within a system is achievable and frequently demonstrated by social systems (Keeney, 1983; Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 1974). All systems face environmental pressures that require adjustment, modification, response, or change. Systems that are able to respond to these demands without sacrificing or

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pathologizing a member of the system are considered healthy. Systems that are under particular chronic pressures, and are able to make structural changes in response to such pressures are also healthy. This is the basis for cybernetic second-order change (Watzlawick et al, 1974). Both changes that lead to problem formation and to problem resolution are considered to be second-order changes (Keeney, 1983). Second-order changes produce a new homeostatic state for the system, and therefore do not necessarily produce healthy functioning. Second-order change occurs as the rules (Nichols & Swartz, 2001) or patterns (Keeney, 1983) that govern system interaction and communication change. For example, a couple frequently fights about the strain of their finances (environmental pressure). Both members also make purchases soon after a fight in order to soothe themselves (first-order changes). These purchases do nothing but give the couple more to fight about. While browsing a bookstore after a fight, the wife finds some information on family budgeting. This purchase leads to better money management, increased expendable income, and a decrease in the number of financial fights the couple engages in. The latter purchase is an example of second-order, system-restructuring change.

But how is second-order change achieved? Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch (1974) in their book, *Change*, offer a few ideas. The first-order "solution" that is maintaining the problem must be stopped. Once a solution transforms into a problem-maintaining symptom, it must cease. Simply stopping a problem-maintaining behavior contributes to systemic or second-order change. In addition, the rules and patterns that created a situation in which first-order solutions could become present problems need to be identified, evaluated, and reconfigured. These processes, these reconfigurations, represent second-order changes that are capable of reorganizing the system to potentially healthier functioning.

In addition to first-order and second-order *change*, cyberneticians often use the terms first- and second-order *cybernetics* (See Table 2 for descriptions). First- and second-order change occurs in both first- and second-order cybernetics. The difference between the two lies with the position of the observer. First-order cybernetics, sometimes called *simple cybernetics*, describes a system in which a transcendent observer views system sequences and makes changes without interacting in the system. Keeney (1983, p. 73) refers to this as "black box" cybernetics, characteristic of a period in time in which researchers studied the recursive relationship between the input and output of a system without seeing themselves as participants in the system. A mythical (and highly desirable) self-steering car would be an example of first-order black box cybernetics, in which the role of human (driver) is not evident, but the involvement of humans for the design and engineering of the car is critical. An automobile's cruise control is a more realistic example.

Table 2

Descriptions of first- and second-order change, and first- and second-order cybernetics

Term	Description
First-order change	Change that maintains the stability of the system and preserves the status quo
Second-order change	Change that promotes reorganization within the system, leading to a different homeostatic state
First-order cybernetics	"simple cybernetics" A view of cybernetics in which the observer is outside of the observed system.

	Focus: Mechanical Systems
Second-order cybernetics	"modern cybernetics" or "Sociocybernetics"
	A view of cybernetics in which the observer is part of the
	observed system.
	Focus: Social Systems

Second-order cybernetics, or cybernetics of cybernetics, positions the observer within the system being observed. While first-order cybernetics had a mechanistic emphasis, second-order cybernetics, a term coined in 1970 by Heinz von Foerster in a paper delivered to the American Society for Cybernetic, historically has focused on social systems. Second-order cybernetics represents a position held by early cyberneticians such as Weiner, Bateson, and Margaret Mead: that first-order cybernetics posits a shallow punctuation, a subjective distinction between what is and what is not necessary for the analyses of simpler systems (Keeney, 1983). While first-order cybernetics allowed theorists to address basic feedback mechanisms, second-order cybernetics allows them to address "cognition, dialogues, [and] socio-cultural interaction" (Howe & von Foerster, 1974, p. 16). Geyer (1998), past honorary president of the Research Committee on Sociocybernetics, recorded that von Foerster defined first-order cybernetics as the cybernetics of observed systems, and second-order cybernetics as the cybernetics of observing systems. In other words, second-order cybernetics specifically includes the observer in the system under study. More generally, it also focuses on living systems including human social systems. Umpleby (1994) contends that there are important consequences of this difference. Living systems have what Maturana and Varela (1987) termed *autopoiesis* or self-production, and can therefore produce their own information needed for regulation. In other words, human systems

are active agents rather than merely reactive to external stimuli. Because of this, living systems are inherently more difficult to steer or predict than mechanical systems. Therefore, some second-order cyberneticians and those applying cybernetic epistemology to human systems (sociocybernetics), are less interested in forecasting system behavior and more focused on describing and understanding system organization and complexity. To summarize, second-order cybernetics describes human systems, be it an individual or a group, as having the ability to respond in a self-reflective manner to both external influences on the system and recursive influences (feedback) within the system.

Summary

Cybernetics is the study of how systems use information to regulate themselves. It has often been reduced to a very simple metaphor – the thermostat. I believe from the writings of Cadwallader (1959), Bateson (1972), Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch (1974), and Keeney (1983, 1985) that metaphor does not capture the full meaning of cybernetics. I propose what these early cyberneticians were discussing was an epistemology, a system of knowing, that could describe the interaction of both simple and complex systems. Although cybernetic processes have been demonstrated to occur in both simple and more complex social systems (families), little has been done with larger systems, including societies and international relationships. Cybernetic analysis at any level would focus primarily on the process by which information is fed back into the system and how this changes the system. Conceptually, any system, indiscriminate of its size and complexity, is governed by the principles of cybernetics (Keeney, 1983). All systems seek stability, and use various forms of change to maintain stability. Therefore even systems involving societies or nations could be analyzed cybernetically. This

could lead to a greater understanding of how and why large systems do what they do, and possibly predict of what would occur next in the system.

Chapter III

Methods

In this chapter I will provide an overview of the methodology, including the techniques of grounded theory, used to complete this study. I will also discuss how grounded theory is appropriate for investigating cybernetic processes. The remainder of the chapter will describe in detail how the data was selected and analyzed.

Description of Grounded Theory

The concepts of grounded theory (GT) (Glaser, 2001; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) were first developed by Glaser and Strauss and described in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967). Using GT, theory is generated from the systematic, inductive analysis of observed data rather than from the deduction of a priori assumptions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Essentially, theory is generated from the "ground up" (R. Chenail, personal communication, April 2, 2006). Described another way, GT is a scientific methodology specifically designed to produce theory grounded by data (Strauss & Corbin, 1994), and increase of the trustworthiness of the subsequent results (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). As Patton (2002) writes, the critical question for the researcher considering grounded theory is "What theory emerges from systematic comparative analysis and is grounded in fieldwork so as to explain what has been and is observed" (p. 125)?

Taking qualitative data, usually interview transcripts, historical documents, or other forms of qualitative media, the researcher reads the documents, noticing the ways in which the data cluster into themes. While constantly comparing incidences and eventually making theoretical comparisons, the researcher asks questions of the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), such as how is this incident similar or different from that incident? In what ways are these incidents

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related? How do these incidents theoretically converge or diverge? Constantly comparing data with data, and data with theory, are essential components of GT. In this particular study, I compared multiple elements of the war in Iraq. Furthermore, theoretically, I compared international relations with family therapy, asking "how is the war in Iraq like family conflict?"

Whereas constant comparison through questioning is a general, underlying component of GT, there are also many specific techniques that comprise GT. As alluded to above, fundamentally, the researcher is reading qualitative data. Strauss and Corbin (1998) write that the inaugural analytic technique for GT is microanalysis. They describe microanalysis as "the detailed line-by-line analysis necessary at the beginning of a study to generate initial categories…" (1998, p. 57). Open coding is the form of microanalysis in which categories and their properties, dimensions, and subcategories are identified. This largely involves classifying segments of the text, be it phrases, sentences, or paragraphs into thematic categories. Finally, axial coding entails relating subcategories to categories, or arranging dimensions and properties of categories around the axis of a category (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Modified Grounded Theory

Researchers using a pure form of grounded theory would seek to generate theory from data. They would resist using a theory to inform their data selection, data coding, or understanding of results (Ron Chenail, personal communication, April 2, 2006; Glazer & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Glaser and Strauss (1967) write about a researcher remaining *theoretically sensitive* [italics original] by not relying on pre-established theory:

> The researcher must be able to conceptualize and formulate theory as it emerges from the data. Theoretical sensitivity is lost when the researcher commits himself exclusively to one specific preconceived theory for then he becomes doctrinaire and can no longer see

around either his pet theory or any other. He becomes insensitive, or even defensive, toward the kinds of questions that cast doubt on his theory; he is preoccupied with testing, modifying, and seeing everything from this one angle. For this person, theory will seldom truly emerge from data. In the few instances where theory does emerge, the preconceived theory is likely to be readily dropped or forgotten because it now seems irrelevant to the data. (p.46-47)

The researcher may begin with a partial framework that guides the work, but eventually categories emerge from the data itself. If the pre-established theory is not expressed in the data, eventually it must be set aside so that the data can speak for itself, so that theory can emerge. In addition, the emerging theory drives data selection for GT. This is known as *theoretical sampling* and is complicated when using secondary or archival data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I am not using a pure form of GT, as I am using an accepted theory to inform my data analysis. For this project, cybernetics was a sensitizing concept (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) in that it gave "meaning to the events and happenings in the data" (p. 46). It made me more sensitive to relationships within the data. Specifically, I looked for evidence of cybernetic ideas within this data, using GT techniques. If cybernetic processes are not represented in this data, than, as Glazer and Strauss (1967) put it, "the preconceived theory [will be] readily dropped or forgotten because it now seems irrelevant to the data" (p. 47). Because I did not use a pure GT, from this point forward I will refer to my analysis as a "modified grounded theory" (R. Chenail, personal communication, April 4, 2006; Davis, 2005).

Grounded Theory and Cybernetics

In Denzin and Lincoln's book, *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (1994), Strauss and Corbin write an overview of grounded theory methodology, and talk at length about the various

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uses of this method (p.275). According to GT, theory is defined as "plausible relationships" between concepts (p.278). "Theories are embedded 'in history'" (p.280). Grounded theory therefore breaks open historical reports to discover the embedded theory. I plan to use GT to extract embedded themes from some of the historical reports concerning the war in Iraq. Because cybernetics is a sensitizing theory for this project, I will also be using GT to identify recursive sequences between and among themes, if at all present. Strauss and Corbin wrote, "Grounded theory researchers are interested in patterns of action and interaction among various types of social units" (p.278). Their description of grounded theory with an interest in patterns and process is similar to cybernetics' interest in pattern and sequence, thus there seems to be a good fit between my sensitizing theory (cybernetics) and my chosen methodology (GT).

There are several other similarities between cybernetics and GT. Cybernetics, particularly second-order cybernetics, draws attention to the interaction between observed and observer. Ground theory similarly focuses on the interaction of the researcher and the data. Cybernetics identifies sequences and patterns of interaction, as does GT's emphasis on coding for process. GT's use of the inductive/deductive cycle is itself an element of cybernetic recursion. In Strauss and Corbin's (1998) chapter on *coding for process* (p. 163-179), they write "rather than analyzing data for properties and dimensions, we are looking at action/interaction and tracing it over time to note how and if it changes or what enables it to remain the same with changes in structural conditions" (p. 163). They ask, "What is the process?" and define process as "sequences of evolving action/interaction, changes in which can be traced to changes in structural conditions" (p. 163). This is essentially the task of a cybernetic analysis. The more I read Strauss and Corbin the more I am convinced that GT is the premier means for doing cybernetic research.

Data

If I were attempting to study the relationship between a couple in therapy, I would have several options for data. I could conduct interviews with the couple. I could interview their therapist, their family members, and their acquaintances. I could observe the couple at home in their natural environment. I could observe them in therapy using thick description (Patton, 2002) to describe their interactions and behavior. The couple could participate in standardized outcome measurement. However, for this project, I am attempting to study the relationship between the governments and citizens of two sovereign nations. From where then should my data come?

Rationale for data selection

Due to the limitations of this project, direct observation of the war in Iraq was impossible, as were direct interviews of participants (high-ranking government officials, soldiers, insurgents, and citizens). I considered using officially sanctioned statements from both governments, in the form of press releases. Official government press releases would have been appropriate for studying international relationships and the internal functioning of governments (Robinson, 2000). Press releases are useful in that they carry the authority of the government producing them. They are limiting in that much of that information will be classified due to the immediacy of the events. In addition, Iraqi press releases would be difficult to obtain. The US government officially releases a preponderance of information in comparison to the Iraqi government. Using press releases would result in a plethora of data from the US government, and very little data from the Iraqi government. I needed a data source that could do what I could not do: interview the key people involved and observe behavior, both in the US and in Iraq. The media performs this function, and they record their information as news articles. The press

constantly monitors the actions of the parties within the system. Therefore I chose to use newspaper articles as my fundamental data source.

The first real problem I faced in searching for print media articles regarding the war in Iraq was limiting the vast number of documents I was finding. If 100 articles are written daily for four years, I would be coding nearly 150,000 documents. Therefore I had to develop reasonable inclusion/exclusion criteria for data sources. I first chose to limit my search to only three major news outlets. I also wanted to include an Iraqi or middle-eastern news source but their archival availability is inaccessible to me at this time. For example, Al Jazeera has a rudimentary archival feature on the website but it contains only selected articles. Therefore I chose to use articles from the *New York Times* (NYT), the *Washington Post* (WP), and the *International Herald Tribune* (IHT). I chose news sources that were considered *papers of record*, and were acclaimed for their international news coverage. Articles produced by these sources are entered into the LexisNexis database almost immediately. This prevents post-hoc editing by the news agencies based on new information. Because I wanted to investigate the relationship between the US and Iraqi governments, I chose to limit my included documents to only those that quoted or paraphrased both Iraqi and US officials in the same article. Third, I limited my search to a specific time period; from January 1, 2001 to December 31, 2005.

Political scientists are well versed in using media sources as data, most commonly print media (Woolley, 2000). Woolley reports that many scholars who are studying military conflicts and other political events are "utilizing data originally drawn from newspaper accounts," (p. 156). He goes on to conclude that although media is used as a source of data, it should be used even more frequently in public policy studies. In an article using similar methodology, Mowle (2003) argues that public statements are a form of observable behavior. Public statements

therefore qualify as a form of the information appropriate to conduct a cybernetic analysis. Furthermore, Mowle contends that public statements are reliable for determining policy and attitudinal trends, as well as for making evaluations about the statements.

