

**Legitimising Evil
Media Contribution to Leniency
Towards Using Physical and
Psychological Violence as a Means of
Intelligence Gathering in US**

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Abstract

Since 2001, the attacks by terrorists on the World Trade Centre on 11th September, and the War on Terrorism brought to discussion the question of whether harsh interrogation techniques that may amount to torture under the definition of international law could be legitimately used as a means of information gathering in order to prevent future attacks. In April 2004, a number of photographs depicting serious abuses being inflicted on prisoners under US custody at the Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq became known to the public, arousing serious concerns towards US detention and interrogation policies in Iraq. Despite the shocking images of abuse, there remained significant level of tolerance among US public towards the use of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering.

In order to understand such level of tolerance among the US public towards the use of violence as a means of intelligence gathering, this thesis examined how the treatments towards detainees under US custody have been presented by the US news media. Applying the theoretical framework of Administrative Evil, this project demonstrated that, through facilitating the discursive conditions leading to the process of moral inversion where acts of evil become convincingly redefined as morally tolerable and even justified, the US news media have been unable to provide effective and sustained criticisms towards US government policies despite claims of increased media independence as a result of technological advancement. More importantly, by supporting the discursive conditions of substitution of moral responsibilities with technical, or instrumental, responsibilities, consequentialist moral reasoning, and the dehumanisation of victims, the US news media supported a discourse that encouraged sympathy and even acceptance among US public opinion towards coercive interrogation techniques, some of which would amount to torture under international humanitarian standards. Examining the failures of US news media, the result of this thesis prompts us to critically review the role of the news media under the context of war. More significantly, the result of this thesis also demonstrated the failure of moral safeguards within modern liberal democratic societies and the need for a standard of morality based upon uncompromising responsibility to the others as fellow human beings.

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1. Introduction

In Article 1 of the Declaration against Torture adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on the 9th December 1975, torture was specifically defined as ‘any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental is intentionally inflicted by or at the instigation of a public official on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or confession, punishing him for an act he has committed, or intimidating him or other persons.’¹ Throughout history, torture, inhumane and degrading treatments have often been used by states both during peace time as well as during war for the purpose of punishment and as intimidation. However, by the end of the Second World War, the use of torture had become largely condemned by international with international efforts to abolish the uses of torture. In 1945, Article 55 of the UN Charter demanded ‘universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, language or religion.’² It was also stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 that ‘No one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.’³ In December 1975, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 3452, which called for ‘protection of all persons from being subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.’⁴ The 1975 declaration also denied states the right to claim exceptional circumstances, even war as justification for torture.⁵ Indeed it is also clearly stated in the 8th Amendment of the US constitution that no ‘cruel and unusual punishments’ should be inflicted.⁶

Following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001, however, the subsequent War on Terrorism triggered a new series of debates, both within academic and political establishments regarding the use of physical and psychological violence towards detainees under US custody as a means of intelligence gathering in order to prevent future attacks. As early as six weeks after the attacks, news articles reported that frustrated FBI investigators were considering harsh interrogation tactics.⁷ It was also reported in a feature article in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, where less than a week after the attack,

¹ Cited in Peters (1985) P.2

² Peters (1985) P.142

³ ibid

⁴ ibid

⁵ ibid

⁶ US Constitution, (http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html last visited 20 April 2006)

⁷ Luban (2006) p. 35

‘a quiz in a university class gave for choices for the proper US response to terrorist attacks: A) execute the perpetrators on sight; B) bring them back for trial in the U.S.; C) subject the perpetrators to an international tribunal; or D) Torture and interrogate those involved. Most students chose A or D – execute them on sight or torture them.’⁸

Proponents of using physical and psychological coercion as a means of intelligence gathering, such as Harvard Law Professor Alan Dershowitz and Andrew McCarthy, at the Foundation for the Defence of Democracies argued that torture could be justified as a carefully administrated last resort. In such a scenario of ‘ticking time bomb’, it is argued that ‘suppose [a] bomb is planted somewhere in the crowded heart of an American city, and you have in custody the man who planted it. He won’t talk. Surely, the hypothesis suggests, we shouldn’t be too squeamish to torture the information out of him and save hundreds of lives.’⁹ As argued by McCarthy, ‘Moral evils, however, do not exist in a vacuum, they exist in collision with other evils and sometimes we are forced to choose... This does not mean our average person favours torture, but he may well be amenable to keeping it on the table as an option.’¹⁰ Therefore, in the State of Exception brought by the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the subsequent ‘War on Terror’, interrogators should be allowed a freer hand in employing exceptional measures such as torture and other extra-judicial measures, as valuable information could be obtained. It is also argued that the attacks on 11th September 2001 by Al-Qaeda, an insurgency organisation, have called into question the fundamental applicability of traditional humanitarian regulations. As a new breed of ‘enemy combatants’ emerges, it is argued that the Geneva Conventions as well as other humanitarian regulations have become obsolete. As government lawyers Lee Casey and David Rivikin Jr. argued, in agreeing to the Geneva treaties, the United States’ goal was to obtain decent treatment for *Americans*, particularly those held as [Prisoners of War].¹¹ Therefore, it is argued that in the ‘War on Terror’ where the traditional principle of reciprocity could not be expected, the United States should not be bound by the Geneva Conventions and other humanitarian regulations in its war of self-defence. ‘Al-Qaeda members’, argue the lawyers, ‘hijacked civilian airliners, took hostages and killed them; and they themselves do not obey the laws of war concerning the protection of the lives of civilians or the means of limited combat.’¹²

⁸ Cited in Luban (2006) P.35

⁹ Luban (2006) P.44

¹⁰ McCarthy (2006) P.106

¹¹ Casey & Rivikin (2006)

¹² Feldman (2006) P.268

Therefore, it made no sense to follow those laws in fighting the terrorists and it would be necessary that constraints of the humanitarian regulations should be loosened as ‘POWs have a right to keep their country’s military secrets. Terrorists on the other hand, have no “right” to keep their secrets’¹³.

The US government also sought justification for the use of coercive interrogation techniques in the War on Terrorism. It was argued by both the Bush administration and legal advisors in Washington, that those captured and detained by the United States would not be covered under the protection of ‘Prisoner of War’ status. It was argued in a memorandum by the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of State in January 2002 that the Geneva Conventions are not applicable to the members of Al-Qaeda, as Al-Qaeda, due to its status as a non-state actor, ‘is not a high contracting member under Article 2’¹⁴. In the same memorandum it was also argued that the President could find that the Geneva Conventions do not apply to the Taliban if the President finds that in the relevant time period, Afghanistan had become a failed state.¹⁵ Consequently, the detainees captured during the ‘War on Terror’ would not be entitled to the status of ‘Prisoners of War’, as they do not conform to the definition of legal combatant under the Geneva Convention. As a result, humane treatment of detainees becomes only subject to regulation by international customary standards and only to the extent that is, as Bush ordered, ‘consistent with military necessity.’¹⁶ As demonstrated by the Bybee Memorandum produced in January 2003 and other memorandums produced by the Office of Legal Counsel in the Justice Department, there have been consistent attempts by the US administration to limit the definition of what constitutes torture under International Law. The narrow definitions of torture have been criticised as a deliberate attempt at misinterpreting international humanitarian law, as well as sanctioning all but the most severe forms of torture.

In late April 2004, a series of shocking photographs depicting Iraqi prisoners abused by American soldiers in the Abu Ghraib Prison were published by the television news programme *60 Minutes* resulting in massive public outcry. Some of the photographs showed US service personnel laughing whiles Iraqi detainees under US custody were being forced to pose in humiliating sexual acts. As early as late 2002, there were reports of mistreatment of

¹³ Caset & Rivikin (2006) P.210

¹⁴ Taft-Haynes Memorandum (2002) P.286

¹⁵ Shapiro (2006) P.231

¹⁶ Cited in Macdonald (2006) P.87

detainees held at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base and other detention facilities. There were also allegations of the use of torture on detainees including sleep deprivation, the use of so-called truth drugs, solitary confinement in confined and cold cells and being forced to maintain uncomfortable positions. The Taguba Report published in March 2004 documented that 'between October and December 2003, at the Abu Ghraib Confinement Facility, numerous incidents of sadistic, blatant and wanton criminal abuses were inflicted on several detainees, intentionally perpetrated by several members of the military police guard force.'¹⁷ Reports by the International Committee of the Red Cross also expressed concerns about the systematic use of ill-treatment, including violent treatments such as assault and humiliation, as well as the psychological impact of uncertainty in legal status, and prolonged detention and interrogation of the detainees, as well as the fate of unknown individuals held at undisclosed locations.¹⁸ In their report published in 2004, the Human Rights Watch also 'alleged systematic abuse, not just from the acts of a few but resulting from administration policies that sought to partially circumvent the Geneva Conventions and the US Convention of Torture.'¹⁹

The revelation of abuse inflicted by US personnel in Iraq triggers widespread concern as several enquiries were commissioned by the US government into the causes of abuse and attribution of responsibilities. Following the scandal of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib, seventeen soldiers and officers were removed from their positions of duty, and eleven soldiers identified within the photographed abuse were also charged with dereliction of duty, mistreatment, aggravated assault and battery. The eleven soldiers charged between 2004 and 2006 were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment and dishonourable discharge. The two alleged ring-leaders, Specialist Charles Graner and Specialist Lyndie England were sentenced to 10 years and 3 years imprisonment respectively in their trials conducted in 2005. On the 5th May 2005, the commanding officer of detention facilities in Iraq, General Janis Karpinski, was also reprimanded for dereliction of duty as well as being demoted to the rank of colonel.

However, despite the shocking images of physical violence and sexual humiliation inflicted on detainees under US custody, there remained a significant level of tolerance and

¹⁷ Taguba Report 2004, P.416

¹⁸ International Committee of Red Cross, Operational Update 30 April 2005, US detention related to the events of 11 September 2001 and its aftermath - the role of the ICRC (<http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/iwpList454/541ACF6DC88315C4C125700B004FF643> Last Visited 7 Dec 2005)

¹⁹ Adams & Balfour (2009) P.143

leniency towards the use of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering. In a survey conducted by Gallup in 2005, 52% of the 1006 interviewed replied that they approved of the way the US was treating the prisoners being held at Guantanamo Bay where coercive treatments towards detainees have also been alleged.²⁰ After the publication of the photographs from Abu Ghraib, the PEW Research Center also reported in November 2005 that nearly half (46%) the members of the general public surveyed, said that torture of terrorist suspects can often or sometimes be justified.²¹ In 2006, a worldwide survey was conducted by the BBC regarding public opinion towards torture, in which more than 27,000 people in 25 countries were asked if torture would be acceptable if it could provide information to save innocent lives. The survey showed that 'some 36% of those questioned in the US agreed that [the] use of torture was acceptable.'²² In comparison to that of other Western countries including Germany (21%), the U.K. (24%) and France (19%), as well as world average percentage of 29%, US public opinion appeared to be significantly more lenient about the use of torture as a means of intelligence gathering.²³

Such a significant level of leniency and tolerance towards coercive treatments of detainees is particularly intriguing in the case of the United States. Within the 20th century, the horror of genocide witnessed under the Nazi rule of Germany and the French suppression of the Algerian revolt generated universal condemnation towards the use of cruel and degrading treatments against prisoners. Indeed, the commitment towards the defence of basic human rights against 'cruel and unusual punishments' was also clearly outlined within the US constitution. As stated in the 8th Amendment of the US constitution that no 'cruel and unusual punishments' should be inflicted.²⁴ Indeed one of the justifications presented by the Bush administration for the invasion of Iraq was the removal of the tyrannical regime under Saddam Hussein, which had committed brutal acts of torture and persecution within Iraq.

Therefore, this study wish to understand such a significant level of leniency towards the use of coercive interrogation techniques, such as stress positions, sleep deprivation and

²⁰ Gallup Poll April 2005 (2005) (<http://brain.gallup.com/documents/questionnaire.aspx?STUDY=P0504021> Last Visited 8th Dec 2005)

²¹ Pew Research Centre (2005) (<http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?PageID=1019> Last Visited 8th Dec 2005)

²² BBC (2006) (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/6063386.stm> Last Visited 25th Aug 2011)

²³ ibid

²⁴ US Constitution, (http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html last visited 20 April 2006)

other forms of violence that may constitute torture, may be possible within a liberal democratic society with a constitutional commitment against ‘cruel and unusual punishments.’

The scandal of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib triggered debates and discussions regarding US treatment towards its detainees. However, the discussions regarding treatments towards detainees under US custody following the abuse have emphasised the search for causes leading to the abuse of prisoners and attribution of responsibilities. Studies examining the causes of the incidents of abuse included official enquiries such as the *Taugba Report*, the *Mikolashek Report*, the *Schlesinger Report* and the *Fay-Jones Report*. Examination of responsibilities within the US also included accounts of US interrogation policies leading to the prisoner abuse scandal such as *A Question of Torture* by Alfred W McCoy, *Torture Taxi* by Trevor Paglen and A.C. Thompson and *Torture and Truth* by Mark Danner. However, despite its contribution to understanding how incidents of unauthorised acts of abuse may occur as a result of causes identified, studies such as those identified above did not address the more important question of why, despite the explicit image of violence and humiliation inflicted under US custody, there remained such a significant level of leniency among US public opinion towards coercive treatments of detainees under US custody.

In order to understand how such a significant level of leniency among US public opinion towards the use of physical and psychological violence towards prisoners is possible within a liberal democratic state, this thesis will examine the possible contribution of discourse produced by the news media. For members of the public who may not have direct experience of events, the news media serves as a major source of information with assumed credibility. The news media conveys ‘knowledge’ though transmitting images and literal descriptions of events, reporting policy statements by the government as well as reflecting public debate through columns, editorials and opinions. In the process, the media also performs a filtering role in the selection of what to report. Through the use of language and imagery, the media not only provides narratives of events but also infuses it with meanings and judgements. While media narratives and discourses are conditioned by the meaning system as well as normative expectations of the society, they also generate their own account of social reality, which in turn contributes to constitute social knowledge and the reproduction of its meaning system. In addition, the news media also contributes to setting the agenda for public discussions. As concluded by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in their book *The Emergence of American Political Issues*, ‘The mass media may not be

successful in telling us what to think, but they are stunningly successful in telling us what to think about.’²⁵ Therefore in this study, I will examine how the news media may have contributed to facilitate the level of leniency towards the use of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering, through its narrative presentation of treatments of detainees under US custody. I will examine the news presentation of coercive treatments towards detainees under US custody in Iraq, both authorised use of coercive interrogation techniques and unauthorised acts of abuse, through the theoretical framework of Administrative Evil.

Examining the possible contribution of US news media in facilitating the level of leniency and tolerance towards the coercive treatments towards detainees under US custody, this study will provide insight into two major areas of study. Examining the role of US news media in the War on Terrorism, this thesis will firstly contribute to the discussion of media-state relations by examining the extent to which the availability of image, and possibility of event-driven journalism have enabled the news media to present a sustainable challenge towards dominant government discourse. Secondly, through the theoretical framework of Administrative Evil, this thesis will contribute towards understanding how the use of physical and psychological violence against detainees may be treated with such a level of tolerance within a liberal democratic state despite its stated commitments towards respect and defence of basic human rights.

1.1. Chapters

This thesis will be divided into six chapters. In the first chapter, I will present a review of the literature outlining the debate between different theoretical models describing media-state relations, as well as studies examining the discourse surrounding treatment towards detainees under US custody in Iraq. In this first chapter, I will also outline the theoretical framework of Administrative Evil through which narratives presented by the US news media will be examined. In the second chapter, I will present a review of methodology, outlining firstly the methodological concepts of discourse, framing and frame analysis, as well as the methodological debate between the quantitative traditions of content analysis and qualitative approach of discourse analysis in analysing news narratives. I will also outline the operationalisation of this project, including the selection of data and aspects of its analysis. The following chapters will consist of the analysis of empirical data. In the third chapter, I

²⁵ Cited in Burstein and Kline (2005) P.8

will present the analysis of how the human agents involved, including perpetrators of coercive treatments towards detainees and detainees under US custody, have been presented within the news narratives. In the fourth chapter, I will examine how the actual acts of coercive treatments towards detainees under US custody and its effect, both on the US and its victims, have been presented by the news media. In the fifth chapter, I will analyse the news presentation of causes and reasons for coercive treatments towards detainees, as well as how they have been judged by the news media. Finally, in the concluding chapter, I will discuss the implications of this thesis, both regarding the role of the news media in the context of

2. Literature Review and the Concept of Administrative Evil

Since the end of the Cold War, the role of the news media within the political system has been subjected to rigorous discussion. At one end of the theoretical spectrum, the media is regarded as completely submissive towards the most powerful group within the political system. Advances in recording and communication techniques since the Vietnam War and in particular the Gulf War has led to what is termed the ‘CNN Effect’. Supporters argue that as a result of the increasing availability of images, the event-driven dynamics of news, allows the news media to perform a more active role within the political system, exerting an influence over the policy making process through its coverage. Following the publication of photographs depicting physically abused prisoners under US custody at the Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq and the resultant widespread outrage, it was argued that the news media was able to assume the ideal role of an independent watchdog providing effective challenge to the legitimacy of government policies. By examining how treatment towards detainees under US custody have been presented by the news media, this thesis will contribute to the macro-theoretical examination of the role of the news media within the political system by analysing the continued relevance of traditional theories of government dominated journalism within the context of advancements in communications technology. Secondly, applying the theoretical framework of administrative evil as presented by Guy B. Adams and Danny Lee Balfour²⁶, this thesis will contribute towards the micro-theoretical understanding of the significant level of tolerance towards the use of coercive interrogation techniques by exploring the extent to which presentation of treatments towards detainees under US custody in Iraq may contribute to an enabling discourse that facilitated legitimisation of coercive interrogation techniques.

In the first half of this chapter, I will introduce different accounts regarding the role of the news media within the network of political communication, as well as its relationship with various power groups within the political system. I will firstly describe the lap-dog image of the news media, in which the news media is viewed as entirely submissive towards the highest authorities within the political system, and the alternative image of the news media as possessing various degrees of autonomy. I will then describe the increasing recognition of the possibility for the media to assume an ideal role as an independent

²⁶Adams & Balfour (2009) *Unmasking Administrative Evil* (New York: M.E. Sharpe)

watchdog within the political system as a result of advancement and availability in the technology of digital recording and transmission. Examining how treatment towards detainees under US custody was presented by the news media, this study will contribute to examining the extent to which the US media is able to assume the role of watchdog by providing significant and sustainable criticism within the context of the War on Terrorism.

In the second half of this chapter, I will examine studies on the role of political narratives produced both by the US government and the news media and their contribution to public perceptions towards the use of war and violence in response to the attacks on the World Trade Centre, as well as to the treatment of detainees under US custody in Iraq. Illustrating the need for a more detailed examination of the possible contribution of the US media narratives to the significant level of leniency towards the use of coercive interrogation techniques, I will introduce the theoretical framework of Administrative Evil whereby acts of evil become presented as justifiable through the discursive conditions of moral inversion. By applying the theoretical framework of Administrative Evil, this thesis will examine the extent to which the news media may contribute towards the level of leniency shown with regards the sanctioned use of coercion and violence as a means of intelligence gathering, through supporting the discourse enabling legitimisation of Administrative Evil.

2.1 Media and the State

As previously described, the role of the media within the network of mass communication, as well as the extent to which the media are influenced by the government and the state, have long been heavily debated. As described by Donohue, Tichenor and Olien²⁷, conventional descriptions of the role of the media can be categorised into several models along the theoretical spectrum according to the perceived level of media autonomy, including;

‘The traditional fourth estate role of independently powerful watch-dog media, the lapdog view of the media as largely submissive to status quo political and economic authority, and a view of media as neither watchdogs nor lapdogs but as part of a *power oligarchy* in the system.’²⁸

²⁷Donohue, George A, Tichenor Philip J& Olien, Clarice N. (1995) A Guard Dog Perspective on the Role of Media in Journal of Communication Vol.45 No.2 P.115~ 132

²⁸ Donohue, Olien & Tichenor (1995) P.115

In this section, the classical theoretical models will be introduced within the debate of media-state relations, which describe the media as under a continuum of varying degrees of domination by the state. This section will then move on to introduce the argument that as a result of the event-driven dynamics in news reporting facilitated by the advance in recording and communication technology, the media is able to assume the ideal role as an independent watchdog, scrutinising and challenging the legitimacy of state policies.

2.1.1. Media as Lapdog

The first category of models explain the role of the media within the political system, describes the media as little more than a lapdog, lacking in autonomy and independent reporting. This was described by Donohue, Tichenor and Olien as:

‘basic elements of the lapdog view are total submissiveness to authority, total lack of independent power, obliviousness to all interests except those of powerful groups, and framing all issues according to the perspectives of the highest powers in the system.’²⁹

Supporting the lapdog view of the media, hegemony theorists believe that government officials keep the information available to the public within such a narrow ideological boundary that democratic deliberation and influence are all but impossible.³⁰ In the words of Mills, the media is ‘at the disposal of the elites of wealth and power.’³¹ Within society, it is argued by Breed that the media play an important role in contributing to the maintenance of social values as well as social integration, as ‘guarantors that a body of common ultimate values remains visible as a continuing source of consensus, despite the inroads of change.’³² At the political community level, it is argued that ‘the media are not only protecting particular “pressure” groups, as is well known, but are also protecting the community from particular groups with a disruptive purpose’³³ through the careful selection and narrative construction of subjects. As a result, there is a lack of willingness for the public media to challenge established social and political institutions. Paletz, Reichert, and McIntyre have observed that relevant studies of relations between the US local government and the media, demonstrate

²⁹ *ibid* P.120

³⁰ Entman (2004) P.4

³¹ Mills (1956) Cited in Donohue, Olien & Tichenor (1995) P.120

³² Breed (1958) P.110

³³ *ibid* P.115

that 'the media are generally supportive of authority.'³⁴ They argue that by means of mechanisms such as the creation of psychological distance through the use of unemotional language, manipulation of the sense of time in reporting events, and symbolic reassurance through use of language that encourages an interpretation among readers who are favourably inclined towards the existing authority, that the US media facilitates reinforcement of the political authority of the government.

Therefore within the lapdog model 'the only media role in conflict would be the defence of the powerful against outside intruders.'³⁵ Through the use of various discursive mechanisms, the influence exercised by the political authority through a so-called lapdog media can be considerable. McIntyre, Paletz and Reichert explain that:

'in contrast to explicit editorials, articles make no overt or express efforts to form opinions. The reader, therefore, is not on his guard against propaganda. He is consequently inclined to accept the articles without questioning their accuracy, completeness, or effects; and to feel that whatever attitudes he has developed toward local political authorities are of his own making.'³⁶

In their book *Manufacturing Consent*, Herman and Chomsky introduce a propaganda model which focuses upon the inequality of power and wealth within the political system and its effect on the mass media. Herman and Chomsky explained that:

'it traces the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalise dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public.'³⁷

Within the propaganda model, Herman and Chomsky identify five filters that influence and constrain reporting by the news media. These filters are: size, ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of individual media companies; reliance on advertisement as the primary sources of income; reliance of the media on information provided by government, business and experts approved by the above actors; negative responses from individuals and groups with substantial resources or numbers; and finally, ideology such as anti-communism as a mechanism of control. Through the selective process of such filters, only the cleansed

³⁴ McIntyre, Paletz and Reichert (1971) P.80

³⁵ Donohue, Olien & Tichenor (1995) P.120

³⁶ McIntyre, Paletz and Reichert (1971) P.89

³⁷ Chomsky & Herman (1988) P.2

residues of the original news material are selected for publication. The power of the filters was explained by Herman and Chomsky thus:

‘They fix the premises of discourse and interpretation, and the definition of what is newsworthy in the first place, and they explain the basis and operation of what amount to propaganda campaigns.’³⁸

As a result, journalists:

‘frequently operating with complete integrity and goodwill, are able to convince themselves that they choose and interpret the news “objectively” and on the basis of professional news values.’³⁹

The constraints of these filters are so powerfully integrated within the political system that alternative choices become unimaginable. Therefore, the propaganda model suggests ‘a systematic and highly political dichotomisation in news coverage based on serviceability to important domestic power interests.’⁴⁰

Within the lapdog model of media-state relations, the media is presented as being almost completely submissive towards the highest authority within a political system and incapable of independent journalism. However, the lapdog model is unable to account for incidents where the media is able to produce oppositional reporting that contradicts interests of various elite groups. Within the propaganda model, Herman and Chomsky note that the elite class within the political system consists of multiple actors, including the government authorities, and other private interests such as ownership of the media, as well as advertisers, who exist within the different layers of mechanisms through which news reports are filtered.⁴¹ However, when describing the influence of multiple actors within the class of elite as, filters through which information is scrutinized and ‘cleansed’ before publication by the media, the propaganda model allows little possibility for media autonomy. However, as the elite classes identified by Chomsky consist of multiple groups of elites, it is possible, by implication, that the media may be able to gain more autonomy in its choices of arguments in the event of conflicting opinion between elites. However, as the elite groups perform as filters within the propaganda model, the ability of the news media to challenge elite discourse

³⁸ ibid

³⁹ ibid

⁴⁰ ibid P.35

⁴¹ ibid P.2

remains limited, as opinions of dissent within the media would still be restricted to ‘within the filter constraints.’⁴² Furthermore, in the event of credible opposition, the media would ‘compete to find ways of putting the newly established truth in a supportive light,’⁴³ as assertions made in contradiction to official views may elicit powerful flak. In order to account for the varying performance of the media in reporting different public issues where the news media appears to engage in more solid challenges to the dominant elite discourse, another category of media-state theories, in which the news media is described as possessing a degree of autonomy, requires exploration.

2.1.2. Media as Possessing Varying Degrees of Autonomy

The second category of models describes the role of the news media within the political system, and its relation to the state authority where the media is regarded as possessing at least some degree of autonomy. In the alternative guard dog metaphor presented by Donohue, Olien & Tichenor, it is suggested that ‘media perform as a sentry not for the community as a whole, but for those particular groups who have the power and influence to create and control their own security systems.’⁴⁴ It is argued that the media are:

‘primarily dependent on the dominant powers. What may seem to be a tug-of-war is, from the guard dog perspective, primarily a result of reporting and reflecting the conflicting views among divided political or economic bodies.’⁴⁵

Unlike the lapdog model of the media, the guard dog model of the media argues that although heavily dependent upon political and administrative leadership, journalists are not always submissive, as ‘occasions would arise that entail reporting of conflicts between dominant powers or power blocs.’⁴⁶

Within this category of models that describe the media as retaining a degree of autonomy, two main theories can be identified that present the media as having different levels of autonomy, including the indexing hypothesis proposed by Bennett⁴⁷ and the model of cascading activation suggested by Entman.⁴⁸ In the indexing hypothesis, it was suggested

⁴² Ibid P.2

⁴³ Ibid P.34

⁴⁴ Donohue, Olien & Tichenor (1995) P.116

⁴⁵ ibid P.122

⁴⁶ ibid P.120

⁴⁷ Bennett, W. Lance, (1990) Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States in Journal of Communication Vol. 40, No2, P.103 ~125

⁴⁸ Entman, Robert (2004) Projections of Power (Chicago: University of Chicago Press)

by Bennett that 'mass media news is indexed implicitly to the dynamics of governmental debate.'⁴⁹ Bennett suggested that ideally:

'it is generally reasonable for journalists to grant government officials a privileged voice in the news, unless the range of official debate on a given topic excludes or marginalises stable majority opinion in society, and unless official actions raise doubts about political propriety.'⁵⁰

However, Bennett also suggests that:

'[m]ass media news professionals, from the boardroom to the beat, tend to "index" the range of voices and viewpoints in both news and editorials according to the range of views expressed in mainstream government debate about a given topic.'⁵¹

Within the indexing model:

'the press gatekeepers open the gates wider or close them more tightly as they perceive potentially decisive challenge or a lack of challenges to the most powerful institutional players and their agendas.'⁵²

In Bennett's article, *Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States*, the indexing hypothesis is supported by a case study of the coverage by the *New York Times* of US policy making on Nicaragua in the mid-1980s, including covert operations by the Central Intelligence Agency against the revolutionary government in Nicaragua. Bennett argues that even in cases of classic investigative journalism, 'the content of the unfolding story was indexed according to the more pronounced political divisions and definitions offered up by the executive branch, Congress and the Courts.'⁵³ This means that the media acted for the most part as a vehicle for government officials to criticise each other.'⁵⁴ Expanding on the indexing hypothesis, Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston have all identified the conditions that may lead to an increase in media autonomy. This was described in *When the Press Fails*:

⁴⁹ Bennett (1990) P.108

⁵⁰ *ibid* P.104

⁵¹ *ibid* P.106

⁵² Bennett *et al.* (2007) P.49

⁵³ Bennett (1990) P.124

⁵⁴ Cited in Entman (2004)P.4

‘[a] typical situation that opens the news gates to underreported versions of events involves some shock to the Washington consensus: a catastrophic event or policy failure, a scandal, an electoral realignment, or a building political opposition that changes the power balance within institutional decision-making circles.’⁵⁵

Under conditions where there is a lack of consensus among the elite group within the political system, the media are able to exercise a slightly higher degree of autonomy and behave as a more active political agent in their examination and representation of alternative voices and views. Therefore, ‘when elites disagree about foreign policy, media reflect the discord in ways that may affect foreign policy, and that means their role, though still limited, transcends mere transmission of propaganda.’⁵⁶

A second theory which presents the media as being heavily influenced by discussions and views among groups of elites is the more complex model of framing and the metaphor of cascading activation, which was suggested by Entman and is closely related to the concept of frames. The concept of frames and frame analysis emerged in the 1980s as an attempt to examine and understand the interactions between actors and information in the network of mass communication. The definition offered by Ryan suggests that ‘[f]raming means organising strips of reality - which are part of a constant flow of events, groups and individuals in ways that help us understand the world’⁵⁷. In the explanation given by Entman, to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient within a communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.⁵⁸ In summary, a frame can be regarded as a mechanism through which events and issues in the social world are accorded meanings and implications. Frames perform four main functions within the process of communication: firstly, frames define the problem and the parameters of the discussion; secondly, frames provide a causal diagnosis, identifying the source of the defined problem; thirdly, frames make moral judgements about the agents involved and their effects; and finally, frames suggest remedies, offering and justifying solutions to the problems named by the frame. Entman argues that:

⁵⁵ Bennett *et al.* (2007) P.60

⁵⁶ Entman (2004) P.4

⁵⁷ Ryan (2004) P.363

⁵⁸ Entman (1993) P.52

‘all four of these framing functions hold together in a kind of cultural logic, each helping to sustain the others with the connections among them cemented more by custom and convention than the principle of syllogistic logic.’⁵⁹

As a paradigm in accounting for the complex process of mass communication, frame analysis contributes to the building of a framework to account for the complex interactions often neglected by traditional theories, where interactions between political authorities, the public and the media often assumed to be a simple input-output relationship.

Entman’s model of cascading activation is based upon the notion of a knowledge network suggested as by Kintsch and spreading activation as suggested by Lodge and Stroh⁶⁰. A knowledge network, Kintsch suggests, consists of connected clusters of ideas and feelings commonly referred to as schemas stored in the human memory.⁶¹ Each idea that is exposed to the knowledge network will quickly develop emotional connections, forming new schemas. As individuals, members of the society are constituted through these schemas that guide their identity thoughts and response to social events.

‘The theory of spreading activation underlines the importance of the order in which information is presented. Early stimuli arising from new events and issues generally have primacy, since activation spreads out from the initial idea.’⁶²

Therefore a dominant frame in early reports can also spread thoughts and feeling both in the network of communication and knowledge networks of individual actors, building new schemas that guide responses to new reports. According to Entman, the spreading activation of thoughts or nodes on a knowledge network within an individual’s mind has parallels in the way ideas travel along interpersonal networks and in the spread of framing of words and images across the different media.⁶³ The process of mass communication can therefore be seen as a complicated process in which the interactions of frames within and between each element within the network of communication, contribute to forming an ever changing perception of social reality. Building on the theory of spreading activation, the model of cascading activation explains ‘how thoroughly the thoughts and feelings that support a frame

⁵⁹ Entman (2004) P.6

⁶⁰ Lodge and Stroh , Cited in Entman (2004) P.7

⁶¹ Kintsch, Cited in Entman (2004) P.7

⁶² Entman (2004) P.7

⁶³ ibid P.9

extend down from the White House through the rest of the system – and who thus wins the framing contest.’⁶⁴ Within the model of cascading activation, initial ideas and frames cascade downward from the administration, sparking conversation and interaction within existing schema within the knowledge network of the different layers within the network of communication. The spreading and activation of dominant frames by the administration is influenced by congruence with existing dominant schemas within society as well as the existence of alternative counter-frames. In the model of cascading activation, ideas cascade downwards from the administration’s initial framing of a particular event, creating conversations that spread ideas across the network of communication while interacting with existing ideas and perceptions of each participant in the network of communication. Where the cascading frames are compatible with existing discourses and images within the cultural context, therefore, it would be easier for the frame to resonate and be accepted.

Entman’s model of cascading activation supplements previous approaches towards understanding communication in several ways. Firstly, the model of cascading activation recognises the diversity between, as well as within, each level of communication, and accounts for the existence of different opinions and counter frames at each node of the communication network. Secondly, the model illustrates the fact that the flow of information is multi-directional. Just as members of the public are influenced by information transmitted by the government and the media, it is also possible that the government and media will be influenced by feedback and responses from other groups within the network of communication such as members of the public. As a result, such a framework also allows the formation of media counter frames that challenge official framing cascading downwards from the state authority. Finally, and most importantly, such a framework enables consideration of the process of communication as a whole, and examination of the complex interactions within the framework, which cannot be achieved through other approaches.

2.1.3. Event Driven Dynamics and Media as an Independent Fourth Estate

While existing theoretical models describe the lack of media autonomy, a number of claims have emerged that emphasise the advancement in communication technologies and their contribution to the role of the media as an independent ‘fourth estate’.⁶⁵ According to these models, the media enjoys substantial autonomy and is able both directly and

⁶⁴ *ibid* P.9

⁶⁵ Burke Edmond (1841) Cited in Donohue, Olien & Tichenor (1995) P.118

independently, to challenge dominate groups within the political system. Following developments in imaging and transmission technology, it has been argued that the availability of instant coverage and real-time images of conflict and humanitarian crises has contributed to a 'CNN effect', whereby public pressure created by reports in the news media influences the policy decisions of the government. As an independent watchdog, the media not only performs the task of surveillance on the government, but also influences government policy by 'creating the environment in which the policy is made.'⁶⁶

In events such as the First Gulf War, the widely broadcasted attack on the World Trade Centre, as well as images of the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, the importance of the image as well as power of the media, became re-emphasised as the nature of modern warfare evolved. When dramatic and spontaneous events arise unexpectedly, especially where provocative visual images are available, journalists may be able to present relatively more independent and critical narratives, as well as introducing challenging questions which draw on alternative resources in the absence of any pre-existing dominant framing from the political elite.⁶⁷ Such event-driven dynamics may encourage journalists to 'draw on sources who present ideas that, absent the event, might seem too politically motivated or otherwise biased.'⁶⁸

The event-driven dynamics of journalism are enhanced by developments in technology that enable news material to be gathered quickly and independently by individuals. As a result of the advances in satellite technology and mobile communication, journalists are able to utilise their own observations and sources other than routine official ones. As Livingstone and Van Belle have observed:

'When journalists turn to alternative sources, when they rely on first-hand accounts of witnesses, or when they tell a story in their own voice, officials who usually cue issue priorities and frames are displaced, if only temporally.'⁶⁹

As a result, the possibility of event-driven journalism has introduced increasing instability within the power relations between the state and the media enabling critical journalism that challenges the dominant frames cascading from the government. In his study entitled *Sky Full*

⁶⁶ Powell, cited in Gilboa, (2005) P.28

⁶⁷ Even-Driven news dynamice, Bennette et al P.75~76

⁶⁸ Bennett *et al.* (2007) P.76

⁶⁹ Livingston & Van Belle (2005) P. 47

of *Lies and Black Swans*, Gowing argues that the increasing levels of transparency that result from the increasing availability of information, as well as the images brought by the advances in communication technology and the increasing accessibility to low cost digital imaging and transmission, has contributed to a new level of empowerment of the media that must be acknowledged. Gowing explains the challenge of the news media by stating that:

‘the technology and resulting transparency created by it have starkly overturned many of the established assumption of power and information flows. They allow the instant witness bearing of witness by almost anyone with the modest amount of cash now needed to buy a mobile phone with a camera lens, or just a plain standard digital camera.’⁷⁰

In addition to the advancement and increasing accessibility of communication technology, it is argued that the changing nature of contemporary warfare has also contributed to the increasing importance of images and changing dynamics of power between the media and the state. It is argued that the nature of contemporary warfare has seen the replacement of conventional fighting between regular armed forces by a range of different characteristics. As explained by Smith’s analysis as cited by Gow:

‘contemporary warfare is fought not for victory but to create political or strategic conditions, non-state actors are strongly present, and the key to war is the struggle for the will of “the people” because war is fought among the people.’⁷¹

As a result, the role of legitimacy becomes increasingly important within the context of contemporary warfare, not only to win the ‘hearts and minds’ of the people involved, but to also gain or retain the support of potential allies. Therefore, the importance and potential impact of images as a key weapon within the context of contemporary warfare is vital in its influence on claims to legitimacy by the actors involved. As explained by Gow:

‘although they are unguided missiles, uncontrollable rockets, images constitute the weapon in contemporary armed conflict. Images certainly constitute the key to legitimacy if there is concern to avoid legitimacy crises. Although the image alone

⁷⁰ Gowing (2009) P.77

⁷¹ Cited in Gow (2007) P.197

will not necessarily be enough and will likely have narrative or other complements, but they are necessary in striking decisive blows.’⁷²

As a result of advances in communications technology, the wider availability of images and increasing accessibility to means of transmission such as the internet, there is an increasing possibility that the media can assume the ideal role of an independent watchdog providing effective critical oversight, as well as influencing government policies. As argued by Gowing, the challenge of advances in technology and the increasing accessibility of digital imagery and transmission, to the existing structure of political power, can be most effectively illustrated through incidents such as the scandal of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib. Following the revelation of the explicit images of abuse, high-level officers such as General Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and General John Abizaid, Commander in Chief for Central Command, were summoned before Congressional committees to explain and defend the acts of two low-level soldiers who were working as prison guards at Abu Ghraib. Furthermore, the revelation of the photographed abuse also resulted in official investigations that challenged the accountability of both the US military officials and government policies towards intelligence gathering and treatment of detainees. Gow also emphasised the lasting impact of the televised image of prison abuse at Abu Ghraib on the legitimacy of the military operation in Iraq:

‘Not only did that initial coverage raise major questions of legitimacy, but also the longer term, continuing salience of the images, and the accusations of abuse, was evident in the ways in which both political discourse and that within news media continued with the scandal as a major theme, while Western casualties, including fatalities could be deliberately attributed to the scandal itself.’⁷³

As a result of the increasing availability of images and access to means of transmission, it is argued that there is an increasing need for the government to recognise the importance of images as well as the newly empowered media within the context of contemporary warfare, where legitimacy is vital to the success of military operations.