In one study attempting to measure the impact of the media on policy decisions, Robinson (2000) examined two international humanitarian crises. In both cases he chose the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and *CBS Evening News* as his sources. Referring to the NYT and WP, Robinson (2000) wrote "they are the most influential of the dailies" (p. 619). He selected the articles using LexisNexis data, and arranged them chronologically, while ensuring that he had articles from each day of the week. "This provided a non-biased sample" (p. 619). In a similar study investigating the power of media to shape foreign policy, Auerbach and Bloch-Elkon (2005) also utilized the NYT and WP. They contend that "among the prominent dailies in the realm of security and foreign policy affairs, the WP and NYT stand out. These specific newspapers are incontestably the main elite press sources for the [US's] foreign policy decision makers" (p. 85). For this study I have chosen to use the NYT and WP as my data sources. Based upon the limited number of articles that I was finding from the NYT, I chose to include a third daily, the *International Herald Tribune* (IHT). The LexisNexis database describes the IHT as "the premier international newspaper…for decision makers around the world." The IHT shares many resources with the NYT. In fact, each article that was added to the data set from IHT lists the *New York Times* as its source.

Sampling procedures

Using the LexisNexis database, an "encyclopedic" (Woolley, 2000) academic full-text print media storage site, I was able to identify documents pertinent to my research. LexisNexis allows users to search in specific media sources, the NYT, WP, and IHT in my case. It also

provides flexible search options so that researchers can identify documents that meet their inclusion criteria. While considering potential search terms, I met with a university librarian who helped me determine the most commonly used journalistic terms regarding my topic. This greatly improved the efficiency and effectiveness of my search. I initially searched for documents in my three media sources between 2001 and 2005 that contained the terms "Iraq! official! said" (quotation marks necessary) and "US official! said". Using the truncation character (!) allows LexisNexis to find various forms of the term, such as Iraq, Iraqi, or Iraqis. As formerly mentioned, I was specifically looking for documents describing the relationship between the US and Iraqi governments and the ongoing war between them. I therefore wanted documents that contained quotes or information from both of the governments.

    While reading through my search results, I also noted that the phrase "Iraqi and US officials said" was a common phrase and needed to be included in my initial broad search. Therefore I included "Iraq! and US official! said" as an alternative (*or*) search term. Subsequently, I also needed to repeat the entire search substituting "US and Iraq! official! said" as a second alternative (*or*) search string. This preliminary search identified 135 documents containing both of the phrases "Iraq! official! said" and "US official! said", or one of two phrases "Iraq! and US official! said," or "US and Iraq! official! said." However, while browsing through the documents, I noted that not all of the documents identified actually met the inclusion criteria. Documents may have contained the phrase "Iraqi official" yet not provided a quote from that official. For example, many articles stated something like "an Iraqi official was killed today in a roadside attack," or "a US official travels to London to discuss the upcoming referendum in Iraq." Another example that had to be culled out was a statement like "…barring trade with Iraq. [US] Officials said Tuesday…" LexisNexis' *KWIC* (key word in context)

feature allowed me to quickly view the location of my search terms within the context of the article. Seventy-six documents met all of the inclusion criteria and were added to the data pool.

Data handling and storage

Once I culled through documents and identified those that met inclusion criteria, I began downloading and saving the documents as text files. I assigned each document an ID code using the date and source of publication. The identifier began with the year of publication, then the month and day, and was concluded by either WP for *Washington Post*, NY for *New York Times*, or IH for *International Herald Tribune*. Labeling documents first by year allowed me to sort documents into yearly categories. This was useful for reading and coding the documents chronologically. A typical data file ID code looked like "040116WP" which identified the January 16, 2004 article from the Washington Post.

I printed each article, along with an index list, for storage in a binder. It was on these hard-copies of the articles that I began reading and coding (I discuss coding procedures below). I organized the documents into some preliminary categories: year and publication. Although I included 2001 within my search range, I did not find any articles from that year, and only three from 2002. The majority of the articles were from 2003 and 2004. See Table 3 for a distribution of data by year and source, and see Table 4 for distribution of data by day of the week.

Table 3

Distribution of data by year and source

	Source			
Year	*WP*	*IHT*	*NYT*	Total
2002	3	0	0	3
2003	23	5	0	28
2004	18	11	1	30
2005	6	8	1	15
Totals	*50*	*24*	*2*	*76*

Table 4

Distribution of data by day of the week

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	*Total*
15	10	12	12	13	7	7	*76*

Due to the large amount of qualitative data contained in seventy-six hard-copy print media documents, I have used a software solution to manage this data. Storing hundreds of pages of documents is problematic, where as software can store the same data in a much more usable format. I imported each of the seventy-six individual documents into N6 for electronic coding. N6, formerly NUD*IST, is particularly designed to handle large amounts of qualitative data. It has been linked specifically with GT methodology, and "makes analysis more visible, thereby enhancing transparency…" (Crowley, Harre & Tagg, 2202, p. 193). N6 can store the

documents, track codes, sort coded documents, and produce multiple output reports. See McDougall, Kerr, and Espie (2005) for a similar use of NUD*IST software.

The following is an excerpt from my journal that I used to document my research experience.

I am very satisfied with the diversity of the data. The daily frequencies are particularly pleasing. I didn't expect much from 2001. I expected a little more from 2002, since the war in Afghanistan was ensuing. Iraq was officially invaded by the US led coalition forces on March 20, 2003. Therefore, it's of no surprise that the majority of the documents are from 2003 and later. I am very surprised that my search returned so few documents from the *NYT*. I fear that I may have chosen search terms that were not commonly used by *NYT* journalists, which could be a serious problem. I am very satisfied with the number of documents from the *IHT*, particularly since its source is the *NYT*.

Just handling the data in this way has certainly encouraged and inspired me. Becoming immersed in these documents should afford me a unique peek into the intricacies of the Iraq War. I look forward into delving into this information, mining it for cybernetic codes (acknowledging my bias of the presence of cybernetic codes). I'm looking for recursion; and I believe that I'll find it. That's what my MFT training has prepared me to do with families. Let's see how it works with nations! (March 30, 2006)

Analysis

I began this modified GT by reading each document "line-by-line" (Struass & Corbin, 1998, pg. 57). Strauss and Corbin (1998) refer to this procedure as "microanalysis" (pg. 57), and define it as the "detailed analysis necessary at the beginning of the study to generate initial

categories." I organized and read the documents chronologically, beginning in 2003 and

proceeding through December 2005. For this part of the analysis, I read and hand-coded the hard

copies of each of the documents stored in the three-ringed binder. Using a red pen, I made notes

in the margins that formed my preliminary themes or nodes as they are referred to in N6.

Conceptually, according to the N6 help section, a node is like an entry in the index of a book,

while a code would refer to the corresponding page number. If the node is *cybernetics*, the code

tells where that node can be found within the data. As I read the data and jotted notes, I

frequently returned to descriptions of GT, both from the writings of Strauss and Corbin and from

other published journal articles that utilized GT, to ensure that my procedures closely modeled

published GT procedures. I read each article, noting preliminary themes. I estimate that this

initial process took sixty to eighty hours.

In addition to coding data and reading published descriptions of GT, I also kept a running

journal cataloguing my procedures. This is similar to *audit trailing*, or the intentional

cataloguing of research decisions and assumptions to "minimize bias and maximize accuracy"

(Patton, 2002, p. 93). I used this document to record my experiences, insights, and struggles.

Throughout the data analysis and writing process, I frequently referred back to this document,

noting the evolution of my ideas and specification of my procedures. The following is an

excerpt from my journal:

> I'm at a unique stage in data analysis. I'm certainly feeling the interplay between
>
> inductive and deductive analysis. By the way, I don't start as a blank slate; an analyst
>
> with no prior knowledge or opinion of the phenomenon. I bring into *my* [italics originial]
>
> initial/preliminary analysis *my* values (killing is bad, war is to be avoided) and theoretical
>
> assumptions (there are cybernetic forces present). Then, I dig into the data, reading every

word, allow the emergent themes and major ideas to wash over me. I ask, what's this word/phrase/sentence/paragraph/article about? I find something in the data that sparks a series of ideas or questions in me. When I have questions, I need additional information. I go searching for it (theoretical sampling of sorts). What I find gets incorporated into my understanding of the phenomenon. This new understanding or hypothesis couples with themes that have already been emerging from the data. This shapes what I read in the next article (deductive analysis). Soon, I see very little that's new. Soon, most of the data fits into preexperienced categories. Soon, theory begins to emerge.

My experience seems to fit closesly with the process of GT described in the notes section of Denzin and Lincoln (1994):

A related point, raised by another reviewer, is that "researchers often *write* [italics original] as though order were implicit…and inhered in the data, when what they really meant was that order emerged from interaction between the researcher, his/her data, and some theoretical sensitivity suggested by the original research question." That is exactly the point! (p. 284).

Strauss and Corbin (1998) describe this relationship between inductive and deductive analysis as an "interplay" (p. 137). Using an inducitve approach, one digs into the data, looking for emergent themes and breaking apart the data into emergent codes. Once themes emerge inductively, themes are applied to subsequent data, which is essentially a deductive process. Themes are constantly compared to newer data, examined for fit, and modifications made as necessary. In addition, Strauss and Corbin acknowledge that researchers' theoretical assumptions and knowledge of the literature can affect their reading of the data, which is why constantly comparing "one piece of data with another" is so important (p. 137).

Whereas microanalysis is GT's mechanism for both open and axial coding, open coding refers specifically to identifying the naturally occurring themes or concepts in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, pg. 101). As I read the data, I noticed that it could be lumped into categories. For example the following is an except from article 030612WP (June 12, 2003, Washington Post):

US military forces, responding to increasingly frequent and lethal attacks by Iraqi gunmen, staged a major operation this week aimed at rounding up suspected Saddam Hussein loyalists in this Tigris River town 45 miles north of Baghdad, US officials said today.

I coded that section of data as "US Ops," or as fitting under the theme of United States military operations inside of Iraq. I found that with this data, the unit of analysis (word, sentence, paragraph) varied widely within the article.

Whereas open coding refers to categorizing data into themes, it also refers to identifying the properties and dimensions of and between the themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Properties are what define a category, what makes a paragraph "US Ops" versus "Iraqi Ops." Dimensions are the range of a category, or all the different forms of "US Ops." For me, the process of discovering the properties and dimensions of my codes occurred concurrently with microanalysis and continued through axial coding. Refining the boundaries (properties) and descriptions (dimensions) of codes and sub-codes was an ongoing, continual process.

After reading through the hard-copies of every document and making notes in the margins, I then entered all of these codes into N6. N6 allows users to organize data into concepts, or nodes they are termed in N6 (Crowley, Harre, & Tagg, 2002). The nature of the concepts and their relationship to other nodes can be analyzed more efficiently. This process probably took an additional thirty hours. Next I began reading the data in categories. Whereas I

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had been reading entire articles chronologically, I now began reading all of the data coded under one category. For me, this was the final stage of open coding, in which I ensured that the data were correctly coded and that sub-codes were correctly gathered under their respective category. This was also the beginning of axial coding. Strauss and Corbin (1998) describe axial coding as "the process of relating categories to their sub-categories…linking categories (or codes) at the level of properties of dimensions" (pg. 123).

I continued to analyze data until each code reached saturation. A code is considered saturated when no new information about the code emerges from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The majority of codes in this project were saturated by the time I got into the data from early 2005. Data from later 2005 really added nothing new to the codes. It was through these largely simultaneously-occurring analytic processes: analytic induction, constant comparison, microanalysis, open coding, and axial coding, that I completed this modified grounded theory. It was through these processes that I derived the themes that I will delineate in the following chapter.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

How are we to know if the process that I used to complete this analysis is adequate for achieving credible and trustworthy results? I employed several strategies throughout this study to help ensure trustworthiness. As previously mentioned, I maintained a journal that recorded the evolution of this project. I used this journal in two specific ways to improve credibility (Patton, 2002). First, I used this document to acknowledge and monitor my biases. I attempted to explicitly state my bias, and then monitor how it affected my reading of the data. I believe that this process helped to limit the impact of my biases on my interpretation of the data. Second, I used this journal to record procedural decisions throughout the development and

writing process. For instance, I recorded how and why I chose the data that I chose. I believe

that recording my procedures and justifying these decisions helped to ensure that I maintained a

credible research protocol.

In addition to using the journal, I found other ways to increase trustworthiness.

Consistent with GT methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), I continually sought to compare

emerging themes with new data. If new data does not match with the emerging theme, the theme

has to incorporate this new dimension. Similarly, during my analysis I frequently returned to

Strauss and Corbin's description of GT procedures. I sought to constantly compare my

procedures with descriptions of GT, ensuring that I followed GT methodology as close as

possible. Finally, I used a software solution (N6) to manage the qualitative data and emerging

themes, which worked to ensure that codes and sub-codes were well organized and inclusive.

Using Secondary Data

I used archival data for this project in the form of newspaper articles. This information

was collected for one purpose (to report the news) and I am using it for a different purpose, that

is to cybernetically describe the relationship between the US and Iraq. This study would be

considered a supra analysis of secondary qualitative data (Heaton, 2004). In the book *Reworking*

Qualitative Data (2004), Heaton describes various types of secondary analyses using qualitative

data. Heaton describes a "supra analysis" as one that "transcends the focus of the primary study

from which the data were derived, examining new empirical, theoretical, or methodological

questions" (p. 38). Heaton describes how GT methodology can be used with secondary data and

refers to Strauss and Corbin (1998). Strauss and Corbin contend that GT methodology handles

secondary data essentially the same way that it handles primary data, through open and axial

coding.

Role of the Researcher

I believe that who I am as a person; my experiences, my values, my beliefs, has some impact on the research questions I pose, the methodology I use, and the results I find. I refer to these as my biases, which work to direct my eyes to certain data while excluding other relevant data. While I do not believe that I can set aside my biases and be completely objective, being aware of my biases and acknowledging them in the research process improves my ability to inclusively see the data more fully, for what it is rather than simply what I want it to be. In this spirit, I want to acknowledge some of my biases as they relate to this project.

Morally, I believe in the sanctity of life, and therefore am reluctant to support war. I do recognize that strong self-defense is sometimes necessary. I am not looking to pick fights. I do not support preemptive war, but rather support preemptive goodwill and diplomacy. I believe in God, but do not believe He's America's commander in chief. I do not consider the American government any more Christian, or good, or righteous, or blessed than most other national governments or international bodies. By birth, I am an American, and grateful to be one.

Clinically, I am thoroughly systemic, which stretches and broadens the notion of linear causality into circular causality. Largely, I do not believe that problems arise *within* people but *between* people. I believe that people form patterns of redundancy that sometimes limit their ability to creatively and successfully address new situations. I also believe that behavior, all behavior, is purposeful, and therefore can be understood as attempting to achieve a desired outcome or goal.

Politically, I consider myself conservative. I am a registered Republican, although I am not very loyal to party, as I have supported candidates from multiple parties. I hope that my morality influences my politics more than the reverse, though I realize this really is a false

dichotomy. In the 2000 election, I voted for George W. Bush. Largely due to Mr. Bush's policies toward Iraq, I voted for John Kerry in 2004. I support both national security and individual civil liberties, and believe that we can have both. I do not believe that all terrorism can be eradicated, as it is my belief that people will always find ways to hurt other people.

I have also found myself to be largely a pacifist, though I would not rule out the possibility that at certain times war is necessary. I believe in standing up for yourself, fighting for your rights and for the rights of others. However, my bias is that the vast majority of wars could have and should have been avoided. A famous quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. captures my feeling: "wars are poor chisels for carving out peaceful tomorrows."

It is my hope that by acknowledging these biases, and doing so early in the research process, I will be more able to see the data for what it is. As one of my wonderful Old Testament professors would say after a student made a biased statement, "okay, but what does the text say?" I want to let the data speak for themselves, though I acknowledge that I will certainly get in the way.

Chapter IV

Results

I identified four major themes from 76 news articles written between 2002 and 2005.

The themes include: *Military Operations, Costs, Perceptions, and Transition*. In part A of the

results, I describe each theme with corresponding sub themes. In part B, I describe the

cybernetic relationships within and between these themes.

Part A – Major Themes

Military Operations

 "We should remember that when the politics get hard, the money runs short, the cynics

are barking, and resolution falters [*sic*]" (Cobbold, 2003, p. 6). The above quote reminds us that

military determination is in part a function of factors other than ideological conviction. The first

of four major themes describes information included in the data regarding the military operations

of four groups: the US military, the Iraqi military, the insurgency, and the sectarian militias.

US Ops

Each time an article described some action that the US military took in Iraq, I coded it as

"US Ops," in reference to military operations. As was expected, this was a very prominent

theme, found pervasively throughout the data set. Many of the articles, especially from 2003,

focused solely on the US military operations, while other articles with a different emphasis made

mention of US Ops as an aside. This is not surprising, particularly with the emphasis on

embedded journalism, and the sheer number of journalists covering the Iraq War. The following

are some excerpts of data coded as "US Ops" from each year represented in the data:

Prior to the invasion by the US-led coalition force of Iraq on March 20, 2003, the data record a few tense skirmishes between the US and Iraqi military. By late 2002, tensions were already rising between the US and Iraq.

As the inspectors searched the airfield, Iraqi officials said, Western warplanes bombed an oil company office building in the southern port city of Basra, killing four people and wounding 27 others. An Iraqi military spokesman said two rockets hit the offices of the Southern Oil Co. this morning. The company supervises the country's oil exports under a U.N. program that allows Iraq to sell oil for food and humanitarian supplies. US officials confirmed an attack occurred, but they said US and British planes, which police "no-fly" zones in southern and northern Iraq, hit air-defense facilities near Basra in response to Iraqi antiaircraft artillery fire. (021202WP)

After the U.S-led coalition force formally invaded Iraq on March 20, 2003, media coverage focused on the operations of the US military. Just days after invasion, the US was pushing deep into Iraq.

Swiftly moving columns of US tanks and armored vehicles pushed halfway to Baghdad today as American and British forces farther south closed in on Basra, Iraq's second-largest city, and allied warplanes and ships rained bombs and missiles on the Iraqi capital in a day-and-night pounding. (030323WP)

Well into the war, and well after fighting had turned non-conventional, the US military found themselves in urban conflict. Once the US defeated the Iraqi military and deposed the Iraqi government, US military operations turned toward providing security among pockets of stiff resistance.

Under the guidelines of the cease-fire, marines are allowed to fight back, but many are frustrated that they may not launch their own attacks. "It's crazy for us to be here as sitting ducks," said Lance Corporal Thomas O'Leary, 20, of Salt Lake City, Utah. "The only way this will ever end is if we're allowed to take these guys out." The Marines began their siege of Falluja, a city of about 300,000 people, two weeks ago to avenge the deaths of four Americans, security consultants who were shot in an ambush. A mob dragged their bodies through the streets and mutilated them. (040417IH)

Fighting insurgents was not the only post-invasion military concern the US faced. By 2004 the US military found itself battling sectarian militias. US military officials also worked to train Iraqi police and security forces. By the end of data collection in late 2005, the US military was still fighting bitterly, insurgent attacks persisted, and sectarian violence surged as political parties battled for power.

Iraqi Ops

I coded material "Iraqi Ops" that described Iraqi military operations. Because I used this code to categorize the actions of the Iraqi military, once the Iraqi military was dismantled, this code was used much less frequently. The following selected quotes are examples from the "Iraqi Ops" theme.

An Iraqi military spokesman said coalition planes staged 62 "armed sorties" over southern Iraq this morning. "Iraqi missile batteries and ground defenses confronted the warplanes, forcing them to flee to their bases in Kuwait," the spokesman was quoted as saying by the official Iraqi News Agency. (021202WP)

Though the majority of the military descriptions focus on the US's advance, the data also depict the Iraqi military resistance. "[US] forces heading toward the capital were slowed by

unexpectedly tough Iraqi resistance" (030329IH). "Perhaps in an effort to confuse incoming missiles, trenches filled with oil were reportedly set alight in the capital. Television images showed thick black clouds of smoke rising from several points in the city" (030324IH). Heavier in some areas, the initial Iraqi resistance was largely sporadic, appearing decentrally organized. "The virtually problem-free push toward Baghdad that characterized the first few days of the war ended. US and British forces have faced serious resistance" (030330WP). "On Friday, the US defense secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, said [Umm Qasr] had been captured and was under US and British control. But 48 hours later, US Marines were still coming under fire from Iraqi forces." (030324IH)

Three days after the invasion of Iraq, Iraqi military personnel began surrendering, or at least appeared to surrender. "About 700 Iraqi soldiers have lined up in the desert at a distance from their military equipment, signaling they do not intend to put up resistance…" (030323WP). "The fast-paced US invasion prompted hundreds of Iraqi soldiers to surrender and thousands of others to shed their uniforms and head home, said Gen. Tommy R. Franks, the overall commander of US forces in Iraq" (030323WP).

After only a few days of organized, conventional fighting, Iraqi military operations turned starkly unconventional and toward guerrilla attacks. Cybernetic redundancy would predict that truly entrenched systems will repeatedly make the same small changes in order to maintain stability. Cybernetic redundancy therefore would predict that Iraqi soldiers would continue to fight their overwhelming foes with conventional methods, and surrender before being overrun. "Iraqi troops and militias used fake surrenders, ambushes and other guerrilla tactics to inflict more than a score of casualties among US troops" (030330WP). Turning toward unconventional guerrilla warfare may be a first example of second-order change.

A small group of Iraqi soldiers, who doffed their uniforms and melted into residential areas, mounted a guerrilla-style resistance. In other areas that US commanders reported as seized, roving bands of soldiers sometimes clad in civilian garb ambushed US troops left in the rear after the main US forces had passed through on their way north. (030323WP)

Information Minister Mohammed Saeed Sahhaf said that there would be more suicide bombings, that Iraqis would undertake "martyrdom operations in a very new, creative way," and that the airport would be "the graveyard" of US forces. (030406WP)

Insurgency

What came to be known as *insurgency* began very early on in the conflict between the US and Iraq. "A suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden taxi at a US checkpoint near the city of Najaf. Four US soldiers died in the first such attack of the war, which US officials said was terrorism" (030330WP). Insurgency is a nonconventional para-military resistance strategy generally utilized by technologically weaker forces fighting against technologically stronger forces (Beckett, 2005). In Iraq, it became the preferred method of some Sunnis trying to reestablish themselves politically. Insurgency was a highly covered topic for journalists of the Iraq War, frequently showing up in the data.

Insurgency in Iraq took many forms. Insurgents detonated explosive-laden cars stranded on the side of the road as US convoys passed by. Cars designed as bombs would be driven into US checkpoints or into US instillations (030324IH), and often these were suicide attacks (051104IH). Insurgents used various weaponry including rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), I explosive devices (IEDs), and mortars. They captured military and civilian hostages (030324IH, 040807WP), and sometimes publicly beheaded them (040716WP). "[A] the top US commander

in Baghdad, said insurgents had been shifting tactics, increasingly using remote attacks, such as firing mortars and rockets, rather than engaging in direct combat with troops" (031112WP).

The insurgency, designed to excise US forces from Iraq, was certainly having some success with this mission. By late 2003 the success of the insurgency was causing some US officials to press for ending the occupation (031116WP). Iraqi transitional authorities also felt this urgency, calling for a cease of insurgent actions, particularly against Iraqi security personnel (040629IH). Additionally, the insurgency affected Iraqi citizens, who although suffered some casualties, felt the brunt of insurgency in the rising cost of gasoline as insurgents destroyed pipelines (031209WP, 040716WP). Beyond attacks on infrastructure, insurgents directly attacked other Iraqis at times, usually Shi'ites, using car bombs and other explosives, seemingly to incite sectarian violence (040505IH).

Some of the fiercest battles against insurgency occurred in Falluja, a city of about 300,000 residents 35 miles west of Baghdad (and at the time of this writing continue). Many residents fled Falluja, and many more were caught in the crossfire.

> Last week, after days of intense house-to-house fighting, US officials declared a limited cease-fire in Falluja, a hotbed of the Sunni Muslim resistance movement….Marines had been laying siege to the city and were engaged in intense battles with insurgents when their commanders issued the order to cease offensive military operations. But in the days that followed, insurgents continued to attack, hitting their positions with mortar, rockets, grenades and heavy machine-gun fire. "There has not been a cease-fire," Jones said, referring to the attacks by insurgents. "There may have been a diminution of the intensity of the fire, but as of now we don't see a full cease- fire, which is what we asked for and what they committed to try to achieve." (040417IH)

In Falluja, Marines attempted to disarm insurgents by offering a money-for-weapons exchange program. Many weapons were turned in but Marines largely determined most of these to be light-arms "junk" (040426IH). Unfortunately, not much has changed since April 2004. "Marine patrols have not entered Fallujah since the end of a three-week siege in April; the city has been under the control of insurgents" (040907WP).

Ongoing insurgency was not limited to Fallujah alone. Within the Sunni triangle, a region north and west of Baghdad (041115WP), home to the hotspots of Mosul, Samarra, and Rhamadi. "…In Mosul…armed men appeared in a sudden tide on a main street in Iraq's third-largest city, a wide avenue where so many American convoys had been ambushed that locals nicknamed it 'Death Street'" (041115WP). An article from March 31, 2005 captures the ongoing, diverse, and widespread nature of insurgency in Iraq:

> Attacks by insurgents continued Wednesday. Six Iraqis were killed by a rocket-propelled grenade fired at an American convoy in the northern city of Mosul, said Ahmed Talib, an emergency room doctor. And in the western town of Fallujah, a land mine killed a US Marine, the military said. Al-Jazeera satellite television network aired a tape Wednesday that purported to show three Romanian journalists kidnapped in Iraq and a fourth unidentified person, apparently an American. The network reported that the four were held by an unnamed militant group and no demands were made. (050331WP)

Beckett (2005), in his analysis of the Iraqi insurgency contends that "insurgency…arises from some sense of grievance" (p. 2). To understand Iraq's insurgency, we must understand the grievance behind it. A key facet of this seems to be an intense disdain for the US occupation. The hypothetical insurgent question is "What right do you have to meddle in my country and my life?" Some Iraqis, particularly the politically dethroned Sunnis, hated the occupation presence,

which was seen as an oppressive regime. Insurgents also hated Iraqi officials who were seen to be cooperating with "the infidels" (040807WP, 050104IH), and later on in the data we see insurgents killing civilians from rival sects. "Insurgents struck the Iraqi capital Wednesday…[targeting] Shiite Muslim civilians, Iraqi security forces and American troops, killing more than 160 people in the deadliest day of violence in Baghdad since the US invasion more than two years ago" (050915WP). Conceptually, insurgents were so desperate to reclaim their freedom from the occupiers that they were willing to die to change things, killing themselves and countrymen. We see glimpses of this in the following two reports:

> Two Turkish civilians who had been missing for more than a month were freed by insurgents. The hostages -- an air-conditioner repairman and his assistant -- were released after their company agreed to stop doing business in Iraq. (040703WP)
>
> The insurgency has also continued to kidnap foreigners, often demanding that the captives' home governments withdraw their forces from Iraq. On Thursday, [interim Prime Minister] Allawi said he called the Philippine president, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, to ask her to reconsider her decision to begin withdrawing her country's 51 soldiers ahead of schedule. Arroyo had ordered the withdrawal after insurgents threatened to kill a Filipino hostage unless she did so. (040716WP)

Militias

In addition to military operations by the US, Iraqis, and the largely Sunni insurgents, Shi'ites and Kurds also entered the fray through regional militias. Pollack (2006) describes Iraqi militias as "irregular military forces of Shi'a and Sunni Arab groups, and to a lesser extent the Kurdish *peshmerga* [italics original]. Most of the Sunni "insurgent" groups are essentially just Sunni militias, functionally equivalent to the Shi'a militias" (p. 1) As security disintegrated in

Iraq, older tribal militias, usually organized by a local religious leader and developed during Hussein's reign, began to assert themselves as localized security forces. As one Iraqi leader described it, "How do we defend ourselves? The police are not up to the task" (040304WP). The problem was that these militias were not centrally organized nor under the control of the government. The militias acted on behalf of their local leadership, and often not in accord with the US and Iraqi peace keeping efforts.

After the US and Iraqi security forces were unable to adequately secure the peace in the face of mounting insurgency, the militias became a necessary evil.