⁷² Gow (2007) P.205

⁷³ ibid P.204

Summary

As outlined above, opinions towards the role of the media within the political system have been subjected to rigorous discussion. Within the theoretical spectrums, theories describing media-state relations may be categorised according to the level of media independence into three broad categories including the media as; completely submissive lapdogs, possessing varying degrees of autonomy, and independent watchdogs capable of challenging and influencing government policy decisions. In the lapdog model of media-state relations, such as the propaganda model presented by Herman and Chomsky, the media is described as being completely submissive towards the most powerful authority within the political system with little possibility of independent journalism. In contrast, theories presenting the media as possessing varying degrees of autonomy, argue that reports of the news media are often indexed towards opinions and discussions among groups of political elites. However, unlike the lapdog model where oppositional coverage by the media to that of the highest political authority is impossible, theories such as the indexing hypothesis and the model of cascading activation, allow the possibility of the media to perform to varying degrees, political roles beyond the mere transmission of filtered propaganda as presented by the government. Following the first Gulf War it was argued by academics including Gow and Gowing, that as digital recording and transmitting technology becomes more advanced, then government control and monopoly over sources of information has become eroded. Gow noted in addition that the dynamics of modern warfare and its demands for legitimacy have meant that the images and narratives of war as presented by the news media can have a significant influence on its domestic and international support. As a result, the media is now increasingly able to perform its ideal role as an independent watchdog, providing effective oversight and challenge to the legitimacy of government policies.

Despite this increase in the ability of the news media to provide critical journalism that challenges the legitimacy of government policies within the context of modern televised warfare, studies of media-state relations during the War on Terrorism, such as the analysis of television broadcasts by Kellner and his analysis of the framing of the prisoner abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib, have suggested otherwise. As will be detailed in the following section, instead of performing the role of independent watchdog, it has been argued that the media have been largely supportive towards government narratives of the attacks on the world trade centre, as well as the invasion of both Afghanistan and Iraq, despite the advances in communication technology. Whilst analysing the coverage of treatment of detainees under US custody in Iraq,

this thesis will examine the extent to which the news media are able to provide effective and sustained alternative framing within the new context of event-driven news dynamics.

2.2. Studies of Discourse Surrounding the War on Terrorism and Torture

In the previous section, I have outlined the macro-theoretical debate of media-state relations. In this section, I will narrow the focus of examination to a more specific discussion regarding the political discourse surrounding the War on Terrorism and the performance of the news media within this specific context.

The revelation of graphic images of abuse at Abu Ghraib Prison raised numerous questions regarding the treatment of detainees under US custody. Inquiries and studies were conducted which examined the attributions of culpability and responsibility, as well as the extent to which the photographed abuses were indicative of systematic practices within the US military and intelligence agencies.⁷⁴ In addition, there were also discussions regarding the legitimacy and practicality of the use of coercion and violence as a means of intelligence gathering within the context of the War on Terrorism.⁷⁵ However, these studies are unhelpful in understanding the significant level of tolerance among US public opinions towards the use of coercive interrogation techniques by the US, despite the revelation of outrageous images of prisoner abuse. In order to address the significant level of leniency in US public opinion towards the sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, this thesis will therefore analyse the contribution of political and media discourse in facilitating the tolerance within the US. In this section, I will outline studies analysing the role of political discourse surrounding the War on Terrorism, and in facilitating war and violence in response to the attacks on the World Trade Centre.

2.2.1. Analysis of Government Discourse

The first area of analysis examining the discourse surrounding the War on Terrorism and its role in facilitating the use of war and violence in response to the attacks on the World Trade Centre is focused on analysing the discursive construction of the attacks and the subsequent War on Terrorism as presented by the US government. This area of analysis is

⁷⁴ Official enquiries includes the The Taugba Report, The Mikolashek Report The Schlesinger Report and The Fay-Jones Report. Accounts of US interrogation policies leading to the prisoner abuse scandal such as A Question of Torture by Alfred W McCoy, Torture Taxi by Trevor Paglen and A.C.Thompson and Torture and Truth by Mark Danner

⁷⁵ Studies of the Torture debate include, among others, Rethinking the Geneva Conventions by Lee Casey & David B Rivikin Jr, Liberalism, Torture and the Ticking Bomb by David Luban, Torture, Thinking about the Unthinkable by Andres McCarthy and Torture and the Ticking Bomb by Bob Brecher

characterised by the detailed study by Jackson in his book *Writing the War on Terrorism*.⁷⁶ This analysis of government discourse recognises several prominent features that have contributed to legitimising the use of war and violence in response to the attacks on the World Trade Centre. The first is the representation of the American nation as the primary victim of an exceptional attack, evoking self-defence as a just cause for war. Jackson argues that the attacks on the World Trade Centre on 11th September 2001 have been constructed as an 'exceptional tragedy and a grievous harm', with America 'assigned a special status as the primary victim of the "War on Terrorism"'.⁷⁷ Examining the discourse surrounding the attacks, Jackson notes a strong emphasis on the grievances and suffering of the American people, as well as the construction of the attacks as a national tragedy. The constant reference by the Bush administration to the attacks as a 'national tragedy', a 'wound to our country' and 'our nation's sorrow'⁷⁸, as well as the emphasis on remembrance, could be seen as deliberate attempts to construct the attacks as a collective experience of the nation. In addition, an effort by the administration to establish the humanity of the victims was also observed through reference to individual names, personalities and personal relations of the victims. Through the deliberate efforts of the US administration, a myth of exceptional grievance and suffering was created with the American nation being assigned the status of the primary victim.

Another important aspect in the discursive construction of the September 11th attacks lies in the constant reference to the attacks as unprovoked acts of war. On the 14th September 2001, President Bush announced that '[w]ar has been waged against us by stealth.'⁷⁹ Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld also supported President Bush's claim by referring to the victims killed in the World Trade Centre as casualties of war. Moreover, as noted by Silberstein, there was a deliberate attempt to remove the attacks from their historical context. Statements such as 'America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world'⁸⁰ by President Bush not only precluded any possible discussion regarding US foreign policies but also reiterated the status of America as the innocent victim. The construction of the 11th September 2001 attacks as unprovoked acts of war inflicting exceptional suffering on innocent American victims it was argued, helped incite the desire for

⁷⁶ Jackson, Richard (2005) *Writing the War on Terrorism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press)

⁷⁷ Jackson (2005) P.31

⁷⁸ Cited in Jackson (2005) P.32

⁷⁹ *ibid* (2005) P.38

⁸⁰ Cited in Silberstein (2002) P.7

vengeance, justifying the use of violence in response. As Jackson summarised: 'One way to promote a discourse of violence which can motivate ordinary people to engage in or acquiesce to war, is to create or sustain a powerful sense of grievance and victim-hood'⁸¹

The second feature of government discourse surrounding the War on Terrorism is the wide-spread use of sanitising language, which trivialises the suffering of others. During the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, Jackson explains, it was constantly emphasised by the US authorities that 'extreme care is continually being taken to avoid civilian casualties, and that the combination of smart weapons and careful targeting actually makes modern warfare relatively bloodless.'⁸² This emphasis on technologically advanced precision weaponry also provided an illusion that the civilian populations were somehow shielded from the destructiveness of war. This emphasis on technology was also accompanied by the extensive use of euphemisms enabling Americans to overlook the death and suffering caused by the invasion. Similarly, the treatment of captured individuals was also characterised by sanitised language such as 'enhanced interrogation techniques.'⁸³ Such sanitised language enabled the trivialisation of the physical and psychological pain inflicted upon the populations of Afghanistan and Iraq.

In addition, the government discourse on the legitimisation of the War on Terrorism also emphasised the polar division of the world between good and evil, and us and them. On 11th September 2001, President Bush declared the attacks were 'evil, despicable acts of terror.'⁸⁴ This initial statement would typically be followed by declarations such as '[w]e are in a conflict between good and evil'⁸⁵, with an emphasis on America's moral responsibility to 'rid the world of evil'.⁸⁶ The construction of the evil other helps create a monstrous and inhuman enemy whose violence is 'irrational, unlimited, and unprovoked.'⁸⁷ Through such processes of labelling and dehumanisation, 'it [becomes] relatively easy to treat them in an unconscionable manner and without any regard for their human rights.'⁸⁸ More importantly, the discursive construction of good versus evil is an absolute one, allowing no ambiguities or compromise. In the words of Kellner, 'it assumes a binary logic where "we" are the forces of

⁸¹ Jackson (2005) P.35

⁸² *ibid* P.132

⁸³ Cited in Mark Danner (2004) P.36

⁸⁴ Cited in Jackson (2005) P.66

⁸⁵ *ibid* P.67

⁸⁶ *ibid* P.67

⁸⁷ Rajiva (2005) P.89

⁸⁸ Jackson (2005) P.75

goodness and “they” are the forces of darkness.’⁸⁹ Constructed under such a totalising paradigm, the War on Terrorism therefore becomes a struggle for existence, where victory can only be obtained through the complete elimination of the enemy. As the stakes of such a war become total, restraints on the conduct of war are removed. Such a discourse, Kellner warned, legitimises any action undertaken in the name of good no matter how destructive, on the grounds that it is attacking evil.⁹⁰

Through examining the construction of exceptional American victimhood, sanitised war and trivialised suffering, as well as the construction of the War on Terrorism as a struggle for the survival between good and evil, studies of official discourse offer important insights into how the US authorities have sought to justify and to rationalise the use of war in response to the attacks on the World Trade Centre. However, the studies discussed have all been focused upon political discourse produced by the US administration in support of military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. In order to understand public opinion towards the War on Terrorism and the use of coercive interrogation techniques, the role of the news media should also be considered. As gatekeepers of information, the news media contributes to influencing the public perception of events through their selection in its coverage, as well as their discursive framing of events. In the next section, this thesis will therefore introduce and discuss studies examining how the War on Terrorism has been presented by the news media.

2.2.2. Analysis of Media Framing and War on Terrorism

In addition to examining the political discourse produced by the US government, a number of studies have examined how the attacks and subsequent War on Terrorism have been framed by the American news media, and the potential implications of this framing for US public opinion. These studies can largely be divided into two main areas: analysis of the television news media such as news reports and talk shows; and the print media. Studying television media spectacles, Kellner examined how the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the military operation in Afghanistan and Iraq were presented by the television news media in his article *September 11, the Media and War Fever and 9/11*⁹¹. A similar analysis

⁸⁹ Kellner (2004) P.47

⁹⁰ *ibid* P.48

⁹¹ Kellner, Douglas (2002) *September 11, the Media, and War Fever in Television & New Media* Vol.3 NO.2 P. 143 ~ 151

was also conducted by Solomon in *Mass Media, Aiding and Abetting Militarism*⁹², which examined the extent to which the television news media has performed as part of the propaganda machine during the War on Terrorism. Another area of research interest lies in various aspects of the print media. In the article *Merging Alternatives or Traditional News Gates*, Fahmy examined the differences in the use of news sources that were used to portray the 11th September 2001 attacks and the War on Terror by English-language and Arabic-language newspapers. This was achieved through analysing the news sources through which each newspaper obtained the visual images used in their respective newspapers.⁹³ Other academics have focused their attention on analysing the content of the newspaper texts. Ryan for example, examined how the War on Terrorism has been framed in editorials of major American newspapers⁹⁴. Others such as Traugott and Brader's *Explaining 9/11*⁹⁵, as well as Dimitrova and Strömbäck's comparison study between media framing of the Iraq war in Sweden and America⁹⁶, chose to analyse the content of the actual newspaper reports.

Within these studies, three main characteristics in the framing of the War on Terrorism by the American Media can be identified, each of which demonstrated media conformity with the dominant discourse produced by the US government. The first commonly identified characteristic is the emphasis on the 11th September 2001 attacks and American victimhood. Examining television broadcasts, Kellner observed that 'after September 11th, the networks played show after show detailing the harm done to the victims of the bombing, and kept their cameras aimed at "ground zero" in order to document the destruction and drama of discovering dead bodies.'⁹⁷ Previous analysis of photographs depicting the 9/11 attacks and the Afghan war, also indicated that the 'English-language newspaper emphasised guilt in the 9/11 attack by showing visual messages that humanised the victims'⁹⁸. The emphasis on the notion of American victimhood contributed to providing justification for the use of violence in the name of self-defence. Moreover, this strong

⁹² Solomon, Norman, (2003) *Mass Media: Aiding and Abetting Militarism* in Boggs Carl (ed) *Masters of War* (London: Routledge)

⁹³ Fahmy, Shahira (2005) *Emerging Alternatives or Traditional News Gates* in *The International Journal for Communication Studies* Vol.67, No.5 P.381~398

⁹⁴ Ryan, Michael (2004) *Framing the War Against Terrorism* in *International Journal for Communication Studies* Vol.66 No.5 P.363 ~ 382

⁹⁵ Brader, Ted & Traugott, Michael W. (2003) *Explaining 9/11* in Just, Marion, Kern Montague and Norris, Pippa ed. *Framing Terrorism* (London: Routledge)

⁹⁶ Dimitrova Daniela & Strömbäck (2005) *Mission Accomplished?* In *The International Journal for Communication Studies* Vol.67 No.5 P.399 ~ 417

⁹⁷ Kellner (2004) P.50

⁹⁸ Fahmy (2005) P.385

emphasis on American suffering and victimhood resulting from the attacks on the World Trade Centre, also contributed to diverting attention from the pain and suffering inflicted by American military operations, while focusing public outrage on the suffering of American victims in the World Trade Centre and their families.

The second commonly identified characteristic in framing the War on Terrorism by the news media, is the construction of the uncompromising opposition between good and evil. In his study on editorials in major US newspapers for example, Ryan noted that in the majority of the editorials examined, the enemies including Osama bin Laden and the Taliban government, were associated with negative labels such as corrupt, murderous, extremist and cowardly.⁹⁹ Such associations were also enhanced by a widespread tendency to remove the 11th September attacks from their historical context, explaining the attacks as being motivated by 'hatred' or the desire to 'start a war' or to 'destroy our [American] way of life'.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, in the article *The Barbarians of Fallujah*, it was noted by Carr that Iraqi insurgents and the celebrating crowds involved in the killing of US personnel working for the Black water private security firm, were branded as 'thugs, savages, cold-blooded ruthless barbarians and cheering crowds in a barbaric orgy'.¹⁰¹ Amongst the US public, such processes of dehumanisation and demonization contributed to the suppression of empathy while enabling acceptance and justification towards the use of excessive violence. In addition, through invoking the notion of an uncompromising binary conflict between civilisation and barbarism, as well as good and evil, the War against Terrorism becomes escalated to a war of survival, where traditional restraints in the conduct of war become powerless. Scholars such as Kellner have argued that the discourse of uncompromising opposition between good and evil 'raises the stakes and violence of conflict and nurtures more apocalyptic and catastrophic politics, fuelling future cycles of hatred, violence and war.'¹⁰² Carr argues that:

'such representations were crucial to the self-righteous consensus that demanded the obliteration of Fallujah in April 2004 and served to transform a city of some 300,000 inhabitants on the Euphrates into a symbol of the wider confrontation between the civilised West and the new barbarians of the twenty-first century. The result was a savage assault by the most powerful military force in history, the devastating

⁹⁹ Ryan (2004) P.377

¹⁰⁰ Traugott & Brader (2003) P.188

¹⁰¹ Carr (2008) P.22

¹⁰² Kellner (2002) P.145

consequences of which have barely been acknowledged by either those responsible or a compliant media that has too often acted as their mouthpiece.’¹⁰³

The third commonly identified characteristic of media framing of the War on Terror, is the trivialisation of sufferings inflicted by the American forces during the War on Terrorism. Kellner for example, argues that television networks within America tended to ‘provide highly sanitised views of the war’ which were focused on presenting spectacular images of high-tech bombings while ‘rarely showing Iraqi casualties.’¹⁰⁴ A similar effect was also achieved in the printed press by the emphasis that:

‘neither US soldiers nor innocent Afghans [or Iraqis] will die in the morally justifiable military strikes against the evil doers, and the “the allies” will liberate the good Afghans [and Iraqis] as well as feed and medicate them, as “the allies” have done previously for other oppressed peoples.’¹⁰⁵

Through such processes of sanitisation, the death and suffering caused by American military operations becomes nothing more but insignificant and unintended ‘collateral damage’.

Through analysing the media coverage of the attacks on the World Trade Centre as well as the War on Terrorism, the above studies enhance the understanding of the contributory role of the media in creating an enabling environment, supporting the legitimacy of war in response to the attacks on the World Trade Centre. Despite the different forms of media outlets analysed by each of the studies, they commonly agree that the US media conformed to the government discourse with respect to both the terrorist attacks and the subsequent military operations. As argued by Kellner:

‘broadcast television allowed dangerous and arguably deranged zealots to vent and circulate the most aggressive, fanatic, and downright lunatic views, creating a consensus around the need for immediate military action and all-out war.’¹⁰⁶

While the use of military force in response to terrorist attacks may be legitimised through invoking the just war tradition by emphasising US victimhood, the just cause of self-defence and trivialisation of suffering caused by the use of war, tolerance towards the violent

¹⁰³ Carr (2008) P.26

¹⁰⁴ Kellner (2004) P.50

¹⁰⁵ Ryan (2004) P.367

¹⁰⁶ Kellner (2002) P.147

treatment of prisoners, both unauthorised abuse and officially sanctioned coercive interrogation policies would be more difficult. While the use of military force may be justified through appealing to the just war tradition, acts of torture, cruel and inhuman treatments have been actively prohibited by international humanitarian legislation, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the Charter of the United Nations. Furthermore, US society has also been keen to condemn violations of human rights under other regimes. Indeed, one of the main justifications given by the Bush administration for the invasion of Iraq was the removal of the tyrannical regime under Saddam Hussein, which had committed brutal acts of torture and persecution. Therefore, although the above cited studies examined the contribution of discursive construction by both the US government and the news media in legitimisation of war, discursive representation of coercive treatments towards detainees under US custody should also be specifically examined due to its nature as directly contradicting established commitments towards human rights. In order to understand the significant level of tolerance towards the use of coercion as a means of intelligence gathering, a strong case can be made that discursive construction of treatments towards detainees under US custody should be specifically examined.

However despite attention to the discourses surrounding the use of war in response to the attacks on the World Trade Centre by both the US government and the media, little attention has so far been given to in-depth examination of the discursive presentation of treatment of detainees under US custody, and whether media narratives have contributed to the creation of an environment whereby officially sanctioned use of physical and psychological coercion as a means of intelligence gathering are treated with a significant level of leniency by US public opinion, despite the publication of explicit images of abuse such as those witnessed at Abu Ghraib. The next section will discuss studies examining the presentation of treatment towards detainees under US custody by the US media.

2.2.3. Media Representation of Treatments towards Detainees under US Custody

As previously mentioned, the revelation of images of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib and its subsequent outrage resulted in a rigorous discussion of the role of the news media in the War on Terrorism. However little attention had been paid to the detailed and specific examination of how treatment of detainees under US custody has been presented by the news media and its possible influence on public opinions. As previously described, studies examining the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib have examined the causes of the scandal and

attribution of responsibilities. Studies examining the scandal in the media have also largely focused on the impact of the images in the media and their implication on the media-state relations.¹⁰⁷

One study examining in detail the representation of US detention and interrogation practices as well as the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, was conducted by Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston and was published in the article *None Dare Call It Torture*, which later featured in the book *When the Press Fails*. The study examined the extent of media compliance with government framing through counting the frequency of usage of the words; ‘mistreatment’, ‘abuse’, and ‘torture’, by leading national news organisations when describing the treatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib by US soldiers as featured in the explicit images broadcast by CBS news. Examining the news items produced by the Washington Post, the study tracked ‘four labels that were most prevalent in news coverage of Abu Ghraib: mistreatment, scandal, abuse and torture.’¹⁰⁸ The selected items were coded by coders unfamiliar with the theoretical position of the study according to the presence of the four labels within the text, choosing from a list including ‘abuse, mistreatment, scandal, torture, or “none of the above”’¹⁰⁹. The study then examined a wider sample of news and editorials from ten newspapers and through machine coding, analysed the frequency of the four labels.

It was argued by Bennett *et al.* that the images of Abu Ghraib could have allowed journalists to act as ‘independent and credible sources outside government for asking hard questions about the conduct of the war in Iraq’¹¹⁰, as a result of the event-driven dynamics within the media enhanced by technological developments in information gathering and transmission. As explained by the watchdog media model, in the event of unexpected catastrophes or policy failures where the established balance of power among the political elite may be disturbed, the news may perform as a more active political agency. Indeed the political impact of the prisoner abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib was emphasised in the arguments by Gow¹¹¹ and Gowing¹¹² as discussed earlier. In the context of the prisoner abuse scandal, the possibility for independent and critical journalism is further enhanced by the

¹⁰⁷ Gow, James & Michalski (2007) *War, Image and Legitimacy* (London: Routledge), Gowing, Nick (2009) *Sky Full of Lies and Black Swans* (Oxford: Reuters Institute for the study of Journalism)

¹⁰⁸ Bennett *et al.* (2006) P. 472

¹⁰⁹ *ibid* P. 473

¹¹⁰ Bennett *et al* (2007) P. 76

¹¹¹ Gow, James & Michalski (2007) *War, Image and Legitimacy* (London: Routledge)

¹¹² Gowing, Nick (2009) *Sky Full of Lies and Black Swans* (Oxford: Reuters Institute for the study of Journalism)

absence of existing dominant framing cascading from the level of the political elite. As argued by Entman in the model of cascading activation:

‘[c]overage that challenges official positions may occur when sources pushing alternative perspectives are readily available to journalists, and when the events being covered are culturally ambiguous – that is, when they are difficult to make sense of in ways that fits easily with the public’s widely shared beliefs.’¹¹³

Therefore, ‘there was reason to expect that the story could become a focal point for challenging the Bush administration’s claims about the treatment of prisoners - particularly since the incident had become an international flash point.’¹¹⁴

In the study by Bennett *et al.*, two aspects of the narrative within the coverage of the Abu Ghraib scandal by US newspapers were examined, including the usage of discursive labels in defining the incidents of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib, as well as the timing within which discursive labels such as torture appeared and disappeared in the narratives of the newspapers. Through comparing the number of incidences where the use of the words ‘mistreatment’ and ‘abuse’ appeared in describing the photographed mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib to that of the word ‘torture’, it was argued that the leading national news organisations failed to present a frame of events that challenged the framing of the scandal as isolated incidents by the US government. Comparing the usage of the terms ‘torture’ and ‘abuse’, Bennett *et al.* noted the reluctance of journalists to employ the word ‘torture’ to describe the photographed treatments at Abu Ghraib, preferring the word ‘abuse’ which carried less negative implications. In addition, the use of the term ‘torture’ in describing the photographed treatment of detainees at Abu Ghraib ceased shortly after the story broke. As explained in the article:

‘at the height of attention to the Abu Ghraib story, when public opinion was in the formative stage, the mainstream media allowed the administration’s “isolated abuse” frame to dominate the news and declined to offer the public a coherent alternative frame.’¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Bennett *et al.* (2007) P. 77

¹¹⁴ *ibid*

¹¹⁵ Bennett *et al.* (2006) P.481

The study conducted by Bennett *et al.*, provides valuable insights in understanding how the photographed mistreatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib can be represented in the media as isolated accidents. However, their sole focus on quantitative analysis of the frequency of usage of single vocabularies in texts resulted in an over-simplified analysis. As explained by Bennett *et al.*, the focus of analysis lies in examining the presence of individual vocabularies in labels attached to the prisoner abuse scandal. While individual words may carry a significant degree of meaning and implication, the methodology of Bennett *et al.* does not address the issue of situated meanings of words under the discursive context of the narrative within which the individual words are located. Although individual words may convey significant amounts of latent meanings, vocabularies also acquire a range of different specific meanings within different discursive contexts. For example, although definitions of torture under international humanitarian standards specifies its use as means for military and political purposes, the word is often also used sentimentally to describe ‘the infliction of suffering, however defined, upon anyone for any purpose – or for no purpose.’¹¹⁶ Therefore, without consideration of the discursive context specific to the text, the label of torture may not automatically suggest connection to government policies. Similarly, the simple presence of individual vocabularies such as mistreatment and abuse may not automatically indicate framing of the violence at Abu Ghraib as isolated accidents, as the context of the text may emphasise the abuse and mistreatment as institutionalised or policy driven. Therefore, although analysis of the usage of words in isolation contributes as an indicator to the pattern of framing, an analysis focusing solely on the presence of individual vocabularies within the texts would not account for the situated meaning of words within different contexts. In order to understand fully the image of treatment towards detainees under US custody presented by the news media, a different approach is required that examines not only the presence of individual keywords, but also the discursive context within the text.

In addition, although the study by Bennett *et al.* demonstrated the failure of the US media to provide an effective counter-frame in its coverage of the prisoner abuse scandal, it does not account for the discursive mechanisms through which framing the abuse of prisoners as isolated incidents distanced from the US administration have been constructed. Furthermore, the study by Bennett *et al.* contributed to explaining how the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib became distanced from US military intelligence. However, in order to fully

¹¹⁶ Peters (1999) P.2

understand the significant level of leniency and even acceptance towards the officially sanctioned use of physical and psychological coercion as a means of intelligence gathering, this thesis will also examine the extent to which the US news media may contribute to the legitimisation of officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques such as sleep deprivation, environmental manipulation and stress positions. In order to examine the extent to which the US news media may contribute to the significant level of tolerance towards officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, this thesis will apply the theoretical framework of administrative evil and moral inversion where acts of evil became convincingly redefined as good. In the following section, I will therefore introduce and outline the concept of administrative evil.

2.3. Theoretical Framework of Administrative Evil

As detailed above, studies examining discourses surrounding the War on Terrorism have analysed the discursive construction of the attacks on the World Trade Centre and subsequent War on Terrorism by both the US government and the news media, as well as the media's role in the legitimisation of war through evoking the Just War Tradition. Examining the framing of the abuse of prisoner at Abu Ghraib by the US news media, the study by Bennett *et al.* demonstrated the failure of the US media to provide an effective counter framing to the government framing of abuse. As previously argued, studies analysing the discourse surrounding the War on Terrorism, have focused on how the use of war has been justified through the emphasis on exceptional US grievances, the language of sanitation and the demonization of terrorist enemies, which appealed to the just war tradition. However, very little attention has been paid to answering the more focused question of why despite the revelation of outrageous images of abuse there has remained a significant level of leniency amongst the US public towards the use of physical and psychological coercion as a means of intelligence gathering. Due to the nature of torture, cruel and inhumane treatments towards prisoners are specifically prohibited both under international humanitarian legislations as well as the US Constitution. The studies cited above, do not address the question of how such acts, which clearly contradict protested humanitarian values, may be presented as tolerable or even justified. Therefore, this thesis will contribute to the more focused examination of the discursive mechanisms through which narratives by the news media may contribute to facilitating legitimisation of officially sanctioned use of coercion as a means of intelligence gathering.

As a result of the lack of detailed discussion and analysis of media representation of treatment of detainees under US custody, there are no existing frameworks employed in the field of political communication with which the possible contribution of the US media discourse to the level of leniency amongst US public opinion towards coercive treatments of detainees may be analysed. Therefore, a theoretical framework is required in order to analyse the possible contribution of media discourse that to the legitimisation of coercive treatment towards detainees. In order to facilitate such an analysis, existing theoretical frameworks used in the study of historical atrocities will be drawn upon. In this section, I will firstly examine existing theoretical frameworks provided by various studies of historical atrocities, in particular the Holocaust, such as the *dehumanisation of victims* and *dominance of technical rationality*. Considering the insufficiency of existing theoretical frameworks examining individual aspects in understanding historical incidents of atrocities, I will then outline the theoretical framework of *Administrative Evil* presented by Adams and Balfour. Through applying the theoretical framework of *Administrative Evil*, this thesis will illuminate the role of the US media in contributing to the level of leniency towards sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques and the unauthorised abuse of prisoners through the social knowledge constituted by the news discourse.

2.3.1. Studying Historical Atrocities

In the study of the Holocaust and other historical atrocities, causes such as *dehumanisation of victims* and *dominance of technical rationality* have been cited individually as explanations of the deliberate infliction of violence and suffering on others.

Theoretical frameworks based upon the process of dehumanisation can be characterised by the concept of *Homo Sacer* as presented by Agamben and the process of de-realisation as presented by Butler. In his book, *Homo Sacer*¹¹⁷, Agamben presented the notion of *Homo Sacer* as individuals existing as exiles outside the law, who, despite their biological existence, are stripped of any political significance. As explained in the book *Homo Sacer*, ‘modern man is an animal whose politics calls his existence as a living being into question’¹¹⁸. Through the status of citizenship, the biological life of man is given political significance as a member of the sovereign. The politicisation of life therefore creates a threshold where life ceases to be worthy of being lived, devoid of value and becomes *Homo Sacer*. Stripped of

¹¹⁷ Agamben, Giorgio (1995) *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press)

¹¹⁸ *ibid* P.119

their status as citizens, victims of the Holocaust were placed in camps where the significance of their lives became reduced to that of *Homo Sacer*, enabling their systematic slaughter. In her book *Precarious Life*,¹¹⁹ Butler discussed the process of de-realisation where some lives are placed beyond the limit where their losses cease to be losses and grief for them ceases. In the words of Butler, ‘on the level of discourse, certain lives are not considered lives at all, they cannot be humanised, that they fit no dominant frame for the human.’¹²⁰ Through removal of names and a meaningful human face, certain lives are placed in a state that is ‘neither alive nor dead, but interminably spectral.’¹²¹ As such, ‘if violence is done against those who are unreal, then from the perspective of violence, it fails to injure or negate those lives, since those lives are already negated.’¹²² Therefore although 200,000 Iraqi children were killed during the Gulf War and its aftermath,¹²³ ‘there are no obituaries for the war casualties that the United States inflicted and there cannot be,’ as ‘if there were to be an obituary, there would have had to have been a life, a life worth noting, a life worth valuing and preserving, a life that qualifies for recognition.’¹²⁴ Theoretical concepts such as *Homo Sacer* as presented Agamben and *the Process of Derealisation* as presented by Butler contribute to understanding the process of dehumanisation, through which victims of abuse become stripped of their political significance as human beings through means of policy and media discourse, and thus become open to abuse. In the studies examining the political discourse surrounding the War on Terrorism, the process of dehumanisation has also been cited in the analysis of how political discourse may contribute to legitimising the use of military force.

In contrast, theoretical frameworks based on technical rationality are characterised by the study of the Holocaust by Bauman. In his study entitled *Modernity and the Holocaust*¹²⁵, Bauman focuses on the *dominance of technical rationality* within modern western society as a product of modernity, and the consequent erosion of moral responsibility through emphasising efficient and regulated policy implementation, as well as effective achievement of an ultimate vision. As described by Bauman:

¹¹⁹ Butler, Judith (2004), *Precarious Life* (London: Verso)

¹²⁰ *ibid* P.34

¹²¹ *ibid*

¹²² *ibid* P.33

¹²³ Cited in Butler,(2004) P.34

¹²⁴ Butler (2004) P.34

¹²⁵ Bauman, Zygmunt (1989) *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity Press)

‘Modern genocide is genocide with a purpose. Getting rid of the adversary is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end: a necessity that stems from the ultimate objective, a step that one has to take if one wants ever to reach the end of the road. The end itself is a grand vision of a better and radically different society.’¹²⁶

Through its promotion of value-free rationality, Bauman argued that ‘science cleared the way to genocide through sapping the authority, and questioning the binding force, of all normative thinking, particularly that of religion and ethics.’¹²⁷ Through erosion of normative moral standards, violence becomes authorised as a technique free of emotion and evaluated solely on its regulated and efficient implementation, as well as its effectiveness in achieving its designated objectives. In the words of Bauman:

‘It is, in fact, entirely reasonable, if “reason” means instrumental reason, to apply American military force, B52’s napalm and all the rest to “communist-dominated” Viet-Nam, as the “operator” to transform it into a “desirable object”’¹²⁸

Examining the domination of technical rationality over moral responsibility as a result of the cultural emphasis of science and pure reason within modern society, Bauman’s study of modernity and the Holocaust contributes to understanding the process of technical and instrumental reasoning, where the moral significance of violence becomes reduced to simply a means to an end. Therefore violence becomes legitimised as a technique in the achievement of the ultimate political objective.

Examining historical atrocities, theoretical frameworks focusing on individual processes such as dehumanisation of victims and dominance of technical rationality contributes to understanding the different aspects in which institutionalised violence becomes justified through policies and discourse. However, theoretical frameworks that are based upon individual processes can only provide partial understanding of how institutionalised acts of atrocities may be legitimised through means of policies and discourse. Therefore, a theoretical framework that incorporates the different aspects of investigation is required in order to achieve a more holistic understanding of the possible contribution of the US media discourse to public opinion. Therefore this thesis will adopt the theoretical framework of

¹²⁶ Bauman (1989) P.91

¹²⁷ *ibid* P.108

¹²⁸ *ibid* P.98

Administrative Evil as introduced by Adams and Balfour, which incorporates the different aspects within the process whereby acts of evil may become accepted as legitimate.

2.3.2. The Concept of Administrative Evil

Examining the relationship between evil and public administrations, as well as other organisations, Adams and Balfour presented the concept of administrative evil, which incorporated the previously identified processes of dehumanisation and erosion of moral responsibility by technical rationality. It is argued that in the modern age, the culture ‘that emphasises the scientific-analytic mind-set and the belief in technological progress’¹²⁹ led to the emergence of a new and bewildering form of evil referred to as *administrative evil*.

In order to understand the theoretical concept of administrative evil, I will firstly outline the notion of evil. Although Adams and Balfour stated ‘evil is an essential concept for understanding the human condition’¹³⁰, there is little consensus on defining the concept of evil.¹³¹ As explained by Ricoeur, ‘to do evil is always, either directly or indirectly, to make someone else suffer. In its dialogic structure evil committed by someone finds its other half in the evil suffered by someone else.’¹³² In their book *Unmasking Administrative Evil*,¹³³ Adams and Balfour defined evil as ‘the actions of human beings that unjustly or needlessly inflict pain and suffering and death on other human beings.’¹³⁴ Acts of evil in history may be categorised along a continuum where mass eruption of atrocities such as the Holocaust are placed at one end of the scale and minor wrongdoings are placed at the other end of the scale. Evil can also be categorised depending on how the acts of evil have been approached and recognised. As suggested by Adams and Balfour:

‘evil also occurs along another continuum: from acts that are committed in relative ignorance to those that are committed knowingly and deliberately or what we would characterise as masked and unmasked evil.’¹³⁵

As a new form of evil, administrative evil can be masked in many ways. Therefore individuals and organisations can often engage in acts of evil without recognising its

¹²⁹ Adams & Balfour (2009) P.4

¹³⁰ *ibid* P.3

¹³¹ *ibid*

¹³² Cited in Adams & Balfour (2009) P.11

¹³³ Adams & Balfour (2009)

¹³⁴ Adams & Balfour (2009) P.3

¹³⁵ *ibid* P.12

consequences or be convinced that the acts committed are justified in serving the greater good.¹³⁶ As noted by Staub:

‘we cannot judge evil by conscious intentions, because psychological distortions tend to hide even from the perpetrators themselves their true intention. Perpetrators of evil often intend to make people suffer but see their actions as necessary or serving a higher good. In addition, people tend to hide their negative intentions from others and justify negative actions by higher ideals or the victims’ evil nature.’¹³⁷

Administrative evil therefore falls under the category whereby individuals and organisations engage in acts of evil without intention or recognition of any wrongdoings. Within the context of this study therefore, the theoretical framework of administrative evil will be able to contribute towards reaching an understanding of leniency towards coercive interrogation techniques in the US.

2.3.3. Legitimisation of Administrative Evil

Administrative evil, which is unique to the modern age, has its roots in the emerging domination of instrumental and technical calculations which have not only underlined the modern age, but have also displaced moral evaluation as a standard of ethics through the process of moral inversion.¹³⁸ Moral inversion is the process:

‘in which something evil has been redefined convincingly as good, ordinary people can all too easily engage in acts of administrative evil believing that what they are doing is not only correct, but in fact, good.’¹³⁹

The process of moral inversion, characterised by the abdication of moral responsibility and authorised violence, as a result of the domination of instrumental rationality, is facilitated by three conditions as specified by Kelman.¹⁴⁰ The conditions facilitating the abdication of moral responsibility and legitimisation of administrative evil include; *consequentialist moral reasoning, emphasis of technical responsibility and erosion of moral responsibility, and dehumanisation of victims.*

¹³⁶ *ibid*

¹³⁷ *ibid* P.13

¹³⁸ Dillard & Ruchala (2005) P.609

¹³⁹ Adams & Balfour (2009) P.4

¹⁴⁰ Kelman (1973) Cited in Dillard & Ruchala (2005) P.612

In the first condition facilitating the process of moral inversion, violence is authorised by virtue of the actions furthering the ultimate goals of the organisation, which must be accepted as synonymous for the well-being of individuals.¹⁴¹ As a result, such consequentialist reasoning becomes dominant in the process of moral evaluation where means are justified by the ends they serve. As illustrated by the Machiavellian principle of *Raisons d'état*, the choice of 'dirty hands *Les mains sales*', 'means that one inflicts knowingly and deliberately pain and suffering on others, for a good reason - for the greater good of the polity.'¹⁴² While consequentialist reasoning within the framework of administrative evil is enabled through moral inversion shares a degree of similarity to that of the Machiavellian principle of *Raisons d'état*, 'the culture of technical rationality tends to drive the consideration out of the picture altogether.'¹⁴³ As acts of administrative evil fall under the category of masked evil, individuals may not even be presented with the calculation of the degree of good within its moral evaluation. A closer analogy may be found in Bauman's study of *Modernity and the Holocaust*. As explained by Bauman, 'Modern culture is a garden culture. It defines itself as the design for an ideal life and a perfect arrangement of human conditions.'¹⁴⁴ The vision of the gardener, constructed as the ultimate objective of the polity, therefore determines the legitimacy of means through which the design is realised. Examining the Holocaust, it was explained by Bauman that:

'modern genocide, like modern culture in general, is a gardener's job. It is just one of the many chores that people who treat society as a garden need to undertake...Weeding out is a creative, not a destructive activity. It does not differ in kind from other activities which combine in the construction and sustenance of the perfect garden.'¹⁴⁵

As:

'all visions of society-as-garden define parts of the social habitat as human weeds. Like all other weeds, they must be segregated, contained, prevented from spreading,

¹⁴¹ Dillard & Ruchala (2005) P.612

¹⁴² Adams & Balfour (2009) P.10

¹⁴³ *ibid*

¹⁴⁴ Bauman (1989) P.92

¹⁴⁵ *ibid*

removed and kept outside the boundaries; if all these means prove insufficient, they must be killed.’¹⁴⁶

Within the modern garden culture, violence and genocide are authorised and justified through the ultimate objective of the perfect garden, which is to be accepted as synonymous with the well-being of individual members within the polity. Through emphasising legitimacy of the ultimate political objective therefore, the consequentialist moral reasoning contributes to facilitating the process of moral inversion through which acts of evil becomes convincingly redefined as good, thereby facilitating administrative evil.

The second condition facilitating the abdication of moral responsibility ‘routinizes the action through role specification and rule governed procedure.’¹⁴⁷ Through role specification and rules embodied within organisational hierarchies, participants are shielded from ‘having to confront moral consequences of administrative actions other than from a theoretical, abstract perspective’¹⁴⁸ through the emphasis of technical or instrumental responsibility. As explained by Adams and Balfour, ‘Technical rationality is a way of thinking and living that emphasises the scientific-analytic mind-set and the belief in technological progress.’¹⁴⁹ Following the Enlightenment of the 17th Century and the Industrial Revolution in the 19th Century, Adams and Balfour argue, ‘the scientific-analytical mind-set captured the way we think, and the study of epistemology was largely reduced to commentaries on the history of science.’¹⁵⁰ The dominance of natural science and the scientific-analytical mind-set contributed to create a culture that strived to achieve scientific precision and objectivity, where social and political issues were considered problems to be solved through engineering solutions. As a result, the reliance on science and the scientific-analytical mind-set gave rise to a culture of professionalism which ‘narrowed the conception of ethics within professionalism,’¹⁵¹ in which ‘to be professional is to be ethical.’¹⁵² Through emphasising instrumental responsibility, which demands the pursuit of efficient implementation of political objectives regulated by a rational and objective standard of professional accountability, the modern emphasis of professionalism and technical, or instrumental

¹⁴⁶ *ibid*

¹⁴⁷ Dillard & Ruchala (2005) P.613

¹⁴⁸ *ibid*

¹⁴⁹ Adams & Balfour (2009) P.4

¹⁵⁰ *ibid* P.29

¹⁵¹ *ibid* P.33

¹⁵² *ibid*

rationality, facilitates the condition of moral inversion and enables administrative evil through erosion of traditional normative ethics and moral responsibility. The power of such moral inversion through the emphasis of technical or instrumental rationality is most vividly illustrated by the institutionalised and systematic slaughter of the Holocaust. In the words of Bauman, 'the Final Solution did not clash at any stage with the rational pursuit of efficient, optimal goal implementation'¹⁵³ Through emphasising technical responsibility which emphasised efficient and regulated implementation, the professionalization of violence meant that 'the ethical dilemmas associated with the ultimate outcome are not confronted, only the daily ones demanding more effective and efficient processing.'¹⁵⁴ In the words of Baumann, 'violence [is] turned into a technique. Like all techniques, it is free from emotions and purely rational.'¹⁵⁵ As a result of the emphasis on technical or instrumental responsibility within the scientific-analytical mind-set of modern society, acts of evil becomes authorised and legitimised through erosion of normative moral responsibilities.

Finally, the third condition that contributes to the abdication of moral responsibility and the process of moral inversion which facilitates administrative evil is the dehumanisation of the victim. In the word of Staub, 'dehumanisation is another powerful ally in the conduct of evil.'¹⁵⁶ As noted by Philip Zimbardo, 'one of the worst things we can do to our fellow human being is deprive them of their humanity, render them worthless by exercising the psychological process of dehumanisation'¹⁵⁷ Through the process of dehumanisation, acts of evil may be more easily legitimised by the removal of meaningful victims. As explained by Adams and Balfour:

'if those people can be defined as less than human "all bad", rather like bugs or roaches (a classic moral inversion) extermination can all too easily be seen as the appropriate action. "They" brought it onto themselves, after all.'¹⁵⁸

The dehumanisation of victims may be achieved through a variety of means. The first means of dehumanisation is the reduction of victims to simple quantifications. Within the context of technical rationality within modern society, 'legitimation is predicated on

¹⁵³ Bauman (1989) P.17

¹⁵⁴ Dillard & Ruchala (2005) P.613

¹⁵⁵ Bauman (1989) P.98

¹⁵⁶ Cited in Adams & Balfour (2009) P.18

¹⁵⁷ Zimbardo, Cited in Adams & Balfour (2009) P.18

¹⁵⁸ Adams & Balfour (2009) P.18

instrumental rationality, which attempts to eliminate any subjective affiliation with the objects of concern. Phenomena are translated into quantitative representations.’¹⁵⁹ Reduced to value-free quantifications, individuals become stripped of their moral significance as human beings, rendering them worthless by exercising the psychological process of dehumanisation.’¹⁶⁰ As explained by Bauman:

‘dehumanisation starts at the point when the objects at which the bureaucratic operation is aimed can, and are reduced to a set of quantitative measures. Once effectively dehumanised, and cancelled as potential subjects of moral demands, human objects of bureaucratic task performance are viewed with ethical indifference.’¹⁶¹

The similar process of de-realisation is also described by Butler. Through removal of the humanising characteristics of victims such as names and personal information, the process of de-realisation contributes to stripping the victims of their status as viable human beings, enabling authorisation of violence. As explained by Butler:

‘certain lives are not considered lives at all, they cannot be humanised, that they fit no dominant frame for the human, and that their dehumanisation gives rise to a physical violence that in some sense delivers the message of dehumanisation already at work.’¹⁶²

Their losses are therefore not considered losses, and their suffering becomes de-realised and therefore meaningless. In the theoretical concept of *Homo Sacer* as described by Agamben, the politicisation of life creates a threshold that defines certain lives as worthy of preservation. Through means of segregation and exclusion, certain lives become placed beyond the threshold of worthiness. Deemed as unworthy of preservation, such lives, despite their biological existence, are stripped of political significance and become *bare life* whose killing does not constitute murder. In addition to de-realisation and exclusion, the effect of dehumanisation is also achieved through presentation of victims with an image that are less than human and with whom we cannot identify. As illustrated by the German press during the Holocaust, ‘the Jews are no people like other people, but a pseudo-people welded together by

¹⁵⁹ Dillard & Ruchala (2005) P.613

¹⁶⁰ Zimbardo, Cited in Adams & Balfour (2009) P.18

¹⁶¹ Bauman, (1989) P.102

¹⁶² Butler (2004) P.34

hereditary criminality... The annihilation of Jewry is no loss to humanity.'¹⁶³ Through the presentation of an image that is less than human, the effect of dehumanisation also contributes to facilitating acts of evil by removing morally significant victims. As stated by Albert Speer, Minister of Armaments under Hitler, 'If I had continued to see them as human beings, I would not have remained a Nazi.'¹⁶⁴ Through the dehumanisation of victims, the removal of morally significant victims enables acts of evil to be presented as inconsequential. As a result, the dehumanisation of victims contributes to facilitate the process of moral inversion and legitimisation of evil.

In order to understand the significant level of tolerance shown towards the sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, many of which would amount to torture under international humanitarian legislation, this thesis will apply the theoretical framework of administrative evil.

In the words of Adams and Balfour:

'administrative evil is not easily identified as such because its appearance is masked; moreover, in our ordinary roles with our taken for granted assumptions about the modern world, we wear the mask.'¹⁶⁵

Through the three conditions described above, an environment is created that facilitates the discourse of moral inversion through which acts of evil becomes not only masked, but also convincingly redefined as good. As a result, 'individuals and groups can and often engage in evil acts without recognising the consequences of their behaviour, or when convinced their actions are justified or serving the greater good.'¹⁶⁶ Through the framework of administrative evil, this thesis will examine the extent to which US media discourse may contribute to facilitating the significant level of tolerance towards coercive interrogation techniques among public opinion, through supporting the discourse of masking the evil of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering.

As outlined previously, the masking and legitimising of administrative evil is enabled by three conditions; consequentialist moral reasoning, emphasis of technical or instrumental responsibility and dehumanisation of victims. In this study, as will be outlined in detail in the

¹⁶³ Cited in Goldhagen (1996) P.394

¹⁶⁴ Speer, (1970) cited in Adams & Balfour (2009) P.18

¹⁶⁵ Adams & Balfour, (1998), Cited in Dillard & Ruchala (2005) P.614

¹⁶⁶ Adams & Balfour (2009) P.12

next chapter, I will examine the discursive presentation of the human elements, the actual acts and effects, as well as the causes and moral judgements of coercive treatments, both sanctioned and unauthorised, towards detainees under US custody in Iraq. I will analyse the extent to which the US media discourse contributed to support the discourse of Administrative Evil through the production of narratives that support the three conditions enabling the process of moral inversion. Considering the incidents of large scale eruption of evil within human history such as the Holocaust, it is often assumed that such acts of extraordinary atrocities emanate from a specific and unique set of historical contexts separated from our own circumstances. However the masking and legitimisation of administrative evil through the process of moral inversion facilitated by the conditions of consequentialist moral reasoning, the culture of technical rationality and the process of dehumanisation, suggest that atrocities such as genocide may be ‘neither abnormal nor a case of malfunction’¹⁶⁷ within the context of modernity. Through this theoretical framework, this thesis will contribute to understanding how the evil of torture may become redefined as tolerable and even acceptable within a liberal democratic society.

2.3.4. Study of Abu Ghraib by Adams and Balfour

The study of Abu Ghraib by Adams and Balfour provides an example of how the theoretical framework of administrative evil may be applied. In the third edition of *Unmasking Administrative Evil*, Adams and Balfour analysed the causes leading to the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, by examining the context of war and contribution of government policy in creating the condition of moral inversion where the abuse of prisoners became possible. The study by Adams and Balfour presented the abuse of prisoners as an example demonstrating how, through the process of administrative evil, torture is masked by the context of war and government discourse from the perpetrators at Abu Ghraib, enabling the abuse of detainees.

Examining reports investigating the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, Adams and Balfour examined several contributing factors that resulted in the abuse of detainees under US custody in Iraq. Firstly, under attacks from Iraqi insurgents and the mission of operating a maximum security prison, it was argued that ‘Operations at Abu Ghraib took place in an environment that was inherently complex and dangerous.’¹⁶⁸ As explained by Adams and

¹⁶⁷ Bauman (1989) P.114

¹⁶⁸ Adams & Balfour (2009) P.144

Balfour, ‘these units were faced with an extremely difficult and unfamiliar mission without clear procedural guidelines and under considerable pressure to produce actionable intelligence.’¹⁶⁹ In addition to the intensity of insurgency and the pressure to produce actionable intelligence, both self-induced and created by senior officers, there was also a severe shortage of experienced and well-trained interrogators, as well as lack of experienced interpreters at Abu Ghraib. As a result, in the context of insurgency warfare, the lack of experienced and well trained staff, and the pressure to produce intelligence, the prison at Abu Ghraib became a stage set for ‘a near perfect storm of unexpected and worst-case developments in terms of detainee operations.’¹⁷⁰ Secondly, as a result of the lack of clearly defined regulations and a perceived need to adapt to a new form of warfare, the line between the permissible and the prohibited became blurred, enabling the migration of coercive interrogation techniques from Guantanamo Bay to Iraq. As argued by Adams and Balfour, ‘our choice in the wake of 9/11 to redefine the rules of war to fit a new paradigm of war – the “Global War on Terrorism”- Set off a whole paper trail of memos on torture.’¹⁷¹ Following the attacks on the World Trade Centre, a series of memorandums prepared by the US administration, proposed a series of definitions of torture so restrictive as to exclude all but the most severe forms of torture. In the meantime, through the presentation of the War on Terrorism as a new form of warfare, it is argued that new rules were required in order to allow more severe forms of interrogation required to combat a new enemy. Therefore:

‘this series of discussions and events became a defining moment for our country in which we crossed over the threshold of overtly sanctioning torture and other abusive practices, and walked down the pathway toward a moral inversion.’¹⁷²

In addition, the process of moral inversion is further facilitated by the dehumanisation of detainees under US custody. In an interview with the BBC, it was stated by Brig. Gen Janis Karpinski that she was told by Gen. Geoffrey Miller, that the Iraqi prisoners ‘are like dogs and if you allow them to believe at any point that they are more than a dog then you’ve lost control of them.’¹⁷³ Through the process of dehumanisation, detainees under US custody became presented as somehow less than human. Stripped of their moral significance, the

¹⁶⁹ Adams & Balfour (2009) P.144

¹⁷⁰ *ibid* P.140

¹⁷¹ *ibid* P.150

¹⁷² *ibid*

¹⁷³ *ibid* P.155

detainees became ‘seen as a “surplus population”, terrorists living outside the protection of society and state.’¹⁷⁴ As a result, the moral inhibition that might have prevented the abuse became further weakened by the removal of morally significant victims.

As Adams and Balfour stated:

‘When the “War on Terror” was wrongly diverted and expanded to the invasion and occupation of Iraq, which produced thousands of detainees, the stage was set for an operational fiasco and a moral inversion.’¹⁷⁵

The context of prison in the midst of violent insurgency, the lack of experienced and well trained staff, as well as the pressure to produce actable intelligence, contributed to the erosion of normative moral fabric. Through emphasising the need for military intelligence and saving US lives, the condition of consequentialist reasoning, contributed to encourage officers at Abu Ghraib to place the priority of intelligence gathering above the basic human rights of detainees under US custody. In addition, through re-defining torture, the boundary between legally permitted interrogation practices and torture becomes blurred, enabling acts of abuse and torture to be justified on the procedural grounds that such acts do not legally constitute torture. Furthermore, through dehumanisation of victims, moral consequences of acts of torture and abuse are removed as a result of the perception that the detainees were somehow less human and therefore morally insignificant. The combination of the above conditions, within the context of intensive insurgency that facilitated the erosion of traditional moral fibre, therefore created the road to administrative evil.

2.3.5. Administrative Evil and Media Discourse of Treatment towards Detainees under US Custody in Iraq

As argued by Adams and Balfour, ‘Abu Ghraib serves well as an example of what the road to Administrative Evil looks like.’¹⁷⁶ Through applying the theoretical framework of administrative evil, Adams and Balfour examined the dynamics between US government policy approaches and the abuse of prisoners, analysing the possible contribution of US government policies and discourse in enabling the photographed acts of abuse to be

¹⁷⁴ *ibid*

¹⁷⁵ *ibid* P.134

¹⁷⁶ *ibid* P.154

perpetrated. At Abu Ghraib, in the words of Adams and Balfour, ‘our capacity for cruelty and administrative evil has been briefly unmasked.’¹⁷⁷

However, while the study by Adams and Balfour contributed to understanding the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, its examination of administrative evil was limited to the unauthorised abuse of prisoners committed and photographed at Abu Ghraib. The study by Adams and Balfour does not explain the significant level of tolerance among US public opinion towards the use of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering, despite outrage shown towards the explicit images of violent abuse and humiliation published in the news media. As argued by Adams and Balfour:

‘the torture and abuse at Abu Ghraib should prompt us not only to punish the perpetrators and better train their replacements, but also to think more deeply about the contradictions and challenges of how we govern ourselves as a democracy in the context of the “Global war on Terror.”’¹⁷⁸

Applying the same theoretical framework, this thesis will focus its attention on the examining the dynamics between media discourse and the significant level of tolerance among US public opinion towards the use of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering. While Adams and Balfour examined how the process of moral inversion enabled US soldiers to commit outrageous abuse as depicted in the photographs, this thesis will examine the extent to which the process of moral inversion contributed to enabling the sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques to receive the significant level of tolerance within US society. Therefore, through applying this theoretical framework, this thesis will contribute to the field of study by exploring the question of why, despite the explicit images of abuse, there remains a significant level of tolerance towards the officially sanctioned use of physical and psychological coercion as a means of intelligence gathering.

2.4. Conclusion

Within studies on the relationship between the media and the state, there have been varying opinions regarding the role of the media within the network of communication, as well as the level of autonomy enjoyed by the media. Supporters of the lapdog image of the media, such as the propaganda model presented by Herman and Chomsky, suggested an

¹⁷⁷ *ibid* P.155

¹⁷⁸ *ibid*

image of the media as completely submissive to the highest power within the political system, without possibility of autonomy. In the alternative models of indexing hypothesis as presented by Bennett *et al.*¹⁷⁹ and cascading activation as presented by Entman¹⁸⁰, the media are presented as having a varying degree, albeit a limited one, of autonomy, where alternative views may be possible under specific conditions. Following the revelation of the prisoner abuse scandal, studies such as those of Gow¹⁸¹ and Gowing¹⁸², argued that the development and increasing availability of digital imaging and communication technology would enable the media to perform the role of an independent fourth estate within the political system. Through analysing media coverage of treatment of detainees under US custody, this thesis will examine the extent to which the event-driven dynamics of the prisoner abuse scandal was able to encourage and sustain effective critical counter framing by the news media to that of the US government.

On the micro-theoretical level, although various studies have examined the discourse surrounding the War on Terrorism, as presented by both the US government and the news media, little attention has been given to examining in depth how treatment towards detainees under US custody was presented by the news media, and its possible contribution to the level of leniency towards the use of coercive interrogation techniques. Therefore, as a pre-existing theory is unavailable, this thesis will draw on the theoretical framework of administrative evil and the process of moral inversion presented by Adams and Balfour¹⁸³. In their study examining the causes leading to the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, Adams and Balfour demonstrated the contribution of the redefinition of torture and traditional laws of war, with emphasis on necessity, as well as dehumanisation of victims, contributing to the process of moral inversion, where the evil of the abuse of prisoners photographed at Abu Ghraib, became accepted by the perpetrators. Expanding on the arguments of Adams and Balfour, this thesis will examine the extent to which, through facilitating the emphasis of consequentialist reasoning, technical and instrumental responsibility and dehumanisation of victims, the narrative framing of treatments towards detainees under US custody by the US news media may contribute to the significant level of leniency exhibited towards the

¹⁷⁹ Bennett, W. Lance, Lawrence Regina G & Livingston, Steven (2006) None Dare Call It Torture in *Journal of Communication* Vol. 56 No.3 P67~485

¹⁸⁰ Entman, Robert (2004) *Projections of Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press)

¹⁸¹ Gow, James & Michalski (2007) *War, Image and Legitimacy* (London: Routledge)

¹⁸² Gowing, Nick (2009) *Sky Full of Lies and Black Swans* (Oxford: Reuters Institute for the study of Journalism)

¹⁸³ Adams and Balfour, Danny (2009)

officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, despite the outrage of Abu Ghraib.

3. Methodology: Analysing the Framing of Treatment towards Detainees under US Custody

In order to examine the role of the American news media in contributing to the level of leniency towards coercive interrogation techniques in the US by supporting the discourse of Administrative Evil, this study will examine how coercive treatments towards detainees under US custody have been framed by the news media.

‘Whatever its specific use, the concept of framing consistently offers a way to describe the power of a communicating text.’¹⁸⁴ The process of framing, as described by Entman, ‘refers to the process of selecting and highlighting some aspects of a perceived reality, and enhancing the salience of an interpretation of that reality.’¹⁸⁵ Through the process of framing therefore, events are accorded interpretations and judgements. As described by D’Angelo:

‘whether the story topic is an anti-abortion rally, nuclear power, the federal budget deficit, welfare reform, a political campaign, an advertising campaign or a military conflict, frames are powerful discursive cues that can impact cognition, individual socialisation via interpersonal discussions, public opinion formation, and group use of media messages to achieve their goals.’¹⁸⁶

In order to examine the extent to which the US news media contributed to the significant level of tolerance among US public opinion towards the use of physical and psychological coercion as a means of intelligence gathering, this thesis will examine how the use of coercive interrogation techniques have been presented by the US news media.

In the words of Entman, ‘frames have at least four locations in the communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver and the culture’¹⁸⁷ Within the location of media texts, frames are produced and manifested through discursive patterns within the text, which through emphasising selected aspects of perceived reality, contribute to its construction by defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgements, and suggesting remedies. Through examining the discursive patterns within news narratives, this

¹⁸⁴ Entman (1993) P.51

¹⁸⁵ Entman (2004) P.26

¹⁸⁶ D’Angelo (2002) P.873

¹⁸⁷ Entman, (1993) P.52

thesis will identify elements of frames within media representation of the treatment of detainees under US custody in the location of text, and its possible contribution to a wider social discourse that supported legitimisation of the sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques within US public opinion. For the purpose of this analysis, this thesis will examine the presentation of treatment towards detainees under US custody in Iraq by the US news media through means of a qualitative discourse Analysis.

This chapter will be divided into four main sections, including introduction of theoretical premises, discussion of methodological approaches, introduction of case studies and data selection, and application of the theoretical framework of Administrative Evil. In the first section, I will introduce the theoretical premises on which the methodology on which this study is based by explaining the concept of discourse and its role in constituting social reality. I will also explain the concept of framing, and the role of frames in producing and re-producing discourse and social reality. In the second section, I will firstly introduce the concept of discourse analysis. I will also discuss the two main different approaches towards analysing news framing, namely the quantitative approach and qualitative approaches in analysing news narratives. I will then explain the case study chosen for this study, namely how treatments towards detainees in Iraq have been presented by the news media, and also the criteria for data selection. I will also explain the different aspects of texts to be analysed for the purpose of this study. Finally, I will present a detailed explanation of how the theoretical framework of Administrative Evil will be applied in analysing news presentation of treatments towards detainees under US custody in Iraq.

3.1. Theoretical Premises

In this section, I will explain the theoretical premises of discourse and framing on which the methodological approaches adopted for the purpose of this study are based. I will firstly explain the concept of discourse and its role in constituting society. I will then discuss the concept of framing, as well as its role in producing and re-producing discourse.

3.1.1. Concept of Discourse

Although the term ‘discourse’ had been widely used, there has been a lack of clear consensus regarding the definition of the concept. As explained by Philips and Jorgensen, the concept of discourse can most simply be defined as ‘a particular way of talking about and

understanding the world (or an aspect of the world).’¹⁸⁸ While there is a lack of consensus, most approaches towards discourse and its analysis share a number of common philosophical premises. Firstly, it is recognised that knowledge of the world should not be treated as objective truth. Secondly, our view of, and knowledge about, the world are the products of historically situated interchanges among people, and therefore should be treated as contingent. Thirdly, our ways of understanding the world, and knowledge, are created and maintained through social interactions in which truths are created. Fourthly, within a particular world view, some forms of action become considered as natural whereas others are regarded as unthinkable. Therefore, the social construction of knowledge has real social consequences.

Stemming from the theoretical claims of constructionism and post-structuralism, approaches of discourse analysis argue that access to reality is always mediated by language. As explained by Philip and Jørgensen, ‘our access to reality is always through language.’¹⁸⁹ Therefore, as knowledge is created and maintained through social interactions, language and discourse is fundamental in the creation of knowledge. As explained by Phillips and Jørgensen:

‘with language, we create representations of reality that are never mere reflections of a pre-existing reality but contribute to constructing reality. Meanings and representations are real. Physical objects also exist, but they only gain meaning through discourse.’¹⁹⁰

Language, therefore, is not merely a channel through which information and knowledge about the world are communicated, but is a “machine” that generates, and as a result constitutes, the social world.’¹⁹¹ As a mechanism that constitutes knowledge and the social world, therefore, language and discourse also constitute our understanding of the world. Therefore, as understanding and views of the social world determine that some forms of actions are considered natural while others may be regarded as unthinkable, discourse, through constituting our understanding of the world, also constitutes our moral reasoning. Therefore, in this thesis, I will examine the role of the news media in shaping the moral outlook regarding using physical and psychological coercion as a means of intelligence

¹⁸⁸ Jørgensen & Phillips (2002) P.1

¹⁸⁹ Jørgensen & Phillips (2002) P.9

¹⁹⁰ Jørgensen & Phillips (2002) P.9

¹⁹¹ Jørgensen & Phillips (2002) P.9

gathering through its contribution to the discursive construction of coercive treatments towards detainees under US custody.

3.1.2. The Concept of Framing and its Role in Producing and Reproducing Discourse

The concept of framing is closely connected to discourse, its production and reproduction. As a constituting part of discourse, frames contribute to the production and reproduction of discourse by shaping and limiting its scope through emphasising selected aspects and interpretations of a particular social event.

As explained in the previous chapter, the concept of frames and frame analysis emerged in the 1980s as an attempt to examine and understand the interaction between actors and information in the network of mass communication. According to D'Angelo, the hard core of the news framing research programme is reflected in four empirical goals that individual studies pursue to varying degrees. These goals are: to identify thematic units called frames; to investigate the antecedent conditions that produce frames; to examine how news frames activate, and interact with an individual's prior knowledge to affect interpretations, recall of information, decision making and evaluations; and to examine how news frames shape social-level processes such as public opinion and policy issue debates.¹⁹² However definitions of the concept of frames remained ambiguous and divided. As Entman explained, although the concept of frames has become more of a unifying thread in political communication research, it has been vulnerable to criticism as an imprecise catchall that means slightly different things to each researcher employing it.¹⁹³ As suggested by Ryan, 'Framing means organising strips of reality - which are part of a constant flow of events, groups and individuals in ways that help us understand the world'¹⁹⁴. Through selective emphasis on aspects of a perceived reality within communicative texts, frames contribute to promote a particular problem identification, causal interpretation, moral judgement, as well as prescription of solutions. Frames therefore could be regarded as a mechanism in the production and reproduction of discourse through which events and issues in the social world are accorded meanings and implications.

¹⁹² D'Angelo (2002) P.873

¹⁹³ Entman (2004) P.5

¹⁹⁴ Ryan (2004) P.363

Frames perform four main discursive functions within the network of communication. Through the four discursive functions, frames contribute to the production of social discourse and, therefore, the production of social knowledge. Firstly, frames define problems and the parameters of discussions. Secondly, frames provide causal diagnosis, identifying the sources of the problems defined. Thirdly, frames make moral judgements about the agents involved and their effects. Finally, frames suggest remedies, offering and justifying solutions to the problems named by the frame. An example given by Entman was the ‘Cold War’ frame that dominated the news in the US, and which:

‘Highlighted certain foreign events - say, civil wars – as problems, identified their source (communist rebels), offered moral judgements (atheistic aggression), and commended particular solutions (US support for the other side)’¹⁹⁵

Entman argued that all four of these framing functions hold together in a kind of cultural logic, each helping to sustain the others with the connections among them cemented more by custom and convention, than the principle of syllogistic logic.¹⁹⁶

According to Entman, frames exist within four locations in the communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture.¹⁹⁷ Firstly, as pre-existing schema, frames exist in communicators who make judgements in deciding the narratives produced, while being guided by frames that organise their belief systems. For example, as a result of a tactic of consensus among US elites of not to argue for options such as negotiation prior to the first Gulf War, ‘the news frame included only two remedies, war now or sanctions now with war (likely) later’.¹⁹⁸ Secondly, frames exist within the text itself, manifested through discursive features such as the presence or absences of certain keywords, phrases, sentences, images and sources of information. As illustrated in the study of news framing of Abu Ghraib by Bennett *et al.*, the discursive labels of:

‘mistreatment and abuse include neglectful behaviour, whereas torture is strongly intentional and has a stronger connection in both common usage and legal

¹⁹⁵ Entman (1993) P.52

¹⁹⁶ Entman (2004) P.6

¹⁹⁷ Entman (1993) P.52

¹⁹⁸ Entman (1993) P.55

terminology to interrogation policies and practices, and therefore may bring attention onto policy initiatives'¹⁹⁹

Thirdly, frames also exist in the system of thoughts of the receivers as habitual schemas and paradigms, which interact with frames in the text resulting in the formation of public opinion. For example, in the paradigm of terrorism, supplied analogies upon which individuals drew on when responding to the attacks on the World Trade Centre, included prototypical events, issues and actors, as well as connections to similar incidents such as the attacks on the Pearl Harbour.²⁰⁰ Finally, culture is the stock of commonly invoked frames, which might be defined as the empirically demonstrable set of common frames exhibited in the discourse and thinking of most people in a social grouping.²⁰¹ Frames in all four positions perform similar functions in defining problems, identifying causes, conveying judgements and suggesting remedies as suggested above. The theory of frames, therefore, presents a relationship of mutual constitution between agency and structure within the network of communication. Within the network of communication, frames in the locations of discourse produced by agency and social structure interact in the production of social knowledge within the network of communication. As frames produced by agencies within the locations of agency feed into to the production of frames and discourse within the location of texts and cultural context, the agency is also constituted by the discourse and social knowledge within the locations of texts and cultural context.

At the fundamental level, frames, as a constituting part of discourse, constitute knowledge of social reality itself for members of society. Frames, through the functions they perform, accord meanings to, and constrain the scope and possibility of interpretation and discussion on its given issue. In the words of Ryan, 'facts ... take on their meanings by being embedded in a frame or story line that organises them and gives them coherence, selecting certain ones to emphasise while ignoring others.'²⁰² As explained by Entman:

'Whether readers accept interpretation "A" which news coverage emphasises, or keep thinking "B" as they did before, by excluding or barely mentioning some information,

¹⁹⁹ Bennett et al (2006) P.473

²⁰⁰ Entman (2004) P.26

²⁰¹ Entman (1993) P.53

²⁰² Ryan (2004) P.364

the coverage may discourage audiences from thinking at all of an entirely different reading “C”.²⁰³

Frames, as a constituting part of discourse and social knowledge, both in the media and at an individual level, therefore play a significant role in shaping perceptions and opinion towards events and social issues. As D'Angelo pointed out, frames are powerful discursive cues that can influence cognition and individual socialisation via interpersonal discussions.²⁰⁴ The powerful influence of framing could be illustrated by an experiment conducted by Kahneman and Tversky in 1984. During the experiment, the subjects were asked the following question. *Imagine that the US is preparing for the outbreak of an unusual Asian disease, which is expected to kill 600 people. Two alternative programmes to combat the disease have been proposed. Assume that the exact scientific estimates of the consequences of the programs are as follows: If programme A is adopted, 200 people will be saved. If programme B is adopted, there is a one third probability that 600 people will be saved and a two-thirds probability that no people will be saved. Which of the two programmes would you favour?* In the experiment, 72 percent of the subjects chose programme A while 28 percent chose programme B. In the next experiment, an identical situation was presented with a different choice: *If programme C is adopted, 400 people will die. If Programme D is adopted, there is a one-third probability that nobody will die and a two thirds probability that 600 people will die.* Upon being given the second set of choices, only 22 percent of the subjects chose programme C, which was identical with Programme A while Programme D, which was identical with Programme B, was chosen by 78 percent of the subjects.²⁰⁵ The experiment by Kahneman and Tversky demonstrated that by changing how the questions and options were framed, the opinions and choices of the recipient could be influenced and even manipulated.

Ultimately, what we know as our ‘political reality’ is truly a product of a multi-layered and multidirectional process of framing and discourse, which Nimmo and Combs called ‘our mediated political reality.’²⁰⁶ Therefore the study of frames and its interaction in the network of political communication is important in understanding the role of news media in the constitution of social discourse and production of perceived social reality. Therefore, in order to understand the level of tolerance towards the use of coercive interrogation techniques

²⁰³ Entman (2001) P.367

²⁰⁴ D'Angelo (2002) P.873

²⁰⁵ Cited in Entman (1993) P.53~54

²⁰⁶ Karen S Johnson-Cartee (2005) P.181

that amount to torture, this thesis will examine how US detention policies and practices have been framed by the US news media. Through examining the image of coercive interrogation techniques presented by the US media framing, this project will evaluate the role of the media in its contribution in enabling a torture-sustaining discourse in the US.

In this thesis, I adopt the post-structuralist theoretical premise that frames, as a constituting part of discourse, constitute our identity and behavioural outlook by contributing to producing and reproducing social knowledge and our views of the social world. However, the most important weakness in the concept of frames and its analysis, however, lies in the apparent absence of a consistent meta-theory. As admitted by Entman himself: ‘nowhere is there a general statement of framing theory that shows exactly how frames become embedded within and make themselves manifest in a text, or how framing influences thinking.’²⁰⁷. However D'Angelo suggested that:

‘knowledge about framing has accumulated because the research program encourages researchers to employ and refine many theories about the framing process under the guidance of distinct paradigmatic perspectives on the relationship between frames and framing effects.’²⁰⁸

As the flow of frames within the network of communication is influenced by many different processes, a multi-paradigmatic approach enables researchers to investigate frames which are located in different positions within the network of communication and their influence on perceived social reality within the political system.

3.2. Analysing News Narratives

In order to examine discourse surrounding the violent treatment towards detainees under US custody and the use of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering, this thesis will examine and identify discursive frames existing in the location of media text. Examining how treatment of detainees under US custody has been presented by the US news media framing, this thesis will adopt the approach of qualitative critical discourse analysis. In this section, I will outline the methodological concept of discourse analysis, on which the methodological approach of this thesis is based.

²⁰⁷ Entman (1993) P.51

²⁰⁸ Cited in D'Angelo (2002) P.881

3.2.1. Discourse Analysis

Despite common basic underlying assumptions on the concept of discourse as patterns of utterance followed by people within different domains of social life, and its constitutive role in the production and reproduction of social knowledge, there is no clear consensus regarding how discourse should be analysed. As a result, the field of discourse analysis contains a series of different approaches, with differently focussed studies and a variety of assumptions. Three of the most important approaches within the field of discourse analysis include; critical linguistics, critical discourse analysis, and discursive psychology. Developed in the 1970s, critical linguistics aims to document the relationship between the linguistic details of texts and the production of ideology. Following the development of critical linguistics, the approach of critical discourse analysis emerged in the 1980s and emphasised the relationship between texts and the wider discursive context. Finally, the approach of discursive psychology emerged with the purpose of accounting for the ways in which communicative micro-mechanisms enter into everyday life as well as institutional processes of social life.²⁰⁹ Examining the discursive representation of treatment of detainees under US custody and its possible contribution towards a wider discursive context that enabled tolerance and leniency towards the sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques despite the images of abuse, the analysis of this thesis would fall under the category of critical discourse analysis.

Although the field of discourse analysis contains not one but many interdisciplinary approaches that may be used to examine different social domains as well as aspects of communication, the three major approaches of discourse analysis described above share the basic philosophical premises of post-structuralist philosophy regarding the nature and social roles of discourse. As previously described, knowledge of the world should not be treated as objective truth but rather as product of discursive construction. Therefore, the ways in which the world is understood and represented, as constituted through discourse, are culturally and historically specific and contingent. As a result of different world views reflecting our knowledge and understanding towards the social world, some forms of action become perceived as natural, whilst others become unthinkable. Consequently, discourse therefore has social consequences.

²⁰⁹ Schröder (2002) P.108

As a result of its theoretical foundation within constructionism and post-structuralism, the most commonly raised concerns regarding the status of knowledge produced through the means of analysing discourse, are concerns of relativism. As explained by Philips and Jørgensen, ‘if all knowledge is historically and socially embedded, and if truth is a discursive effect rather than a transparent account of reality, how, we asked, do we treat our own knowledge?’²¹⁰ Indeed, as knowledge is regarded as contingent, the approaches of discourse analysis could not offer any ideology-free truth, as the researcher would also distort their own observations through their own ideology. Therefore critics argue that the constructionist and post-structuralist approaches are unusable both scientifically and politically, as they neither present the objective truth nor determine good or bad. Responses to concerns of relativism are divided regarding whether relativism should be considered as a political obstacle. Those accepting the unavoidability of relativism, such as Edwards, Ashmore and Potter²¹¹, argue that as all claims of knowledge are open to discussion, there remains the possibility of ongoing democratic debate. In contrast other academics, such as Fairclough²¹², argue that although claims to knowledge are historically and socially constructed, judgements of its quality may be made through criteria such as transparency, consistency, coherence and support of empirical evidence.

3.2.2. Quantitative Method in Analysing Text

Throughout its history, development of micro-methodological approaches in analysing texts produced by the media has been heavily conditioned by a range of diverse political, economic and intellectual interests, resulting in a lack of consensus over how the study of mass communication should be approached. The most prominent debate however, is the debate between qualitative and quantitative approaches in analysing the different aspects in the process of mass communication. The debate between quantitative and qualitative approaches within the field of media and communication research is characterised by the debate between ‘a “positivist” or “hypothetico-deductive” school of thought’ and ‘critical and interpretative perspectives.’²¹³

²¹⁰ Jørgensen & Phillips (2002) P.175

²¹¹ Edwards, Derek, Ashmore, Malcolm and Potter, Jonathan (1995) *Death and furniture: the rhetoric, politics and theology of bottom line arguments against relativism* in *History of the Human Sciences*, No.8, Vol.2 P.25~49

²¹² Chouliaraki, Lilie and Fairclough, Norman (1999) *Discourse in Late Modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press)

²¹³ Gunter (2002) P.209

Conventionally, analyses of discursive patterns within media texts have largely been dominated by the predominantly quantitative approach of content analysis. As explained by Gunter, the basic concepts that characterise quantitative research methodologies concern relevant modes of measurements known as variables and procedures to analyse the relationships between such measurements.²¹⁴ The quantitative approach is primarily concerned with demonstrating correlational and causal relationships between variables and testing pre-established hypotheses through means of mathematical and statistical calculations. The aim of such approaches is to produce reliable and replicable results through scientific and objective observations. Indeed most studies examining how the War on Terrorism has been presented by the American news media have been conducted through quantitative content analysis, including the studies of media framing of Abu Ghraib by Bennett *et al.*²¹⁵, framing of the Iraq War by Dimitrova and Strömbäck²¹⁶, and framing of the War on Terrorism by Ryan²¹⁷.