> "We would prefer there to be no militias here," said [an Iraqi police chief]. But he said that if militiamen insisted on staying in the area, he would not challenge them. "I don't want a clash," he said before getting back in his car and driving away. "If they want to handle security there, let them." (040304WP)

But it was not just insurgents that the militias were battling. Soon they were engaged in deadly confrontations with the US military (040426IH). For several days an intense battle between US Marines and Shi'ite militia was fought in Najaf. Officials believe from 300 to 400 militia members were killed, while less then ten US soldiers died (040807WP). Iraqi officials called these militia members "criminals and terrorists" (040807WP).

While militias posed a significant problem for security in Iraq, there were significant differences between militias and insurgents. In multiple cases, militia leaders were willing to work towards peace and political legitimacy (040807WP). A deal was worked out for nine militias to disband (040608IH). One of the most significant of these was the Mahdi Army led by Shi'ite cleric Moktada al-Sadar (041011IH). Part of the plan for disbanding incorporated a weapons-for-cash program in which militia members were paid for all heavy weapons

surrendered, as well as "millions of dollars worth of reconstruction projects in Sadr City (041011IH). This included approximately 400 mortars and 700 RPGs, in return for about 1.2 million dollars (041019IH). Under the agreement, Mahdi Army members were allowed to retain their automatic weapons and Sadar was encouraged to participate democratically in the political process.

Costs

While reading the data, I attempted to track the various costs of the Iraq War, both to the Iraqis and the US. I found that these costs clustered into three sub-categories: *casualties, infrastructure,* and *decreased security*. Each will be described below. Conceptually, I would not think only of costs as negative results to be avoided, though that is certainly included. Conceptually, costs should also be positive outcomes, however, overwhelmingly, this data reports negative costs.

One of the most prominent costs of the Iraq War was human casualties. Iraqi soldiers died, Iraqi civilians died, and US soldiers died, as well as other groups. How many people died? Who knows? The data do not, and will never provide that answer. The data describe the kinds of people who died and the circumstances under which they died. It appears that the journalists collecting this information had the most access to American and Iraqi civilian deaths, because that is what they report on the most. I found only minimal reports of Iraqi military deaths. Journalists would make reports such as "…Iraqi officials said three people were killed and 207 injured…" but often did not differentiate between military, insurgent, and civilian deaths. Therefore I coded reference to casualties as either US or Iraqi. US casualties generally referred to military personnel, while Iraqi casualties described the deaths of military personnel,

paramilitary resistance groups, and civilians. I will begin with US military casualties, of which I also include prisoners of war (POWs).

US military casualties

"Casualty reports continued to be light. No one has been hurt by the Iraqi missile attacks, and so far two Marines have been reported killed in combat" (030323WP). In hindsight, this statement, written three days into the invasion of Iraq, is hopefully optimistic. A day later, reports surfaced of four killed US soldiers, and five POWs (030324IH). March 24, 2003 also included reports of a fratricidal shooting in which a reportedly Muslim US solider wounded sixteen other soldiers, and killed one. "Several US troops were killed and five others were captured by Iraqi forces in fighting near the city of Nasiriyah" (030330WP). Early on, Iraqi officials were releasing reports of enemy casualties.

In addition to conventional warfare, US soldiers were killed in many other ways. March 30, 2003 saw what would soon be a dramatic shift in Iraq's military strategy, as the first reported car bomb was detonated at a checkpoint, killing four US soldiers (030330WP). Fatal accidents claimed lives as one Marine was run over by a Humvee and another drowned after his Humvee turned over into a canal. In the first case of "friendly fire," "A US Patriot missile battery mistakenly shot down a British Royal Air Force Tornado GR4 fighter plane near the Kuwaiti border, killing the two-person crew," while two other British soldiers died when their tank was destroyed by another British tank (030330WP). Military planners contend that friendly fire is an inevitable part of war, though highly regrettable (Codner, 2003). While friendly fire is never friendly and always a nightmare for military leaders, it is particularly onerous within a coalition force. When members of coalition fire upon one another, fragile alliances can quickly decompensate into mistrust and suspicion (Codner, 2003).

Like casualties, POWs are a significant cost of any war, this war not withstanding. American POWs capture media attention for two reasons. POWs seem to resonate with US citizens who love to see captured soldiers return home safe and sound, and love to hear of their heroics. Recall 19 year old Pfc. Jessica Lynch, a female POW, who was rescued from her captors by US Special Forces. "The rescuers were tipped to her presence and aided in her recovery by an Iraqi lawyer whose wife was a nurse at the hospital" (030406WP). Wartime POWs are also a concern for their captors. The US was capturing hundreds of suspected Iraqi militants per month. "The operation […] rounded up about 390 suspects, some as they fled down streets and into [a] river" (030612WP). "In the northern town of Hawija, [US] troops captured more than 100 people, including a senior former member of Hussein's elite Republican Guard" (031203WP). Adequately and legally detaining this many prisoners was an arduous task.

By April 2003, the war saw its first reported suicide attack on US soldiers, killing three. By June, "guerrillas-style assaults" (030612WP) were becoming more common and more sophisticated. Late 2003 marked the beginning of insurgent attacks upon the US "In Mosul, insurgents shot and killed a US soldier guarding a gas station on Monday" (031209WP). As US soldiers faced increasing attacks of an ever-more guerrilla nature, they in turn increased their attacks on Iraqi resistance groups. This, in turn, led to more deaths of US military personnel. As US deaths rose, US attacks rose. As US attacks rose, US deaths rose, as did those of Iraqi insurgents and Iraqi civilians (I return to this issue below). This trend continued without deviation throughout the remaining articles.

Iraqi casualties

"In Baghdad, it was another day of intense airstrikes. Iraqi officials said a US bomb killed 58 people in a crowded Baghdad market" 030330WP). As noted earlier, when reporting

Iraqi casualties, the data rarely differentiate between Iraqis serving in official military positions, Iraqis involved in militias or insurgency, and Iraqi citizens. This is for good reason, for it was often difficult to determine Iraqi military from Iraqi citizens. "A small group of Iraqi soldiers, who doffed their uniforms and melted into residential areas, mounted a guerrilla-style resistance" (030323WP).

The war in Iraq officially ended on May 1, 2003 as announced by George W. Bush (Fawn & Hinnebusch, 2006), though fighting waged on (Donnelly, 2004). With no official Iraqi military in place, how does one characterize those Iraqis continuing to resist the US? When is a soldier not a soldier? When is a civilian no longer a civilian? How are the armed and militant Sunni residents of Fallujah to be classified? These are questions that the data does not answer.

Iraq's information minister, Mohammed Said Sahhaf, said Sunday that a total of 77 people had been killed and 366 wounded after air strikes in Basra. This could not be independently confirmed and it was unclear if Sahhaf was referring to civilian casualties. He called them "martyrs" (030324IH)

The data often list reports such as, "The death toll from the attacks was set at 117…" (040304WP), without describing the casualties, while at other times is more specific. "[O]fficials said the fighting, which began Thursday, has killed at least 300 militiamen, three US troops and uncounted Iraqi civilians" (040807WP). My sense is that Iraqis do not distinguish between military and civilian as sharply as the US seems to do. In the US, a person is either military personnel or civilian, but not both. In Iraq, particularly as the war progressed, citizen resistance replaced military resistance, in both the form of insurgency and militia.

It is clear that this war, and the unconventional fighting, made it very difficult for US soldiers to distinguish friend from foe.

American Marines shot and killed four Iraqis Wednesday and wounded 10 in the second

fatal shooting incident at the public square in this city in northern Iraq in two days, Iraqi

officials said. In both cases, US forces said they were responding to shots fired at them

first while Iraqi witnesses contended that nervous Marines fired on unarmed civilians

(030417IH).

… [W]itnesses said American soldiers fired on a crowd of Iraqi bystanders, mostly

children, after a roadside bomb detonated next to a patrol of four Humvees, killing one

soldier. At least one Iraqi teenager was killed and 14 wounded, doctors said. Kimmitt

said the soldiers opened fire after first being shot at from rooftops, and that the military

was investigating the incident. (040426IH).

As fighting between US military transitioned to urban skirmishes with insurgents,

civilians were in even more peril. Often civilians were caught in the middle.

Attacks by insurgents continued Wednesday. Six Iraqis were killed by a rocket-propelled

grenade fired at an American convoy in the northern city of Mosul, said Ahmed Talib, an

emergency room doctor….Al-Jazeera satellite television network aired a tape Wednesday

that purported to show three Romanian journalists kidnapped in Iraq and a fourth

unidentified person, apparently an American. The network reported that the four were

held by an unnamed militant group and no demands were made (050331WP).

Referring only to the period from March 20, 2003 to April 14, 2003, Codner (2003)

writes that "civilian casualties, sad as they are, appear to have been very light for a war…" (p.

17). Iraqi deaths have continued well past April 2003. The Iraqi Body Count project (Danchev

& MacMillan, 2005), an attempt to track civilians deaths in reputable media sources, places the

current civilian death count somewhere between 44,000 and 49,000.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure usually refers to an entity's, in this case a nation's, ability to maintain ongoing processes. Nationally, it generally refers to buildings and services (offices, hospitals, schools, government, law enforcement, etc.), transportation networks (roads, rails, and ports), and utility networks (power, fuel, water, etc.). In war, damaging an opponent's infrastructure is usually considered vital to success. This was no doubt the case in US war planning that sought to topple Hussein's regime, win the war, and provide adequate security for the reconstruction of Iraq (Donnelly, 2004). It is not surprising then that the data record infrastructural damages.

US military commanders have shed their early caution in striking some targets in Baghdad and have embarked on more aggressive air attacks that run the risk of larger numbers of civilian casualties, defense officials said yesterday. The strikes, many of them against communication nodes, telephone exchanges and government media offices, appear to reflect a judgment that winning the war against Iraq will require more aggressive air attacks, particularly the systematic destruction of networks used by the Iraqi authorities to direct their forces (030402WP).

Electricity production was the most heavily covered example of infrastructural damage. Electrical shortages and blackouts were widely reported throughout Iraq, but most notably in Baghdad. "At nightfall, the city was plunged into near darkness as electricity was cut and more major explosions could be heard in the center of the city" 030406WP). And residents of Baghdad were not accustomed to this.

In Baghdad, a vast city of high-rise buildings, bustling markets and scorching summer temperatures, most residents received more than 20 hours of electricity a day before the war – enough to run elevators, air conditioners and other staples of modern life. Today,

the capital got about eight hours of power. On Tuesday, it was even less. And for a few days last week, there was none (030703WP).

Baghdad's power demands are estimated at 2200 megawatts per day (030818WP). At times during the summer of 2003, Baghdad was receiving less than 500 megawatts of power per day, "prompting the city's power distribution director to order that only hospitals, water plants and sewage treatment facilities be given electricity" (030703WP). Though early on US military officials denied intentionally targeting Iraq's electrical grid, they did acknowledge that "accidental damage from air or artillery strikes toppled several high-voltage transmission towers, disrupting the national electrical grid and causing [blackouts]" (030703).

As the availability of electricity became more of a problem in Iraq, citizens became more frustrated. Consider the two following quotes. "[C]rippling blackouts have returned to the capital and the rest of the country [...] creating a new focus of anger at the US occupation" (030703WP). "The lack of power has been one of the biggest catalysts of public anger at occupation forces. In Basra, the country's second-largest city, frustration over lengthy power outages erupted into large riots last weekend" (030818WP). Blackouts affected people emotionally. It led to aggravation and dissatisfaction with the US military. It is the kind of factor that may have turned the US from liberators to occupiers in the eyes of many Iraqis.

The importance of electricity infrastructurally, emotionally, and to security must not be underestimated. One senior US military official emphasized saying, "Power is the central issue. Without it, you don't have security. You don't have an economy. You don't have trust in what we're doing. What you do have is more anger, more frustration, more violence" (030703WP). The US military attempted to remedy the power problem by employing the US Army Corps of Engineers, and found that this was no easy task. "Looters had made away with crucial spare

parts from several plants. There was no fuel for oil-fired units because the country's refineries were not working. The startup of some facilities required an initial boost of outside power, which was nonexistent" (030703WP). There were even reports of Iraqi citizens who were sabotaging their own electricity by cutting lines and felling towers. To deal with these concerns, Iraqi power plant managers petitioned the US for military protection, but "[US officials] said it was unlikely the military, which already is stretched thin…would dispatch more soldiers to power facilities" (030703WP). Ultimately, the cost of restoring Iraq's power grid fell on the shoulders of the US "Restoring the power system is expected to take more than two years and cost more than $ 2 billion, US officials said" (030818WP).

The shortage of fuel, and the subsequent consequences, was another infrastructural cost. "Iraq's daily domestic demand for gasoline is about 4 million gallons, but its refineries are producing only about 2 million, [Iraqi] Oil Ministry officials said" (031209WP)

> The line of cars waiting to fill up at the Hurreya gas station on Monday snaked down the
> right lane of a busy thoroughfare, around a traffic circle, across a double-decker bridge
> spanning the Tigris River and along a potholed side street leading to one of Iraq's three
> oil refineries. At the end, almost two miles from the station, was Mohammed Adnan, a
> taxi driver who could not comprehend why he would have to wait seven hours to fuel his
> mud-spattered Chevrolet Beretta. "This is Iraq," he noted wryly. "Don't we live on a
> lake of oil?" (031209WP)

Baghdad, and for that matter Iraq, is an area were residents are accustomed to having petroleum products. They depend on fuel, oil, and kerosene to power their lives, but by December 2003 their lives were quickly changing. Residents, particularly of the middle-class, could no longer purchase the gasoline to drive to work, take their children to school, or drive to the store. This

was both confusing and frustrating for citizens. Iraq produced and refined enough oil to meet its own needs while also exporting oil to other nations. And gasoline was cheap, about five cents per gallon (031209WP). By December, the price had risen to twenty times that, and drivers were spending the night in line to get fuel.