In the early 1950s, the definition of content analysis by scholars such as Berelson was largely limited to 'a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.'²¹⁸ As stated by Berelson, content analysis was defined as 'a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifested content of communication.'²¹⁹ With the development of the tradition, the definition of content analysis has widened to include 'any technique' for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages.'²²⁰ The approach of content analysis emphasises the importance of consistently applying methodical procedures in order to generate a replicable, empirical dataset for analysis. In the analysis of news framing, the process of content analysis often consists of four main steps including; the identification of frames and keywords and phrases, mapping of keywords and phrases, coding, and validation of frames. According to Koenig, quantitative analysis of discursive framing 'starts with an interpretative detection of frames in a sample of

²¹⁴ Gunter (2002) P.210

²¹⁵ Bennett, W. Lance, Lawrence Regina G & Livingston, Steven (2006) *None Dare Call It Torture* in *Journal of Communication* Vol. 56 No.3 P67~485

²¹⁶ Dimitrova Daniela & Strömbäck (2005) *Mission Accomplished?* In *The International Journal for Communication Studies* Vol.67 No.5 P.399 ~ 417

²¹⁷ Ryan, Michael (2004) *Framing the War Against Terrorism* in *International Journal for Communication Studies* Vol.66 No.5 P.363 ~ 382

²¹⁸ Cited in Hanson et al (1998) P.94

²¹⁹ Cited in Mitchell (1967) P.233

²²⁰ Woodrum (1984) P.2

data.’²²¹ Following the interpretative analysis, a process of concept mapping is conducted in order to verify the framing models identified through qualitative interpretation. After the establishment of a framing model, ‘the full data set is then coded for the presence or absence of the identified frames’ through counting and analysing the usage of related keywords and phrases. Finally, the final step is the validation of the frame models through a statistical analysis of the coding matrices, utilising various analytical models such as latent class analysis.

A number of main advantages of quantitative content analysis in the study of social sciences may be identified. Firstly, studying the content of texts, quantitative content analysis is able to supplement the understanding of social structures through demonstrating correlating statistical patterns of symbolic messages produced by agents within the network of communication. It is especially helpful in mapping and analysing important characteristics within large bodies of texts. Secondly, through the strict demand of validity and reliability tests, content analysis forces researchers to ‘go beyond impressionistic generalisations’ and ‘specify category criteria and assess their results’.²²² As a result content analysis is able to generate empirical, reliable and replicable data for further hypothesis testing.

However, within the field of social studies, over-emphasis on positivist assumptions and over-reliance on quantitative evaluation may be problematic. Schonfield argued:

‘In the social sciences it is rarely possible to pose questions and provide answers in the manner of some of the natural sciences, and it is a refusal to recognise this that has often led us up the wrong path.’²²³

Over-reliance on quantitative analysis of media narrative could lead to over-simplification and neglect in the qualitative exploration of the process of communication. The practice of simply counting the usage of symbols in texts fails to recognise the fact that the same keywords or phrases may acquire different meanings and significance within different literal contexts. As explained by Gee:

‘the word “coffee” is an arbitrary form that correlates with meanings having to do with the substance coffee. At a more specific level we have to use context to

²²¹ König (2006) P.63

²²² Woodrum (1984) P.6

²²³ Halloran (1998) P.14

determine what the word means in any situated way. In one context, “coffee” means a brown liquid, in another one it means grains of a certain sort, in another it means berries of a certain sort, and it means other things in other contexts, for example, a certain flavour’.²²⁴

Similarly, despite the potential meaning of concepts such as ‘torture’, ‘abuse’ and ‘mistreatment’, quantitative studies such as that of Bennett *et al.*, are unable to account for situated meanings of the above concepts, which may differ within various discursive contexts, simply through counting the frequency of appearance of the individual keywords. Therefore the assumption that influence could be confined to measurable statistical changes in public attitudes and an over-reliance on quantitative methods, would risk the potential of an over-simplified and de-contextualised understanding of the complex communication process. As a result, the simple quantification of individual words and phrases would be unable to account for the changes in the meaning of words within different discursive contexts and therefore produce an over-simplified or distorted image. Consequently, while quantitative content analysis is able to process large numbers of texts, it is unable to analyse narrative messages of the texts as a whole in depth. More importantly, the obsession with quantitative research techniques, as well as the appearance of objectivity through quantification and statistical correlations, may also result in the risk of neglecting the inherently interpretative elements of the studies such as the identification of keywords and coding of texts. As Kracauer explained:

‘Within the framework of quantitative analysis, qualitative exegesis is condemned to play a black sheep role. Recognised mainly as a means to arrive at suitable quantifications, its use in analysis proper is regarded as shameful and may in fact be pursued with guilty haste and lack of discipline.’²²⁵

As a result qualitative elements, such as determination of keywords for the identification of frames and manual coding of texts within such studies, risk becoming unaccountable under the image of objectivity given by quantitative techniques and turn into ‘opinion-laden short cuts.’²²⁶

²²⁴ Gee (1999) P.57

²²⁵ Kracauer (1952) P.637

²²⁶ Kracauer (1952) P.637

3.2.3. Qualitative Approach towards Analysing News Narratives

Considering the inadequacies of quantitative approaches in the analysis of media narratives, a more qualitative approach towards analysing media texts and narratives would offer a more sensitive analysis on how treatment of detainees under US custody has been presented by the US news media.

Following criticisms of quantitative research methods, there appears to be an increasing recognition of qualitative approaches and methodologies in the field of Mass Communication Research. As noted by Jensen:

‘qualitative researchers tend to conceive of their studies, most generally, as an iterative or repeated process, which allows for the flexible application of theoretical concepts and analytical procedures to a wide variety of empirical domains.’²²⁷

Despite the diversity within the domain of qualitative research, several common assumptions can be observed in all schools of thoughts.

The first common feature between schools of qualitative approaches is the concept of meaning, and its embedded-ness and orientation in social actions. It is argued that the embedded meanings within society provide individuals with their identity and their orientation in social interactions. In the study of mass communication, qualitative approaches are concerned with how meaning in society is generated by the media texts. The second common feature among qualitative analysts is the assumption that meaningful actions should be studied within their naturalistic context in order to understand the ‘natives’ perspective’ on their social reality. The third common feature of qualitative approaches is the definition of the researcher as an interpretative subject. As Jensen explained:

‘in quantitative studies, interpretative agency tends to be exercised in a sequential and delegated form - segregating the phases of the operationalization and analysis from interpretation and discussion, and delegating certain moments of a study to collaborators as well as machines, above all in computerised data analysis. The qualitative ambition, in comparison, has been for a single researcher to interpret “meaning in action”.’²²⁸

²²⁷ Jensen (2002) P.236

²²⁸ Jensen (2002) P.236

In the analysis of media texts, the approach of qualitative discourse analysis would examine latent meanings within the discursive text through analysing discursive features such as the use of nominalisations, metaphors and euphemisms, focusing ‘not so much on the content of a communication as rather on its underlying intentions or its presumable effects on the audience.’²²⁹

In the examination of texts and narratives in their representation of the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the War on Terrorism, approaches of qualitative analysis, such as those employed by Jackson in *Writing the War on Terrorism* and Kellner in *9/11, Spectacles of Terror, and Media Manipulation*, contribute to understanding the discourse and framing presented by both the US government and the news media, as well as its social and political implications in several ways. Firstly, as qualitative approaches are less pre-occupied by the search for countable characteristics, such as usage of keywords, and mathematical correlations than quantitative approaches, they are able to explore the texts as a whole. In addition, with the ability to examine non-quantifiable latent features within the text, qualitative analysis allows the researcher to achieve considerably more depth in examining media texts. As Kracauer explained:

‘by virtue of its ability to use non-quantifiable frequencies, qualitative exegesis also penetrates textual dimensions which are completely inaccessible to quantitative techniques.’²³⁰

In addition, the ability of qualitative analysis to explore beyond ‘the secure haven of analysis’ is ‘capable of classifications and descriptions which conform far more closely to the texts than those commonly produced by quantitative analysis.’²³¹

In contrast, two main criticisms have been made of qualitative approaches in analysing texts, including the danger of subjective bias and relativism. Indeed as an inherently interpretative method of analysis, qualitative analysis is unable to validify its findings in the manner of exact science through means of producing quantifiable and replicable results. However what may be considered as a weakness by supporters of quantitative analysis could in fact be an advantage, as by not assuming ‘the correct answer’, qualitative analysis contributes to avoiding the premature closure of discussions by allowing

²²⁹ Kracauer (1952) P.638

²³⁰ Kracauer (1952) P.639

²³¹ Kracauer (1952) P.640

alternative accounts to participate in the debate. However, it has also been argued by critics that the interpretative nature of qualitative research approaches may result in arbitrary subjectivism in the resultant analysis. In light of such criticism, it is therefore vital that researchers adopting qualitative approaches conduct their research in a systematic manner, as well as presenting the resultant analysis with transparency. Moreover the element of interpretation is inevitable even in scientific disciplines, as even statistical and experimental results have to be evaluated and interpreted by researchers in order to formulate a conclusion. The open acknowledgement of its interpretative nature, in fact enables qualitative analysis to be more accountable by forcing the researcher to place the process of identifying frames and discursive features under scrutiny.

3.3. Data Analysis

In this study, I will examine how various cases of mistreatment of detainees in Iraq have been presented by the US newspapers. Analysing the narratives presented by the newspaper texts, I will adopt the qualitative approach of critical discourse analysis. I will identify narrative features related to the specific aspects of this study's aims and purposes, including the presentation of various categories of agencies, as well as presentations of different aspects of the treatment of detainees under US custody such as the actual acts, effects, causes and moral judgements. I will examine the texts with a view to identifying prominent features and patterns within the discourse, examining how these narrative features may resonate with existing cultural contexts and how they may support or oppose the discursive framework of Administrative Evil.

As previously explained, the most significant weakness in the methodology of discourse analysis, due to its post-structuralist theoretical premises, is the concern of relativism. As knowledge is regarded as being contingent the researcher would not be able to offer any ideology-free truth; accordingly, critics have argued that the post-structuralist approach is unusable as it neither presents objective truth nor determines good or bad. In particular, criticisms of qualitative approaches to textual analysis have emphasised its inability to validate its findings, as well as the possibility of selectivity and arbitrary subjectivism. However, although claims to knowledge are historically and socially constructed, judgements of its quality may still be made through criteria such as transparency, consistency, coherence and support of empirical evidence.

In the following sections, I will therefore explain my selection of case study and sources of data in order to examine how various cases of mistreatment of detainees under US custody in Iraq have been presented within the US media narrative. I will firstly explain the choice of case study, namely these cases of mistreatment of US detainees under US custody in Iraq, particularly those in the Abu Ghraib prison. I will also introduce cases of violence committed by others as a baseline comparison in order to illustrate possible frames within the media narratives. I will then discuss the source of data selected for the purpose of this study, explaining the choice of the newspapers as the source of data. I will also outline the aspects of news texts to be examined by this thesis, namely the portrayal of human agency involved, presentation of the actual acts of torture and its consequences, as well as the reasons identified for torture and its moral judgement. In the next main section, I will outline in detail how the theoretical framework of Administrative Evil will be applied to the analysis of newspaper texts.

3.3.1. Case Studies

In order to understand the level of leniency within US society towards officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques, this study will analyse the contribution of the presentation of treatment of detainees under US custody in Iraq by the news media to US public discourse. Emphasising selected aspects of perceived reality, news framing within the location of text contributes to political discourse by defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgements and suggesting remedies. Within the location of texts, frames are produced and manifested through discursive patterns within the narratives. Therefore through analysing the discursive patterns within the news narratives, this thesis will analyse elements within the news narratives in order to determine whether the news narratives may contribute to support the discourse that facilitates legitimisation of torture.

Case Study: Treatment of Prisoners in Iraq

In order to examine the extent to which the presentation of the treatment of detainees under US custody by the news media may have contributed to a torture enabling discourse and leniency towards using physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering, I will examine the news framing of the treatment of detainees in Iraq within the context of the scandal of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib.

Located to the west of the city of Baghdad, Abu Ghraib Prison was built by British contractors during the 1960s. Until 2001, Abu Ghraib Prison was used to house political

prisoners during the regime of Saddam Hussein, of whom many were tortured and executed. Following the War against Iraq, the facility became employed by the occupying coalition forces for detaining, as well as interrogating, suspected anti-Coalition guerrilla fighters. As early as 2003, there were allegations of the wide-spread use of methods during interrogation that could constitute torture by coalition forces. In October 2003, reports were submitted by the International Committee of the Red Cross to the US administration documenting abuse of prisoners. However, the issue of the mistreatment of detainees held by coalition forces did not receive any significant attention until late April 2004, when a series of photographs featuring explicit images of violent and sexual abuse of Iraqi detainees by members of the US military forces were published by the television programme *60 Minutes*. Some of the published photographs depicted US service men and women laughing while posing next to naked inmates stacked in a pyramid or positioned as if performing sex-acts. The allegation of abuses was further confirmed by the International Committee of the Red Cross in February 2004, which documented the most frequently alleged systematically used methods of ill treatment, including violence such as beatings with hard objects, acts of humiliation such as being paraded naked and various other means.²³² The Taguba Report in March 2004 also documented that:

‘between October and December 2003, at the Abu Ghraib Confinement Facility, numerous incidents of sadistic, blatant and wanton criminal abuses were inflicted on several detainees... Intentionally perpetrated by several members of the military police guard force.’²³³

As documented by the Taguba Report, a criminal investigation had taken place in 2003 resulting in many soldiers of the 320th Military Police Battalion being charged with abuse towards detainees under US custody. Following the revelation of the prisoner abuse scandal, Court Marshal procedures for the alleged individuals were announced in May 2004. Eleven soldiers, including Specialist Charles Graner and Specialist Lynndie England were convicted of charges related to the abuses, while three others were either cleared of charges or not charged. In trials ending on the 14th January 2005 and 26th September 2005, Specialist Charles Graner and Specialist Lynndie England received 10 years and 3 years imprisonment respectively. However, the majority of those charged received relatively minor sentences.

²³² The ICRC Report (2004) P.392~393

²³³ Taguba Report (2004) P.416

As a result of the graphic and explicit nature of the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, the mistreatment of detainees under US custody received significant attention from the US news media. The narratives presented by the news media on the mistreatment of prisoners in Iraq and, in particular, Abu Ghraib allowed the US public to gain insight into acts of violence inflicted on detainees by US personnel, both as photographed abuse and as part of government policy. Therefore, through studying the discursive images in the news media of the coercive treatment inflicted on detainees by US personnel, this thesis will be able to analyse the possible contribution of the US media to US public discourse. As our knowledge of the social world, and consequently our moral outlook towards events within society, are constituted through language and discourse, the study of media framing should help facilitate understanding of the significant level of tolerance of the use of coercive interrogation practices despite graphic depictions of the suffering and humiliation of the detainees.

Comparison: Atrocities Committed by Others

In order to reveal and illustrate and identify any possible existence of narrative frames produced by textual choices, this thesis will compare the framing of the treatment of detainees under US custody in Iraq against incidents of violence and atrocities committed by others, including those where US personnel have been captured, abducted or killed.

As Entman explained:

‘comparing media narratives of events that could have been reported similarly helps to reveal the critical textual choices that framed the story but would otherwise remain submerged in an undifferentiated text.’²³⁴

As many framing devices can appear as obvious and natural choices for words or images that are taken for granted, frames may be difficult to be detected fully with reliability. Through means of comparison therefore, it may be revealed that the choice of words and images made by the news media in its narrative of events are neither inevitable nor unproblematic, but a vital element in establishing the commonly accepted interpretation of the events in question. In Entman’s article; *Framing U.S. Coverage of International News: Contrasts in Narratives of the KAL and Iran Air Incidents*, through comparison between the choices of words, narrative descriptions and images, a US missile strike on an Iranian plane

²³⁴ Entman (1991) P.6

was framed as a technical problem, while a Soviet missile strike on a Korean jet, which was a similar event, was framed as an incident of moral outrage.

In this thesis, the narrative framing by the news media of human agency involved in US detention practices and the prisoner abuse scandal in Iraq, will be compared to the experience of Jessica Lynch who was held in Iraqi custody, as well as to the abduction and execution of the American engineers Nicholas Berg and Eugene Armstrong, where US citizens were in the position of victims of detention and abuse. By comparing how different victims subjected to violence have been presented, the analysis will be able to reveal latent narrative and textual choices that could be taken for granted. Examining the framing of the acts of harsh treatment and abuse of detainees under US custody, as well as its reason, context and moral judgement, this project will also compare the coverage of the treatment of detainees under US custody to those of similar acts committed by others such as the kidnappings and executions of US citizens by Iraqi insurgents, as well as torture under the regime of Saddam Hussein. Through comparison of similar incidents of violence and atrocities committed against others by different agents, latent discursive features, such as different aspects of emphasis and deliberate textual choices, in the framing by the US news media of coercion and violence committed by both the US and others may be revealed for the purpose of analysing the contribution of news framing to US public discourse.

The first case of comparison selected for the purpose of this study is the capture of Jessica Lynch by Iraqi forces. On 23rd March 2003, a convoy consisting of the 507th Maintenance Company and 3rd Combat Support BN elements of the US army were ambushed near Nasiriyah, a major crossing point on the Euphrates River northwest of Basra, as a result of navigational error. During the ambush, Jessica Lynch, a supply clerk with the 507th Maintenance Company was injured and captured by Iraqi forces. In addition to Lynch, five other soldiers in the company were also captured and later rescued, while eleven soldiers were killed in the ambush. Under Iraqi custody, Lynch was taken to a hospital in Nasiriyah where she was treated for her injuries. She was later rescued on 1st April in a dramatic rescue operation conducted by the US armed forces assisted by information supplied by an Iraqi lawyer. Initially, it was claimed in a video released by the Pentagon that Lynch had suffered stab and bullet wounds. It was also claimed that she was slapped whilst in her hospital bed and subjected to interrogation. However, it was later revealed that Lynch had suffered a broken arm, broken thigh and dislocated ankles. Following her rescue, Lynch was transferred

to Landstuhl Regional Medical Centre in Germany where she received surgical treatment for her injuries. Considering the framing of those under the custody of the US authorities, the comparison between framing of foreign detainees under US custody and US prisoners of war under Iraqi custody can contribute to illustrate the differences in textual choices by the news media in framing victims of different nationalities, as well as under different authorities.

In addition to the coverage of the capture and rescue of Jessica Lynch, this thesis will also compare the coverage of acts of excessive violence committed by others such as acts of torture under the regime of Saddam Hussein, as well as the abductions and executions of US citizens in Iraq including Nicholas Berg, Eugene Armstrong, Jack Hensley and others, such as those killed and mutilated by Iraqi insurgents in the city of Fallujah. One of the first victims of a series of abductions and executions, Nicholas Berg was an American contractor working in telecommunication in Iraq. Berg was abducted and later executed by Iraqi militias. The body of Nicholas Berg was discovered on 8th May 2004, and on 11th May, a video was posted on the website of the militant group Muntada al-Ansar, showing Berg's execution by decapitation. In the video, Berg was shown to be surrounded by five men wearing masks and head scarves. A statement was also read stating that Berg had been executed in retaliation for the abuse of prisoners by members of the US forces at Abu Ghraib prison and then Berg was decapitated with a knife. Similarly to Berg, Eugene Armstrong and Jack Hensley were both American contractors working in Iraq. Armstrong and Hensley were captured along with their British colleague Kenneth Bigley, by an Iraqi militant group in the al-Mansour district of Baghdad on 16th September 2004. These three individuals were working for Gulf Commercial Supplies and Commercial Services, which had been working on reconstruction projects in post-war Iraq. Following the abduction, a video was released featuring the three abducted men and demands were made for the release of Iraqi women held by coalition troops. Armstrong was beheaded on the 20th September followed by Hensley on the following day. Despite efforts to rescue him and negotiations by both the British government and the Bigley family, Kenneth Bigley was also beheaded two weeks later on 7th October 2004. It took several minutes for the captors to decapitate Armstrong due to the use of a small knife. Video footage as well as images of the executions was also published on the internet.

In addition to the cases of violence where US citizens have been victims, this study will also use other cases where acts of atrocious violence are committed by other actors such as the violent attack on US convoy by Iraqi insurgents in Fallujah on 31st March 2004, as well

as acts of torture committed under the regime of Saddam Hussein. Through comparing the media presentation of violence and atrocities committed by different actors, I will analyse whether incidents of atrocities where perpetrators and victims were of different nationalities were presented with a different image, examining not only the presence of frames but also how such frames may feed into public discourse surrounding coercive treatments towards detainees under US custody.

It may be argued however, that it would be insensitive and inappropriate to compare acts of atrocious torture committed under the regime of Saddam Hussein and the abduction and execution of US personnel and hostages by Iraqi insurgents to the abuse and humiliation of Iraqi detainees under US custody. Although the detainees who had suffered various officially sanctioned ‘coercive interrogation techniques’ under US custody or unauthorised abuse by members of the US forces and suffered only physical violence and sexual humiliation, they had not suffered the fate of severe torture, disfigurement and violent deaths as the victims of torture under the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein or the abducted US personnel executed by Iraqi insurgents. However, while acknowledging the pain and suffering endured by such victims, it is not the purpose of this thesis to discuss whether the pain and suffering of being subjected to coercive interrogation techniques and unauthorised abuse such as those photographed at Abu Ghraib are equal in severity to execution and death. Instead, this project will only compare the news framing of incidents of abuse and violence perpetrated and suffered by different perpetrators and victims in the coverage by the US media, in order to examine the process of legitimisation and de-legitimisation of such practices through discursive constructions.

3.3.2. Data Selection

In order to analyse the contribution of US news media narratives to US public discourse surrounding coercive treatments towards detainees in Iraq and its potential influence on US public opinion, this thesis will analyse narratives presented by the US newspapers. Although television news reports provide immediate images and footage that trigger an instant response, newspapers are capable of providing more in-depth analytical narratives which make a greater contribution to knowledge and understanding of the cases of coercive treatment of detainees under US custody. Therefore, it is more appropriate for the purpose of this study to analyse the narratives produced by newspapers.

Due to the very nature of qualitative analysis, it would be impractical to process an exceedingly large amount of data as each article has to be analysed in depth by the researcher in order to reveal latent features within the text. Therefore, databases selected for qualitative studies are characterised by their relatively limited size in comparison to quantitative studies. Instead of searching for quantitative patterns in discursive features, and its correlated relations, qualitative studies aim to reveal through careful textual analysis the underlying discursive mechanisms within the context of the text. Therefore, this study will examine in depth relevant reports by the three national newspapers with the largest circulation within the US. The three largest US newspapers with the widest national circulation are selected as the source of the data as they enjoy the largest national readership and therefore accordingly can be considered to exert the greatest influence on public discourse on account of their wide reaches. In addition, selection of newspapers based on the criterion of national circulation also prevents selectivity in the choice of data.

The first newspaper selected for the purpose of this project is *USA Today*, a national daily newspaper published by the Gannet Company. Founded in 1982, *USA Today* enjoys national readership and is currently the widest circulated newspaper in the United States. Established with the goal of providing an alternative to other wordy broadsheet newspapers, *USA Today* is known for simplifying news down to easily comprehensible stories. As the most widely circulated newspaper, enjoying a daily circulation of 2,528,437 according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations, *USA Today* is able to reach a large section of the US public and therefore exerts significant influence on public perceptions.²³⁵ The second newspaper selected is the highly influential *Wall Street Journal*. The *Wall Street Journal* is an American newspaper published by Dow Jones & Company enjoying wide national as well as international readership. Although primarily covering business and financial news, the *Wall Street Journal* also carries coverage of political news. Enjoying a daily circulation of 2,062,312 as reported by the Audit Bureau of Circulations, it is the second most widely circulated daily newspaper in the US.²³⁶ In addition to its wide circulation the *Wall Street Journal* was also selected due to its reputation as a broadsheet newspaper. The third newspaper selected for the purpose of the project is the *New York Times*. Published in New York City, the *New York Times* is a daily newspaper that has both national and international

²³⁵ Cited in http://www.burrellesluce.com/top100/2007_Top_100List.pdf Last visited (3rd Jan 2008)

²³⁶ Cited in http://www.burrellesluce.com/top100/2007_Top_100List.pdf Last visited (3rd Jan 2008)

circulation. With a daily circulation of 1,120,420,²³⁷ the *New York Times* is the third most widely circulated newspaper in the US. Similar to the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times* was also selected for its broadsheet reputation in addition to its wide circulation.

The analysis will be focused on evaluating the coverage by the above newspapers on US detention policies and practices during the invasion of Iraq, and particularly the within the context of the prisoner abuse scandal of Abu Ghraib between 2004 and the end of 2005. Analysing the news coverage, this study will examine how coercive treatments towards detainees under US custody, both authorised and unauthorised, has been framed in the narratives. This study will also examine relevant news coverage by these selected newspapers of acts of atrocities and violent attacks committed by others. For the purpose of analysis, this project has selected 164 relevant articles and public comments published by *USA Today*, 319 relevant articles and public comments published by the *New York Times*, as well as 109 relevant articles and public comments published by the *Wall Street Journal*. These articles were obtained through searching the Factiva Electronic Archive using search terms including the prisoner abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib, the capture and rescue of Private Jessica Lynch, kidnapping and execution of US citizens, as well as attacks on US Citizens at Fallujah. The use of electronic searches should ensure that the selection of data returned has been randomly chosen in order to avoid the possibility of bias. A list of items examined may be found in the appendix. In addition to articles, reports and editorials, published public comments have also been included in the analysis, as through the process of selection and publication, public comments published by the newspapers are also filtered by the existent frames within the news media, and therefore also contribute to constituting the narrative presentation of the treatments of US detainees by the selected newspapers. It may also be noted that the base for data sampling is relatively small when compared to existing quantitative studies on framing for the War on Terrorism and the prisoner abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib. However, the main interest of this study lies in contributing to the identification and understanding of the discursive mechanisms through which institutionalised policies and practices of torture could be constituted as morally tolerable. As a result, a smaller sampling source is more appropriate as it allows analysis of the text in more depth and detail.

²³⁷ Cited in http://www.burrellesluce.com/top100/2007_Top_100List.pdf Last visited (3rd Jan 2008)

3.3.3. Aspects of Text to be Analysed

For the purpose of this study, I will examine several aspects of narratives within the news texts. Firstly, I will the news presentation of human agency involved in the acts of violence cited in the case studies described above. Secondly, I will analyse how the actual acts of violence cited in the above case studies, and its various effects have been presented within the news narratives. Thirdly, I will analyse how the reasons and causes leading to the use of violence in the above case studies have been presented. I will also examine how the acts of violence in the above case studies have been morally evaluated within the news narratives. Base on the aspects of texts identified above, empirical data analysis of this thesis will be divided into three chapters.

In the first chapter, I will examine how the human agency is involved in both sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques and unauthorised abuse, including the perpetrators and victims, as they are presented in the newspapers. Analysing how the agents involved are presented by the media, this thesis will examine two aspects of discursive features within the framing of the human agency, including the presence of different agents within the texts and the how they are presented by the selected newspapers. The presence of agents in the news narratives serves as an indicator of the aspect of the issue which the author wishes to emphasis. In addition to the presence of different human agencies within the coverage by the selected newspapers, this thesis will also examine the images with which different human agents are presented. The impression of different human agents as received by the audience, contributes to influencing the moral evaluation of whether acts of the described agents, as well as treatments to which they are subjected, could be constituted as justifiable. As noted in studies on other forms of violence, such as domestic violence in *Dominance and entitlement: the rhetoric men use to discuss their violence towards women* by Adams, Towns and Gavey, the different characteristics attributed to the agents could serve to justify or criticise their action or treatments. For example, the way men talk about women and relationships can have the effect of justifying violence, concealing abuse and supporting entitlement to positions of power.²³⁸ In an interview analysed by Adams *et al.* where, through the discursive construction of his role as ‘king of the castle’, the perpetrator of domestic violence is able to justify his acts of violence through positioning others as subjects to his

²³⁸ Adams et al (1995) P.387

authority.²³⁹ Therefore, through examining the images of different agents presented within the news texts, this thesis will be able to analyse how the news narratives may contribute to constituting perceptions of their acts, as well as their treatment.

In the second chapter of empirical analysis, I will examine how the actual acts of sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques and unauthorised acts of abuse, as well as their effect on both the perpetrators and victims are framed by the news media. I will firstly examine which aspects of the incidents, such as details of the actual acts involved in coercive interrogation techniques and unauthorised abuses, their possible effects on different subjects, including the victims and perpetrators of the abuse, and others such as family members and fellow citizens, were emphasised within the news narratives. Through emphasising selected aspects of the social in the communication texts, frames within news coverage promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation and moral judgement, which in turn contribute to influencing public opinion. Through examining and comparing the amount of emphasis given to different aspects of the treatment of detainees under US custody, as well as acts of torture and abuse by other actors, this study can analyse and demonstrate how the different emphases may affect public perception of coercion and violence in different incidents. In addition, this thesis will also examine the discursive mechanisms, including the use of discursive labels, metaphors and euphemisms, used within the texts describing the acts of violence in the case studies previously outlined. As Sornig highlighted, ‘the replacement of words, metaphorical and otherwise, is one of the devices by which evaluative semantic components can be focused on or obscured’ and ‘Euphemism is by far the most widely used paraphrastic manipulation on the lexical level.’²⁴⁰ Through the choice of words and discursive labels in the narrative texts, narratives by the news media presents distinctively different construction of social events, contributing to inducing distinct responses among the readers and thereby influence public perceptions towards the coercion and violence committed by different actors. Therefore, by examining the discursive mechanisms within the texts, this thesis will be able to analyse how the image of coercive treatment towards detainees has been presented within the US media discourse and its influence on public opinions.

²³⁹ Adams et al (1995) P.394~5

²⁴⁰ Sornig (1989) P.105

In the third chapter of empirical analysis, as it is part of the function of frames to diagnose the source of the problem as defined, I will examine how the contexts and causes leading to the acts of violence in the case studies occurred has been identified and presented by the news media. As frames also make moral judgements on the incidents and the agents involved, I will also examine how the moral evaluation of the treatment of detainees under US custody, as well as the atrocities committed by others such as Iraqi insurgents have been presented by the news media. In this area of analysis, I will firstly examine the presentation of causes and reasons leading to the use of sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques, abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib and violence committed by others, which have been presented by the news media. Examining how the causes and contexts are presented by the selected newspapers, I will examine the different causal factors emphasised in the explanation of the use of officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques, the unauthorised abuse of detainees under US custody, as well as acts of violence perpetrated by others. Emphasis and presentation of the causal factors and contexts leading to the use of violence by different agents within different contexts is important as it contributes to the process of moral evaluation which determines whether given acts are considered acceptable. More importantly, I will also examine the reasons given in the explanations of moral judgements in the coverage by the news media. As frames contribute to define the scope and focuses of public debate, the reasons cited for the judgements made within the news texts also contribute to confine the knowledge and discussion of public opinion regarding both the treatment of detainees under US custody as well as acts of violence and coercion committed by others. In addition to the presentation of causal factors leading to the use of violence and coercion, I will also examine how both the authorised use of coercive interrogation techniques and the unauthorised abuse of the treatment of detainees under US custody has been morally evaluated by the media. Through analysing the discourse of the moral evaluation of acts of violence and abuses presented by the news media, including the discursive labels attached to violence committed by others and the different ethical traditions to which the narratives appeal, this thesis will examine the extent to which narratives by the selected newspapers may contribute to the level of tolerance observed towards the use of coercive interrogation techniques.

Examining the different aspects of news coverage, I will examine the extent to which the discourse presented by the news media may contribute to the support the discourse of Administrative Evil.

3.4. Applying Administrative Evil Framework

In order to examine the possible contribution of the US news media to the level of leniency displayed to the sanctioned use of physical and psychological coercion as a means of intelligence gathering, through its facilitation of a more tolerating social discourse about the outrageous cases of mistreatment, I will apply the theoretical framework of Administrative Evil as presented by Adams and Balfour. As explained in the previous chapter, Administrative Evil is rooted in ‘a way of thinking that emphasises the scientific-analytic mind-set and the belief in technological progress.’²⁴¹ The culture of modernity contributes to enable a new form of evil where ordinary individuals can engage in acts of evil without acknowledging any wrongdoing. Furthermore, through the process of moral inversion, acts of evil are not only tolerated but are convincingly redefined as something good. As a result, ‘ordinary people can all too easily engage in acts of administrative evil while believing that what they are doing is not only correct, but in fact, good.’²⁴² As specified by Kelman, three discursive conditions may be identified to facilitate the abdication of moral responsibility and the legitimisation of acts of evil within social discourse. The first condition is *consequentialist rationality* sustained by virtue of furthering the ultimate goals of the organisation. The second condition refers to the dominance of *technical* and *instrumental rationality* as a result of the modern scientific analytical mind-set, where moral responsibility is eroded through emphasis on technical effectiveness, regulated policy implementation and professionalism. Finally, the third condition is the *dehumanisation of victims* which renders their suffering morally insignificant.

Examining the news media’s representation of the mistreatment of detainees under US custody, this thesis will examine in detail the narratives related to the different aspects of the text as outlined previously within the chapter. As explained previously in this chapter, frames within different locations interact to produce what comes to be recognised as social reality. Therefore, I will examine the discursive mechanisms used in reporting different aspects of coercive treatments under US custody and how these discursive mechanisms may

²⁴¹ Adams & Balfour (2009) P.4

²⁴² Adams & Balfour (2009) P.4

evoke various pre-existing social discourse and images that facilitate particular interpretations of the events. This study will then examine the extent to which the representations and interpretations by the newspapers of the mistreatment of detainees under US custody may support the three conditions described above and thereby facilitate the process of moral inversion and masking of the administrative evil of coercive interrogation techniques.

3.4.1. Consequentialist Moral Reasoning

In the study of Administrative Evil by Dillard and Ruchala, it was cited that Kelman had specified three conditions for the abdication of moral responsibility and the process of moral inversion. The first discursive condition cited is consequentialist moral reasoning, in which the legitimacy of acts are evaluated by the objective served and the consequences it achieved. In the words of Dillard and Ruchala, 'violence is authorised by virtue of the actions furthering the ultimate goals of the organisation.'²⁴³ An example of such consequentialist moral reasoning, as explained by Zygmunt Bauman, is modern genocide as seen during the Holocaust. As Bauman explained, 'Modern genocide is genocide with a purpose ... It is a means to an end: a necessity that stems from the ultimate objective, a step that one has to take if one wants ever to reach the end of the road. The end itself is a grand vision of a better and radically different society.'²⁴⁴ As a result of consequentialist moral reasoning, the violence of modern genocide becomes legitimised through the objective and vision of achieving a better society.

As consequentialist moral reasoning evaluates acts by the objectives served and consequences produced, it follows that narratives supporting the discourse of consequentialist justification for acts of violence in news narratives would be demonstrated through emphasising legitimate objectives and positive outcome produced as a result. In the narrative presentation by the news media of the human agency involved in the treatment of detainees under US custody, legitimisation of violence through consequentialist moral reasoning may be demonstrated in the representation of the objectives motivating the perpetrators to commit the acts of violence. In the framing of perpetrators of acts of violence and atrocities within the news narratives, a discourse promoting consequentialist moral reasoning may be demonstrated through emphasis on well-intended objectives and benign motivations behind the acts of the perpetrators. Evoking the images of fictional heroes, who were forced to

²⁴³ Dillard & Ruchala (2005) P.612

²⁴⁴ Bauman (1989) P.91

employ acts of violence for motivations considered as legitimate, such as Jack Bauer's torture motivated by desire to save lives in the TV series *24*, frames emphasising benign or legitimate motivation contribute to an empathetic discourse that portrays their acts of violence as understandable or commendable through consequentialist moral reasoning.

Similarly, in narratives describing the actual acts of torture and the consequences it produces, narratives supporting consequentialist discourse would also emphasise moral judgements based upon the consequences produced by the acts within the narratives. Consequentialist justification of violence would therefore be demonstrated through emphasising the positive result of acts of coercion and violent treatment while de-emphasising the negative consequences. By emphasising positive consequences over negative effects, the narratives would feed into the discourse supporting a consequentialist justification of the acts presented within the narratives by supporting the moral reasoning based on cost and benefit calculations. In the meantime, the discourse of consequentialist justification would also be demonstrated through de-emphasising the negative consequences of the violent treatment of detainees, such as the physical and psychological injuries inflicted during the acts of violence and its short term and long term consequences for the victims. On the other hand, narratives emphasising negative consequences over positive consequences produced by the acts within the narratives, would facilitate discourse that de-legitimatises the acts described within the narratives.

As described in the theoretical framework of Administrative Evil, 'violence is authorised by virtue of the actions furthering the ultimate goals of the organisation'²⁴⁵ and is presented and accepted as synonymous with the interest of individuals within the organisation. Therefore, in the aspects of text identifying and presenting reasons and causes leading to the acts of violence presented within the text, the discourse of consequentialist moral reasoning would also be demonstrated in the identification and emphasis of reasons and objectives. As acts of violence are morally evaluated by the objectives that they are designed to serve, discourse supporting consequentialist justification of violence would emphasise the legitimacy of its objectives. One example of objectives that may be considered legitimate is that of various interpretations of self-defence, evoking the notion of 'Just Cause' within the discourse of Just War Tradition. As part of the Just War Tradition, violence is justified in response to aggression or the threats of aggression. By emphasising the objective of self-

²⁴⁵ Dillard & Ruchala (2005) 612

defence, therefore, the news narratives would evoke the discourse of Just War Tradition that provides legitimisation for the acts of violence in the narratives based on the notion of Just Cause. As an extension of self-defence, another example of possible objectives that may be considered legitimate is the need to ‘save their own people’²⁴⁶ in what may be perceived as ‘Supreme Emergency’ where consequence of defeat would be ‘immeasurably awful.’²⁴⁷ Narratives invoking the notion of supreme emergency, in the word of Michael Waltzer, ‘bring us under the rule of necessity (and necessity knows no rules)’²⁴⁸ where acts of violence becomes legitimised by the objective of saving one’s own people.

3.4.2. Technical/Instrumental Responsibility

The second discursive condition facilitating legitimation of the administrative evil is the emphasis of technical and instrumental responsibility and erosion of moral responsibility. As explained by Dillard and Ruchala, ‘technical responsibility considers only whether the activity has been carried out according to the best available technological knowledge in a cost-effective manner.’²⁴⁹ As a result of the modern scientific-analytical mind-set, normative moral considerations are replaced by an emphasis on effective and regulated implementation of acts and policies. As a result, actors may be shielded from the moral consequences of their actions, reducing acts of violence to mere technique.

As the discourse of technical and instrumental rationality replaces normative considerations of moral responsibility with technical efficiency, narratives supporting the discourse of technical and instrumental rationality would emphasise effective and regulated implementation of acts and policies. In the presentation of human agency, an emphasis on technical and instrumental rationality would firstly be demonstrated through distancing active agents from any direct involvement in inflicting violence and suffering. The effect of distancing could be achieved through discursive features such as the removal of active agency from the account. Such narratives provide a discourse that conceals the involvement of agents in inflicting harm and injury on others, and they thus ‘create distance between [their] actions and the destructive activity’²⁵⁰ and facilitate focus of attention on considerations of technical rationality. Secondly, a discourse of technical and instrumental rationality could also be revealed through an emphasis on issues relating to the professionalism of the agents

²⁴⁶ Waltzer (1977) P.254

²⁴⁷ Waltzer (1977) P.253

²⁴⁸ Waltzer (1977) P.255

²⁴⁹ Dillard & Ruchala (2005) 613

²⁵⁰ Adams & Balfour (2009) P.17

responsible for implementing the acts within the narratives, such as their training, qualifications and disciplinary oversight. Emphasising aspects of qualifications and organizational efficiency, the narratives would serve to focus discursive attention away from the moral legitimacy of the acts committed onto the technical considerations of bureaucratic expertise regarding whether the individual implementing the acts were sufficiently qualified and whether they have been adequately supervised.

Presenting the actual acts and effects of violence within the news coverage, an emphasis on technical or instrumental rationality might also be observed by examining the emphasis placed on different aspects of the acts of violence and coercion within the news narratives. The first discursive feature in the narrative representation of actual acts and effects of violence which demonstrates an emphasis on technical or instrumental rationality would be lack of reference to any details of the violence inflicted in the process. The significance of different emphases in the media coverage of acts of atrocities and violence suffered by different victims was observed by Chomsky and Herman in the analysis of religious murders in Poland and South America:

‘While coverage of worthy victim was generous with gory details and quote expressions of outrage and demands for justice, the coverage of the unworthy victims was low-keyed, designed to keep the lid on emotions.’²⁵¹

In their account, Chomsky and Herman, emphasise that the gory details of atrocious acts and expressions of outrage are often employed in order to focus the attention of the readers on the suffering inflicted by the described acts by providing vivid mental images of suffering that could resonate with images and memories of suffering within popular culture such as television and cinematic features. Consequently, emphasis on gory details serves to constitute a discursive framing that encourages outrage and empathy while emphasising its moral significance. By the same token, omitting details of violence inflicted by the acts of violence described within the text would also divert attention away from the suffering inflicted, facilitating a sanitised image that enables the process of psychological distancing.

The second discursive feature facilitating the discourse of technical and instrumental rationality would be an emphasis on the technical aspects of the described acts, such as their legality, associated codes of conduct and technical details of implementation. Such an

²⁵¹ Chomsky & Herman (2002) P.39

emphasis would contribute to support a discourse that displaces moral responsibilities with instrumental and procedural rationalities. Through emphasising the technical aspects of violence, therefore, the narratives would feed into a sanitised discourse of violence as a adiphoric technique, which is 'neither good nor evil, measurable against technical but not moral values',²⁵², substituting technical responsibility in the place of moral responsibility.

As previously explained, a discourse of technical and instrumental rationality emphasises considerations of effective and regulated policy implementation. Therefore, a discourse of technical and instrumental rationality would be revealed through judgements based on technical aspects of the acts within the narratives, such as their legality, the regulated nature of their implementation, as well as the technical expertise deployed. The basis of moral judgement based on technical rationality appeals to the modern scientific analytical discourse and what Zygmunt Bauman referred to as 'cult of rationality' where violence has been turned into a technique that is purely rational. Therefore by focusing upon the technical aspects of the described acts of violence, moral evaluations within the news texts made on the basis instrumental responsibility would contribute to a discourse of technical rationality which confines public discussion and social discourse within the realm of professionalism and technical efficiency, where acts are justified 'by reason as defined either by the goal or by the rules of behaviour.'²⁵³

As explained by Adams and Balfour, there are several ways through which our moral compass may be 'switched off'. 'Firstly, harmful behaviour may be repackaged as positive. Second, we can create distance between our actions and the destructive activity. Third, we can minimise or use euphemisms to diminish the destructive activity, thus convincing ourselves that nothing really bad happened. And finally, we can use dehumanization to help us understand the victims as deserving of their treatment.'²⁵⁴ Focusing only on the effective and regulated implementation of policies and acts of violence while de-emphasising the gory details of violence and suffering inflicted in the process, discourse of technical and instrumental rationality would enhance the process of 'switching off our moral compasses' by enabling moral distancing and trivialisation of violence through discourse.

²⁵² Bauman (1989) P.215

²⁵³ Bauman (1989) P.214

²⁵⁴ Adams & Balfour (2009) P.17

3.4.3. Dehumanisation of Victims

The third discursive condition enabling the legitimisation of evil is the dehumanization of victims. As explained by Zimbardo, ‘one of the worst things we can do to our fellow human being is deprive them of their humanity, render them worthless by exercising the psychological process of dehumanisation.’²⁵⁵ The process of dehumanisation is the removal of the human status of the victims and consequentially rendering the victims morally insignificant. Through the process of dehumanisation, acts of evil may be more easily legitimised due to the lack of meaningful victims. Another aspect of dehumanisation also refers to presenting the victims with an image as deserving of their treatment. In the words of Adams and Balfour, ‘We can use dehumanisation to help us understand the victims as deserving of their treatment.’²⁵⁶

In the presentation of human agency, discourse supporting the dehumanisation of victims would be demonstrated through two processes, namely the process of ‘de-realization’ and the process of ‘demonization’. Within the discursive presentation of the human elements involved, the process of de-realization may be demonstrated by removing the presence of victims. Removal of the victims’ presence may be achieved through several discursive features within the texts. This may be achieved through the use of nominalisation, the choice of noun phrases over verbs within the text, and use of the passive voice, where subjects are removed from the sentence. The use of nominalisation therefore serves to remove not only the presence of the perpetrators, but also that of the human victims who were subjected to the described acts, thus creating an image of violence where moral consequences are removed by deleting the presence of the victims from the discourse. The removal of the victims’ presence could also be achieved through the omission of names and personal information of the individual agents involved. Not only does such an omission of names and personal information serve to absolve the perpetrators of the responsibilities of their acts by concealing their direct involvement, but it also contributes to the removal of meaningful human subjects from the narrative. In the words of Butler, by being called a name, one is given a certain possibility for social existence.²⁵⁷ The omission of names and social backgrounds can therefore create the effect of dehumanisation and de-realisation, that strips off the human status and worthiness of certain lives and therefore encourages tolerance of their abuse. As

²⁵⁵ Zimbardo, Cited in Adams & Balfour (2009) P.18

²⁵⁶ Adams & Balfour (2009) P.17

²⁵⁷ Butler (1997) P.2

Butler explained in *Precarious Life*, 'certain lives are not considered lives at all, they cannot be humanised, that they fit no dominant frame for the human.'²⁵⁸ The extent of the human status accorded to agents, would therefore contribute to the emotional and moral evaluation of the treatments to which they have been subjected. As a result, the omission of names and personal information also contributes to a discourse that presents the acts of violence described within the narratives as being without moral consequence, since the images of the victims remain nameless and faceless.

In addition to the process of de-realisation, the dehumanisation of victims can also manifest itself through the process of imposing such a negative image of victims that we cannot identify with. In the words of Butler, 'The "I" who sees that face is not identified with it: the face represents that for which no identification is possible, an accomplishment of dehumanization and a condition for violence.'²⁵⁹ This process of dehumanization through presenting the 'face' as unidentifiable as human can be achieved through two main processes. The first process is presentation of victims with an image of 'less than human', which denies their entitlement to natural human rights. As explained by Jackson, 'Once a group has been reduced to being an evil 'spawn', 'animals', 'parasites', 'a cancer on human condition' ... it is relatively easy to treat them in a unconscionable manner and without any regard for their human rights.'²⁶⁰ An example of discursive construction of the 'less than human' victims would be references to existing racist stereotype images such as the Orientalist image of the Middle East as barbaric, 'alien and inferior.'²⁶¹ Secondly, the dehumanization of victims could also be demonstrated through the discursive construction of the 'Deadly Victims',²⁶² Presenting the victims, the discursive construction of 'Deadly Victims' would be demonstrated through emphasis on negative characteristics attributed to the victims, such as previous criminal records and possible associations with insurgency and terrorist activities, would contribute to further enhance the process of dehumanisation by presenting an image the victims as posing a significant threat and therefore deserving of their own mistreatment.

As explained by Bauman, by facilitating the abdication of moral responsibilities and authorised violence through the process of moral inversion, individual victims are reduced to

²⁵⁸ Butler (2004) P.34

²⁵⁹ Butler (2004) P.145

²⁶⁰ Jackson, (2005) P.75

²⁶¹ Little (2008) Chapter One

²⁶² Lifton, (2000) P.476

the most basic level of primitive survival, stripped of symbols of human dignity and deprived of recognisable human likeness.²⁶³ Once effectively dehumanised, and cancelled as potential subjects of moral demands, human objects of bureaucratic task performance are viewed with ethical indifference,²⁶⁴ facilitating tolerance towards the suffering and humiliation inflicted upon the dehumanised victims. Presenting the actual acts and effects of both the treatment of detainees under US custody and acts of violence committed by others, a discourse on dehumanisation would also be revealed through the deletion of the presence of victims and the process of de-realisation. Within the narratives, the process of derealisation would be revealed by a lack of emphasis on the experiences of the victims who are subjected to the acts of violence, and its physical and psychological impact through the means of omission and sanitisation. By deleting the experience of violence, as well as their experiences, victims of violence and coercion are denied a meaningful voice within the news narratives, as well as social discourse. Consequently, denied a meaningful voice, the victims of violence and coercion are also stripped of their political and moral significance, facilitating the process of their dehumanisation that contributes to discourse that constitute their suffering and experiences as non-existent or morally insignificant.

3.5. Conclusion

Examining the role of the news media within the political system and its possible contribution to the level of tolerance towards the use of coercive interrogation techniques as a means of intelligence gathering within the context of the War on Terrorism, this thesis will examine the contribution of news framing to the US social discourse.

According to Philips and Jorgensen, the concept of discourse can most simply be defined as ‘a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world).’²⁶⁵ While there is a lack of consensus on a solid definition of discourse and its analysis, most approaches towards discourse and its analysis shares a number of common philosophical premises that recognised discourse as constitutive to social knowledge and our understanding of the social world. As within a particular world view, some forms of actions may become considered as natural whereas others are regarded as unthinkable, discourse therefore, through constituting social knowledge, also have consequences. Therefore, I will examine the role of the news media in shaping the US opinion towards using physical and

²⁶³ Bauman, (1989) P.102

²⁶⁴ Bauman, (1989) P.102

²⁶⁵ Jørgensen & Phillips (2002) P.1

psychological coercion as a means of intelligence gathering through its contribution to the discursive construction of coercive treatments towards detainees under US custody.

Examining the contribution of the news media in shaping social discourse surrounding the use of coercive treatment towards detainees, I will analyse treatments towards detainees under US custody has been framed by the US news media. The concept of framing is closely connected to discourse, its production and reproduction. As a constituting part of discourse, frames contribute to the production of discourse by shaping and limiting its scopes through emphasising selected aspects and interpretations of a particular social event. Within the location of text, frames perform four main discursive functions including defining problems and the parameters of discussions, providing causal diagnosis, making moral judgements, and suggesting remedies. In order to understand the level of tolerance among US public opinion towards the use of coercive interrogation techniques, this thesis will examine how US detention policies and practices have been framed by the US news media, as well as its contribution in constituting social discourse and knowledge of torture. Through examining the image of coercive interrogation techniques presented by the US media framing, this study will evaluate the role of the media and its possible contribution to a torture-sustaining discourse in the US.

Examining how treatment of detainees under US custody has been presented by the US news media framing, this thesis will adopt the approach of qualitative critical discourse analysis. Through a more qualitative methodology, this thesis will provide a more in-depth examination of the discursive features within the frames presented by the news narratives, accounting for the latent situated meanings within the narrative context of the text. However, qualitative approaches have been criticised for possible bias as a result of its interpretative nature, as well as difficulties of qualitative approaches in producing replicable results in the manner of natural sciences. Despite the interpretative characteristics of qualitative discourse analysis, studies of qualitative research may be validated through categories such as transparency, consistency, coherence and support of empirical evidence. As claims of knowledge remains open for discussion, the possibility for democratic debate remains open. Furthermore, through acknowledging the presence of the researcher in the analysis and interpretation of data, the researcher is required to place the process within which discursive frames are identified, under scrutiny.

Analysing how the treatment of detainees under US custody has been presented by the news media, this thesis will examine the coverage of the prisoner abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib and its possible influence on public opinion towards the use of coercion and violence as a means of intelligence gathering. In order to reveal latent discursive features within the narratives presented, this thesis will also compare the coverage of both officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation as well as unauthorised abuse of detainees under US custody, to acts of violence and atrocities committed by others actors such as the kidnapping and killings of US citizens by Iraqi insurgents. This thesis will examine the news coverage by the three most widely circulated newspapers within the US, namely *USA Today*, the *New York Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. This thesis will examine the framing of agents involved in the coercion and violence committed by both US agents and other actors, the actual acts and the effects of those acts, as well as the reasons and resulting moral judgement presented by the selected newspapers.

Applying the theoretical framework of Administrative Evil, I will examine the extent to which news narratives may contribute to legitimising acts of evil through supporting the discursive conditions of consequentialist rationality, technical and instrumental rationality and dehumanisation of the victims. In this study, I will analyse the newspaper texts, examining for features and patterns outlined in the application of the framework of Administrative Evil. I will also examine for other discursive patterns within the text not mentioned in the previous section that may prove or disprove the presence of the discourse of Administrative Evil.

In the following chapters, I will firstly analyse the framing of human agents by the selected newspapers. I will examine the images of the perpetrators of both officially sanctioned coercive interrogation practices and unauthorised abuse, as well as those subjected to such treatment as presented by the selected newspapers. I also compare the presentation of the perpetrators and victims in the treatment towards detainees under US custody to that of violence and abuse committed by others. In the following chapter, this thesis will proceed to examine the framing of the actual acts involved in the treatment of detainees under US custody, both officially sanctioned coercion and unauthorised abuse, as well as its consequences both to the US and its victims. This thesis will also compare the image of the treatment of detainees under US custody to that of violence and atrocities committed by others. In the third chapter of empirical analysis, this thesis will examine the casual factors

identified by the selected newspapers in explaining both the authorised coercive interrogation techniques and the unauthorised abuse inflicted by the US and its moral judgements. Through the above analysis, this thesis will contribute to understanding the level of leniency present within US public opinion towards the use of coercion, both physical and psychological as a means of intelligence gathering, through examining the extent to which the framing of the treatment of detainees under US custody contributed to the conditions facilitating the process of moral inversion, namely consequentialist reasoning, the emphasis of technical and instrumental rationality, the dehumanisation of victims, and the legitimisation of the evil of authorised violence.

4. Presentation of Human Agency

This chapter examines how the human elements involved in the treatment of detainees under US custody, including the US military and intelligence personnel, the identified offenders of abuse at Abu Ghraib, as well as detainees under US custody, have been presented by news media. In this chapter, I examine two main features of how the human agency have been presented within the news narratives, including the presence of different actors within the texts and the characteristics attributed to different categories of agency. I will firstly examine the presence of different agents in the coverage by the selected newspapers. Through making selected aspects more salient than others, frames within narrative texts contribute to promote particular discursive construction of social events. Therefore, the presence of agents in the reports is important as it serves as an indicator of the aspect of issue which the author wishes to emphasise. In addition, the chapter will also analyse the characteristics attributed to the different agents within the news narratives, as well as the implication for the moral and emotional judgements on their actions and treatments. In order to illustrate the presence of framing within the news narratives, this thesis will also examine how the perpetrators and victims of incidents of violence committed by ‘others’, such as the capture of Jessica Lynch as well as the kidnapping and execution of US citizens, have been presented by the US news media.

The chapter begins by examining the presentation of US intelligence personnel involved in the officially sanctioned detention and interrogation practices. Following this, how the identified offenders in the prisoner abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib have been presented will be examined and finally, this I will examine the presentation of detainees under US custody in the coverage by the selected newspapers.

4.1. Framing of US intelligence personnel

In the first section of this chapter, I will analyse how the active agencies that were involved in inflicting both officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques and unauthorised abuse of prisoners, have been presented by the news media.

4.1.1. Deleting the Active Agency and Distancing US Military Intelligence from Torture

Analysing how US personnel involved in the Abu Ghraib scandal and the official interrogation procedures, distinctively different approaches could be observed from analysing

the presentation of US military and intelligence personnel and the identified offenders in the Abu Ghraib abuse scandal. The examination of how US intelligence officers assigned with the responsibility of interrogating detainees were presented by the selected newspapers showed a general reluctance to mention the direct involvement of US personnel in intelligence operations both in Iraq and elsewhere. Such reluctance could be observed in the widespread usage of narrative mechanisms such as nominalisation and passive voices in the narratives describing officially sanctioned interrogation techniques and treatment of prisoners. The concept of nominalisation refers to the process of using noun forms of verbs to describe certain actions, such as sleep deprivation and intimidation by guard dogs. By omitting the presence of an active agency within the text, the use of nominalisation, as Philips and Jorgensen described, ‘absolves the agent of responsibility’²⁶⁶ by concealing any direct involvement in inflicting acts of violence. It also contributes to enable the process of emotional and moral distancing, among readers by presenting the acts of physical and psychological violence inflicted on detainees under US authority as ‘a kind of natural phenomenon’²⁶⁷ without any obvious direct involvement of US military personnel. In addition to the use of nominalisations, the omission of active agency was also demonstrated by use of the passive voice in the construction of the narratives. For example, ‘prisoners were routinely kept naked, given limited water rations and forcibly disciplined’²⁶⁸ and ‘interrogation targets have been subjected to sleep deprivation and light and noise around the clock, they’ve been forced to stand for long periods of time, and have been made to assume uncomfortable positions and to wear hoods that disorient them’²⁶⁹. Similar to the omission of agency through the use of nominalisation, the use of the passive voice also contributes to de-emphasising the direct involvement of US agents in using coercion towards detainees under US custody through removing the presence of US interrogators from the text. By omitting the presence of US agents in the text, the use of the passive voice also enables distancing of the US authorities from the direct and personal involvement of conducting interrogation techniques that could be considered as torture. Through such processes of distancing, the news narratives, therefore, de-emphasised any moral responsibility of the US military intelligence agents directly involved with the use of coercive interrogation techniques, and

²⁶⁶ Philips & Jorgensen (2002) P.83

²⁶⁷ *ibid*

²⁶⁸ Lynch, David J, USA Today, (2004) Prisoners lived in fear of guards, freed Iraqi says (10th May)

²⁶⁹ Willing, Richard & Diamond, John, USA Today (2004) interrogation targets have been subjected to sleep deprivation (13th May)

therefore enable the erosion of moral responsibility. Such de-emphasis of moral responsibilities associated with the use of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering facilitated a discourse that allowed consequentialist moral reasoning as well as technical rationality.

4.1.2. Emphasising Professional Image

In addition to the dissociation of US personnel from the direct involvement in acts of violence, newspapers narratives also emphasised the image of professionalism amongst US military intelligence and self-imposed restraints in the implementation of official interrogation practices. The narratives emphasising restraint and professionalism contributed to a legitimising discourse of officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques by supporting the discourse of technical responsibility which emphasised the effective and regulated implementation of violence.

This emphasis on the image of professionalism and restraint can be demonstrated in reports published by the *Wall Street Journal*. In a report published on 1st June 2004, for example, it was emphasised that:

‘while the Sanchez standards did allow short-term sensory deprivation and stress positions with the specific approval of a commanding general in every instance, there is no indication that anyone intended them to be used together. As it happens, requests to use stress positions were made only three times -- and all three were denied. Only about 25 exceptional interrogation requests were made in total -- all for segregation.’²⁷⁰

While confirming the use of coercive interrogation techniques such as sensory deprivations and stress positions, the emphasis on requirement of approval and limited number ‘exceptional interrogation requests’ also reassured that while coercive techniques were employed in the interrogation process, they had been conducted in a controlled and restrained manner. As a result, narratives such as those cited above contribute to supporting the discourse of technical rationality through emphasising the image of US intelligence personnel as professional and restrained. Again, in an editorial published on 25th June 2004, it was reiterated that ‘far from fostering an anything-goes culture at Guantanamo, it turns out that in

²⁷⁰ Cooper, Christopher & Jaffe, Greg, *Wall Street Journal* (2004) *Under Fire: At Abu Ghraib, Soldiers Faced Pressure to Produce Intelligence --- Analysts, Interrogators Say Many Were Ill-Prepared; Quotas, Unsafe Conditions --- In a Tent, as the Shells Flew* (1st June)

December 2002 Mr. Rumsfeld actually rejected a number of proposed techniques as too harsh.²⁷¹ In the report above, emphasis on an image of professionalism, oversight and self-restraint of the US military was demonstrated by the emphasis that a number proposed techniques were actually rejected as 'too harsh.' Emphasis on the image of self-restraint by the US military contributes to enabling disassociation of officially sanctioned interrogation practices from incidents of abuse through reassurance on the grounds of technical rationality that despite the coercive nature of many of the interrogation techniques, personnel conducting the interrogation were restrained by professionalism and disciplinary oversight. Such reassurance is then further strengthened by the emphasis on the incidents of abuse such as those photographed at Abu Ghraib, were only a small number of isolated incidents perpetrated by individual offenders unrepresentative of US interrogation practices. As emphasised by another editorial published on 26th Aug 2004:

'Since Operation Enduring Freedom began in October 2001, the US has handled about 50,000 detainees in Afghanistan, Iraq and other venues of the war on terror. Among those, about 300 allegations of abuse have arisen. And as of this month 155 investigations have resulted in 66 substantiated cases of mistreatment.'²⁷²

Furthermore, it was also emphasised that despite the scandal, Americans were willing to accept responsibility for the mistakes committed. As commented on by a member of the public:

'Although the abuse is an unfortunate, embarrassing episode for which Americans have apologised and feel shame, it was caused by a handful of misdirected individuals. Not one' head was cut off, not one hostage taken, not one threat against humanity made, nor was one car bomb or assassination carried out.'²⁷³

Not only does the emphasis upon the individual responsibility of the offenders at Abu Ghraib reassure the US public that the system of interrogation remains accountable, but also that the photographed abuses would not have been allowed during the official 'harsh interrogation techniques'. Regarding the US intelligence personnel in Iraq, an image of professionalism was presented through the emphasis by the news narratives on self-imposed restraint, discipline, oversight and its criticisms of the unauthorised abuse of prisoners. Through

²⁷¹ Editorial, Wall Street Journal (2004) *Tortured Arguments* (25th June)

²⁷² Editorial, Wall Street Journal (2004) *A Rumsfeld Vindication* (26th Aug)

²⁷³ Hammer, Glen, USA Today (2004) Debate Section: Beheadings deserve more news coverage (25th June)

emphasising the image of professionalism and restraint of US military intelligence, the news narratives provided reassurance that officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques would be implemented with professionalism and restraint. Consequently, such emphasis by the news narratives contributed to support the discourse of technical rationality by focusing public discussion on the efficient and regulated implementation of coercion as a means of intelligence gathering while maintaining the image of the US military intelligence as professional and disciplined.

4.2. Framing Offenders of Abu Ghraib

While the presentation of an active US agency being involved in the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques emphasised the disassociation of US personnel from direct involvement in acts of violence as well as the image of restraint and professionalism, the perpetrators identified in the photographed abuse were presented very differently.

4.2.1. Emphasis on Individual Responsibilities of Prisoner Abuse

In contrast to the omission of an active US agency in the framing of official interrogation practices, individual participation and responsibility for the abuse at Abu Ghraib was emphasised through the specific reference to names and detailed descriptions of the direct involvement in the photographed abuses of detainees. In its report of Lynndie England, for example, *USA Today* described in detail that:

‘England, 21, is the most famous figure in photos from the scandal, known for a pose in which she pointed at the genitals of a naked detainee while a cigarette dangled from her lips. She also posed holding a leash around a naked prisoner's neck. She faces 19 charges of abuse and indecency, which together carry a maximum sentence of 38 years.’²⁷⁴

In the report cited above, the *USA Today* provided detailed coverage of the name and offence committed by Lynndie England. While the lack of reference to names and personal information contributes to absolve responsibilities of the perpetrators, detailed descriptions such as that cited above emphasised responsibilities of Lynndie England in her acts of abuse by emphasising her direct involvement in inflicting violence and humiliation. An earlier

²⁷⁴ Parker, Laura, *USA Today* (2004) Ex-comrade: England tormented Iraqis ; Prosecutors want hearing wrapped up (31 Aug)

report describing Spc. Charles Graner, also detailed that ‘Graner is accused of hitting prisoners, including one who was knocked unconscious. He ordered some Iraqis to strip, forced them to masturbate and stacked them naked for photos.’²⁷⁵ A similar pattern of emphasis could also be observed in the reports of the *New York Times*. Unlike the US agents involved in the officially sanctioned interrogation practices, the perpetrators of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib were reported with detailed descriptions of names and personal details, as well as the acts of abuse each were responsible for. In a report on 14th May 2004, it was reported in detailed that:

‘Graner put the detainee’s head into a cradle position with Graner’s arm, and Graner punched the detainee with a lot of force, in the temple. Graner punched the detainee with a closed fist so hard in the temple that it knocked the detainee unconscious’.²⁷⁶

Similarly, the coverage of the prisoner abuse scandals also repeatedly emphasised the acts of Pfc. England where she had ‘jauntily given a thumbs up over a pile of naked prisoners’²⁷⁷ while posing for the photograph.

While the removal of an active agency contributed to absolving responsibility through omitting direct and active involvement in officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques towards prisoners, the specific and graphic description of acts of abuses committed by named individuals and their specific attribution to individual US officers implies a specific focus of attention on their individual responsibility in the abuse of prisoners through emphasising their direct involvement.

4.2.2. Perpetrators of Abu Ghraib Abuse as Rogue Elements

In addition, while US military intelligence agents involved in officially sanctioned interrogation practices were presented as disciplined professionals who acted with self-restraint, individuals identified as offenders in the photographed abuses were described as individuals with weak personalities who followed the lead of a small number of ringleaders who had sadistic personality traits. The emphasis on negative characteristics of the perpetrators of abuse at Abu Ghraib contributes to support the discourse that the abuses of prisoners were the result of unsuitable staff. The presentation of perpetrators of prisoner

²⁷⁵ Cauchon, Dennis, USA Today, (2004) Former guard has a history of complaints ; Graner faced abuse charges while working at Pa.prison (17th May)

²⁷⁶ Zernike, Kate, New York Times (2004) *Accused Soldier Paints Scene of Eager Mayhem* (14th May)

²⁷⁷ Zernike, Kate, New York Times, (2004) *Prison Guard Calls Abuse Routine and Sometimes Amusing* (16th May)

abuses as either weak-minded, brutalised individuals or irrational monsters with violent and abusive personalities, facilitate to de-emphasise the institutionalised use of coercive interrogation policies under US authority by emphasising individuals' weaknesses as the cause of the abusive behaviour witnessed. Such emphasis on the negative personal characteristics of perpetrators in the prisoner abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib also contributed to facilitating the framing that the pain and suffering seen at Abu Ghraib was the result of 'technical errors' in employing 'the wrong people.'

In the reports by *USA Today*, the identified offenders in the prisoner abuse scandal were emphasised as weak-minded individuals lacking in the ability to make independent moral choices and easily succumbing to peer pressure. Army Spc. Jeremy Sivits for example, was described in the reports as 'always eager to please, and to make and hold onto friendships.'²⁷⁸ Sivits was described as someone who 'might disapprove of rude behaviour but would not necessarily step forward to stop it'.²⁷⁹ Another widely covered individual in the abuse scandal, Lynndie England, was also portrayed as a weak-minded follower who followed blindly the demands of Spc. Charles Graner. The report by *USA Today* on 25th May 2004, for example, quoted Rose Mary Zapor, England's attorney, 'She was just standing there. She was handed the leash, and when the picture was through, the other person took the leash back.'²⁸⁰ In the narratives above, both Spc. Jeremy Sivits and Lynndie England were presented as simply following the suggestions and demands of Spc. Charles Graner, who was presented as the ring-leader, without questions. Such presentations, therefore, suggested that despite the number of soldiers accused and the alleged scale of the abuse, most of the perpetrators participating in the abuse were acting on the suggestion of a few ring leaders due to personal weaknesses. As a result, the narratives contributed to support the discourse of technical rationality that emphasised the technical failure of unsuitable staff the prisoner abuse scandal. Another characteristic attributed to the perpetrators of prisoner abuse was their brutalised psychological status as a result of the constant stress of the insurgency coupled with inadequate training and equipment. Such emphasis on training and equipment also supports the discourse of technical rationality which focused on efficient policy implementation with best possible technical expertise. According to Paul Bergin, the defence

²⁷⁸ Zoroya, Gregg, *USA Today* (2004) Hometown says soldier was always eager to please ; Neighbors support first to face court-martial (18th May)

²⁷⁹ *ibid*

²⁸⁰ Parker, Laura, *USA Today* (2004) Defense lawyers want England's statements erased (25th May)

attorney for one of the soldiers involved in the scandal, ‘defendants had worked 18 hours a day for weeks without a break in horrible conditions. The jury too should “smell the faecal matter and urine”’.²⁸¹ In addition, the guards and interrogators at Abu Ghraib lacked adequate body armour, armoured vehicles, manpower to cope with a surging inmate population and the threat of an armed inmate revolt.²⁸² They are also described as being under pressure to assist in running the prison and in intelligence gathering, with ‘little direction from the CPA about how to handle the civilian side of the prison other than not to hire former employees of Saddam's regime.’²⁸³ Through emphasising the weak-minded nature and inability to resist peer-pressure, as well as the process of brutalisation, the readers are presented with a framing that emphasised the participation in the abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib as the result of individual weakness and the influence of an external environment.

While the majority of perpetrators identified in the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib were presented as weak minded followers, alleged ringleaders such as Spc. Charles Graner, for example, were portrayed as having a violent personality and history of abusive behaviour. Such representation contributed to a discourse that presented the leading offenders at Abu Ghraib as inhuman monsters, engaged in irrational violence and abuse for their own sadistic enjoyment. Graner was reported to have repeatedly ‘faced allegations of violence and psychological abuse in his personal life and at his job as a Pennsylvania prison guard.’²⁸⁴ It was also reported that inmates in Pennsylvania prison made accusations that Graner ‘spat in inmates’ food, taunted Muslims about not eating pork, cracked jokes about homosexuals during strip searches and relished withholding privileges such as exercise’ as well as putting razors in inmate’s food in retaliation for the inmate’s testifying against guards in abuse cases.²⁸⁵ It was also reported that Graner had also been violent in his personal relationships. The report stated that Graner's ex-wife, Staci, secured three “protection of abuse” court orders against him for allegedly beating her, breaking into her house and secretly videotaping her.²⁸⁶ Despite vague reports in his defence such as the description by Graner’s friend that he was ‘a

²⁸¹ Komarow, Steven, USA Today (2004) Generals ordered to testify on abuse ; Abu Ghraib case will be kept in Iraq (22nd June)

²⁸² USA Today (2004) Pressure at Iraqi prison detailed ; Rice aide went to Abu Ghraib (18th June)

²⁸³ Lwinwand, Donna, USA Today (2004) Some Iraqi guards as bad as prisoners, MPs say ; Let inmates escape, gave them weapons (28th June)

²⁸⁴ Cauchon, Dennis, USA Today, (2004) Former guard has a history of complaints ; Graner faced abuse charges while working at Pa.prison (17th May)

²⁸⁵ *ibid*

²⁸⁶ *ibid*

good man and dedicated father of a 13-year-old girl and an 11-year-old boy'²⁸⁷, coverage by *USA Today* emphasised his violent and sadistic characteristics, such as his abusive treatment of inmates previously under his supervision, as well as the violence shown towards his ex-wife. Through such reports, the news narratives supported the discourse of technical rationality by emphasising failure of human characteristics in policy implementation.

Examining coverage by both the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, emphasis was also noted for the negative characteristics of the identified offenders. In the reports by the *New York Times*, the perpetrators of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib identified in the published photographs, were emphasised as individuals with a history of violent behaviour, the inability to make independent moral decisions, as well as having suffered from the stress and brutalisation of combat in Iraq. Through the emphasis on the negative characteristics of the individual offenders identified in the photographs, readers were presented with an image that the abuses of prisoners at Abu Ghraib were acts of misconduct by individuals in the US military who were unsuited for the task of prison management. For example, in the reports covering the hearings and trials of Charles Graner, the personal history of his violent personality traits were emphasised in the report by the *New York Times*, that 'his ex-wife and two children had left after a bitter divorce. He had pleaded guilty to stalking and beating his ex-wife'²⁸⁸ as well as by 'sued in federal court by a [inmate at State Correctional Institution Greene] who accused Specialist Graner of beating him on at least two occasions.'²⁸⁹ In contrast, Lynndie England was presented as ill-disciplined and disobedient towards orders from superior officers. It was reported on 27th May 2004 that 'Pfc. Lynndie R. England was reprimanded three times, twice in July and then in November, for disobeying direct orders not to sleep with Specialist Graner.'²⁹⁰ In the same report, her disobedient behaviour was also described in detail:

'She was instructed to sleep in her own bed and to address officers properly and was told that she could not be in Specialist Graner's building except through the day and to watch movies. She was ordered into corrective training for 10 days. Private England

²⁸⁷ *ibid*

²⁸⁸ Dao, James & von Zielbauer, Paul, *New York Times* (2004) *Guard Left Troubled Life for Duty in Iraq* (14th May)

²⁸⁹ *ibid*

²⁹⁰ Zernike, Kate, *New York Times*, (2004) *Three Accused Soldiers Had Records of Unruliness That Went Unpunished* (27th May)

refused to sign a counselling form. In November she was reported missing for two days. She was found in Specialist Graner's cot.'²⁹¹

However, the majority of offenders identified in the photographed abuses were presented in the reports as weak-minded individuals incapable of resisting pressure from colleagues. While reiterating the benign personalities of offenders such as Specialist Jeremy Sivits and Staff Sgt. Ivan Frederick, and the shock of their family and friends at their involvement in the abuse, the difficulty in refusing to conform to peer pressure was emphasised. Citing the experiment by Stanley Milgram²⁹², readers were reminded that 'most people will deliver a lethal dose of electricity to another subject if instructed to do so by a scientist in a white lab coat'²⁹³ while only a rare minority could resist the pressure to conform.

Reports by the *New York Times* also emphasised the stressful conditions of combat in the War in Iraq and the pressure from military intelligence to 'soften-up' detainees for interrogation, as part of the explanation for the actions of the perpetrators of prisoner abuse. Through emphasising the brutalising condition of combat, the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib was presented as an understandable breakdown in discipline among the perpetrators that could be expected in a chaotic environment. Describing the conditions at Abu Ghraib according to Specialist Jeremy Sivits, 'the prison, was a nightmarish place: overcrowded, out of control and under constant attack'.²⁹⁴ As Sivits described in court 'It was hell, it honestly was. We were being attacked by mortars, rockets and small arms. It was dark. The prison was overcrowded. It was like hell, sir.'²⁹⁵ The coverage by the *New York Times* also emphasised the responsibility of the US administration in its failure to plan adequately for the occupation resulting in the lack of trained interrogators and confusion within the facility. As commented on in an editorial on 8th May 2004:

²⁹¹ *ibid*

²⁹² In July 1961, a series of experiments were conducted by Stanley Milgram in his study on obedience to authority figures. Within the experiment, subjects were given roles of the teacher and electric shock generators with which actors playing the role of students would be shocked. The subjects were told that for each wrong answers given by the student, they would receive electric shocks of increasing voltage. As the voltage increased, pre-recorded sounds would be played at each shock level while actors would start to bang on the wall separating the subject from the actors. After banging on the wall several times and complain about his heart condition, all response would cease. If at any time the subject wished to halt the experiment, they would be urged to continue through verbal prodding. Results of the experiment demonstrated that 65% of the subjects, despite their unease at doing so, administered the final level of shock at 450 volts, while only one refused to administrate shocks under 300 volts.

²⁹³ O'Connor, Anahad, *New York Times*, (2004) *Pressure to Go Along With Abuse Is Strong, But Some Soldiers Find Strength to Refuse* (14th May)

²⁹⁴ Filkins, Dexter, *New York Times*, (2004) *G.I. Pleads Guilty In Court-Martial For Iraqis' Abuse* (20th May)

²⁹⁵ *ibid*

‘the destructive stress created by the administration's lack of preparation was distressingly evident yesterday, when the hearings revealed that the members of the Army Reserve military police detachment stationed at Abu Ghraib had been sent to Iraq without being trained as ordinary prison guards, much less for the nightmarish duty they would face.’²⁹⁶

As explained by Staff Sgt. Camilo Mejia, who had served for six months in Iraq:

‘Imagine being in the infantry in Ramadi, like we were, where you get shot at every day and you get mortared where you live, [and attacked] with R.P.G.'s [rocket-propelled grenades], and people are dying and getting wounded and maimed every day. A lot of horrible things become acceptable.’²⁹⁷

By emphasising the hardships, narratives by the *New York Times* cited above contributed to support the image of perpetrators of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib as victims under difficult circumstances. The emphasis on both the stressful and chaotic environment and the lack of training and preparation, also contributed to reinforcing the discourse of technical rationality that emphasised failure in effective, regulated and professional policy implementation at Abu Ghraib prison that led to the deterioration of ‘prisoner management’ into prisoner abuse.