US officials blamed the fuel shortage on various things, but were hesitant to share some of the responsibility. "'There's no one thing that's to blame,' said an official with the US-led occupation authority who is responsible for oil issues. 'It's a combination of a lot of little things'" (031209WP). US officials blamed decrepit refineries suffering from years of sanctions, decreased production of fuel during Ramadan, increased automobile imports, and decreased electricity as causes of the fuel shortage. The effect on the streets of Baghdad was as one journalist put it, "Murders, carjackings and other violent crimes are rampant. Those problems have fueled complaints on the streets of Baghdad and other cities that the Americans are not working, spending or [transferring] authority fast enough" (0030818WP). Part of the US solution to the fuel shortage was to pay companies to import oil into Iraq. Much of this fuel was imported by Halliburton at $2.65 per gallon (031209WP); quite a significant change from the five cent per gallon gas Baghdad residents were used to.

Both the electrical blackouts and the fuel shortage were associated with increased violence and decreased security. Significant, debilitating looting occurred at power plants and refineries, further complicating the restoration effort. Truck drivers responsible for transporting oil and fuel around the country fell under escalating attacks. Turkish drivers refused to transport oil because of security risk (031209WP). Furthermore, Iraqi oil exports decreased from 1.6 million barrels per day to 900,000 barrels per day.

Decreased security

An overarching cost of the war was the decreased security in Iraq. As the civil government and authority were toppled, security dropped. Significant looting was reported at power plants and refineries (030703WP), and oil wells were set ablaze (030324IH). $1 billion dollars was stolen by Qusay Hussein shortly after the US invasion (030508IH). This was in addition to an estimated $500 million dollars looted during the early stages of the war. Toting weapons and taking hostages, disgruntled citizens terrorized employees, truck drivers, and US military personnel (030818WP, 031112WP). Violent crime increased. "Iraqi police believe [crime] has skyrocketed. Car heists, armed robberies and cold-blooded killings…have become alarmingly common. The director of Baghdad's central morgue said his facility handled 10 times more shooting victims this July than it did last July" (030818WP). In parts of Iraq, the US occupation force simply was unable to provide adequate security and squelch a growing insurgency (050314IH). "'The American policies concerning security are not good enough,' said Abdel-Mehdi of the Supreme Council" (040304WP).

Perceptions

A third major theme that emerged from this data describing the relationship between the US and Iraq, were the perceptions of and about the other, usually captured in quotes from government officials and citizens. This includes thoughts from both citizens and government officials (what one thinks of the other), as well as statements about how one group (i.e. Iraqis) believe they are perceived by the other group (i.e. US). Initially, I coded perceptions as different themes, either US or Iraqi perceptions, depending on the origin of the perception. During the process of re-reading this data, I began to see perception as one overarching theme, with US and Iraqi representing different dimensions of that theme. I then laid the various US and Iraqi

perceptions side by side for comparison, and grouped them according to content. This process allowed me to compare the US perception of an event with that of the Iraqi perception. Perceptions covered many of the topics coded for under other themes. For instance, there are US and Iraqi perceptions regarding the specific costs of the war. Not surprisingly, what I found in this comparison was blame and mistrust, from both sides.

Causes for war

US and Iraqi officials perceive very different causes for the war in Iraq. US officials cite Hussein's WMD program and liberation as the primary reasons for invading Iraq. "[The unconventional weapons] program was the rationale for the US-led invasion…" (050314IH). Unfortunately, as the passage continues, "…occupation forces found no unconventional arms and CIA inspectors concluded that [Iraq's WMD program] had been largely abandoned after the 1991 Gulf War" (050314IH). Iraqi officials countered, claiming that the US will use fabricated photographs as evidence of Iraq's weapons program. "They will be space photos, aerial photos of some vehicles that could be interpreted in different ways just to create suspicion," said one Iraqi official. "They will not be real evidences because we have nothing. We have no weapons of mass destruction" (030203WP).

US officials also cite the need to liberate Iraq. In one speech, Bush stated, "Iraq will be free" (030330WP), and Vice President Dick Cheney said American troops would "be greeted as liberators" (031130WP). Iraqi officials perceived much less noble reasons for the US invasion.

[Iraqi officials] said that what is really behind Bush's talk of war is Hussein's refusal to follow the recent path of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and other Arab states and submit to what they perceive as US dominance. Bush "wants Iraqi oil. Saddam Hussein won't let him. He wants to put a stooge government in. Saddam Hussein won't let him," said

Abdelrazak Hashimi, a semi-official government spokesman. "Nobody has the right to go into another country and change the system of government…." (020517WP)

Who is winning the war?

Early on during the invasion, there were multiple discrepancies as to who was winning the war campaign in Iraq, and the media covered this. Iraqi officials claimed to be successfully resisting the US attack, while US officials reported their successes and unexpected difficulties. According to US General Tommy Franks:

This will be a campaign unlike any other in history, a campaign characterized by shock, by surprise, by flexibility, by the employment of precise munitions on a scale never before seen and by the application of overwhelming force….Our troops are performing as we would expect, magnificently. And indeed the outcome is not in doubt." (030323WP)

Iraqi officials described the situation differently, using much more cryptic language. "The enemy must come inside Baghdad and that will be its grave," [Iraqi General Sultan Hashim] said. "We feel that this war must be prolonged so that the enemy pays a high price" (030324IH). US officials, including President Bush, appear to be obliging, promising to "fight however long it takes to win" (030330WP). Iraq's information minister, Mohammed Saeed Sahhaf, asserted "We have brought them into the swamps and they will not be able to ever leave it," he said (030323WP). The following quote, from early in the war, is a good example of divergent US and Iraqi perceptions.

A Defense Ministry spokesman, Hazem Abdul Qader, told reporters in Baghdad that four of the planes were shot down over Baghdad while the fifth was downed in the southern city of Basra. He said the two helicopters were shot down in Mosul in the north and a town he named as Simaya. US officials said all aircraft were accounted for. (030324IH)

US officials did acknowledge that the war they were fighting was different than the war they had planned to fight. "The enemy we're fighting is different from the one we'd war-gamed against," acknowledged Lieutenant General William Wallace (030329IH). For instance, "[Capturing Basra] is probably not going as quick as we would have liked," said Col. Thomas Waldhauser (030323WP). "The virtually problem-free push toward Baghdad that characterized the first few days of the war ended. Coalition forces have faced serious resistance," cited one article (030330WP).

Infrastructure damage

Perceptions varied over the causes and consequences of infrastructural damage in Iraq. US officials asserted that they did not damage anything unintended, and were working to keep civilian deaths and public works damage to a minimum. "We're using delayed fuses and taking other measures to ensure only the effects we want are achieved," commented a US military officer (030402WP). While the electrical grid and fuel infrastructure were damaged during fighting, US and Iraq specialists blamed antiquated equipment, looting, and sabotage in addition to war damage (040302WP).

Lack of reliable utility services infuriated Iraqi citizens, who blamed both the damage and the consequences on the US

> "We figured the Americans, who are a superpower, would at least give us electricity," said Mehdi Abdulwahid… "Now we wish we had the old times back… How can we care about democracy now when we don't even have electricity?" Ordinary Iraqis, however, find it difficult to believe that the US military cannot keep the lights on all the time. "They brought thousands of tanks to kill us," said Bessam Mahmoud, a shopkeeper who sells packaged biscuits and candy on the sidewalk when the power is out. "Why can't

they bring in generators or people to fix the power plants? If they wanted to, they could."

(030703WP)

In regard to the gasoline shortage, one Iraqi speculated, "It's the Americans, for sure, they are taking our oil back to America" (031209WP). In addition, many Iraqis seem ambivalent about the US presence in Iraq. On one hand they desperately want the US out of Iraq, but on the other hand they want the US to provide for their needs.

> "Why don't [the US] give all the unemployed people a stipend? Why don't they bring in
>
> generators so we'll have electricity? Why don't they give our policemen more cars so
>
> they can protect us?" asked Kassim Mohammed, an out-of-work engineer…(030818WP)

Insurgency

The current and ongoing insurgency began as the official Iraqi military fragmented into guerrilla forces soon after the US invasion. Sensing the futility in fighting the US conventionally, Iraqi military leaders warned of unconventional attacks in an attempt to offset the US technological advantage.

> "We will use any means to kill our enemy in our land and we will follow the enemy into
>
> its land," [Iraqi vice president Taha Yassin] Ramadan said at a news conference in
>
> Baghdad. "This is just the beginning. You'll hear more pleasant news later." He said Iraq
>
> will use suicide and guerrilla tactics to compensate for its technological disadvantage in
>
> weaponry. "They have bombs that can kill 500 people, but I am sure that the day will
>
> come when a single martyrdom operation will kill 5,000 enemies." (030330WP)

Such attacks included ambushes, rocket-propelled grenades, road-side bombs, suicide bombs, diversionary fire, and land mines (030612WP). A US convoy might be driving along a road

when a bomb would detonate, killing soldiers and destroying equipment (040907WP). US

military leaders framed such insurgent attacks as desperate acts of inhumanity and terrorism.

Militias

As the conflict waged on and security in Iraq disintegrated, tribal militias, largely Shi'a,

reasserted themselves as provincial security forces. Militias were usually organized around a

powerful cleric. Their usefulness in postwar Iraq was an issue of great debate between Iraqi and

US leaders. Some Iraqi leaders and the majority of US leaders felt that Iraqi militias should be

dissolved. "'This is a very big blunder,' said Ghazi Yawar, an independent council member.

'We should be dissolving militias, not finding ways to legitimize them,'" (031203WP). Some

Iraqi groups, particularly the militias themselves, felt that they should be legitimized as regional

peace-keeping forces. "'We know the security issue better than they know it. We don't want the

police or the military,' said Mohammed Hussein, a burly, gun-wielding member of the Badr

Brigades. 'We don't trust them. We prefer to handle the security here,'" (040304WP).

The US considered empowering militias to assist in peace-keeping efforts in Iraq.

Ultimately, US officials decided that militias posed a greater threat than solution to their

objectives.

> In Iraq, the US occupation authority has opposed the idea of legitimizing the militias,
>
> fearing they could be used to intimidate political rivals, challenge official security forces
>
> and otherwise impede efforts to form a democratic government. For months, US officials
>
> have sought to demobilize various paramilitary groups, including the peshmerga, a
>
> 50,000-member ethnic Kurdish militia, and the Badr Brigades, the military wing of the
>
> Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, a large Shiite party. (040304WP)

Transitional government

Iraqi and US perceptions differed greatly in regard to the progress of the post-Hussein transitional government. After just a few months of US occupation, Iraqis were complaining about the decreased level of security. "Crime is out of control. The police are not up to the task," said one Iraqi citizen (030818WP). Some Iraqi officials blamed the decreased security on the inability of the US to effectively empower Iraqis to govern themselves. In turn, the US blamed the Iraqis. "The plan for after the Iraqi government fell assumed that Iraqi Troops and police officers would stay on the job – an assumption that proved wrong" (031130WP). Both sides blamed the other, which was a recurrent theme of this section.

On several occasions US officials expressed frustration over the progress that the newly appointed Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) was making in working toward elections, a constitution, and a permanent government. "[The IGC] has not demonstrated the ability to have a seriousness of purpose or single-mindedness about its work," said a senior US official (031112WP). US representatives called the IGC "disorganized" and illegitimate in the eyes of most Iraqis (031116WP), alleging that the US appointed IGC suffered from internal strife and discord (031130WP). IGC members felt differently and blamed their problems on US discord (031130WP). "[Iraq] fell victim to the intense struggle within the US government over Iraq policy" (031130WP). Iraqis blamed the US for poor post-Hussein planning. "I am not sure there was any strategy," said [future interim prime minister] Iyad Alawi (031130WP).

> "On many occasions, I told the Americans that from the very moment the regime fell, if an alternative government was not ready there would be a power vacuum and there would be chaos and looting," said Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party

and a longtime ally of the United States. "Given our history, it is very obvious this would occur." (031130WP)

One council member, Ahmad Chalabi, even suspected that the US's insistence on IGC progress is due to the upcoming Presidential elections of 2004 rather than concern for Iraq (031129IH).

Concerning the future of the newly formed Iraqi government, officials from both sides conveyed mixed perceptions. One US official expressed confidence, saying "there is no sense of panic. It's complicated, it's not easy, it's never been done before in Iraq, but we'll get the job done." He continued with, "I suppose on any given day you look over and say, my gosh, we're on the edge of the abyss here, but I don't think so" (040125WP). Another US official felt differently asking, "Where is the exit" (031112WP)? Some Iraqis had different observations. "'I want to draw your attention to the fact there was no transferring of authority,' said Jabir Khafaji, a top Sadr lieutenant. 'What has changed is the name only…'" (040703WP). Another Iraqi rejected the US-appointed IGC altogether.

> The crux of the problem is the occupation…We all realize that under occupation, there is no chance for any legitimate government…So whether it is Jafari or Allawi or Chalabi, they are all the same to us. They all came with the occupation. (050216WP)

In one of the most interesting quotes in the study, one US official remarked, "Some of [the potential Iraqi politicians] may not be perfect democrats, and some may be Ba'athists…But I would rather err on the side of inclusion than exclusion at this point" (040707WP). The statement indicates that including Ba'athists in Iraqi governance, a group that the US originally sought to disempower, is now becoming a viable option. By July 2004 US representatives were warning that the second phase of Iraq's political transition may be more difficult than the first phase, saying "We won't achieve it all. I don't think we can pacify the country in seven months"

(040707WP). A US scholar and former CIA analyst echoed this sentiment stating, "It took Britain nearly 900 years and a civil war to evolve into a truly representative government…[and] the US more than 225 years and a civil war….How can the Iraqis be expected to achieve this in one year" (040707WP)?

Transition of Government

While much of the information that comprised the *Ops* and *Costs* themes emerged early in the data chronology, information for *Transition of Government* naturally emerged later in the data. After May 1, 2003, the formal end of the war, the US was considered the occupation authority in that the government of Iraq had been deposed and the US now occupied that role. This theme describes the transition of authority from the US occupation to various iterations of a new Iraqi government, with the ultimate goal being a stable democratic Iraqi-led state (Beckett, 2005). As one-time Iraqi Interim President Ghazi al-Yawar once stated, "We want a free, democratic Iraq" (040629IH). Many of the articles collected for this study depicted the day-to-day progress of the transition. I use this theme to describe these events, separated into three stages: (a) the 14-month US occupation, (b) Iraqi Governing Council (formed July 2003) and elected Transitional Assembly, and (c) Interim Government. I describe the recursive elements of transition in Part B of the results. Though my data collection ceased at the end of 2005, the Iraqi government transition is ongoing. For a more detailed historical overview of these stages see Danchev and MacMillian (2005, p. 141-145, 150-155).