In the reports by the *Wall Street Journal* where the individual perpetrators were detailed, the focus of the reports also emphasised the image of perpetrators as rogue elements in the US military. In the reports and letters published by the *Wall Street Journal*, statements by perpetrators of the abuses were cited repeatedly to confirm the argument that the acts of abuse had not been authorised by the military and were autonomous acts committed by the individual perpetrators. It was emphasised in an editorial published on 17th May 2004 that:

‘as Specialist Sivits says in his sworn statement, no one ordered what is revealed in those photos: “Our command would have slammed us. They believe in doing the right thing. If they saw what was going on, there would be hell to pay.”’²⁹⁸

In the editorial, the statement by Specialist Sivits was used to dismiss arguments that the abuses were a result of the climate of abuse created by the administration in its policies, but unauthorised conduct of undisciplined individuals. In another editorial published on 5th May

²⁹⁶ Editorial, New York Times, (2004) *Mr. Rumsfeld's Defense* (20th May)

²⁹⁷ Herbert, Rob, New York Times (2004) ‘Gooks’ To ‘Hajis’ (21st May)

²⁹⁸ Editorial, Wall Street Journal (2004) *Geneva for Demagogues* (17th May)

2004, the statement by Lynndie England during her trial was also cited to emphasise that the acts of abuse had not been encouraged as a means of ‘softening up’ detainees prior to interrogation. At the trial of England, it was reported that ‘Judge Pohl asked Ms. England directly whether she had been softening up detainees for questioning, as proponents of the so-called “torture narrative” have claimed. Ms. England denied this and also that her behaviour was related to orders of any kind. “I had a choice, but I chose to do what my friends wanted me to do,” she said. As for the others who participated, “they did it for their own amusement.’²⁹⁹ Through the words of the individual offenders, the readers are again reassured that the abuse of prisoner as seen at Abu Ghraib was not representative of US detention and interrogation practices, which are conducted by professional interrogators in a controlled and restrained manner.

While detailed reports of the personal information of perpetrators contributed to the understanding of how individuals are capable of committing violent and abusive acts, emphasis on the abuses as acts of amusement by individuals supported the discourse portraying perpetrators as individuals with flawed characteristics that had led to the abuse. Consequently, the emphasis on the negative characteristics of the perpetrators contributed to de-emphasising connection between the photographed abuse and US detention and interrogation policies. Moreover, it also reinforced the discourse of technical rationality that emphasised the abuse as a result of human error in policy implementation through emphasising individual responsibility and the negative characteristics of the identified offenders. This contributed to a discourse that allowed arguments of technical rationality which emphasised that abuse could be avoided as long as the policies were conducted by mentally healthy and professional interrogators under strict supervision. As it had been argued by Professor Alan Dershowitz in an interview with CNN in 2003:

‘We should never under any circumstances allow low-level people to administer torture. If torture is going to be administered as a last resort in the ‘ticking-bomb’ case, to save enormous numbers of lives, it ought to be done openly, with accountability, with approval by the president of the United States or by a Supreme Court Justice.’³⁰⁰

²⁹⁹ Editorial, Wall Street Journal (2005) ‘*Torture*’ on Trial (5th May)

³⁰⁰ Dershowitz (2003) <http://edition.cnn.com/2003/LAW/03/03/cnna.Dershowitz/>

4.2.3. Emphasising Punishment and Repentance of the Perpetrators of Abuse

Furthermore, news narratives also emphasised on the trials and punishment received by the perpetrators of prisoner abuse, reassuring the readers that despite the abuses, US interrogation policies remained controlled and the US authority remained accountable.

The extensive coverage of the trials and sentences contributed to the emphasis of US moral integrity, as despite the photographs of abuse, the US military remained accountable, as the 'rogue elements' involved in the abuse have been punished and the 'human error' leading to the abuse had been rectified. Such emphasis functions to reassure that the US forces remained morally accountable. More importantly, the extensive coverage of the trial process of the perpetrators also emphasised the willingness of the offenders to accept responsibility and punishment for the abuse. Such emphasis contributes to facilitate closure through the discourse of technical rationality by reassuring that professionalism and regulated policy implementation has been restored. In a report by the *USA Today* on Ivan Fredrick, for example, quoted his attorney Gary Myers:

'He has, unlike many, accepted responsibility for corrupt behaviour generated by circumstances that existed at Abu Ghraib, You will find he is a good person, a good father and a good man. He hopes others will step forward and accept their responsibility.'³⁰¹

In the quoted statement above, acceptance of responsibility by Ivan Fredrick for the acts of abuse was emphasised. Fredrick's statement was also quoted, 'I have accepted responsibility for my actions at Abu Ghraib prison.'³⁰² Such emphasis on acceptance of responsibility for the abuse facilitates the technical rational emphases professionalism through the images of accountability by both the administration and the perpetrators. As demonstrated by a report published by the *USA Today*, which quoted the statement by the mother of Joseph Derby:

'I'm so glad that the Iraqi people know that the United States does not allow this kind of stuff (prisoner abuse) and that we do have free speech, we do have freedom of press.'³⁰³

³⁰¹ Knox, Noelle, *USA Today* (2004) Higher-ups at Abu Ghraib could face abuse charges (25th Aug)

³⁰² Knox, Noelle, *USA Today* (2004) Higher-ups at Abu Ghraib could face abuse charges (25th Aug)

³⁰³ Cited in Zoroya, Greeg, *USA Today* (2004) Whistleblower asked mom's advice ; She knew he was bothered before abuse scandal broke (12th May)

The coverage by the *New York Times* also emphasised trials and punishments of the individual offenders identified in the prisoner abuse scandal. Analysing reports covering the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, it was noticed that a significant proportion of the coverage was devoted to documenting the trials and hearings of the individual offenders, as well as the punishment received by the individual offenders. Through the emphasis of trial and punishment, the news narratives presented a point of closure where those accused and convicted of wrong-doing were punished and justice was served. In a report on 20th May 2004, the readers were re-assured of US moral integrity through the statement of Baktiar Amin, the Iraqi Human Rights Minister that 'there can be a trial for criminals who perpetrate these kinds of things is new in this country. It's a lesson in democracy.'³⁰⁴ The image of US moral integrity is further reinforced through the demonstration of repentance by the individual offenders by emphasising their apologies for the acts of abuse against Iraqi detainees. A report on the court martial of Specialist Jeremy Sivits, dramatically described:

'fighting back tears, Specialist Sivits pleaded with the Iraqi people and his comrades in the Army to forgive him, saying he had made a terrible mistake in failing to stop the abuse he saw unfolding that night in November.'³⁰⁵

Specialist Sivits stated:

'I want to apologise to the Army, to my unit, to the country. I want to apologise to my family. I let everybody down. This is not me. I should have protected the detainees. I shouldn't have taken that picture. I've learned a huge lesson: You have to stand up for what is right.'³⁰⁶

In the reports cited above, the news narratives emphasised Sivits' apologies for the abuse and pleads for forgiveness. In addition, it also sought closure by emphasising that 'a huge lesson' was learned as a result of the scandal. In another report on 28th Sep 2005, it was also stated that 'Private England directed her apology to the detainees and to any American troops and their families who might have been injured or killed as a result of the insurgency in Iraq gaining strength.'³⁰⁷ Similarly, the narratives in the above report emphasised apologies and acceptance of responsibilities by Lynndie England for her role in the abuse of prisoners.

³⁰⁴ Filkins, Dexter, *New York Times* (2004) G.I. Pleads Guilty in Court-Martial For Iraqis' Abuse (20th May)

³⁰⁵ *ibid*

³⁰⁶ *ibid*

³⁰⁷ Cloud, David, S, *New York Times* (2005) *Private Gets 3 Years for Iraq Prison Abuse* (28th Sep)

Through emphasising the apologies and repentance of the individual offenders, the readers were again given the reassurance that despite the abuse, Americans were willing to accept responsibilities for the wrongs committed at Abu Ghraib. More importantly, such emphasis also provide further reassurance that through the experience learned from the scandal, abuses such as those seen at Abu Ghraib prison would be avoided during future interrogation practices. Such images presented by the news narratives therefore contribute to supporting the discourse of technical rationality, through which criticisms towards treatments of detainees under US custody was mitigated through emphasising ‘lessons learnt’, improved technical expertise in policy implementation, and encouraging moral closure.

Similarly, the framing of individual perpetrators of prisoner abuses at Abu Ghraib by the *Wall Street Journal* also emphasised the outrage caused by their acts, as well as the trials and punishments of the identified offenders. In a report on 23rd November 2004, a list was drawn up detailing the trial status as well as the punishment received by individuals accused of participation in the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib.³⁰⁸ It was also noted several times in later editorials that despite the “‘just-following-orders” defence’, Charles Graner, the accused ring-leader among the offenders, was sentenced to 10 years in prison.’³⁰⁹ Through the emphasis on the trials and punishment of the offenders at Abu Ghraib, narratives by the *Wall Street Journal* also reassured of the accountability of military intelligence in their conduct of detention and interrogation, as ‘the military justice system is taking the issue [of the Abu Ghraib scandal] as seriously as it should.’³¹⁰ More importantly the emphasis on the punishment received by the individual offenders in the prisoner abuse scandal, as well as their apologies contributed to reassuring the public that despite the scandal, Americans were willing to accept responsibilities for mistakes committed. As commented on by a member of the public:

‘Although the abuse is an unfortunate, embarrassing episode for which Americans have apologised and feel shame, it was caused by a handful of misdirected individuals.

³⁰⁸ Eig, Jonathan, *Wall Street Journal* (2004) *Hard Time - Inside Abu Ghraib: Missed Red Flags, Team Under Stress --- Some Who Were There Point To a Charismatic Corporal Involved in an Affair --- The Night Shift on Tier 1A* (23rd Nov)

³⁰⁹ Editorial, *Wall Street Journal* (2005) *Congress and ‘Torture’* (18th Jan)

Editorial, *Wall Street Journal* (2005) *Abu Ghraib Accountability* (27th April)

³¹⁰ Editorial, *Wall Street Journal* (2005) *Congress and ‘Torture’* (18th Jan)

Not one head was cut off, not one hostage taken, not one threat against humanity made, nor was one car bomb or assassination carried out.’³¹¹

Not only did the emphasis on the trials and individual responsibility of the offenders at Abu Ghraib reassure the US public that the system of interrogation remained accountable but also that the photographed abuse would not have been allowed in the official ‘harsh interrogation techniques’.

4.3. Framing of Perpetrators of Violence against US Citizens

In contrast, perpetrators of violent acts towards US citizens were presented in a very different light. Perpetrators of violence against US citizens were presented as terrorists by emphasising an image of deliberate brutality and viciousness. Emphasising deliberate brutality and viciousness, such narratives contribute to present perpetrators of violence against US citizens as in violation of the principle of proportionality as commonly accepted in the Just War Conventions which prohibited excessive violence. In addition, such image of deliberate brutality also facilitated the discourse that the perpetrators of violence against US citizens were motivated by the desire to cause harm. As a result, the news narratives contributed to de-legitimise violence perpetrated by such actors against US citizens both through the discourse of the Just War Conventions, as well as consequentialist moral reasoning. The emphasis on an image of deliberate brutality and viciousness can firstly be observed in the discursive labels attached to the perpetrators. In the coverage of the execution of Nicholas Berg, a US contractor in Iraq by the *Wall Street Journal*, for example, the perpetrators were described as ‘barbarians’³¹² and ‘evildoers’³¹³ while the perpetrators of abuse at Abu Ghraib were described as possessing more benign characteristics such as mental instability, brutalisation as a result of combat, and impressionable personalities.

In the reports by *USA Today*, for example, Iraqi perpetrators of kidnapping and execution were described as fanatical and malicious. In the opinion articles published by *USA Today*, those involved in the kidnapping and execution of US citizens have been referred to as ‘fanatical murderers’³¹⁴ and a ‘monster’³¹⁵, which contributed to creating an image of Iraqi insurgents as irrational perpetrators who ‘believe killing anyone who is American somehow

³¹¹ Hammer, Glen, *USA Today* (2004) Debate Section: Beheadings deserve more news coverage (25th June)

³¹² Henninger, Daniel (2004) *Want a Different Abu Ghraib Story? Try This One* (14th May)

³¹³ Henninger, Daniel (2004) *Are Beheadings The Face of Evil Or Just Politics?* (25th June)

³¹⁴ Shiver, Ivey, *USA Today* (2004) Debate: Where is greater Muslim outcry over beheadings in Iraq (28 Sep)

³¹⁵ Shlyakhter, Ilya, *USA Today*, (2006) Debate: Despite Zarqawi’s death, terrorism cycle will continue (14th June)

makes them holy or heroes.’³¹⁶ The image of the evil terrorist is further reiterated through comments such as:

‘in terms of the degree of civilised behaviour the West admits to since perhaps the French Revolution, these beheadings are evil. If they are not evil, then the West no longer accepts the possibility or idea of evil.’³¹⁷

Moreover, unlike the framing of the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib which portrayed the abuse as isolated incidents of disciplinary failure, the kidnappings and execution of US citizens were portrayed as deliberate acts of brutality for the purpose of intimidation and political gain. As described in an analysis published on 3rd Sep 2004:

‘The militants’ calculation is a chillingly simple one: roadside bombs may kill small numbers of soldiers and contractors, but they don't give militants a forum for airing their political views or publicising their demands on popular Arabic satellite-television stations like Al-Jazeera. The beheading videos, by contrast, allow the militants to reach -- and perhaps intimidate -- a far wider audience over television and the internet.’³¹⁸

In the reports above, the militants were emphasise as scheming and calculating in their choice of action in order to ‘reach – and perhaps intimidate a far wider audience’ by choosing to publicly execute US citizens for its dramatic effects. Through such framing, the kidnapping and execution of US citizens by Iraqi insurgents were portrayed as malicious, premeditated and systematic, while the abuse of prisoners was presented as an unintended excess of war.

Unlike US perpetrators of both sanctioned coercion and unauthorised acts of abuse against detainees, perpetrators of violence against US citizens were presented with the image of cold blooded murderers motivated by irrational motivations such as hatred and religious fanaticism. As explained by Jackson, ‘Making terrorists out to be mad is actually a powerful way of deflecting questions about their political beliefs or grievances, because their behaviour can be explained as being motivated by pathology rather than ideology.’³¹⁹ Similarly, by labelling perpetrators of violence against US citizens as barbarians, evildoers,

³¹⁶ Belt, Sharone, USA Today (2004) Debate: Maintain US resolve, even in face of Americans brutal murder (23 June)

³¹⁷ Henninger, Daniel (2004) *Are Beheadings The Face of Evil Or Just Politics?* (25th June)

³¹⁸ Dreazen, Yochi, J (2004) *Beheadings Become Tactic of Choice* (3rd Sep)

³¹⁹ Jackson, (2005) P.63

fanatical murders and monsters, and emphasising their deliberate intention to kill, the news narratives supported the discourse that excluded potential consequentialist justifications for their acts of violence. In contrast, identified offenders of prisoner abuse were presented as individuals who suffered from a history of violent tendencies as well as weak-mindedness, resulting in the framing that while the abuse of Abu Ghraib was not representative of US interrogation practices, the nature of their acts were portrayed as far less sinister. While the process of disassociation enabled readers to distance the perpetrators of unauthorised abuse from the US military intelligence and its interrogation practices, the lack of malicious intentions behind the acts of unauthorised abuse of prisoner enabled moral implications and responsibilities of the scandal to be mitigated within the narratives through consequentialist moral reasoning as acts of violence that were not intended for malicious purposes. Furthermore, such presentations also contributed to enabling the construction of moral differentiation between violence committed by others such as the Iraqi insurgents, and that of both the unauthorised abuse of prisoners as well as the 'harsh interrogation techniques' by the US government, and therefore also has the added effect of supporting the discourse of US moral superiority in the War in Iraq.

4.4. Summary: Presentation of Perpetrators

As explained by Richard Jackson, 'it was important to construct Americans as essentially decent and peaceful because the US was going to attack other nations and cause inevitable human suffering.'³²⁰ As the appalling photos of abused and sexually humiliated prisoners surfaced, the need to disassociate the US military from the scandal and to reassure the American public that the US remained a nation with morally sound principles was reflected in the news reports focusing their attention on the individual responsibilities of the perpetrators identified in the scandal. By the removal of active agency in the coverage of officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques, a process of moral disengagement was created that would enable the process of moral inversion and legitimisation of the authorised use of coercive interrogation techniques through de-emphasising the direct involvement of the US military in the use of coercion and violence towards detainees. Furthermore, emphasis of the US news media on the image of professionalism and disciplinary oversight within the US military also supported the discourse of technical

³²⁰ Jackson (2005) P. 76

rationality which focused only on policy implementations with regulated professionalism and technical expertise.

On the other hand, the detailed description of acts and deeds by named individual actors in the abuse scandal, in contrast to the depersonalised description of officially sanctioned interrogation policies, contributed to focus public attention on the individual responsibility of the identified perpetrators in the abusive treatment of detainees under US custody. In addition, by emphasising the negative and un-American characteristics such as weak-mindedness and sadist tendencies of the individual perpetrators involved directly in the abuse of prisoners, such discourses allowed members of US society to disassociate themselves and the American forces, from the prisoner abuse by maintaining the image of good Americans. More importantly, such discourse also contributed to isolating offenders in the abuse as rogue elements within the armed forces unrepresentative of US military personnel, facilitating the framing of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib as a result of human failure. Therefore, the emphasis by the reports on the trial and punishment of the offenders contributed to reassuring the public that the excess of abuse was the result of a 'technical error' by the armed forces in its fielding of unsuitable personnel, and could be rectified by punishing the offenders and replacing them with more 'professional' interrogators. As a result, the presentation of US agents in Iraq further contributed to the discourse of technical rationality by emphasising ratification of technical failures, and maintenance of professionalism. Such a process of moral disassociation also in turn facilitated the focus on the technical rational considerations that were focused on the image of professionalism in the narrative presentation of US military personnel. In addition, the emphasis of the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib as being the responsibility of isolated individuals whose negative characteristics have been emphasised as the cause of the abuse, also contributed to support the discourse of technical rationality that emphasised the abuse of prisoners as a result of technical error in policy implementation. Consequently, moral closure has been achieved through legal prosecution and administrative reforms ensuring more effective implementation of officially sanctioned interrogation techniques.

4.6. Framing the Detainees under US custody

In addition to understanding the representation of the US agents involved, it is also vital to examine how those subjected to coercive treatments, both sanctioned interrogation techniques and unauthorised violence, were portrayed by the news media. Accordingly, in

this section I analyse the discursive framing of detainees under US custody as presented by the selected newspapers.

4.6.1. De-realisation

In examining how detainees under US custody were presented by the press, the first observable feature was the lack of reference to the victims' names, personal backgrounds and their personal experiences whilst under US custody. Analysis of the coverage of the detainees under US custody showed that the focus of attention by the selected newspapers was on the description of the scandal, the attribution of responsibilities and the related trial processes, as well as the possible consequences of the scandal. Among the over one hundred reports published by *USA Today*, there was only one story reporting the accounts of one of the inmates held under US custody at Abu Ghraib. In additions, there were less than five reports that mentioned the names and personal information of individual detainees in US custody. In comparison to the reports of the prisoner abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib by *USA Today*, the detainees as well as the victims who had suffered abuse were given a slightly larger amount of coverage in the reports by the *New York Times*, however, this coverage remained minimal. Among the over three hundred reports covering the prisoner abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib, less than 40 reports included the names and experiences of the Iraqi detainees. Among these reports, only one story published on 3rd January 2004 described in detail the experiences of two Iraqi detainees, namely Najim Abdulhusein and his son.

The lack of reference to the Iraqi detainees is illustrated further through the comparison with the amount and detail of coverage received by US citizens that had been subjected to Iraqi detention. A search of reports covering the capture of Jessica Lynch, as a lone individual, and her experience under captivity by the Iraqi military forces (when the 507th Maintenance Company of the US army was ambushed near Nasiriyah) in the *New York Times* returned more than 40 related articles. Overall, the lack of reference to the names of the Iraqi victims facilitated the discourse that diverted attention away from the victims of US mistreatment and abuse. While the omission of active agency contributed to the framing that diverted attention from direct US involvement in coercive interrogation techniques, the removal of victims from news narratives, by the same mechanism, contributed to present US detention and interrogation practices as acts without human subjects and thereby removing from the views of the readers, any meaningful physical and psychological pain and suffering inflicted, together with associated moral responsibility. As a result, such coverage contributed

to the dehumanisation of the victims which presented the abuse as being devoid of morally significant victims and meaningful suffering. In addition, within the framework of administrative evil, such a discourse also facilitated the dominance of the discourse of consequentialist moral reasoning and technical rationality as morally significant victims are concealed out of sight through the process of derealisation.

In addition, the infrequent reports featuring individual victims of the abuse under US custody were focused on factual and unemotional accounts of what had happened. Such factual and unemotional accounts are characterised by narratives such as that presented by *USA Today*:

‘Nasef Ibrahim, 63, died at Abu Ghraib on Jan. 8. The death certificate released by the Pentagon attributes his death to hardening of the arteries and a fluid build-up around his heart.’³²¹

In the narrative above, the *USA Today* provided no information on any possible circumstances under which the victims had died, providing only vague descriptions of medical causes of death. Similarly in another report published by *USA Today*, such factual and unemotional narratives were also demonstrated in another story which reported that:

‘Hossam Shaltout, an Egyptian-born Canadian citizen, claims that he was handcuffed, beaten and left in the sun after he was taken into custody by US troops in Iraq last year.’³²²

Similarly, in the descriptions above, the *USA Today* reported treatment suffered by Hossam Shaltout through vague descriptions such as ‘handcuffed’, ‘beaten’ and ‘left in the sun’ where details and severity of his treatments remained unclear. As seen in reports of *USA Today*, the news narratives provided little more than vague accounts of the treatments received by detainees under US custody. Examining reports by the *Wall Street Journal* where the experiences of detainees under US custody had been described, it could also be observed that the experiences of the detainees had been also been narrated in a purely descriptive manner that de-emphasised possibility for empathy. In describing the experience of Najim Abdulhussein under US custody, published on 3rd January 2004 the report stated:

³²¹ Squitieri, Tom, *USA Today* (2004) Documents give different explanation for inmate's death (28th June)

³²² Willing, Richard & Diamond, John, *USA Today* (2004) interrogation targets have been subjected to sleep deprivation (13th May)

‘He was often threatened he would be shipped to Guantanamo Bay, where Al Qaeda prisoners are being kept, and promised he would never see his wife and children again if he didn't admit to being a terrorist. Once, in what he calls the worst interrogation session of all, he says the American soldier told him he was sending soldiers to his house to rape his wife. "I broke down and started crying like a child and begged him to stop," says Mr. Abdulhussein.’³²³

In the descriptions cited above, threats made to the detainee were described in vague narratives such as ‘shipped to Guantanamo Bay’, ‘told him he was sending soldiers to his house to rape his wife’. Such vague descriptions failed to convey the severity of such threats made to the victims. Similarly, his experience was also described through vague and factual statements such as ‘crying like a child’. However, such vague descriptions do not provide any insight to the experiences of detainees under US custody. Examining narratives such as this, despite the rare reference to the victims’ names, the lack of emphasis on the personal experience of the detainee may be observed whereby even the emotional devastation caused by the threat of harm to loved ones was reduced to little more than an unemotional, factual description of the physical reactions of the detainee. In another report on the findings by the Red Cross during inspections at Abu Ghraib Prison, it was described that a prisoner complained to the inspector that: ‘ “I am extremely humiliated” and pulled down his pants slightly to show he was being made to wear women’s underwear.’³²⁴ Similarly to the description previously cited, the experience of the prisoner had been reduced to a vague and superficial account such as ‘extremely humiliated’ without explaining the emotional and psychological state of the prisoner who had been subjected to psychological coercion and the impact of such an experience. The unemotional and factual narratives of the personal experiences of detainees under US custody could also be observed in the reports by the *New York Times*. On 4th May 2004, it was reported that:

‘In a brief interview on Al Jazeera, Haishem Mohsen, a man who said he was depicted in the photos, described his abuse at the hands of Americans. Mr. Mohsen said that when he was detained in January, he was interrogated by American

³²³ Fassihi, Farnaz, Wall Street Journal (2004) *Iraqi Detainee Gets To Go Home at Last -- With Tale of Ordeal - -- Grocer Nabbed From Home Tells of Harsh Questioning; Burned With a Cigarette (12 Jan)*

³²⁴ Fassihi, Farnaz & Stecklow, Steve, Wall Street Journal (2004) *Behind Bars: Finding US Abuse in Iraq Left Red Cross Team in a Quandary --- Not Used to Seeing Such Acts By a Developed Country, Some Debated Exposing It --- An Inspection of Cellblock 1 (21st May)*

intelligence officers and Iraqi and Egyptian interpreters. “They covered our heads with bags, they beat us with the butts of their guns without any fear that we would die of the blows,” he said. “They made us take our clothes off and they pushed us against the wall. They did things to us that I am unable to talk about.”³²⁵

In the above report, the personal experience of Mr. Mohsen under US custody was described with vague purely factual narratives on what had taken place during his interrogation. In reports mentioning the emotional impact of the abuses inflicted on the detainees under US custody, the significance of the impact was minimised through the use of unemotional language. In a statement describing the response of Hayder Sabbar Abd who was featured in one of the photographs, it was described that: ‘[t]he shame is so deep that Hayder Sabbar Abd says he feels that he cannot move back to his old neighbourhood. He would prefer not even to stay in Iraq.’³²⁶ In another report on 22nd May 2004, it was also described that when replying to an investigator who asked about how he felt about being forced to masturbate and become part of a pile of naked men, Hussein Mohssein Mata al-Zayadi replied ‘I was trying to kill myself, but I didn’t have any way of doing it.’³²⁷ In the above statement the distinctly factual manner used to describe the emotional impact of US detention on the detainees through the reluctance to use emotional language in the reports as the resultant trauma as a result of sexual humiliation was simply described through the vague and superficial statement of ‘I was trying to kill myself’.

In addition to the unemotional and factual manner used to describe the experience of detainees under US custody, and the lack of coverage on the physical and emotional responses of those subjected to ‘harsh interrogation techniques’, the reported experiences of detainees were further discredited by descriptions of their testimonies as being ‘unable to be verified’. In the account of the experience of Hayder Sabbar Abd, the readers were reminded that ‘though the pictures tell their own story, the details of Mr. Abd’s account could not be verified.’³²⁸ Again, it was emphasised in a report featuring the accounts of Amjed Isail Waleed and Abd Alwhab Youss that ‘not all of the sworn statements have been verified,

³²⁵ Filkins, Dexter & Shanker, Thom, New York Times (2004) *Army Punishes 7 With Reprimands For Prison Abuse [CORRECTED]* (4th May)

³²⁶ Fisher, Ian, New York Times (2004) *Iraqi Recounts Hours of Abuse By US Troops [CORRECTED]* (5th May)

³²⁷ Myers, Steven Lee, New York Times (2004) *Testimony From Abu Ghraib Prisoners Describes a Center of Violence and Fear* (22nd May)

³²⁸ Fisher, Ian, New York Times (2004) *Iraqi Recounts Hours of Abuse By US Troops [CORRECTED]* (5th May)

though several of the incidents form the basis of the charges against seven members of the 372nd Military Police Company.’³²⁹ In reports such as these, the readers are repeatedly reminded that the accounts of the victims may not have been truthful. Moreover, the testimonies of the detainees were further discredited through an emphasis upon existing, as well as potential claims, for compensation against the US government. In the report of the abuse of Havder Sabbar Abd, it was emphasised that:

‘[h]e wants the American government to pay compensation. He said he felt he needed to move out of Iraq, and despite it all, he said he would not refuse an offer to move to America.’³³⁰

In addition, a report on 22nd May 2004 also emphasised that ‘the Pentagon is preparing for an influx of compensation claims stemming from the charges of abuse at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.’³³¹ Through emphasising the claims for compensation by Iraqi detainees, an image is created that presented the detainees as opportunistic individuals seeking financial compensation, facilitating possible implications that their accounts may have been exaggerated. As mentioned in an account by Saddam Saleh Aboud of his treatment under US custody, it was impossible to verify his claims - and the job gets ever harder amid the widespread rage, the possible desire for compensation and the sheer volume of detailed coverage of the case.³³² As a result, not only were the physical and psychological trauma of those subjected to mistreatment under US custody presented as distant and insignificant, the experience of the detainees subjected to harsh interrogation practices and abuse became devalued and understood as little more than tactics for financial gains.

As Herman and Chomsky noted in their discussion of press coverage on worthy and unworthy victims during the Cold War, these reports were ‘designed to keep the lid on emotions.’³³³ Therefore, the strictly factual account of victims who were presented as being no more than an unsubstantial name, also contributed to the effect of moral distancing that enabled the reader to overlook the physical and psychological trauma that the detainees would have experienced under US custody and interrogation as if it was completely

³²⁹ Myers, Steven Lee, New York Times (2004) *Testimony From Abu Ghraib Prisoners Describes a Center of Violence and Fear* (22nd May)

³³⁰ Fisher, Ian, New York Times (2004) *Iraqi Recounts Hours of Abuse By US Troops [CORRECTED]* (5th May)

³³¹ Marquis, Christopher, New York Times (2004) *US Preparing for Influx of Compensation Claims by Abused Iraqis* (22nd May)

³³² Fisher, Ian, New York Times (2004) *Iraqi Tells of US Abuse, From Ridicule to Rape Threat* (14th May)

³³³ Herman & Chomsky, (2002) P.39

insignificant. Furthermore, by denying any significance of their experience, the US news media also contributed to the discourse of de-realisation by denying the victims a meaningful voice and a morally significant existence.

The consequence of such lack of references of the names, personal information and personal experiences of the detainees under US custody is the effect of dehumanisation through the process of derealisation. As explained by Adams and Balfour, one of the three conditions in the masking of administrative evil is the process of dehumanisation that renders victims morally insignificant through the removal of their basic existence as human beings. Indeed the refusal to name the detainees under US custody supports the discourse that avoided recognising the human status of the detainees and to disassociate from their suffering. In her work *Precarious Life*, Butler explained the implication of such a denial of human status on the detainees, through the removal of names, voices and their human face, detainees become relegated to a state that is 'neither alive or dead, but interminably spectral.'³³⁴ As a result, violence against such individuals fails to create any real or meaningful suffering, as those subjected to the violence were not considered to have real and viable lives. As Butler pointed out, certain images do not appear in the media, certain names of the dead are not uttered, certain losses are not avowed as losses, and violence is de-realised and diffused.³³⁵ Through the omission of the names of the detainees, as well as denying them a meaningful voice, the victims of coercive interrogation techniques and unauthorised abuse under US custody were refused the status of viable life and were relegated to the status of *Homo Sacer*, those who can be killed but not sacrificed, and whose suffering could be overlooked.

In contrast US citizens captured, kidnapped and executed by Iraqi forces, insurgents and other militant groups, were presented with more humanising images that including names, family and social backgrounds. Unlike the detainees under US custody, more attention was given within the news narratives regarding the experience and emotional response, of both the victims themselves, as well as members of their families. In the reports concerning the capture and rescue of Jessica Lynch, attention was paid to her ambition of becoming a schoolteacher³³⁶ and her excitement about her wedding.³³⁷ Such reference to her personal life,

³³⁴ Butler (2004) P.33

³³⁵ *ibid* P.38

³³⁶ Jones, Charisse, USA Today (2003) Lynch's friends line streets; Ex-POW, wounded in Iraq, gets hero's welcome today (22nd July)

³³⁷ Jones, Charisse, USA Today (2003) Lynch wrestles with hero status; all ex-POWs 'should have been treated equally' (12th Nov)

ambitions and excitements helped to create a more humanised image of an ordinary young woman with ambitions and wishes that could be easily identified and sympathised within the American society. In addition, her personal and emotional experiences during the capture and its aftermath received extensive and detailed coverage, thereby encouraging empathy among readers. It was quoted in the report of her homecoming that:

‘[She] was happy that some of the soldiers [she] served with made it home alive. It hurts that some of [her] company didn’t. [She] misses Lori Piestewa. She was [her] best friend. Lori will always remain in [her] heart. She fought beside [her] and it was an honour to have served with her.’³³⁸

The narratives of the report above emphasised in detail the emotions of friendship and bereavement felt by Jessica Lynch, which is easily identified and empathised with. Similarly, the experiences of US citizens subjected to detention and violence by Iraqi forces or militias were reported with emphasis on the emotional aspects of their experiences. In a report published by *USA Today* on 29th April 2003, the news narratives described the responses of the mother of Army Spc Edward Anguiano following the ambush where Lynch was captured. It was reported that the soldier’s mother, San Juanita Anguiano ‘is very sad’, and Aunt, Maria Anguiano, said ‘she was not expecting him to be found dead.’³³⁹ In the report, a humanising image of Spc Edward Anguiano was constructed by reminding that this particular soldier has a mother and an aunt, both with names that could be identified, who were grieving for his death. Similarly, the report by the *USA Today* on the abduction and death of helicopter expert Paul Johnson Jr. who worked in Saudi Arabia also emphasised the desperation and plight of his family, reporting that:

‘As father’s Day approached, Johnson’s son and sister appeared on television, begging President Bush the Saudis and the kidnappers to spare him. Paul Johnson III held the captive’s grandson on his knee as he pleaded.’³⁴⁰

In the report, narratives by the *USA Today* also constructed a humanised image of the victim by focusing attention on his grieving family pleading for his life. By emphasising the grief of

³³⁸ Jones, Charisse, *USA Today* (2003) Lynch comes home full of thanks ; She praises kind Iraqis, US troops, fallen friend (23rd July)

³³⁹ Kasindorf, Martin, *USA Today*, (2003) Remains identified of war’s last listed MIA (29 April)

³⁴⁰ Hampson, Rick, *USA Today* (2004) Many accept risks of working overseas; Pay is high, and Americans fill vital global role (21st June)

the family, the narratives contributed to present the individual victim within the text as a grievable human death that made his suffering and death morally significant. Such emphasis on the emotional responses of US citizens subjected to violence in Iraq could also be observed in the coverage by the *New York Times*. In a report by the *New York Times* on the capture of Jessica Lynch, the shock of the event on the Lynch family was emphasised through expressions such as ‘the family was watching television that afternoon when they were *jolted* by the news that an Army maintenance unit had been ambushed early that morning.’³⁴¹ The description of the family as ‘jolted’ emphasised the intensity of the emotional impact on the family. Furthermore, the anxiety of the family was also emphasised through an intimate description that:

‘for a while, they watched television, flipping from channel to channel, for a titbit about Private Lynch. But it was turned off after a reporter asked the White House press secretary, Ari Fleischer, “Does the president think that the Iraqi Army has somehow changed to avoid raping of female prisoners?”’³⁴²

Through describing in detail the family’s distraught and anxious response to the news of the ambush, an intimate picture is created whereby the readers are able to identify and empathise with the anxiety felt by the family towards the event. Through such emphasis, the narratives reminded that the US victims were human beings with families and loved ones who grieved over their suffering and deaths. The emphasis on the *human* status of US victims contributes towards enabling identification and empathy from the readers, reinforcing the presentation of US citizens as human victims whose suffering are morally significant.

4.6.2. Image of the Subhuman

The dehumanisation of detainees under US custody is not limited to the omission of names, personal backgrounds and individual experiences within the news narratives. The process of dehumanisation can be divided into two aspects, including constructing the detainees with sub-human images and discursive creation of the ‘deadly victims’. The process of dehumanisation is firstly supported by presentation of the prisoners under US custody with images of the ‘less than human’. A report published on 6th May 2004, described that:

³⁴¹ Blair, Jason, *New York Times*, (2003) *Relatives of Missing Soldiers Dread Hearing Worse News* (27th March)

³⁴² *ibid*

‘as reporters toured the compound on Wednesday, detainees surged towards them, waving and yelling. One man waved his prosthetic leg over his head. Some detainees were dressed in dishdashas, the traditional robes worn by men here. Others wore dirty sweat pants and T-shirts.’³⁴³

In the report, Arab detainees incarcerated at Abu Ghraib were represented by means of a disorderly and degraded image that evoked the Orientalist stereotype of the Middle East as backward, ‘alien and inferior.’³⁴⁴ In addition, description of female prisoners at Abu Ghraib also produced a similar image of disorder, noise and desperation. It was reported that:

‘the prison has five female detainees. They are housed in a row of cellblocks. The 10-foot- by-12-foot cells house one detainee each. When reporters entered the cellblock, the women began shouting and stretching their hands through the steel bars of their cell doors.’³⁴⁵

In addition the disorderly and harsh conditions of Abu Ghraib were also described in other reports where the image of Abu Ghraib was presented as a dirty, overcrowded complex under frequent attack by Iraqi militants from outside. For example, the portrayal of Iraqi detainees as well as their families with an undignified and almost animal-like impression could also be observed in the reports by the *New York Times*. In a report covering a visit by Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, it was described that:

‘Hundreds of detainees rushed toward the concertina wire barriers of one sector of the camp, aware that Mr. Rumsfeld was rolling past inside an armoured bus. Most of the detainees stood mutely in the dusty, windswept compound. Some waved clothes, some jeered. A few held up signs or T-shirts carrying hand-lettered messages in English.’³⁴⁶

In another report on the release of 624 prisoners from Abu Ghraib prison, it was also described that:

³⁴³ Michaels, Jim USA Today (2004) Tour provides glimpse of life at Abu Ghraib ; Most prisoners are kept not in cells but in 25-mantents (6th May)

³⁴⁴ Little (2008) Chapter One

³⁴⁵ Michaels, Jim USA Today (2004) Tour provides glimpse of life at Abu Ghraib ; Most prisoners are kept not in cells but in 25-mantents (6th May)ibid

³⁴⁶ ibid

³⁴² Shanker, Thom, New York Times (2004) At Iraqi Prison, Rumsfeld Vows To Punish Abuse (14th May)

‘As Iraqis who had followed the buses caught up, the bus doors suddenly opened. Out spilled the detainees, flinging themselves into their relatives’ arms, kissing the ground, clutching prayer mats and pyjamas in homemade bags made of American Army ration wrappers sewn together.’³⁴⁷

In descriptions such as these the emphasis on the dusty, crowded environment, as well as the acts of large numbers of detainees ‘rushing’ towards the wire barriers and ‘spilling’ out of the bus contributes to create a desperate, chaotic and almost zoo-like spectacle. Such a spectacle resonated with the traditional Orientalist impression of the Middle East and Muslims as perpetuated by writers such as Mark Twain, who described Muslims as ‘a people by nature and training, filthy, brutish, ignorant, un-progressive, [and] superstitious.’³⁴⁸ By reference to such orientalist stereotypes, the victims were represented with a face that can be seen but cannot be identified with. This facilitated the discourse of dehumanisation by presenting victims with an image unrecognisable as humans, and in turn this side-lined their moral significance as fully human victims.