I found that reading numerous accounts of Iraq's governmental transition was frequently complex and confusing. It was difficult to keep track of the different stages and phases of the new government, and the changes taking place on a monthly or daily basis, particularly when there were several weeks between articles in the data set. Iraq's phases of governance were at

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times called different names by different journalists which created further confusion. Sketching a timeline of events was difficult. I found myself wanting to read an overview of the process, a 2006 perspective looking back over the past three years.

The first reference in the data to Iraq's new government was the "Governing Council" (030818WP). This later was referred to as the IGC, a 25-member board of Iraqis responsible for selecting new cabinet ministers, draft a budget, and begin talks of writing a new constitution. Here is how one group of scholars described the IGC:

> [It] was formed in Iraq in July 2003 and was promoted by Americans as 'the most representative body in Iraq's history,' but this could not come from the undemocratic method of its formation; instead it reflected the supposed religio-ethnic divisions in the country: thirteen Shias, five Sunnis, five Kurds, a Turkman, and a Christian." Eventually the IGC was expanded to twenty-five members. "The manner of the IGC selection caused a great deal of consternation across Iraqi opinion. Criticism focused on the fostering of an overt sectarianism that had not previously been central to Iraqi political discourse (second-order change, in the wrong direction). (Fawn & Hinnebusch, 2006).

Members of the IGC were chosen by the staff of L. Paul Bremer, the top US administrator in Iraq, and included many Iraqis exiled under Saddam Hussein's rule. It also included Iraqis from all three major sects: Shi'a, Sunni, and Kurd. Their first task was to determine a leader, which was a difficult process in itself.

> Members first suggested selecting a three-person committee that would have one representative from each of the country's three major religious and ethnic groups: one Shiite Muslim Arab, one Sunni Muslim Arab and one Kurd. But then several Shiites

objected, arguing that because Kurds are Sunnis, too, that proposal would give the Sunnis a 2-to-1 majority, while Shiites represent about 60 percent of population (030818WP). After much debate, the group considered having up to eleven presidents but eventually settled on nine. As one member described the process to select the first leader of the first transitional governing body in Iraq, "We thought there would be a democratic process" (030818WP). It was anything but.

> At that point, several members said, a small group of former exiles, including Ahmed Chalabi of the Iraqi National Congress, Iyad Allawi (sometimes rendered Ayad Allawi) of the Iraqi National Accord and Ibrahim Jafari of the Shiite Dawa Party, broke away for private discussions. When they returned, the members said, they produced a list of nine names – all of whom were Kurds or former exiles (030818WP).

The IGC's presidency rotated among nine members, each of whom held the top spot for one month. Commenting later on this process, one IGC member said, "The process was hijacked by a small group of politicians. "We're trying to take our first step toward democracy and we screwed up our first big vote…" (030818WP).

By late 2003, the newly formed IGC was being criticized by US officials. Mr. Bremer believed the IGC was disorganized and sluggish is making decisions. He along with other US administrators sought to accelerate the political transition in Iraq. They began talking about the prospect of holding an election in Iraq. The original idea proposed in November 2003 included electing a body to write a constitution and assume executive sovereignty of Iraq. US officials believed that security in Iraq was tenuous, and speeding up the transition process would work to increase security. Officials hoped the plan would also promote a gradual reduction of US troops during 2004. While US officials pressed the IGC to work faster, members of the IGC resisted.

As one council member is quoted, "It will backfire if we speed it up. We have to cook this on a slow fire" (031112WP).

In November 2003 the data mentions the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) for the first time, though the CPA's role is not immediately clear. The CPA is the US-led occupation authority. Headed by Mr. Bremer, the CPA was the initial governing authority after Mr. Hussein's regime was deposed. As Iraqi governance was established and sovereignty transferred, the CPA was to be dissolved (031116WP).

The WP article from November 16, 2003 describes a "major revision of the Bush administration's earlier political blueprints" and "a radical new plan for the country's transition" that aims to transfer sovereignty to Iraqis by July 1, 2004 and ensure a significant withdrawal of US troops. Originally, before the US would consider a transfer of power, officials insisted a constitution must be drafted and an election held. Due largely to increased attacks on US troops, the plan proposed to hand over power to a provisional administration regardless of the completion of these two requirements. Under the new plan, the IGC would select members for a provisional administration that would be empowered with sovereignty by July 1, 2004. This provisional administration would hold national elections to select members to a Transitional Assembly (TA), responsible for choosing the Interim Government. As one IGC member put it, "Either Iraq regains its sovereignty in five months as scheduled or we scrap the whole thing and postpone the whole process, until we can agree on some acceptable method, which means we may end up keeping the occupation another two years" (040116WP).

By late 2003 US officials were experiencing competing emotions. They wanted to transfer sovereignty to Iraqi officials sooner than later, in part with the hopes of bringing home US troops sooner. There also was the belief that transferring power would result in Iraqi defense

forces taking greater responsibility for security. "'[The transfer of power on July 1 2004 is] going to have an enormous impact,' a senior US official" (031116WP). In contrast, US officials were concerned that a transfer of power would limit their ability to shape the content of Iraq's constitution. "'When sovereignty is transferred, sovereignty is transferred,' a senior White House official said" (031116WP). Officials were also concerned about the authority and function of the remaining US military presence. Negotiations for the continued role of the US military will be "between two sovereign powers," thought one IGC member (031116WP).

The US requirement for selecting members to the TA was through elections held by the provisional administration. An important caveat to this, however, is that the US planned for indirect elections through a regional caucus system, as opposed to national direct elections. Although the plan for election via caucuses was agreed upon by the IGC and CPA, Grand Ayatollah Ali Hussein al-Sistani, Iraq's most powerful Shi'ite cleric, spoke out vehemently against indirect elections (031129IH). The US purportedly proposed caucuses because of the logistical problems associated with a national election. A national census would have to be conducted in order to create accurate voter rolls. Utilizing a regional caucus system, US officials could simply select or approve all Iraqi citizens participating in caucuses, reducing the logistical demands. The selected citizens would then vote for members of the TA, indirectly giving the US more control over the TA makeup. Sistani contended that this process would lead to under-representation of Shi'a in the TA and that direct elections would be the only "transparent and inclusive" means for choosing members of the TA (040116WP). Though they were insisting upon elections, US officials could not understand why Sistani was insisting upon direct elections. The debate over elections between Sistani and the US officials continued for several months.

Due to problems associated with holding a national election in Iraq, a task that US officials felt required more time and manpower than available, other alternatives were considered. One plan considered scrapping elections, and expanding the IGC from 25 members to 125 members. This hand-picked group could work to hold an election in late 2004 (040126IH). This plan was largely popularized by IGC members reluctant to disband their group and transfer their newly acquired authority to the TA. Election plans and negotiations for IGC expansion continued through Spring 2004, eventually with assistance from the United Nations (UN). In the meantime, current IGC members worked on drafting an interim constitution. Just hours before this new document of national law was to be ceremoniously ratified, Shi'ite political leaders refused to sign the document, at the persuasion of cleric Sistani.

> Sistani's pronouncements about the need to have elected individuals draft a constitution scuttled the Bush administration's first transition plan. A second plan, to select an interim government through regional caucuses, also was torpedoed by Sistani, forcing the administration to agree to hold elections for a transitional government by early [2005] (040306WP).

> [Sistani's] principal objection involves a clause in the interim constitution that says a permanent constitution would not go into effect if two-thirds of the voters in any three provinces rejected it, even if the document receives a nationwide majority. Because the [Sunni] Kurds control three provinces in the north, the provision would effectively give the Kurds veto power over the constitution. The Kurds make up about 20 percent of Iraq's population (040306WP).

As the June 30, 2004 deadline for the transfer of power quickly approached, negotiations for how to expand and utilize the IGC continued. UN and US officials proposed expanding the

IGC from 25 members to 50 or 75 members (040502WP), and appointed two special envoys to select members to the body. US officials referred to this expanded body as "a caretaker government" (040525IH). IGC members jockeyed for top leadership roles. All of this maneuvering upset many Iraqis, particularly Shi'ite leaders.

> Muhammed Bahr Uloum, a prominent Shiite member of the Governing Council, rejected [the UN envoy's] mediation and warned Friday that Iraqis would rise up if the United Nations is allowed to pick the new government. "We are not under age in need of a guardian. Iraqis are not a herd of 27 million people to be directed by [UN and US officials] (040502WP).

UN and US envoys were reportedly attempting to ensure that "the job of prime minister, the most important post in the new caretaker government, is filled by a Shi'ite" (040526NY). To provide some context, it is during this time that the fiery Fallujah insurgency (Sunni) was beginning to blaze.

By late June 2004, Iraq had a transitional law in place, and the IGC was disbanded. An interesting part of this transitional law, known as Order 17, provides US personnel and troops "personnel immunity from prosecution by Iraqi courts for killing Iraqis or destroying local property after the occupation ends and political power is transferred to an interim Iraqi government" (040624WP). The basic thrust of the order is to protect foreign personnel working on assignments, at the request and with the support of the Iraqi interim government. The US wants to ensure that its troops and personnel will not be prosecuted by completing acts backed by Iraqi governance, particularly in the battle against insurgency. For instance, if US soldiers kill Iraqi insurgents or militia members, they do not want to be prosecuted later by an Iraqi court. While heavily backed by top US officials, they are also concerned that "[Order 17] could create

the impression that the United States is not turning over full sovereignty – and giving itself special privileges" (040624WP).

"In a surprise ceremony convened Monday morning to decrease the chances of more violence, US officials handed over sovereignty to Iraqi leaders, formally ending the American occupation two days earlier than scheduled" (040629IH). On June 28, 2004 Paul Bremer presented Iyad Allawi, Iraq's prime minister, with a letter recognizing Iraq's sovereignty. During the ceremony, Iraq's president, Ghazi al-Yawar, made a statement that may be a good benchmark for measuring second-order change: "We want a free, democratic Iraq that will be a source of peace and stability for the region and the whole world" (040629IH). Though Iraq is given full sovereignty, it comes with some limits stipulated by the US The interim Iraqi government cannot make any long-term policy decisions, has no authority over the 160,000 foreign troops in Iraq, and cannot reverse any policies enacted by US administrators during the occupation. Some Iraqis were thus skeptical that Iraq had been given full sovereignty by the US (040703WP). However, by November 2004, the Iraqi government was authorizing US military actions as Allawi sanctioned the US invasion of Falluja (041110IH).

The Iraqi interim government, led by Prime Minister Allawi, was empowered to elect a national assembly, and the election was slated for December 2004 or January 2005. "The Iraqi government must do what the CPA conspicuously did not, which was to win [Iraqi] hearts and minds" (040707WP). The elected assembly would choose the Interim Government which would be given executive powers to draft a constitution. "'If we pull off [this election, it] will be one of the more monumental occurrences in the Middle East in several hundred years,' [according to] Deputy Secretary of State Richard L. Armitage" (040707WP). I have certainly found that

determining second-order change is difficult, but the above quote sounds like an attempt at this kind of change.

As previously stated, the fledging Iraqi government went through several iterations as it headed towards its goal of permanent, solid, and sovereign. Often change, especially big change, takes a number of smaller steps, each serving to drive one closer to the desired destination. We certainly see this approach with Iraq's new government. One of these steps, in addition to the newly recognized interim government, preparations for national elections, and transitional assembly, was the 1000-member Iraqi National Council (040716WP). From this body a smaller body was formed to be an interim legislature. To further complicate matters of keeping track of Iraq's government, a 100-member interim national council was planned as the first check on Iraqi government ministers and policy (040707WP). There were also a host of small boards or committees to decide various issues and complete various tasks (040907WP).

Iraqi national elections occurred on January 30, 2005, however, the first article in the data set after the elections was February 16, 2005. When Iraqi citizens voted, they indirectly elected 275 members to the Transitional Assembly (TA), a type of parliament. Three coalitions, political parties so to speak, controlled 255 of these seats. The TA would select a president and two deputies who would then by unanimous vote, select a prime minister, the real power position of the TA. Several prominent members of the original IGC were jockeying for the position, including current interim Prime Minister Allawi and Ahmed Chalabi. Despite advances, some Iraqis remain skeptical of the legitimacy of the new government.

"The crux of the problem is the occupation," said Abdel-Salaam Kubeisi, a leader of the Association of Muslim Scholars, an influential Sunni Arab-led group that championed the call for a boycott [of the election]. "We all realize that under occupation, there is no

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chance for any legitimate government," he said in an interview Tuesday. "So whether it is [Ibrahim] Jafari or Allawi or Chalabi, they are all the same to us. They all came with the occupation" (050216WP).

Chalabi, an Iraqi-born exile with ties to the U.S, was once financially supported by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (030427WP). He is reported to have provided US officials with much of the information pertaining to WMD, "exaggerated information," that led to the US invasion of Iraq (031130WP). Prior to the elections, Chalabi was arrested for alleged counterfeiting of Iraqi currency, a charge he adamantly denied (040810IH). In a separate incident, US officials also charged that Chalabi was passing classified US information to Iranian officials (040810IH).

Spring 2005 was filled with political jockeying amongst leaders of Iraq's newly elected TA. Disagreements were rampant between the various political parties. Frequently, they had difficulty making decisions. An article from March 31, 2005 (WP) described the infighting saying "Iraq's first attempt at democratic government remains mired in private deal-making and public shouting matches. Ironically, as negotiations between Iraqis became more strained, some Iraqis sought increased US involvement; and US leaders resisted. As one US official stated, "it is important that [Iraqi politicians] maintain the momentum of the elections. This is not the time to slow down" (050331WP).

As this theme represents, there certainly was a great deal of transition in Iraq between 2003 and the end of 2005. The question remains, does this change, this transition represent first or second-order change?