In contrast, US victims under Iraqi detention were presented with a more dignified image. In a report on the rescue of Private Jessica Lynch, it was reported that the Iraqi doctors had described Lynch as ‘courageous and funny in the face of unrelenting pain’ and that ‘she told Abdul Hadi, a hospital worker who had befriended her, not to take risks for her because he was needed by his 17 children.’³⁴⁹ In the report above, the *New York Times* emphasised positive characteristics of Jessica Lynch, including positive outlook, courage and altruism towards other despite her capture and detention. Such positive characteristics facilitated a discourse that encouraged respect, identification and empathy, creating a more morally significant ‘worthy victim’. Such difference in the presentation of ‘worthy victims’ could also be observed in the coverage by *USA Today* of the experience of Sister Diana Ortiz, an American nun tortured during the Guatemalan civil war, in a report on the lingering effect of torture published on 29 June 2004. As a more ‘worthy victim’, Sister Ortiz was presented with the dignified image of a teacher and co-founder of the Washington, D.C.- based Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International, who despite surviving the ordeal of torture, conducted herself in a dignified manner. Instead of emphasising her degraded

³⁴⁸ Little (2008) Chapter One

³⁴⁹ Kristof, Nicholas D, New York Times (2003) *Saving Private Jessica* (20th June)

treatment under torture, the emphasis on her dignity and composure, contributes to create an image of victim that is respectable and therefore easily empathised with.

In her book *Precarious Life*, Judith Butler reminded us that the media can contribute to the erasure of humanity through the 'images of the 'less than human' in the guise of the human' by showing 'how the less than human disguises itself, and threatens to deceive those of us who might think we recognise another human there, in that face.'³⁵⁰ Such an image could be observed in the undignified images produced of yelling, waving and caged victims in a state of filth and desperation which not only resonated with the Orientalist stereotype of the backward and inferior Muslims, but also constituted an almost animal-like image. As a result, the victims become presented with a sub-human image that facilitated the removal of their moral significance. This process of dehumanisation through humiliation could be further illustrated by an analogy to the process of dehumanising of the victims of the Holocaust. During the Holocaust, victims of the Nazi gas chambers were also relegated to a sub-human status by stripping them of their basic dignity through process of humiliation such as removal of all clothing. In an incident where Franz Stangl, Commandant of Treblinka suggested putting buckets in the road leading to gas chambers for the women as they defecated, it was met by the response of 'Let them "be-shit" themselves it can be cleaned up afterwards.'³⁵¹ Indeed the dehumanisation of the victims of the holocaust was effectively achieved through stripping them of their basic human dignity, creating an image that could not be recognised as human. As Gendarmerie Master Jacob wrote in one letter, upon seeing the grieving and starved Jewish victims:

'I do not know either you too, Herr Lieutenant General, saw such frightful Jewish types in Poland. I thank my lucky stars that I've now seen this mixed race for what it is... these were not human beings but ape people'³⁵²

Through a similar process, the detainees under US custody at Abu Ghraib prison became stripped of their basic human dignity and relegated to the status of sub-human as a result of the almost animal-like image. In such circumstances, torture became presented as devoid of human suffering, as the victims became stripped of their humanity and could no longer be

³⁵⁰ Butler (2004) P.146

³⁵¹ Sereny (1995) P.161

³⁵² Rhodes (2003) P.160

considered as human lives, making their subjection to 'coercive interrogation techniques' easier to tolerate and accept.

4.6.3. Image of the Deadly Victims

Another aspect of dehumanisation is the image of deadly victims constructed through a process of demonization and construction of the 'Deadly Victims'. In examining the coverage of US detention and interrogation practices, detainees under US custody were presented with generalised negative characteristics that contributed to reinforcing the process of dehumanisation. Examining the coverage by *USA Today*, it may be observed that prisoners under US custody were often labelled as 'criminals', 'insurgents' and more importantly, 'terrorist suspects'. In its report on 1st July 2004 published by the *USA Today*, for example, the narratives described 'US civilian officials were charged with rebuilding Iraq's prisons and guarding common criminals such as thieves and rapists.'³⁵³ In the report, detainees under US custody were labelled as criminals, thieves and rapists. In another report on 26th Aug 2004, the detainees were described as 'mix of petty thieves, hardened murderers and insurgents who had attacked coalition forces.'³⁵⁴ These negative labels emphasised a generalised image of the detainees as being characterised by criminality, which contributed to suppressing empathy towards their coercive treatments, as they were not innocent. Indeed even if the detainees could have been subjected to coercive treatments as a result of mistaken identities, the generalised presentation of criminal characteristics would contribute to reducing the feeling of guilt as the victims were presented as guilty anyway.

More importantly however, is the generalised presumption of guilt that presented the detainees as enemies to through emphasis on possible associations of the detainees with the Iraqi insurgency and terrorist activities. In the reports by *USA Today*, for example, detainees were referred to as insurgents, suspected guerrillas and foreign fighters, despite the fact that the vast majority of the detainees under US custody in Iraq had been captured as a result of mistaken identities. Indeed it was stated by the International Committee of the Red Cross in a report published in February 2004 that '[c]ertain CF military intelligence officers told the ICRC that in their estimate between 70% and 90% of the persons deprived of their liberty in

³⁵³ Leinwand, Donna, *USA Today* (2004) Some Iraqi guards as bad as prisoners, MPs say ; Let inmates escape, gave them weapons (1st July)

³⁵⁴ Leinwand, Donna, *USA Today* (2004) Chaotic prison always on the brink ; Vastly outnumbered and poorly equipped, the soldiers guarding Abu Ghraib endured a 'grinding existence' (26 Aug)

Iraq had been arrested by mistake.³⁵⁵ In a report on 15th June 2004, for example, the *USA Today* described how the world's most powerful military, which had crushed Saddam Hussein's regular army in a matter of weeks, found itself in an unexpected predicament last year when US forces began jailing thousands of 'suspected guerrilla fighters' and 'criminals' in Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison.³⁵⁶ Another report by *USA Today* also described, that '[m]any of the prisoners in Abu Ghraib are classified as "security detainees," who are not covered under the Geneva Conventions on the rules of war'.³⁵⁷ In the reports above, reference to detainees under US custody as guerrilla fighters and security detainees implicated participation of the detainees held under US custody were somehow involved in the insurgency in Iraq. Such a generalised portrayal of presumed guilt contributed to creating the image of the detainees as threats to the safety of US troops in Iraq, and more importantly to US citizens, which not only enabled tolerance but also justified the use of 'harsh interrogation techniques.'

The framing of detainees under US custody by the *Wall Street Journal* also presented the detainees under US custody as dangerous individuals that somehow deserved their treatment. In a report published on 6th Jan 2005, for example, detainees were regularly described as 'terrorist enemies [who] have declared themselves enemies of the civilized order'.³⁵⁸ By labelling the detainees as 'enemies of the civilized order', narratives such as the above evoke the binary opposition of civilisation and barbarism which presented detainees with a dehumanised image of 'savages living on the hunted margin of mankind'.³⁵⁹ In another report, it was also emphasised that:

'The US holds some very dangerous people in Iraq, and it's easy to forget that the point of interrogating them is to better protect both US soldiers and the Iraqi civilians that the Geneva Conventions oblige us to safeguard.'³⁶⁰

Similarly, stating that 'the US holds some very dangerous people in Iraq' the report above also emphasised detainees as dangerous and deserving of their coercive treatment in order to

³⁵⁵ Report Of The International Committee of The Red Cross (ICRC) On The Treatment By The Coalition Forces Of Prisoners Of War And Other Protected Persons By The Geneva Conventions In Iraq During Arrest, Internment And Interrogation (Feb 2004)

³⁵⁶ Moniz, Dave & Eisler, Peter, *USA Today* (2004) US missed need for prison personnel in war plans ; Shortage haunts military months later at Abu Ghraib (15th June)

³⁵⁷ Potter, Beth, *USA Today* (2004) Reservist pleads guilty in prison scandal ; Says he was ordered 'to humiliate' Iraqis (21st Oct)

³⁵⁸ MacDonald, Heather, *Wall Street Journal* (2005) *Too Nice for Our Own Good* (6th Jan)

³⁵⁹ Jackson (2005) P.62

³⁶⁰ Editorial, *Wall Street Journal* (2004) *Geneva for Demagogues* (17th May)

safeguard US soldiers and Iraqi civilians. Through the emphasis on the hostility and danger posed by detainees under US custody, a demonised image began to emerge that presented those detainees as '*Deadly Victims*'³⁶¹ posing an imminent threat to the safety of US troops in Iraq as well as the US society itself.

The image of the *Deadly Victims* was further strengthened and consolidated through generalised association of the detainees with the Iraqi insurgency and terrorist organisations such as al Qaeda. In the *Wall Street Journal*, prisoners housed at the Abu Ghraib Prison were described as 'captured insurgents and common criminals.'³⁶² In a letter published by the *Wall Street Journal* regarding the need for 'harsh interrogation techniques', it was argued that 'Some al Qaeda fighters had received resistance training, which taught that Americans were strictly limited in how they could question prisoners.'³⁶³ Even in a letter published on 1st June 2004 by Senator John McCain which had been critical towards US interrogation practices, one may also notice such an association through the questioning that 'If al Qaeda beheads kidnapped Americans, some argue, why must we be bound to treat detained members of al Qaeda humanely?'³⁶⁴ In the statements above one may notice the unquestioning association of detainees under US custody with al Qaeda. Through these presumptions of guilt, as well as generalised association of the detainees with Iraqi insurgency and terrorist organisations, the news narratives not only strengthen the image of the *Deadly Victims* but also appeals to arguments of the ticking time bomb scenario where the subject of potential torture is presented as terrorists with knowledge of imminent attacks. As a result, the detainees are presented with an image that had deserved their harsh treatment despite the fact that many may have been captured as merely a result of mistaken identity. Indeed, through invoking the image of the deadly victim, the use of 'harsh interrogation techniques' becomes presented as not only acceptable, but also necessary.

Moreover, the news reports also supported the US government discourse by emphasising the intelligence value of the detainees. The generalised description of detainees at Abu Ghraib as insurgents and foreign fighters implied that knowledge and information could be extracted from the detainees. Indeed a report published on 13th May 2004, for

³⁶¹ Lifton, (2000) P.476

³⁶² Fassihi, Farnaz & Stecklow, Steve, Wall Street Journal (2004) Behind Bars: Finding US Abuse in Iraq Left Red Cross Team in a Quandary --- Not Used to Seeing Such Acts By a Developed Country, Some Debated Exposing It --- An Inspection of Cellblock 1A (21st May)

³⁶³ MacDonald, Heather, Wall Street Journal (2005) *Too Nice for Our Own Good* (6th Jan)

³⁶⁴ McCain, John, Wall Street Journal (2004) *In Praise of Do-Gooders* (1st June)

example, in *USA Today* emphasised official arguments that such psychological and mild physical pressure on prisoners has yielded results in questioning terror suspects and Iraqis opposed to the US occupation and ‘[t]hat’s how we got Saddam Hussein.’³⁶⁵ The statement above attributed the capture of Saddam Hussein through the use of physical and psychological coercion on detainees under US custody, implying possible contributions to US war effort. As a result, such emphasis that detainees held at Abu Ghraib could provide information in assisting the American war effort further contributed to the justification for the use of ‘harsh interrogation techniques’ in extracting any information, and indeed made it necessary in response to the ‘deadly threats’ posed by hostile Iraqi insurgents. As demonstrated in a statement by a former interrogator:

‘Do you really think that someone who is prepared to kill isn’t prepared to lie and try to deceive an interrogator? We have an obligation to follow the rules. But we also have an obligation to take advantage of everything at our disposal to get information that may save lives.’³⁶⁶

The deliberate image of detainees under US custody as being responsible for their harsh treatments whilst under US custody is in contrast with emphasis on the non-combatant roles of Jessica Lynch, as well as other US victims of Iraqi violence by the newspapers. Unlike the detainees under US custody who were portrayed as potential threats to US troops in Iraq and the US society itself, US citizens who have been captured by Iraqi force as well as kidnapped and executed by Iraqi insurgents were framed very differently by the newspapers. Through emphasising the non-combat role of the US victims, the treatment and violence suffered by US citizens captured, kidnapped and executed by groups of Iraqi insurgents as well as other militants, were presented as unfair and unjustified. In the report published on 4th April 2003 regarding the capture and rescue of Jessica Lynch, it was specifically noted that the Army’s 507th Maintenance Company had been ‘a *non-combat unit* based at Fort Bliss Texas’³⁶⁷, despite the unit being part of the US armed forces. In a later report, it was also emphasised that ‘[Lynch’s] task in Iraq was to support those who fought, not necessarily to

³⁶⁵ Willing, Richard & Diamond, John, *USA Today*, (2004) US interrogators face ‘gray areas’ with prisoners ; Analysts: Abu Ghraib events went too far, appear illegal (13th May)

³⁶⁶ *USA Today*, (2004) Cruelty is never justified (13th May)

³⁶⁷ Lynch, David J, *USA Today* (2003) Iraqi lawyer’s tip led to rescue of POW (4th April)

fight alongside them.³⁶⁸ Reporting the ambush of the 507th Maintenance Company, it was also described by the *New York Times* that:

‘part of what has made the circumstances of the 507th so striking is that most of its members were young and in noncombat roles. The unit -- made up of mechanics, supply clerks, a cook -- was trapped by two buses, Iraqi irregular forces and tanks.’³⁶⁹

Emphasising on the non-combatant role of Jessica Lynch and her unit, the *New York Times* supported an image that, despite being part of the US armed forces, Lynch and members of her unit were eligible for civilian status and immunity from combat due to their non-combat roles. Similarly, the non-combatant status of the US citizens kidnapped and executed, such as Nicholas Berg and Eugene Armstrong, have also been emphasised. In an opinion published on 23rd June 2004, they were described as ‘casualties in a war they weren’t fighting.’³⁷⁰ However no attention had been given to Berg noting in an e-mail to his family that ‘his company had been announced as an approved subcontractor for a broadcast consortium awarded a contract for the US-controlled Iraqi Media Network,’³⁷¹ which would have been considered potentially sensitive in times of conflict. There was also little mentioning of the fact that Eugene Armstrong, who was also executed by insurgents, had been working for ‘Gulf Supplies and Commercial Services, a company based in the United Arab Emirates that has construction contracts with the American government in Iraq’³⁷², which could also potentially make him appear as an eligible target facilitating occupation in the minds of the insurgents. In another report by the *New York Times* describing the kidnapping and execution of Jack Hensley, a colleague of Eugene Armstrong, the disassociation of Hensley from the US occupation despite the connection between his employer and the US military, was also emphasised through the statement of his brother claiming that:

³⁶⁸ Jones, Charisse, USA Today (2003) Lynch’s friends line streets; Ex-POW, wounded in Iraq, gets hero’s welcome today (22nd July)

³⁶⁹ Blayr, Jason, New York Times (2003) *Relatives of Missing Soldiers Dread Hearing Worse News* (27th March)

³⁷⁰ Belt, Sharone, USA Today (2004) Debate: Maintain US resolve, even in face of Americans brutal murder (23 June)

³⁷¹ Guardian Unlimited online (2004) Questions Surround Slain American in Iraq (12th May)
<http://web.archive.org/web/20040602195828/http://www.guardian.co.uk/worldlatest/story/0,1280,-4083599,00.html> (Last visited 25 Feb 2008)

³⁷² New York Times, (2004) Iraqi Video Shows Beheading of Man Said to Be American (21 Sept)
http://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/21/international/middleeast/21iraq.html?_r=1&oref=slogin (Last Visited 25 Feb 2008)

‘the type of work that he is doing, again, is to work with the Iraqi people in helping develop a water system for the Iraqi people. He’s helped work on a school, rebuild a museum and also housing for the Iraqi people.’³⁷³

Comparing the framing of US victims and Iraqi detainees under US custody, one may observe that while US citizens captured, kidnapped and killed by Iraqi forces and insurgencies have been framed as peaceful, constructive and innocent, detainees under US custody have been deliberately portrayed with the image of ‘deadly victims’ by the news media through the process of demonization.

The process of demonization may be seen as an important part of dehumanisation, which in addition to removing the moral responsibilities of inflicting violence and coercion, enabled justification of the sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques. By portraying the detainees as potential threats to the American forces and society, the news media contributed to creating the image of ‘deadly victims’ with an imminent conspiracy to attack and kill and whose plans must be stopped at all cost. As a result, through the process of demonization, violence and the use of coercive interrogation techniques amounting to torture were not only justified, but also presented necessary in the name of self-defence, justifying coercive treatments towards detainees. As argued by Dershowitz and McCarthy:

‘suppose [a] bomb is planted somewhere in the crowded heart of an American city, and you have in custody the man who planted it. He won’t talk. Surely, the hypothesis suggests, we shouldn’t be too squeamish to torture the information out of him and save hundreds of lives.’³⁷⁴

4.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined how the perpetrators of both unauthorised abuse of prisoners and officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques have been presented by within the news narratives. Within the narrative presentation of perpetrators of both unauthorised abuse of prisoners and officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques, elements of framing may be observed that supported the discursive conditions facilitating the process of moral inversion and authorisation of violence. In the process of moral inversion, authorisation of violence is firstly enabled by erosion of moral responsibilities and the focus

³⁷³ Hakim, Danny, New York Times (2004) *Grief and an Evening Vigil In a Michigan Small Town* (21st Sep)

³⁷⁴ Luban (2006) P.44

of attention is on technical rational considerations which emphasise efficient and regulated policy implementation. By presenting US military intelligence personnel involved in administering officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques, such a process was facilitated through the de-emphasising of direct involvement in inflicting violence on the detainees as well as by placing a strong emphasis on their image of professionalism and self-restraint. In contrast, the presentation of perpetrators of unauthorised abuse of prisoners emphasised individual responsibilities, which further reinforced the disassociation of officially sanctioned interrogation techniques from the violence inflicted on detainees. More importantly, by emphasising the negative characteristics of the perpetrators of unauthorised abuse, the news narratives also supported the emphasis of technical responsibilities that presented the scandal as a result of ineffective staff appointments, where closure could be achieved through prosecution and disciplinary reforms. Another discursive condition facilitating the process of moral inversion is the discourse of consequentialist moral reasoning, where acts are judged by the objectives they are designed to serve. By emphasising the image of the perpetrators of unauthorised abuse at Abu Ghraib as victims of exceptional circumstances and personal weakness, news narratives also contributed to mitigate the severity of the scandal by presenting a lack of malicious intent by the perpetrators.

The third condition facilitating the process of moral inversion and legitimisation of Administrative Evil is the dehumanisation of victims, which was most strongly manifested in the presentation of detainees under US custody. Presenting the detainees under US custody, the news narratives contributed to the process of dehumanisation by removing the presence of the victims through mechanisms such as nominalisation and passive voices, as well as through the lack of reference to names and personal information. By removing the presence of the victims, detainees under US custody suffered the process of de-realisation that rendered victims morally insignificant, enabling acts of violence inflicted on them to be regarded as inconsequential. Furthermore, by emphasising a generalised image of detainees as being associated with criminal offences and insurgency within Iraq, the news narratives also supported the process of demonization. In addition to removing the human status of victims, this also presented an image of the *Deadly Victims*, which not only enabled their abuse to be tolerated but also justified as a necessity. Therefore, through contributing to the three discursive conditions described above, the narrative presentations of the human

agencies involved in the coercive treatment of detainees under US custody supported a discourse of administrative evil.

5. Presentation of the Acts and Effects of US Detention and Interrogation Practices

This chapter examines the presentation of the actual acts of violent treatment of detainees under US custody and its effects. This chapter will analyse news presentations of the actual acts of violence including both the sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques and the unauthorised abuse photographed at Abu Ghraib, as well as its effects on different actors. In order to provide a baseline comparison, this chapter also analyses how the acts of violence committed by others, such as the kidnapping and killing of US citizens by the Iraqi insurgency, as well as acts of torture under the regime of Saddam Hussein, have been presented in the news media narratives. The aim here is to examine how different aspects of the violence committed by different actors have been emphasised within the narratives, which is important as the image created through the different emphases contributes to the moral judgement of these acts of coercion and violence. The chapter also examines the discursive mechanisms, such as the use of nominalisation, metaphors, euphemisms and descriptive labels, applied in describing the acts of coercion and violence as presented within the narratives. Through analysing the different aspects of emphasis in the presentation of the acts of coercion and violence committed by both the US military and other agents, as well as the discursive mechanisms through which the acts have been portrayed, this chapter will examine whether the news media's representation of the treatment of detainees in US custody serves to support the discourse of Administrative Evil, including consequentialist reasoning, emphasis on instrumental responsibility and erosion of moral responsibility, as well as the dehumanisation of victims.

In addition to the presentation of the actual acts of violence, this chapter also examines how the effects of the acts of violence, including both the sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques and the unauthorised abuse of prisoners, have been presented within the news narratives. Specifically, this chapter examines how the impact of the photographed abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib on different actors has been emphasised within news narratives, as well as the discursive mechanisms through which their impact has been presented. Similarly, this chapter also examines how the impact of the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques on different actors has been presented. In order to provide baseline comparison, this chapter also analyses how the effects of violence committed by 'others' have been presented within the news narratives as a means of

comparison, in order to illustrate the latent frames within the narratives. Through this analysis, this thesis will examine the extent to which the news media's representation of the impact of the treatment of detainees under US custody, both sanctioned coercion and unauthorised abuse, served to facilitate a discourse of Administrative Evil.

The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section examines how the actual acts of violence, including officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques and abuse of Iraqi detainees have been presented by examining the presentation of the actual acts of unauthorised abuse photographed in the prisoner abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib within the news narrative. The chapter then proceeds to analyse how the acts of the officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques were presented. In order to illustrate the presence of frames, this section will also draw upon the narrative framing of violence and atrocities committed by other agents as a means of comparison. In the second section, this chapter will examine the framing of the physical as well as the psychological effects of the photographed acts of abuse on its victims.

The chapter will then consider the representation of the effects, both physical and psychological of the officially sanctioned detention practices as well as the harsh interrogation techniques, to those who have been subjected to US detention. Finally, this chapter will examine the effect of both the officially sanctioned detention and interrogation practices, as well as the abuse of prisoners photographed at Abu Ghraib on the US war effort in the War on Terrorism.

5.1 Representation of the Actual Acts of Violence in Unauthorised Abuse and Coercive Interrogation Techniques

This section analyses the presentation of the acts of violence in unauthorised abuse of prisoners and then how the acts of officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques have been presented within the news narratives. In order to illustrate the presence of frames within the text, this thesis will also analyse the presentation of acts of violence inflicted by others in order to provide a baseline comparison. Within the narrative descriptions of the acts of both unauthorised abuse of prisoners and officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, one may observe the mutually reinforcing processes of de-emphasising the severity of violence inflicted on detainees under US custody, as well as the focus of attention on technical aspects of how detainees have been treated under US custody. Through the processes described above, the news narratives contributed to facilitating the

process of moral inversion by facilitating the replacement of moral responsibility with an emphasis on technical responsibility, which contributed to enable tolerance towards coercive treatments of detainees under US custody.

5.1.1. Presenting Unauthorised Acts of Abuse at Abu Ghraib

Examining how the photographed acts of abuse at Abu Ghraib have been presented in news narratives, the news papers presented detailed and graphic descriptions of what had taken place at the scenes of the abuse. However, despite the graphic and explicit detail of accounts of the actual acts, both the severity of the abuse inflicted at Abu Ghraib and its significance was de-emphasised through a process of trivialisation and ‘downward comparison’ with other cases. In addition, the news narratives also emphasised the disassociation of officially sanctioned treatment of detainees from the scandal of abuse.

Emphasising Graphic Details in the Unauthorised Acts of Abuse

Upon initial examination of the presentation of the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, it may firstly be observed that the photographed acts of unauthorised abuse were presented with detailed and graphic descriptions. As explained by Herman and Chomsky, ‘coverage of worthy victims was generous with gory details and quote expressions of outrage and demands for justice.’³⁷⁵ Through the emphasis on gory details of the religious murders in Poland and South America, the coverage by the news media contributed to attracting and focused the attention and moral outrage on the acts of atrocities committed by providing clear, explicit and detailed mental images. Although the study by Herman and Chomsky examined the disparity in the media presentation of worthy and unworthy victims by the US news media during the Cold War, the same mechanism can nevertheless be applied to examining news presentation of acts of violence inflicted by different actors. Describing the unauthorised acts of abuse photographed at Abu Ghraib, the graphic descriptions of the act of abuse by the newspapers also contributed to focusing attention on the their severity by increasing the salience of gory details through explicit representation of violence and humiliation.

In the report by *USA Today* published on 4th May 2004, for example, shortly after the publication of the leaked photographs, acts of violence and humiliation were described that:

‘the *New Yorker* magazine this week reported details from an internal U.S. Army report that said prisoners were beaten and threatened with rape and electrocution to

³⁷⁵ Chomsky & Herman (2002) P.39

coerce them to talk. And former Iraqi detainees have alleged to U.S. media that they were forced to perform humiliating sexual acts.’³⁷⁶

In the report above, the news narratives provided detailed descriptions of the alleged acts of abuse at Abu Ghraib, including threats of rape, electrocution and sexual humiliation. Another report describing what had happened on the night when the photographs of abuse had been taken published by the *USA Today* on 28th May 2011 reported more explicit details of the abuse. The report documented that the prisoners were stripped, arranged in a human pyramid and ordered to masturbate. One prisoner was forced to stand on a box of military meals, with a wire attached to his penis, and threatened with electrocution if he lost his balance.³⁷⁷ In the reports above, the *USA Today* reported the acts of sexual humiliation taken place at Abu Ghraib with explicit and graphic descriptions of details. Through the provision of explicit details, as explained by Entman, ‘the reports provided imagined details of what was going on.’³⁷⁸ Through the same mechanism, describing the unauthorised acts of abuse, the graphic and explicit narratives of the photographed abuse such as in the examples cited above, contributed to focusing the attention of the readers through the sensationalising effect of the dramatic and sexually explicit language which also provided imagined details.

Similarly, the acts of abuse inflicted on detainees at Abu Ghraib were also presented with graphic and detailed descriptions in the news narratives presented by the *New York Times*. In a report published by the *New York Times* published on 2nd May 2004, the various acts of abuse inflicted on detainees were described in detail. It was reported that:

‘prisoners were beaten and threatened with rape, electrocution and dog attacks, witnesses told Army investigators, according to the report obtained by *The New Yorker*. Much of the abuse was sexual, with prisoners often kept naked and forced to perform simulated and real sex acts.’³⁷⁹

The above report published by the *New York Times* also documented the acts of coercion and sexual humiliations inflicted, including forced nudity and ‘forced to perform simulated and real sex acts.’³⁸⁰ In a report on 14th May 2004, describing the violent treatment and sexual

³⁷⁶ Debate, *USA Today*(2004) Pentagon too slow to decry shameful U.S. acts in Iraq (5th May)

³⁷⁷ Locy, Tony, *USA Today* (2004) Special report: Hidden identities hinder probe ; 'Bond,' 'Doe' aliases muddle abuse cases (28th May)

³⁷⁸ Entman (1991) P.17

³⁷⁹ Shenon, Philip, *New York Times*, (2004) Officer Suggests Iraqi Jail Abuse was Encouraged (2nd May)

³⁸⁰ Ibid

humiliation of detainees at Abu Ghraib, the *New York Times* cited the testimony of Specialist Sivits that ‘Graner knelt down to one of the detainees that were nude and had the sandbag over his head’ and ‘punched the detainee unconscious.’³⁸¹ In addition, it was also quoted that:

‘Staff Sergeant Frederick would take the hand of the detainee and put it on the detainee’s penis, and make the detainee’s hand go back and forth, as if masturbating. He did this to about three of the detainees before one of them did it right. After five minutes, they told him to stop. Specialist Graner then had them pose against the wall, and made one kneel in front of the other, So that from behind the detainee that was kneeling, it would look like the detainee kneeling had the penis of the detainee standing in his mouth.’³⁸²

In the report above, the *New York Times* presented in unadulterated detail, the violence and sexual abuse inflicted on detainees by the identified perpetrators of the prisoner abuse scandal. Through the detailed and graphic description of the violent abuses, as well as the sexual humiliation of the prisoners inflicted by the identified offenders, the news narratives presented a shocking image of misconduct.

Describing the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, narratives presented by the *Wall Street Journal* also included graphic and detailed descriptions of the acts of violence and humiliation. Describing allegations of an incident of photographed rape, a quoted statement from Kasim Mehaddi Hilas, an inmate at Abu Ghraib, reported in detail that ‘he heard screaming in a cell, whose door had been partially covered by a sheet. Looking over the sheet, he said he saw an Arab male in military fatigues committing the rape.’³⁸³ It was further recorded in the narrative that ‘the victim was a 15- to 18-year-old boy and “the female soldier was taking pictures.”’³⁸⁴ Through the statement of a fellow inmate at Abu Ghraib, the report above by the *Wall Street Journal* presented in detail acts of rape committed at Abu Ghraib while photographed by a female soldier. In another report, describing examples of violence committed against detainees at Abu Ghraib, the treatment of one detainee was described in detail in his statement that he had been ‘urinated on, kicked in the head, lower back and groin,

³⁸¹ Zernike, Kate, Moss, Michael & Risen, James *New York Times*, (2004) Accused Soldier Paints Scene of Eager Mayhem (14th May)

³⁸² *ibid*

³⁸³ Clour, David S, Jeffe, Greg & Karp, Jonathan, *Wall Street Journal* (2004) Titan Worker Is Cited in Iraq Scandal (21st May)

³⁸⁴ *ibid*

force-fed a baseball which was secured in his mouth with a scarf and deprived of sleep for four consecutive days.’³⁸⁵ Similarly, the report above also presented detailed descriptions of violence to which individual detainees had been subjected, such as being ‘urinated on’, ‘kicked in the head, lower back and groin’ and ‘force-fed a baseball’ creating a vivid image of the actual acts and processes of abuse.

Analysing reports of the KAL incident in which a passenger jet operated by the Korean Airline was shot down by the Soviet military, the study by Entman argued that through offering ‘copious details of the weather, the cold sea and other physical elements’, ‘the reports provided imagined details of what was going on in flight, encouraging identification with passengers.’³⁸⁶ Through the same mechanism, the detailed descriptions of acts of violence, sexual abuse and humiliation inflicted upon detainees also provides readers with imagined details of what had happened at the scenes where the photographed and alleged abuse of detainees took place. In addition, the presentation of a vivid and detailed image of abuse also contributed to facilitate outrage and criticisms among readers through the construction of proximity between the readers and the photographed acts of abuse.

De-emphasising the Severity of Abuse at Abu Ghraib

The images leaked to the news media provided graphic detail of the violence and sexual humiliation inflicted at Abu Ghraib. However, despite the detailed descriptions of the abuse at Abu Ghraib within the news narratives, the severity of the abuse inflicted upon Iraqi victims at Abu Ghraib, and their associated moral responsibilities were mitigated in many ways within the news narratives. Firstly, the significance of the unauthorised abuse of detainees was mitigated by de-emphasising the severity of the violence inflicted in the scandal. Secondly, the significance of the scandal was also mitigated through emphasising the casual and irrational nature of the abuse inflicted on the detainees.

In the narratives presented by the selected newspapers, the moral significance of the acts of abuse at Abu Ghraib was reduced by presenting the scandal as ‘looking worse than they actually were’. Describing the acts of abuse photographed at Abu Ghraib, such were achieved through comparison with historical incidences of violence on more significant scale and severity committed by other actors and regimes. Such comparison contributes to produce

³⁸⁵ Fassihi, Farnaz & Stecklow, Steve (2004) Behind Bars: Finding U.S. Abuse in Iraq Left Red Cross Team in a Quandary --- Not Used to Seeing Such Acts By a Developed Country, Some Debated Exposing It --- An Inspection of Cellblock 1A (21st May)

³⁸⁶ Entman (1991) P.17

an effect similar to that of the discursive and cognitive mechanism of ‘downward counter factual thinking’ as introduced by **Markman, Mizoguchi and McMullen**. In their article *It Would Have Been Worse Under Saddam*, Markman, Mizoguchi and McMullen described the discursive and cognitive mechanism of downward counter factual thinking: ‘the consideration of imagined alternatives that worsen reality.’³⁸⁷ The comparison with examples of worse alternatives leads individuals to ‘recalibrate their scales of moral standards and enhance the relative standing of a range of behaviours that they may have previously deemed unethical.’³⁸⁸ Through the same mechanism, by comparing the acts of abuse inflicted at Abu Ghraib against more severe acts of violence inflicted by ‘others’, the news narratives also de-emphasised its severity by recalibrating the scale of moral standards.

In a report published by *USA Today* shortly after the revelation of abuse, for example, it was argued that ‘under Saddam's regime, Iraqi prisoners fared far worse.’³⁸⁹ Through this statement, the acts of abuse committed at Abu Ghraib were compared to the more severe acts of torture under the regime of Saddam Hussein, where the abuses at Abu Ghraib appear relatively insignificant. In a public comment published by *USA Today*, it was also argued that:

‘although the abuse is an unfortunate, embarrassing episode for which Americans have apologised and feel shame, it was caused by a handful of misdirected individuals. Not one head was cut off, not one hostage taken, not one threat against humanity made nor was one car bomb or assassination carried out.’³⁹⁰

Within the comments above, the abuse of prisoners was compared to the kidnapping and public execution of US citizens and other insurgent activities where the relative insignificance was emphasised through the statement that ‘not one head was cut off, not one hostage taken, not one threat against humanity made nor was one car bomb or assassination carried out.’³⁹¹ In addition, the above comments also emphasised the repentance expressed by the perpetrators as explained in the previous chapter, which also contributed to further diminish its significance. Through comparison with atrocities of a more significant scale and severity, the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib was presented as relatively benign. The

³⁸⁷ Markman *et al.*, (2008) P.651

³⁸⁸ *ibid* P.653

³⁸⁹ Lynch, David, J *USA Today* (2004) Some in Baghdad say U.S. troops no longer wanted ; Iraqis who say they welcomed Saddam's fall now speak of mistrust and hostility, especially after abuse at Abu Ghraib: 'The American occupation is like a cancer (13th May)

³⁹⁰ Hammer, Glen, Debate, *USA Today* (2004) Beheadings deserve more news coverage (25th June)

³⁹¹ *Ibid*

discourse of downward comparison may also be observed in the narratives by the *New York Times*. In a news report published on 8th May 2004, the comparison of the scandal to worse alternatives was also demonstrated through quoted public statements emphasising ‘as far as I know they weren’t hurt, they were humiliated. But think of the thousands of bodies in the mass graves over there and what Saddam did to them.’³⁹²

The relative insignificance of the abuse inflicted at Abu Ghraib was also strongly emphasised in the narratives presented by the *Wall Street Journal*. In a report published by the *Wall Street Journal* on 3rd May 2004, it was argued that:

‘we must keep the allegations in some sort of historical context. Even at their worst, these disturbing incidents are not comparable to past atrocities such as the June 1943 killing of prisoners in Sicily, the machine-gunning of civilians at the No Gun Ri railway bridge in Korea, or My Lai. Beatings and rumours of sexual sadism, horrific as they appear, are not on a par with executions that have transpired throughout all dirty wars -- such as the simultaneous reports that Macedonians are now accused of murdering Pakistanis -- but so far have not been attributed to Americans on either the Afghan or the Iraqi battlefield’³⁹³

In the report above, the acts of abuse inflicted at Abu Ghraib were compared with some of the worst atrocities in the 20th century, such as the My Lai massacre during the Vietnam War. Similarly, the *Wall Street Journal* also emphasised the relative insignificance of the prisoner abuse in comparison with historical incidents of genocide and ethnic cleansing taken place in the Middle East. It was reported that, ‘American soldiers are not ethnically cleansing Palestinians from Kuwait or executing Kurdish civilians, crimes that in the past went largely unnoticed in the Middle East.’³⁹⁴ Through comparison with large scale massacres of civilians as well as acts of genocide in history, the *Wall Street Journal* presented an image that significantly reduced the severity of abuse inflicted at Abu Ghraib through the discourse of downward comparison that recalibrated moral standard of evaluation to comparison with the worst incidents of atrocities in history. Furthermore, through emphasising selective coverage by the Arab media, which was accused of paying little attention to reporting atrocities and violence inflicted by other Arab states as well as the insurgents in Iraq, the *Wall Street*

³⁹² Jacobs, Andrew, *New York Times* (2004) Shock Over Abuse Reports, but Support for the Troops (8th May)

³⁹³ Hanson, Victor Davis, *Wall Street Journal* (2004) Abu Ghraib (3rd May)

³⁹⁴ *ibid*

Journal also argued that, in spite of the detailed and graphic reports by the news media both in the US and Arab states, the severity as well as the significance of the abuse of prisoners seen at Abu Ghraib had been exaggerated. As argued, in a public comment published on 7th May 2004:

‘the pan-Arab media, with its selective outrage, honours and gives prominence to terrorists and barbaric mobs. The smallest American error is given banner headlines, but is, in contrast, excoriated.’³⁹⁵

Comparing the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib to other acts of violence and atrocities more significant in scale and severity, the news narratives presented the unauthorised acts of abuse as relatively benign through the discourse of downward comparison. Through emphasising the severity of violence inflicted by others, the news narratives thus contributed to encouraging recalibration of moral standard. Therefore:

‘In this way, behaviours that seriously violate default standards of moral behaviour may come to be seen as relatively benign in light of the new standard and thereby lower expectations regarding how the US should treat prisoners of war in the future.’³⁹⁶

Consequently the significance of the suffering inflicted through the unauthorised abuse at Abu Ghraib and the associated moral responsibility became trivialised by the news discourse and therefore easier to tolerate.

Emphasising the Irrational Nature of Abu Ghraib

The second aspect of mitigating the moral significance of the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib was the emphasis on its casual and irrational nature. Such emphasis contributed to a process of distancing, which distinguished the sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques from the acts of abuse at Abu Ghraib by presenting the abuse of prisoners as casual misconduct by the identified perpetrators. Such an emphasis on the irrational nature of the abuse inflicted at Abu Ghraib may be demonstrated through the emphasis on the casual attitude displayed by the identified perpetrators in the process of abuse and acknowledgement of its unauthorised nature.