Part B: Examples of Recursion

In this section of the results I describe examples of cybernetic recursive sequences found within and between the themes. Responding to a perceived problem, with the problem, is the primary recursive sequence found in this data, and this is certainly true in the military operations theme. This can be characterized as solutions of *more of the same*. This process is seen most frequently in the US response to insurgency, or the insurgent response to US occupation. For example, the following describes a US response to one of many insurgent attacks:

> US military forces, responding to increasingly frequent and lethal attacks by Iraqi gunmen, staged a major operation this week aimed at rounding up suspected Saddam Hussein loyalists in this Tigris River town 45 miles north of Baghdad, US officials said today. The campaign, designated Operation Peninsula Strike, was described by US officials as the biggest since the end of the Iraq war. Working from intelligence tips, US troops tried to track down members of Saddam's Fedayeen, a militia loyal to the ousted president, as well as high- ranking members of the Baath Party and former Iraqi security agencies, US officials say. (030612WP)

The problem as stated is the increasing number of lethal attacks by Iraqi gunmen, on US soldiers. The US solution is to forcibly oust the militia leaders responsible for the attacks, or to respond with their own set of lethal attacks. In the process, both Iraqis and US soldiers are wounded or killed, which is precisely the stated problem that the invasion was trying to curtail. It is as if the conversation was, "we want you to stop killing us, so we are going to attack you, and when you kill us, we will attack you again." Interestingly, and classically cybernetic, the US responds to the perceived problem (increased attacks) with the perceived problem (increased attacks). This is a classic cybernetic sequence, like when a spouse responds to yelling and name

calling with yelling and name calling of his/her own, promoting more yelling and name calling. Or like the athlete who responds to increased effort from his/her opponent with their own increased effort and concentration.

This problem/solution recursive sequence provides no potential end to itself. This is the same recursive sequence that promotes marital conflict, gang violence, and political mud-slinging. When one responds (solution) with the problem, one must annihilate the other party to break the sequence. If one is not willing to annihilate the other, there by responding with the problem, one is are only willing to perpetuate the problem. In essence, if one is not willing to annihilate than one is only willing to respond to the problem with enough of the problem to maintain the problem. Of course, a third alternative is to refuse to respond with the problem.

Another recursive sequence, and example of more of the same, is represented in the relationship between US policy makers and Sunni politicians. US officials essentially maintain that Sunni Iraqis are dangerous and untrustworthy. Sunnis respond by being dangerous and untrustworthy. Sunnis complain that the US has disempowered them in the political process, so the US responds by further excluding Sunnis from political participation.

Prior to the US invasion of Iraq, Sunni Arabs, the numerical minority, held the majority of political power in Iraq. Saddam Hussein, a Sunni himself, exploited this power by ruthlessly abusing other ethnic groups. To protect themselves and their interests, Shi'ite and Kurdish leaders developed regional militias. When the US deposed Hussein's regime and security force, Sunnis suddenly found themselves in the political minority, as well as the numerical minority. In many regions, Shi'ite politicians backed by Shi'ite militias were now in authority. In broad terms the Sunni insurgency in Iraq can be understood as a disparate group's desperate attempt to regain some control. The US, in undercutting the Sunni authority and setting up a transitional

political system that disenfranchised Sunnis, in effect helped fuel insurgency. Sunnis may have been disempowered to such an extent that they could not legitimately or appropriately participate in the new Iraqi political system (one half of recursive sequence). Therefore they turned to an inappropriate response – insurgency. The other side of the recursive pattern is that Sunnis responded to their disempowerment with such dangerous and threatening behavior, that the US could not legitimately empower them in the political process. By responding with more of the problem, threatening behavior in this case, Sunnis effectively contributed to their own disempowerment.

Sequences of recursion go beyond military operations and can be found within the other themes. For example, the following describes how the problem of infrastructural damage is maintained through more infrastructural damage.

> US military commanders have shed their early caution in striking some targets in Baghdad and have embarked on more aggressive air attacks that run the risk of larger numbers of civilian casualties, defense officials said yesterday. The strikes, many of them against communication nodes, telephone exchanges and government media offices, appear to reflect a judgment that winning the war against Iraq will require more aggressive air attacks, particularly the systematic destruction of networks used by the Iraqi authorities to direct their forces (030402WP).

In addition to the damage inflicted upon the communication network, one may note that this passage also draws attention to the fact that increased infrastructural damages generally correlated with increased civilian hardship and casualty. This is recursively related to sabotage, in that as civilian hardship increased, infrastructural damage increased via sabotage. With goals of both regime change and reconstruction, making decisions to damage infrastructure at the risk

of greater civilian casualties must have been difficult. Damaging the Iraqi military's ability to communicate also meant that Iraqi citizens' ability to communicate was also damaged. It also meant that these communication networks would be unavailable for US use during the reconstruction period and would need to be repaired or rebuilt. A similar sequence is shown by the US feeling it necessary to import oil into Iraq at $2.65 per gallon after oil production and distribution was damaged.

> Another article presents another version of this recursive sequence:
>
> And most significantly, saboteurs believed to be loyal to Hussein started to attack the system by felling towers and cutting lines. US officials here would not detail the number of cases of sabotage to the electrical infrastructure other than to call them significant….
> (030703WP)

Now why would Iraqi citizens cut off their own power? Why would they destroy part of their infrastructure that they depend on? Why would anyone bring harm to themselves (like self-injurious behavior)? This can only be understood as someone's proposed solution to an even greater perceived problem. In this case the US occupation appeared worse to some Iraqis than being without electricity.

Another recursive process that could be described as a cost to the war in Iraq was the increasing lack of trust between US and Iraqi political leaders, which served to promote skepticism and confusion as to how to proceed. In an article describing the cooperation between Sunni and Shi'ite leadership in opposition to the US occupation (030817WP), US leadership attempts to interfere in this cooperation. The US wants to unite Iraqis, and yet does not trust them to do so. Does not the US want these groups to cooperate and avoid sectarian schism? What does the US fear more, sectarian violence or Iraqis united in opposition to the US? To

keep Iraqis divided so that they cannot be unified against US, the US prevents them from meeting privately and provides support to them individually (money, position of power, etc.). But this only promotes skepticism of each other among the Iraqis, breeds sectarian violence, and ultimately prolongs the US occupation in Iraq. It is my opinion that the US probably would have been better served promoting unity among Iraqi sects, much like a family therapist promotes unity among a conflictual family in order for the family to align together against the therapist.

In a conflictual dyad, like the US and Iraq, perceptions of one another seem to be recursively related. What the US thinks about Iraq seems to be recursively related to what Iraq thinks about the US, as well as what Iraq thinks the US thinks about them. Therapists will often try to disrupt these recursive perceptions by reframing the perception (Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 1974). For example, instead of talking about the lack of security in Iraq, one could reframe this as an abundance of insecurity, maintained by the partnership of US military and the insurgency.

Recursive sequences can similarly be found in Iraq's transition toward new governance. In late 2003, US officials were pushing for the IGC to speed up assigned tasks, complaining that in-fighting in the IGC was slowing the process. Why would Iraqis, who claim to want sovereignty and independence stall, which in effect keeps their sovereignty at bay and the US in charge? (031112WP). The IGC exhibits the very problem perceived by the US (disorganization), which has the effect of maintaining the problem (US occupation) that is not desired by the IGC. Classically recursive, the IGC blames in-fighting among US policy makers as the cause for political unrest in Iraq. "[Iraq] fell victim to the intense struggle within the US government over Iraq policy," said [one Iraqi policy analyst]. The US insists that the IGC draft a preliminary constitution so that Iraqis can begin to rule themselves. Iraqi political leaders agree to hold

elections in order to elect people to write the constitution. US officials in essence respond with, "No, your plan is too slow and too disorganized." The implicit message from the US is, "we want you to be more independent and organize your own government, but not in the way that you are going about becoming independent. You should be dependent on us (US) for that." The US seems to be sending the recursive message of "rely on us for your independence," while Iraqi leadership seems to be saying, "make us independent."

A report by the Brookings Institute (Pollack, 2006) alludes to a recursive sequence in Iraq's transition to stable governance. "US policy often focuses on the wrong problems and employs the wrong solutions" (p. ix). When the US removed Saddam Hussein from power (solution) they created a power vacuum that has yet to be properly filled (problem). This has created two significant problems that were not present prior to the US invasion: a stubborn insurgency and "a failed state, in which the governmental architecture has essentially collapsed and has not yet been effectively replaced by new, capable military and political institutions" (p. ix). In many ways, both of these problems are of direct result of the US invasion (a conclusion based on linear causality if one punctuates history in such a way) and are now requiring the US to remained involved (circular causality).

Summary of Results

In part A of the results I reported on the four major themes that emerged from these data. I sought to describe each theme and provide evidence that describes and illustrates the theme. I used part B of the results to highlight what I consider to be recursive sequences in the relationship between the US and Iraq. I believe that from the many examples provided above, I have successfully shown that elements of cybernetic recursion can be found in international relationships, at least this one.

Determining first- or second order change in international relationships, at least in this international relationship, is and difficult and complex undertaking. From the US perspective, prior to invasion, Iraq presented as an imminent threat to US national security. Iraq was thought to be corroborating with terrorists, namely Al Qaeda, and developing their own weapons capable of mass destruction. Second, Iraq was ruled by a ruthless dictator, Saddam Hussein, and the US felt compelled to liberate Iraqi citizenry from his reign. From the US perspective, these beliefs would constitute stability or homeostasis in Iraq. The US sought to change these perceived realities by invading Iraq, deposing Hussein's regime, and establishing a free and stable democratic government. How will we judge these changes as first- or second-order? I submit that any change that maintains the current perceived problem would be, by definition, a first-order change. Therefore in order to judge the kinds of changes in Iraq, we must return to what the US perceived to be the problems that needed changing. Does Iraq present as an imminent threat to US national security? Has US national security decreased because of its actions in Iraq? Has Iraq become a haven for terrorism? Does Iraq possess weapons used for mass destruction? Are the citizens of Iraq living under an oppressive regime? Since these were the problems perceived by the US that led to actions in Iraq, these are the questions we must ask. Of course, the answer to many of these questions is, "It's too early to tell." Although these data do not provide a definitive answer, events since 2005 shed some light, which will be addressed in the discussion. Over time, if the answer to these questions becomes, "yes," then we can judge that the changes enacted in Iraq were first-order changes; changes that ultimately upheld the problems they were designed to treat. If over time, the answers to these questions is "no," then cybernetically one would say the US has made a second-order change in Iraq. A caveat to all of this however, is that some of these perceived problems were judged to not actually be realities in

Iraq. Thus far, Iraq has been shown not to be in possession of WMD. Therefore, if this remains stable over time, in that Iraq continues to not possess WMD, then the US changes in Iraq would merely be maintaining the current state of affairs, and thus a first-order change, or no change at all. If however, after the war, Iraq takes possession of some WMD, then the US actions in Iraq would have to be seen as second-order, in the wrong direction. Time will tell.

Chapter V

Discussion

This chapter presents a summary of the study and conclusions that I found in analyzing

this data set. I describe limitations of the study and surprises that I encountered. I give a few

suggestions for future research. I conclude this chapter with what I feel are important

implications of this research, cybernetically describing conflict in international relationships.

Summary of Study

The purpose of this project was an attempt to analyze the relationship between the US

and Iraq from a cybernetic perspective. My hypothesis was that cybernetics processes would be

demonstrated in the Iraq War. Second, I sought to determine if the changes constituted by the

Iraq War would represent first- or second-order changes. While I believe many of the changes

during the war represent first-order change, I do not believe that at this time I conclusively state

whether the Iraq War will ultimately lead to second-order change. Additional time and analysis

is required to make this determination. When considering what second-order change may look

like for Iraq, I believe that Iraq's former interim president, Ghazi Al-Yawar, is close when he

states, "we want a free, democratic Iraq that will be a source of peace and stability for the

region" (040629IH).

Limitations

I mentioned this study to a friend of mine who has been to Iraq on a tour of duty with the

US Air Force. He was very interested in the study but critical of one of the data sources. He

said something in a disparaging tone like, "but the *New York Times* is so liberal." I suspect that

his reaction will be felt by others. Despite evidence that the NYT and WP are two of the most

influential and important media outlets in the world, particularly for international affairs, I

suspect some will dismiss this study simply on the source of the data. Let us pretend for a moment, with an air of grandiosity, that someone from the Bush Administration got wind of this project. I suspect that data source would provide a convenient avenue for discounting the findings in the study. First person interviews would have strengthened the study. Traveling to Iraq and talking directly with citizens, soldiers, and politicians would have been highly valuable. But I could not do that in this study, so I relied on those who could – international journalists working for reputable news agencies. I believe that a strength of this project is its data, and I am satisfied with this choice.

A second limitation that I was concerned about has to do with the topic itself; critically analyzing the war in Iraq. I suspect that this work may not be accepted by some in the academic and political communities. Facing questions like those posed by this inquiry can be uncomfortable and unpopular. I will provide an example from therapy. I once worked with a family that complained that their teenage children were out of control. However, the more that I worked with the family, the more that I saw that the father was constraining and binding the children in such a way that the teens could not behave without being rebellious. Their great desire was to please their father, and yet pleasing him often meant displeasing him at the same time. As their therapist, the problem that I faced is that I simply could not sell this framework of the problem to the family. The father never bought my conclusions. He came alone to therapy one day to tell me that his family would not be returning. Despite my efforts, best intentions, and I believe a correct understanding of the family's recursive and dissatisfying processes, I could not present the information to them in such a way that they could accept it. I fear that this will happen with this study. I call this limitation "the Karl Rove dilemma." I am not sure that

there is anyway to present the findings of this study in such a way that those who it is critical of could accept it.

A possible third limitation of this study is that it was completed entirely by one researcher, me, in isolation from the ideas and opinions of other researches. This work represents independent scholarship, not collaboration. These are my questions and my ideas. This is my analysis and my conclusions. I know that some may be concerned that no one verified my work or evaluated my procedures. I believe that the transparency of this project and the lengths to which I went to carefully and accurately describe my procedures makes this concern defensible. This study is replicable in that anyone can take this data and conduct a very similar study. I believe that replicability will confirm the accuracy of my work.

Finally, this study presents the natural limitation of being behind the times. Since I completed this study, additional and relevant information has been published. My data collection ceased at the end of 2005. Since then many important events have occurred in the War in Iraq. Possibly most important is the Iraq Study Group (ISG), a bipartisan group commissioned by the US Congress to assess US policy in Iraq. Co-chaired by James Baker III and Lee Hamilton, the ISG recently published the findings of its study. The Iraq Study Group finds the situation in Iraq "grave and deteriorating" (Baker & Hamilton, 2006, p. 6). The report contends that violence in Iraq is increasing and that the democratically elected government is ineffective in providing basic security and utilities. The report recommends that the US government take a very different policy tact than it has over the past three years, including withdrawing troops and establishing diplomatic relations with Iran and Syria among others. These findings by the ISG would indicate that second-order change has not been achieved in Iraq.

Surprises

I want to describe several surprises that I encountered as I completed this research. I was first surprised by some of the topics that were not as represented in the data as would have predicated. I expected that the capture of Saddam Hussein would be a prominent theme mentioned in this data, but it was rarely mentioned. The elections held by Iraq in January 2005 were more underrepresented in the data than I would have thought. Abu Ghraib prison was mentioned a few times, but usually as a geographic location and not in relation to the prison scandal, which was mentioned twice. I believe that the financial costs of the war were only explicitly discussed in one article. Each of these topics were discussed, but to a much smaller degree than I would have expected. In this data set, military battles, casualties, and the Iraqi interim government were the most prominently covered topics.

Secondly, and anecdotally, I was surprised by how well people accepted the idea of essentially a marriage counselor researching international relations. People would ask me, "So, what's your dissertation about?" I would usually respond with something like, "well, I do marriage or family counseling, and I'm taking a theory of family therapy and using it to describe the relationship between the US and Iraq in the Iraq War." Intuitively, and again anecdotally, this seemed to make sense to people. It seemed to resonate.

Another surprise that I encountered was just how passionate I became about the war in Iraq as I read and reread these articles. I read about the war, talked about the war, thought about the war, and read some more. When a news cast caught regarding the war was on, it usually always caught my attention. As I immersed myself in the data, I felt myself at times getting angry or feeling sad. I even laughed out loud a few times. I was afraid for the soldiers, and I

was afraid for the civilians. More than anything, I wanted the story that I was reading to end in peaceful stability. I am sure that these feelings affected the way I interpreted the results.

Finally, I was surprised at how this study affected me clinically. As I began to see recursive processes within the data, particularly problem maintaining behaviors, I was surprised to begin noticing the many problem maintaining behaviors in the lives of my clients. The fact is that all of us repeat processes that don't work, whether individually, interpersonally, or internationally. While I found similarity between this research and my clinical work, I am not claiming that the war in Iraq is just like marital conflict. A war between nations and a "war" between spouses is not exactly the same, and I am not claiming such. I am not even sure how they are similar and different. I do, however, believe that they are similar in that both exhibit recursive process and therefore can be described cybernetically.

While working on this project I had the opportunity to meet clinically with a family in distress. Note the striking similarities between the processes exhibited by this family and those exhibited between the US and Iraq. All of the names have been changed, and measures have been taking to obscure the identity of the family members. This five member family included the parents, Robert (57) and Mary (56), who have been married over thirty years. They have three children: Bobby (31), Lisa (26), and Rachel (23). Everyone in family is well educated. Robert is an executive and Mary holds a doctorate, though now works at home. Bobby is a successful engineer and has a family of his own. He moved away for college and stayed to pursue his career. Rachel is doing very well at a prestigious medical school. The middle child, Lisa has always had a love for animals and is a graduate student in biology. She's not doing as well. Her parents had to pull strings to get her into graduate school and she has struggled since day one. Her parents have been paying other students to tutor her. When this did not work,

Robert and Mary decided that Mary would move in with Lisa at school to ensure that Lisa was going to class and studying. Soon Lisa was studying less, sleeping more, and she and Mary were arguing frequently. The fights progressively got worse. The parents threatened to take away Lisa's beloved horses leading to one skirmish in which Lisa yelled, "I hate this! I might as well be dead!" The parents called the local law enforcement to have their daughter evaluated for psychiatric hospitalization. After all, she was already on medication for "bipolar disorder" but was "refusing to take her medication." When I first saw Lisa I was surprised at how young she looked; how much she looked like an adolescent. After meeting alone with the parents and discussing the situation, the desperate question they posed was simply, "should we give her more money?" Lisa however was making a different statement: "I just want to be close to my dad."

The above clinical example has several features similar to the US/Iraq War. The identified problem was characterized very differently depending on if one asked the parents or the child. In an attempt to solve the problem, several solutions were employed, including increased expenditures, invasion, and sanctions. When the problem did not abate, bitter fighting increased. Soon Lisa was making statements that were leading others to believe that she was contemplating suicide. Both sides were desperate to see real change. In talking with this family I attempted to help them see how their solutions might be actually maintaining the problem they were attempting to solve. This was a very difficult conversation, and I suspect that helping the US and Iraq see how they may be maintaining problems is similarly difficult.

Future Research

Replication

One of the strengths of this study is its replicability. This study is highly replicable in that the data is so public. It requires no inside knowledge, no special connections, and no high-

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level security clearance. Essentially all one needs to replicate this study is a newspaper subscription or access to a computer database. The study required very few resources. I did not travel, conduct interviews, or make telephone calls. The study required very little equipment or overhead. I did use a qualitative software solution which was highly valuable, but not very costly. Using grounded theory I analyzed data publicly available to practically everyone in the world.

Second, these data are replicable in that there are literally millions of additional pages of data that could be added to this study. Using theoretical sampling, I could continue this research using other data sources and other data forms. I could add video analyses and first person interviews. Furthermore, there are plenty of other international conflicts to be analyzed. I could continue this research using the Gulf War, the American Revolution, or a host of smaller conflicts. I could analyze conflicts in which neither the US military nor media was involved and compare the results to conflicts in which they were.

Content Analysis

A similar study could be conducted using similar data, but with a different methodology. I believe that a natural extension of GT is content analysis (CA). Content Analysis requires exclusive categories to which data are assigned to, but when approaching a new topic, the research lacks established categories. One benefit of GT is that themes emerge from data through inductive analysis, and could become theoretically supported categories for content analysis. For example, I could use the four major themes found in this study to conduct a content analysis of Iraq War coverage from another news source. Coders could be trained and correlational studies conducted. Conversely, one could head the other way down the qualitative

methodology continuum and conduct an ethnographic study of one particularly fascinating subgroup in this study, such as highly educated though now unemployed Baghdad residents.

Application

Finally, this study could be replicated in that other types of conflicts and policy decisions could be analyzed for cybernetic processes. I believe that system theories are useful for describing social systems, regardless of size. Therefore systemic analyses could be used to describe sequences of interaction in any conceivable system, including but not limited to corporations, political parties, and demographic subgroups. I would like to turn a cybernetic eye toward domestic policy issues, specifically recursive processes within prison systems. This study has certainly shown me the potential value of applying systems theories to larger social systems.

Implications

Based on the results and the recursive processes found within the data, I want to delineate four implications of this work. The first three address issues of awareness, while the fourth challenges an irrational belief. I know that these implications will not be accepted by all, but I believe that they are solidly established within the data used for this study.

First, neither a nation nor an individual can successfully destroy and build-up at the same time, though cybernetically, one cannot exist without the other. You cannot destroy something that has never been built, and you cannot build-up unless there has been destruction. These data show that the same entity cannot do both simultaneously. One cannot occupy and liberate at the same time. As I wrote in one of my journal entries:

Seems U.S. has discovered that, like in most relationships, it is easier to tear-down than it is to build. It's almost cliché but, with power comes responsibility and accountability.

Because the U.S. is seen as powerful its being held accountable for how it uses its power. The U.S. also seems to feel some responsibility to use its power constructively. For instance, the U.S. feels responsible to help Iraq develop a government, even though the U.S. was instrumental in removing the Iraqi government. The U.S. doesn't want to be viewed as intensely powerful and yet shirking of responsibility. The U.S. understands that powerful nations can't shirk responsibility. Do they also (less consciously) recognize that if a nation could demonstrate that it's not very powerful, and better yet rather weak, it could then legitimately be excused from the responsibility that comes with power? For if the U.S. can be impotent (a decrease in power), than perhaps they can escape responsibility and accountability. How does a nation (or a person) go about becoming less powerful, either in fact or in perception? If the U.S. can attribute problems to insurgents or the Iraqi government (it's your fault), they can escape some of the responsibility that comes with their actions. This is much like the conversation I had in Yemen with a young man who attempted to convince me that the male sex drive is such that one wife won't suffice. "Since I have not control (power) over my libido," he argued, "I have no responsibility to remain faithful to my wife." By attributing problems, and therefore responsibility, to someone else, you simultaneously attribute power; which in effect makes a simultaneous statement about your own power. It's a simple formula: power = responsibility & accountability. If you want to decrease responsibility, you must decrease power. If you want to say, "it is not my fault," (responsibility) you must also say, "I can't stop them," "I can't control them," or "I can't help it" (power). How do you decrease power? One way is by setting yourself up for failure; by placing yourself under

unachievable circumstances. Examples might be destroying a government and protecting

all the civilians, or by fighting insurgency with conventional warfare.

A second implication is policy analyst must always be aware of the recursive relationship

between problems and solutions. Problems are not really being solved when the solutions used

cause innumerable problems themselves. First-order solutions, a type of first-order change, are

solutions that end up either maintaining the problem or causing other problems that prevent the

original problem from begin solved. Second-order change requires that solutions do not

maintain the problem they were trying to address. There are numerous examples of the US using

problem-maintaining solutions in Iraq.

A third implication from this study is how profoundly punctuation shapes perspective.

Punctuation allows people to make sense of information or data. Like the period at the end of

the sentence, punctuation allows us to make distinctions. Punctuation puts boundaries around

the amount of information one can consider. Consequently, it also excludes information. For

instance, when I chose to analyze data for this project, I chose to punctuate the data set as

beginning in 2001 and ending in 2005. I also chose to limit data to three news sources, instead

of five or 100. The catch is that punctuation, although necessary for understanding, influences

understanding. Had I punctuated the data differently, I might have drawn different conclusions.

When seeking second-order change, one must remember that the data have been punctuated in a

certain way, while someone else may punctuate the same information differently, leading to

different conclusions. When you accept someone's conclusions, you are almost always

accepting his/her punctuation of the information. Sometimes punctuation needs to be revisited.

An element of punctuation that emerged from the US/insurgent conflict was the use of

the word "terrorism." To understand insurgency as terrorism requires punctuation. Punctuation

allows one side to condemn the other without being condemned for similar behavior. In effect, one group seeks to distinguish themselves from another group. Very early on in the war, Iraqi military strategy changed from conventional fighting to unconventional fighting. Iraq officials seem to understand the futility in fighting the US conventionally. It is as if the conversation went, "We (Iraq) can't compete with you (US). We have to fight creatively to maximize our attacks." The US calls this unconventional fighting terrorism, and somehow distinguishes Iraqi attacks from its own. Through punctuation the US can differentiate dropping bombs from the sky from a car loaded with explosives driven into a building. The results are the same: death, hurt, anger, destruction, but the classification is different. This occurs only through punctuation. The US perspective seems to be, "as long as you wage war and kill people in the same way we do, it's honorable. If you use different methods, such as an individual infiltrating our lines and detonating a bomb, we condemn that as being somehow more inhumane." Arbitrarily differentiating oneself from another so that one can justifiably commit similar behavior is classic cybernetic punctuation.

Understanding punctuation is critical for understanding recursive relationships. When a couple comes in for therapy, one member will often make a formulaic statement of complaint ("I'm leaving him because he cheated on me"), which can be understood as one punctuation of a broader recursive process. The other member may counter with a complaint representing a different punctuation (I cheated because she's distant). Of course, she will see things differently (I'm distant because he's interested in other women), representing yet a third punctuation. Re-punctuated, these statements of linear causality become pieces of a recursive system. The proverb, "you can't see the forest for the trees," is an example of punctuation.

One of the real travesties of the Iraq War, are the multitudes of mispunctuations present in the narrative. For example the ongoing counterinsurgency effort. Insurgents seem to be claiming that they must forcibly resist the US occupation of their land (punctuation). "Get out of our land or we will kill you!" The US claims that the military must stay in Iraq and root out insurgents because of the threat that they pose to security (punctuation). "We can't leave while you're trying to kill us!" Each of their solutions is the other's perceived problem. In this sense, each is causing the other. The US occupation of Iraq is causing the insurgency, and the insurgency is causing the US occupation of Iraq, is one way of describing this recursive relationship. Of course, this description is simply another way of punctuating these events.

The final implication from this research is that the US will have to address what I consider the fallacy of its moral superiority. The notion that the US military has wreaked havoc in other nations, (i.e. Nicaragua, Panama, Beirut), at least as severe, if not worse, than was sustained on Sept. 11, 2001, is well documented. Noam Chomsky (2006), the political critic, has written several books and given countless speeches on this issue. He claims that according to the US government's official definition of terrorism, the US is the most prolific terrorist state in the world. Chomsky's miscalculation is that he believes that the US is concerned with this point, much like Jesus thought people would be interested in removing "the log from their eye before removing the speck from your brother's." In my opinion, Americans, by and large, are content in playing by different rules and living by different standards. Instead of asking, "are we morally better than them," I offer five questions the US should consider:

1.   How does our irrational insistence in our moral superiority serve us as a nation?

2.   What do we get out of believing ourselves to be more innocent, more righteous, more civilized?

3.   What information do we have to blind ourselves to in order to maintain the belief in our moral superiority?

4.   What does the world get out of allowing us to hold this belief?

5.   For the US and the world, what are the dangers of not holding this belief?

Conclusion

Systems theorists have been describing relationships and family functioning for a number of years. Specifically, principles of cybernetics have been applied to small social units such as families for forty years. I think that I have convincingly shown that systemic theories from MFT have application beyond the therapy room. Helping families solve problems and explore relational functioning is something MFTs are experts at. I believe these problem-solving skills can be applied to larger social systems, even international relationships. I look forward to the work of proving or disproving this theory. I would encourage MFTs to seek careers in public policy, corporate coaching, system analysis, mediation, and diplomacy, allowing their knowledge of systemic processes to serve them well.

Helping people change is important. Helping people improve their relationships is important. Helping disparate groups find mutual satisfaction is important. Simply put, this dissertation is about taking a theory used to help families and applying it to nations. When families are fighting, cybernetic principles can help relieve conflict. When nations are fighting, many of the same processes are present. It is time for marriage and family therapists (MFTs) to offer their knowledge of system processes to those trying to understand larger system functioning. It is time for MFTs to expose their systemic thoughts to the world. After all, you change families, you change nations; you change nations, you change families. Either or, both are important.

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