³⁹⁵ Gingrich, Newt, Wall Street Journal (2004) Double Standards on Abu Ghraib (7th May)

³⁹⁶ Markman *et al.*, (2008) P.653

In a report by *USA Today*, for example, a statement by a fellow colleague at Abu Ghraib described how he watched Pfc. Lynndie England stomp on the toes and fingers of three Iraqi prisoners, **laugh**, and **then pose for photos** with them after they had been stripped nude.³⁹⁷ The report of laughter and acts such as posing for photographs indicated a casual and tourist-like attitude among the offenders inflicting acts of abuse. In another report, the *USA Today* described that:

‘in one photo, Graner appears to be giving a thumbs-up signal as he stands behind a pile of naked Iraqis. In another photo, he is clenching a fist and has his arm cocked as if preparing to punch a hooded prisoner.’³⁹⁸

The casual character of the violence inflicted by the identified offenders such as Spc. Charles Graner was also demonstrated through narratives presenting the incidents of abuse as a perverse form of tourist imagery through acts such as posing for camera. In reports such as those cited above, the identified offenders were presented as laughing and joking while engaging in acts of violence and humiliation, reinforcing an image that the violence and humiliation had been committed purely for the purpose of amusement. Consequently, as such, the significance of prisoner abuse is reduced by the media discourse that presented acts of violence and humiliation as amusement that went out of control. As illustrated by comments made by US commentator Rush Limbaugh, ‘This is no different than what happens at the Skull and Bones initiation.... I’m talking about people having a good time.’³⁹⁹

In the *New York Times*, the irrational nature of abuse at Abu Ghraib was also reinforced by the emphasis on the callous attitude of the perpetrators such as that demonstrated in the messages attached to images of abuse in the e-mails sent by Charles Graner. It was reported that:

‘[the messages] include new photographs from Abu Ghraib, sent to Specialist Graner’s friends and family, including his young children, with chatty messages to explain them. ‘The guys give me hell for not getting any pictures while I was fighting

³⁹⁷ Parker, Laura, *USA Today*, (2004) Ex-comrade: England tormented Iraqis ; Prosecutors want hearing wrapped up (31 Aug)

³⁹⁸ Parker, Laura, *USA Today* (2005) Court-martial begins for Abu Ghraib figure (7th Jan)

³⁹⁹ Limbaugh, Rush (2004) Cited in Hooks & Mosher (2005) P.1630

this guy,' said one message, titled "just another dull night at work," with a photograph attached of a bound and naked detainee howling with pain, his legs bleeding.⁴⁰⁰

With a photograph of him stitching a wound on a detainee's eye, he wrote:

'Things may have gotten a bit bad when we were asking him a couple of questions. Oh well.' A similar photograph is titled "cool stuff." It was attached to an e-mail reading: 'Like I said, sometimes you get to do really cool stuff over here,' ending it "xoxoxoxo to all."⁴⁰¹

Through the words of Charles Graner, the casual attitude towards abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib by the perpetrators was demonstrated through messages akin to that of tourist activities and images motivated by personal amusement with little purpose. Reporting the photographed acts of abuse, narratives by the *Wall Street Journal* also described that:

'while detainees were being kicked, punched or tossed around, according to Spc. Sivits's testimony to investigators, Cpl. Graner 'was joking, laughing, p- off a little bit, acting like he was enjoying it.'⁴⁰²

In another report by the *Wall Street Journal*, the portrayal of prisoner abuse as callous acts of amusement by the perpetrators was also illustrated by a statement by Lynndie England that 'the photos of her humiliating the naked prisoners had been taken just in order to have some fun -- just some fooling around while on the night shift.'⁴⁰³ In the reports above, descriptions of the abuse as 'fooling around', as well as identified perpetrators as 'joking, laughing p-off' contributed to reinforce presentation and interpretation of the scandal as acts of irrational and purposeless amusements. The portrayal of the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib as irrational and careless violence, contributed to distancing the abuse from official policies by emphasising the abuse as acts of pornographic and sadistic humour unrelated to the officially

⁴⁰⁰ Zernike, Kate, New York Times, (2005) Army Reservist's Defense Rests in Abu Ghraib Abuse Case (14th Jan)

⁴⁰¹ *ibid*

⁴⁰² Eig, Jonathan, Wall Street Journal, (2004) Hard Time -- Inside Abu Ghraib: Missed Red Flags, Team Under Stress --- Some Who Were There Point To a Charismatic Corporal Involved in an Affair --- The Night Shift on Tier 1A (23rd Nov)

buses by Guard in Prison in Iraq (12th Jan)

⁴⁰³ Rabinowitz, Dorothy, USA Today (2004) The Youngsters at Abu Ghraib (17th Aug)

²⁸ Editorial, Wall Street Journal (2005) 'Torture' on Trial (4th May)

sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques. As testified by Pfc. Lynndie England ‘they did it for their own amusement.’⁴⁰⁴

Emphasising the casual and irrational nature of photographed abuse at Abu Ghraib, the news narratives contributed to support a discourse that distanced the abuse of prisoners from officially sanctioned techniques by presenting the abuse as acts of pornographic and sadistic amusement. Consequently, the news narratives facilitated a discourse that mitigated both the moral and political significance of abuse photographed at Abu Ghraib through the framing the scandal as purposeless excess unrelated to US government policy.

Emphasising the Unauthorised Nature of Prisoner Abuse

In addition to emphasising the image of abuse at Abu Ghraib as irrational acts for the amusement of the identified offenders, disassociation of the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques from the photographed violence at Abu Ghraib was further supported by unauthorised nature of prisoner abuse. In the news narratives by *USA Today*, the unauthorised character of the acts of abuse at Abu Ghraib was demonstrated through condemnation by the US government of the scandal as “shameful and appalling acts”, as well as demands from the US government to punish the perpetrators.⁴⁰⁵ In another report, the demand to prosecute offenders by the US authorities is again reiterated in a statement by White House spokesman Scott McClellan: “the president believes that those who committed the atrocities at Abu Ghraib should be punished.”⁴⁰⁶ Through emphasising the government description of the abuse as shameful and appalling, as well as the demand for prosecution, the media contributed to present a narrative that portrayed the abuse of prisoners as not only unauthorised but also frowned upon by the US government. Shortly after the revelation of the scandal, stories in the *Wall Street Journal* also cited condemnation by the US authorities, stating that ‘responsible parties, from Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt to President Bush himself, have condemned the accused guards and promised swift punishment when and if they are found guilty.’⁴⁰⁷ Similarly, in the *Wall Street Journal*, the unauthorised character of the photographed acts of abuse at Abu Ghraib was stated directly in the description that:

⁴⁰⁴ Editorial, *Wall Street Journal* (2005) ‘**Torture’ on Trial** (4th May)

⁴⁰⁵ Debate, *USA Today* (2004) Pentagon too slow to decry shameful U.S. acts in Iraq (4th May)

⁴⁰⁶ Ross, James, *USA Today* (2004) Hold officials accountable (27th Aug)

⁴⁰⁷ Hanson, Victor Davis, *Wall Street Journal* (2004) Abu Ghraib (3rd May)

‘except for the presence of dogs, none of the behaviour in the photos was included in interrogation rules. Mandated masturbation, dog leashes, assault, and stacking naked prisoners in pyramids -- none of these was approved (or even contemplated) interrogation practice in any theatre of conflict.’⁴⁰⁸

Disapproval of the photographed acts of abuse as well as the promise of punishment for the offenders was also emphasised by the reports of the *New York Times*. Citing statements by the identified offenders, *The New York Times* reported that the soldiers knew that what they had done was wrong. In a report published on 14th May 2004, when asked if the abuse would have happened if someone in the chain of command was present, Spc Sivits answered ‘Hell no.’ adding that ‘Because our command would have slammed us. They believe in doing the right thing. If they saw what was going on, there would be hell to pay.’⁴⁰⁹ It was also described in a report by the *New York Times* published on 24th August 2004, that:

‘[w]e now know these abuses occurred at the hands of both military police and military intelligence personnel. The pictured abuses, unacceptable even in wartime, were not part of authorised interrogations nor were they even directed at intelligence targets.’⁴¹⁰

By emphasising the disapproval of the US authorities towards the abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib, as well as the promises of prosecution, the news narratives portrayed the scandal as unrelated to authorised policies of interrogation and detention. More importantly, emphasising the unauthorised nature of the abuse at Abu Ghraib, the news narratives also support the technical rational discourse by reassuring professionalism and restraint of officially sanctioned interrogation policies.

Examining how the unauthorised acts of abuse have been presented, the news narratives contributed to facilitate two categories of discourse that mitigated the moral significance of the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib. Firstly, despite the presentation of graphic details of the abuse inflicted, the news narratives through comparison with atrocities of a greater severity supported a discourse of that mitigated the significance of the scandal

⁴⁰⁸ MacDonald, Heather, Wall Street Journal(2005) Too Nice for Our Own Good (6th Jan)

⁴⁰⁹ Zernike, Kate, Moss, Michael & Risen, James New York Times, (2004) Accused Soldier Paints Scene of Eager Mayhem (14th May)

⁴¹⁰ The New York Times, (2004) Findings on Abu Ghraib Prison: Sadism, 'Deviant Behavior' and a Failure of Leadership (25th Aug)

through the discursive and cognitive mechanism of downward comparison. Secondly, by emphasising the irrational and unauthorised character of the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, the news media therefore contributed to disassociating officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques from involvement in violence such as that photographed at Abu Ghraib. By presenting the scandals as unauthorised acts by the perpetrators for apolitical reasons, the acts of abuse inflicted upon prisoners are presented as attributable not to officially sanctioned policies for the treatment of detainees under US custody but to the failures of individuals. As a result, the news narratives contributed to facilitate a discourse that disassociated the acts of officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques from the unauthorised acts of abuse which were presented as casual, irrational and purposeless. In combination with emphasis on the unauthorised nature of photographed abuses inflicted at Abu Ghraib, the news narratives therefore further contributed to support the discourse of technical rationality by reassurance that the US government remained professional in its detention policies.

5.1.2. Presenting Acts of Officially Sanctioned Coercive Interrogation Techniques

In the previous section, analysis of how the acts of abuse were represented within the news narratives demonstrated how the moral significance of the unauthorised abuse was mitigated despite explicit images and graphic descriptions through the mechanism of downwards comparison. In the meantime, by emphasising the irrational and casual nature of abuse committed at Abu Ghraib, descriptions of acts of abuse at Abu Ghraib also contributed to a discourse that served to disassociate the photographed violence at Abu Ghraib from official policies, which further diminished its significance.

In this section, I examine how the acts of officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques were presented by the news narratives. Describing the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, the news narratives were also characterised by a tendency to de-emphasise their severity and associated moral responsibilities. Such effects were achieved through the language of sanitisation, which served to focus attention on the technical aspects of applying physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering by concealing the violence inflicted in the process. Such a focus on technical considerations in turn facilitated the displacement of moral responsibilities and the process of moral inversion through a process of mutual reinforcement that supported the discourse of Administrative Evil.

Language of Sanitisation

The first discursive feature that de-emphasized the severity and significance of officially sanctioned use of 'coercive interrogation techniques' was the language of sanitisation. Unlike the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, which was presented with detailed and graphic narratives of the actual treatments of the prisoners, the coverage of officially sanctioned detention policies and interrogation techniques were sanitised through the use of nominalisations and euphemisms. Through the language of sanitisation, the news narratives concealed the violence and suffering inflicted through the officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques, facilitating the discourse of Administrative Evil by removing the moral responsibilities involved.

Upon initial examination of the language employed in the narrative descriptions of the officially sanctioned interrogation techniques, one of the most prominent features that can be seen is the extensive use of nominalisations and euphemisms in describing techniques used in interrogation, which serve to distance and conceal the coercive nature of the officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques. The process of nominalisation refers to the use of the process through which noun forms of verbs are used to describe certain actions while euphemisms refer to the substitution of less offensive expressions in place of words that may suggest distinctly unpleasant events to the reader. In the reports by the *USA Today*, 'sleep deprivation'⁴¹¹ was used to describe the technique of artificially keeping the detainees awake for prolonged periods of time. In addition, the term, 'environmental manipulation'⁴¹² was also used by the news reports of *USA Today* to describe the technique of subjecting human subjects to excessive noise and extreme temperatures during their detention or interrogation. Similarly, the use of nominalisations such as 'sleep management',⁴¹³ 'sensory deprivation',⁴¹⁴ and 'dietary manipulation'⁴¹⁵, as well as euphemisms such as 'fear up harsh',⁴¹⁶ which referred to an interrogation technique where interrogator behaves in a heavy, overpowering

⁴¹¹ Diamond, John, *USA Today*(2004) Early signs were given secondary priority ; Gravity of scandal eluded Pentagon (10th May)

⁴¹² Diamond, John, *USA Today* (2004) Report: Harsh interrogation OK'd for 1 inmate ; Lt. Gen. Sanchez approved prison techniques (19th May)

⁴¹³ Reuters, *New York Times* (2004) Iraqi Journalists Report Abuse As Detainees in U.S. Hands (19th May)

⁴¹⁴ Jehl, Douglas & Schmitt Eric, *New York Times* (2004) Afghan Policies On Questioning Landed in Iraq (21st May)

⁴¹⁵ Cloud, David S, Jaffe, Greg & Robbins, Carla Ann *Wall Street Journal* (2004) Interrogation Rules Were Issued Before Iraq Abuses --- Some Techniques Needed Commander's Permission; Questions of Interpretation (13th May)

⁴¹⁶ Cloud, David S, Jaffe, Greg & Robbins, Carla Ann *Wall Street Journal* (2004) Interrogation Rules Were Issued Before Iraq Abuses --- Some Techniques Needed Commander's Permission; Questions of Interpretation (13th May)

manner in order to intimidate the subject, could also be observed in narratives describing various officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques used by the US military intelligence. In addition to absolving the responsibilities of US agents involved through omission of direct agency, as explained in the previous chapter, the extensive use of nominalisations and euphemisms served to cover up the actual acts of coercion and violence inflicted in the process of officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques. Therefore, by concealing the actual violence inflicted in the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, the news narratives contributed to absolve the US military intelligence, as well as US society, from the moral responsibility of inflicting violence on detainees, thereby eroding its moral significance. As explained by Adams and Balfour, 'we can minimise or use euphemisms to diminish the destructive activity, thus convincing ourselves that nothing really bad happened.'⁴¹⁷

In addition to the extensive use of nominalisations and euphemisms, the violence inflicted was further de-emphasised through the use of factual and sanitised descriptions by the news media in describing officially sanctioned interrogation techniques. Describing coercive interrogation techniques sanctioned by the US government, for example, a *USA Today* report published on 13th May 2004 described that:

'Interrogation targets have been subjected to sleep deprivation and light and noise around the clock. They've been forced to stand for long periods of time, and have been made to assume uncomfortable positions and to wear hoods that disorient them. The Washington Post has reported that in a few cases, captives have been stripped and left alone in their cells.'⁴¹⁸

In the above report, the physical and psychological violence inflicted in the process of coercive interrogation techniques such as stress positions, and forced nudity, were covered up by sanitised and factual expressions such as being 'forced to stand for long periods of time', 'made to assume uncomfortable positions' and subjected to 'environmental manipulation.' Unlike the presentation of unauthorised abuse at Abu Ghraib, where graphic and explicit

⁴¹⁷ Adams & Balfour (2009) P.17

⁴¹⁸ Diamond, John & Willing, Richard, *USA Today* (2004) U.S. interrogators face 'gray areas' with prisoners; Analysts: Abu Ghraib events went too far, appear illegal (13th May)

descriptions of the acts of abuse provided imagined details of suffering and humiliation that encouraged moral outrage, the vague description served to ‘keep the lid on emotions.’⁴¹⁹

Similarly, the reports published by the *New York Times* were also characterised by the language of sanitisation. For example, in a news report published on 7th May 2004, the *New York Times* described:

‘the interrogation and detention methods that the Pentagon acknowledges having regularly used include **forms of physical and psychological abuse that violate American values, international standards of human dignity and the lawful rules of war.**’⁴²⁰

In the paragraph above, the *New York Times* did report use of physical and psychological abuse by the Pentagon for the purpose of interrogation. However, in the same report, vague and sanitised language was also used to describe examples of the interrogation techniques used including ‘sleep deprivation and forcing prisoners’ bodies into “stress positions” for hours at a time.’⁴²¹ Using vague and sanitised descriptions, the *New York Times* also concealed the actual level of physical and psychological violence inflicted in the process of sleep deprivation and forced assumption of ‘stress positions’. In another report describing the use of military dogs in the interrogation process, for example, the *New York Times* described that ‘at least two non-commissioned officers, Sgts. Michael J. Smith and Santos A. Cardona, said they had used un-muzzled military dogs to intimidate prisoners under interrogation.’⁴²² In the description above, the threat of attack by military dogs was described simply as ‘used un-muzzled military dogs to intimidate prisoners’, thus concealing the level of violent intimidation inflicted by the threat of attack by military dogs specifically trained to be aggressive. In narratives such as those cited above, descriptions of the actual interrogation techniques employed by the US military remained vague and ambiguous, with little information regarding the physical or psychological violence associated with the techniques such as forcing detainees to assume stress positions, staying awake for a prolonged period of time, as well as threats of attack by military dogs.

⁴¹⁹ Chomsky & Herman, (2002) P.39

⁴²⁰ New York Times, (2004) The Military Archipelago (7th May)

⁴²¹ ibid

⁴²² Jehl, Douglas & Schmitt, Eric, New York Times (2004) *Dogs and Other Harsh Tactics Linked to Military Intelligence* (22nd May)

The use of sanitised language was also present in the reports describing officially sanctioned detention and interrogation practices by the *Wall Street Journal*. For example, the use of sanitised language can be observed in a report published on 13th May 2004 describing interrogation techniques that do not require authorisation. It was described that:

‘[a]mong the techniques that don't require prior approval in advance under the rules issued last fall are silence, repetition, “emotional love/hate,” and “fear up harsh,” in which an interrogator behaves in a heavy, overpowering manner, yelling and even hurling objects, in an effort to implant fear in a suspect.’⁴²³

In descriptions such as that cited above, interrogation approaches were also described in vague language including words and phrases such as ‘silence’, ‘repetition’, ‘yelling’, ‘hurling objects in an effort to implant fear in a subject’. Through the vague descriptions above, it is difficult to construct and imagined detail reflecting the level of physical and psychological violence inflicted in the process of ‘implanting fear in a suspect’. Consequently, it is difficult for readers to imagine any possible harm, both physical and psychological, may be inflicted through the interrogation techniques described above.

Therefore in addition to the extensive use of nominalisation and euphemism in reference to the officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques, the use of sanitised and factual language in texts describing acts violence as a means of intelligence gathering also contributed to covering up the violence and suffering inflicted in the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques. As result, the news narratives contributed to concealing the moral responsibilities associated with the use of violence as a means of intelligence gathering, paving the way for the discourse of Administrative Evil

Emphasising Considerations of Technical Responsibility

As the moral significance of officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques and associated moral responsibility becomes eroded through the covering up of violence, suffering and humiliation inflicted in the process of coercive interrogation techniques, the news narratives focused on considerations of technical responsibilities. The considerations of technical responsibilities supported the discourse of technical rationality that emphasised only the effective and regulated implementation of government policies. The emphasis on

⁴²³ Cloud, David, S, Jaff, Greg & Robbins, Carla Ann, *Wall Street Journal* (2004) *Interrogation Rules Were Issued Before Iraq Abuses --- Some Techniques Needed Commander's Permission; Questions of Interpretation* (13th May)

technical and instrumental responsibility in describing the implementation of officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques is demonstrated through focus of attention on the regulated use of coercive interrogation techniques, on their restrained implementation as well as on their effectiveness in producing information.

In the reports where details of the application of various coercive interrogation techniques are reported, emphasis on the technical responsibilities was demonstrated through technical and scientific language that focused the attention on the aspect of technical implementation of sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques. Describing the sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, for example, the *USA Today* emphasised the factual discussions regarding which techniques had been authorised by US Military Intelligence, and how the coercive interrogation techniques mentioned had been implemented. For example, a news report published on 19th May 2004 describing the investigations into the use of coercive interrogation techniques by the US military, described how:

‘Pentagon lawyers approved use of the harsh techniques, but in practice, they required specific, case-by-case approval by the field commander, Sanchez... The prisoner was also subjected to less- stressful techniques that did not require the general’s approval and which could be used for all detainees. Those included something the Central Command list of interrogation techniques describes as ‘fear up harsh,’ and silence from the interrogators.’⁴²⁴

The narrative above focused its attention on technical aspects of officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, namely the structure of policy approval and oversight within the US military intelligence. Emphasising such technical aspects of policy implementation, narratives such as those described above served to support a discourse of technical rationality by focusing attention on bureaucratic structure and professionalism. In another report explaining the use of coercion as a means of intelligence gathering, the *USA Today* also quoted the highly technical comment by former army interrogator Mike Ritz:

⁴²⁴ Diamond John, Report: Harsh interrogation OK'd for 1 inmate ; Lt. Gen. Sanchez approved prison techniques (19th May)

‘The idea is not to incapacitate the source, but to bring him to a level of stress where his instinct for self-preservation takes over,’ and ‘[h]e said that that increases the chance that the captive will blurt out useful information.’⁴²⁵

Emphasising the scientific aspect of how coercive interrogation techniques contribute to produce useful military intelligence, the *USA Today* served to present an image of coercive interrogation technique as purely a means used to ‘increase the chance that the captive will blurt out useful information’. In such narratives, emphasis on the discussion of coercive interrogation techniques becomes focused on the technical aspects of policy implementation of interrogation techniques used by the US military as well as how such techniques may be used to produce useful information.

Similarly, emphasis on the technical aspects in the implementation of interrogation techniques could also be observed in the narratives presented by the *New York Times*. In a report published by the *New York Times*, for example, the narrative cited the description of the ‘Sleep Meal Management Program’ by Stefanowicz, a civilian interrogator, which emphasised the detailed technical specifications of regulated sleep deprivation. In this program, it was specified that ‘prisoners were allowed no more than four hours of sleep in a 24-hour period, in a regime that usually lasted 72 hours’⁴²⁶, and that military police were “allowed to do what is necessary, within certain limits, to keep prisoners awake during that period.”⁴²⁷ In the report, emphasis was placed upon detailed technical specifications of sleep deprivation where attention was focused on the amount of sleep prisoners were allowed and how the regime of sleep deprivation may be implemented. Emphasising the specific regulations of implementation in the subject of authorised conduct in coercive interrogation techniques, the focus of attention becomes centred on its effective and regulated implementation, facilitating the discourse of technical rationality.

Such emphasis on the technical aspect in the implementation of coercive interrogation techniques is also demonstrated in the reports by the *Wall Street Journal*. Similar to the news narratives presented by *USA Today* and the *New York Times*, reports by the *Wall Street*

⁴²⁵ Diamond, Richard & Willing, Richard, *USA Today*(2004) U.S. interrogators face 'gray areas' with prisoners ; Analysts: Abu Ghraib events went too far, appear illegal (13th May)

⁴²⁶ Jehl, Douglas & Schmitt, Eric, *New York Times* (2004) Dogs and Other Harsh Tactics Linked to Military Intelligence (22nd May)

⁴²⁷ Jehl, Douglas & Schmitt, Eric, *New York Times* (2004) Dogs and Other Harsh Tactics Linked to Military Intelligence (22nd May)

Journal also focused on discussing the specific legal regulations and bureaucratic expertise in implementation of coercive interrogation techniques. In a news report examining US policies regulating the use of interrogation techniques, for example, it was described that 'Gen. Sanchez's harsher rules of engagement fall into a legally murky territory,' as '[t]he Army's official interrogation manual says that U.S. troops can't use "stress positions for a prolonged period of time" or subject detainees to "abnormal sleep deprivation.'⁴²⁸ As explained later in the report:

'[e]ventually, the lawyers concluded that depriving prisoners of sleep for as long as 72 hours didn't violate the standards set by the Army manual or the Geneva Conventions. Similarly, they concluded that soldiers could force prisoners to assume "stress positions" for 45 minutes without violating the Army guidelines against the "prolonged" use of this tactic.'⁴²⁹

In the report above, attention of the narrative was focused on which interrogation tactics had been authorised to use against the detainees and legal considerations whether the use of such techniques may possibly violate standards set by the Army manual or the Geneva Conventions. Emphasis on the technical aspects of coercive interrogation techniques, such as its effective management and legal regulation, served to focus and restrict discussions to focus on the discourse of technical rationality that facilitated abdication of moral responsibility.

‘As the quality of thinking grows more rational, the quantity of destruction increases. In our time, for example, terrorism and torture are no longer instruments of passions; they have become instruments of political rationality.’⁴³⁰ Within the news narratives reporting acts of officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques, one may observe the mutually reinforcing processes in the erosion of moral responsibilities associated with the use of coercive interrogation techniques through the language of sanitisation and trivialization, and focus of attention on considerations of technical responsibilities. Through extensive use of nominalisation and euphemism, as well as sanitised and factual narratives in describing the officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques, the news narratives contributed to a

⁴²⁸ Cloud, David, Jaffe, Greg & Robbins, Carla Ann, Wall Street Journal (2004) Interrogation Rules Were Issued Before Iraq Abuses --- Some Techniques Needed Commander's Permission; Questions of Interpretation (13th May)

⁴²⁹ *ibid*

⁴³⁰ Karen & Rapport, Cited in Bauman (1989) P.97

discourse that eroded the moral significance of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering. Such a process of sanitisation enabled readers to disassociate the US military from the moral responsibilities in inflicting violence and suffering. Through removing the moral responsibilities associated with the use of coercive interrogation techniques, reports describing the acts of coercive interrogation techniques focused attention on considerations of technical rationality, such as the bureaucratic structure of authorisation, the functioning of coercive interrogation techniques, and legal standards. The focus of news coverage on technical aspects in the implementation of coercive interrogation techniques facilitated further erosion of moral responsibilities by supporting the discourse of technical rationality. Through the mutually reinforcing process of the erosion of moral responsibilities and focus on technical responsibilities, narratives by the selected newspapers therefore contributed to the support the discourse of Administrative Evil whereby the evil of authorised violence becomes simply presented as value-free techniques.

5.1.3. Comparison: Violence by Others

Unlike the acts of coercive treatment of detainees committed by US personnel, however, the acts of violence and atrocities committed by others were presented very differently. By means of comparison, this chapter will examine the distinction between the narrative presentations of violence committed by different actors in order to reveal the presence of the discursive framing within the news narratives.

Graphic Description of Details

Similar to the news presentation of the unauthorised abuse at Abu Ghraib, news reports covering violence towards US citizens, such as the kidnapping and execution of US hostages in Iraq, emphasised the violence inflicted by Iraqi insurgents through graphic and detailed descriptions within the narratives. Describing the kidnapping and execution of US hostages, the reports by the *New York Times* provided detailed and intimate descriptions of his execution. In reporting the abduction and subsequent execution of American workers Eugene Armstrong and Jack Hensley, for example, *New York Times* described in graphic detail from the point where the two workers were abducted, all the way through to their execution. Describing the kidnapping of Eugene Armstrong and Jack Hensley, the report by the *New York Times* described in detail that:

‘[t]he raid took place around 6 a.m., when a blackout prompted two of the victims to open the black metal gate of their home to turn on a large generator sitting in a metal

cage outside a four-foot wall. As the gate swung open, masked men rushed into the front yard and seized the two foreigners.’⁴³¹

Within the report, the *New York Times* presented ample details, including times, locations and circumstances with which facilitates construction of an intense mental image that resonates with familiar dramatic images from Hollywood thriller and horror films. The execution of Eugene Armstrong by Iraqi insurgents was also reported in great detail, describing the step-by-step process whereby Armstrong was killed. In the report, it was described that ‘the masked man then pulls out a knife, grabs his head and begins slicing through his neck. The killer places the head atop the body before the video cuts to a shot of him holding up the head.’⁴³² Following closely the process of the kidnapping and execution of Eugene Armstrong, narratives such as these presents a vivid image of nightmarish violence easily associated with scenes from horror movies such as *Saw*.⁴³³ Such graphic and explicit images of violence and suffering inflicted by others contribute to encourage both empathy towards the victims and outrage towards the violence.

Similarly emphasis on the graphic detail of executions of foreign hostages by Iraqi insurgencies may also be found in the narratives of the *Wall Street Journal*. In an editorial for example, the *Wall Street Journal* described:

‘armed, masked men grandiosely displaying utterly helpless individuals before the world... the men then grab[bed] the victim's head and saw[ed] through his neck, while a colleague calmly videotape[d] the beheading.’⁴³⁴

Similar to the *New York Times*, the report by *Wall Street Journal* also presented through its report scenes of nightmarish violence invoking memories of popular horror films...

Furthermore, while the severity and moral significance of both unauthorised abuse and officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogations were de-emphasised by the news narratives, the human suffering inflicted by ‘others’ was specifically emphasised through graphic descriptions of the victims’ minutes that resonate with memories of dramatic

⁴³¹ Wong, Edward, *New York Times* (2004) *Rebels Kidnap 2 Americans And a Briton in Baghdad* (17th Sep)

⁴³² Wong, Edward, *New York Times* (2004) *Iraqi Video Shows Beheading of Man Said to Be American* (21st Sep)

⁴³³ *Saw* (2004) is an independent horror film directed by James Wan. The film featured a scene where the kidnapped leading character was forced to saw off his own foot in order to escape confinement.

⁴³⁴ Henninger, Daniel *Wall Street Journal* (2004) *Are Beheadings The Face of Evil Or Just Politics?* (25th June)

productions of extreme violence through other popular media outlets such as television and films. In an editorial published by the *USA Today*, the horror inflicted upon the victims was emphasised through the graphic narratives. It was described that: 'a South Korean businessman was beheaded by terrorists in Iraq on Tuesday, 48 hours after television broadcast his heart-wrenching screams, "I don't want to die! I don't want to die!"'⁴³⁵ Unlike the sanitised description of officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques by the US military, the graphic emphasis on human suffering contributed to a discourse that focused attention on the suffering it inflicted and its moral significance.

Analysing reports of the murder of Jerzy Popieluzko, a worthy victim, by the Polish police, Entman described that 'the emotional strain and guilt manifested by the police officers were described time and again, interspersed with the description of how Popieluzko pleaded for his life'⁴³⁶, thereby 'adding dramatic detail in support of the image of police viciousness.'⁴³⁷ Similarly, the vivid image provided by the imagined detail of the sobbing victims in the face of impending execution pleading for their lives, also served to add dramatic detail and encourage empathy and moral outrage among the readers by emphasising the viciousness of violence perpetrated by others.

Through means of comparison, it may be observed that reports of both the unauthorised abuse of detainees under US custody and the acts of violence inflicted by 'others', were both described with graphic details which encouraged outrage among readers. On the other hand, detailed acts of violence in the process of coercive interrogation techniques were omitted within the news narratives. However, although the news coverage of the acts of unauthorised abuse described in detail the acts of abuse inflicted by the US offenders, its severity was also mitigated by emphasising its relative insignificance in comparison with other historical atrocities.

5.1.4. Summary: Framing the Actual Acts of Violence

Within the news presentation of coercive treatments of detainees under US custody, the acts of unauthorised abuse of prisoners and officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques were presented differently. Presenting the acts of unauthorised abuse inflicted at Abu Ghraib, the news narratives supported a discourse that mitigated its moral

⁴³⁵ Debate, *USA Today* (2004) Beheading cannot deter battle (23th June)

⁴³⁶ Entman (2002) P.42

⁴³⁷ Entman (2002) P.43

significance. Despite the inclusion of explicit details of the abuse, the news narratives also emphasised its relative insignificance in comparison to other historical incidents of atrocities, facilitating the discourse of downward comparison. Emphasising the irrational and casual nature of the abuse inflicted, the news narratives also contributed to supporting the discourse disassociating officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques from the direct involvement of violence.

Presenting the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, the news narratives presented a framing that de-emphasised its moral significance by omitting the violence inflicted in the process and thereby removing its associated moral responsibilities. The erosion of moral responsibilities then facilitated the focusing of attention on the emphasis of technical responsibilities, which considered only its effective and regulated implementation. In turn, the focus of attention on technical responsibilities further facilitated the erosion of moral responsibilities. As a result, through supporting the erosion of moral responsibilities and focus of attention on emphasis of technical responsibilities, the news narratives facilitated the discourse of moral inversion.

5.2. Presenting the Effect of Abuse at Abu Ghraib and Sanctioned Use of Coercive Interrogation Techniques

The second aspect in the portrayal of the treatment of detainees under US custody in Iraq, including both the unauthorised abuse and the sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques to be examined in this chapter is their effect on both US agents and detainees under US custody. This section will examine how the effect of US treatments towards detainees, both on its victims and the members of the US society have been presented within the news narratives.

Examining the consequences of unauthorised abuse and the sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, one may observe that the reports of the selected newspapers have been characterised by the tendency to de-emphasise the severity of the physical and emotional effects of both unauthorised abuse and the sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques suffered by detainees under US custody. As a result, the news narratives supported a discourse that alleviated the moral responsibility for inflicting a lasting physical and psychological impact on the detainees. Through the alleviation of the moral responsibility towards victims subjected to sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques and

unauthorised abuse, the news narratives contributed to the discourse of consequentialist calculations based on its effect on the US war effort in Iraq.

5.2.1. Effect of Coercive Treatment on Victims

Examining reports in the selected newspapers on the subject of the effect of coercive treatment of detainees, both in the unauthorised acts of abuse and officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques, two areas of impact can be identified; the effect on the United States and the effect on its victims.

Presenting the effect of Unauthorised Abuse on Victims

In this section, I will first analyse how the impact of unauthorised acts of abuse and the on their victims have been presented in the news narratives.

In analysing the narratives presented by the selected newspapers, a significant disparity in the coverage of its effect on different actors may firstly be observed through the lack of coverage of the effects of abuse on its victims. In the over 100 reports by *USA Today* concerning the abuse at Abu Ghraib examined by this study, there was only a single story dedicated to reporting the experience of one of the inmates held under US custody at Abu Ghraib. In addition, among the reports relating to Abu Ghraib prison after the US invasion, less than five reports mentioned the names and personal information of the detainees under US custody. While the reports by the *New York Times* devoted more attention to the experiences of detainees under US custody, the amount of coverage of the detainees subjected to abuse and mistreatment under US custody, remained minimal. Among more than 300 reports relating to the prisoner abuse scandals at Abu Ghraib, less than 40 reports mentioned the names and experiences of the Iraqi detainees under US custody. Among these reports, only one story published on 3rd January 2004 was dedicated to describing in detail the experience of Iraqi detainees, namely that of Najim Abdulhussein and his son under US custody.

As previously mentioned, the physical and psychological impact of the unauthorised abuse of detainees under US custody received very little attention within the overall coverage of the scandal. In addition to the lack of coverage by the selected news media, news narratives describing the effect of the mistreatment suffered by detainees under US custody were also characterised by the lack of detail in describing the personal experiences, as well as its physical and psychological effects suffered by detainees subjected to unauthorised abuses.

By omitting the effect of the abuse on its victims, the news narratives contributed to the aforementioned discourse that de-emphasised moral responsibility for the acts of abuse through concealing the physical and psychological suffering inflicted upon its victims.

One of the reports published by *USA Today*, for example, described the personal experiences of detainees featured a testimony by Naufel al- Dory, who was arrested in his office at the oil ministry. The report described that he was battered with gun butts and hung from the ceiling in a way that injured his right arm. Reporting his ordeal, it was described in the news coverage that:

‘[b]y the time he was released without explanation, al-Dory had **lost nearly 100 pounds of his original 286 pounds**. ...Al-Dory still walks with a bodybuilder's swagger, but **his eyes go red when he speaks of his jailing's impact on his girls**. "My kids can't stop thinking the Americans detained and tortured me. How are they going to behave (toward Americans) tomorrow?" he asks. "The kids used to wave to the Humvees passing by. . . . There is no more waving.’⁴³⁸

In the narrative above, only two brief sentences were devoted to the physical and emotional impact of Al-Dory's experience under US custody, such as his weight-loss and emotional response when speaking of his experience. The attention of the report then quickly shifted onto changing attitude towards American personnel in Iraq. In addition, the consequences suffered as a result of unauthorised abuse by US prison guards were simply presented through factual description of his weight loss. Instead, the focus of the report centred on the damage done to the image of the US military in Iraq through detailed description of al-Dory's loss of trust and changed attitude of his daughters toward US occupation.

As previously mentioned, the *New York Times* devoted slightly more coverage to the distress of the prisoners suffering mistreatment and abuse at Abu Ghraib and their personal experiences under US custody. The testimony of Hayder Sabbar Abd, for example, was quoted in a *New York Times* report published on 5th May 2004:

“I can't tell you my feelings,” he said. “The Americans got rid of Saddam Hussein. They told us about democracy and freedom. We are happy about that.” But then he

⁴³⁸ Lynch, David JL, *USA Today* (2004) Some in Baghdad say U.S. troops no longer wanted ; Iraqis who say they welcomed Saddam's fall now speak of mistrust and hostility, especially after abuse at Abu Ghraib: 'The American occupation is like a cancer' (13th May)

tapped the photos again. “Then this man did this to the seven of us,” he said. “I am asking: Is that democracy? Is that freedom?”⁴³⁹

In this report, although the testimony by the victim of the abuse demonstrated some emotional response by the victim towards their mistreatment through the words such as ‘I can’t tell you my feelings’,⁴⁴⁰ which implied the experience was too emotionally intense to describe. However, similar to the report by the *USA Today*, the main focus of attention quickly changed to the loss of trust in the victim towards the US occupation.

Therefore, despite the occasional reference to the physical and psychological impact of the unauthorised abuse of detainees at Abu Ghriab, the significance and severity of the suffering of victims that was endured far beyond the explicit images published in the initial coverage, remained concealed by the superficial narratives and swiftly diverted attention within the text. As a result, the lack of detailed coverage of the effects suffered by detainees as a result of unauthorised acts of abuse at Abu Ghraib contributed to the alleviation of moral responsibility for inflicting violence upon detainees by perpetrating an image that no one was seriously hurt. In addition, the swift change of focus within the text onto the loss of ‘heart and mind’ towards the US presence in Iraq in the victims’ testimonies, also served to change the focus of attention onto the discourse of consequentialist calculation based the effect of the scandal on the US war effort in Iraq.

Effect of Officially Sanctioned Coercive Interrogation Techniques on Its Victims

Similar to the narratives describing the impact suffered as a result of the unauthorised abuse at Abu Ghraib, the severity and significance of the physical and psychological effects suffered as a result of coercive interrogation techniques were also de-emphasised through a lack of coverage and the use of superficial and factual narratives.

The experience of those subjected to sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques have been described through testimonies such as that of Hossam Shaltout, an Egyptian-born Canadian citizen, who claimed that ‘he was handcuffed, beaten and left in the sun after he was taken into custody by US troops in Iraq last year.’⁴⁴¹ In this report, for example, the victim’s experience under US custody were simply described through superficial and vague

⁴³⁹ Fisher, Ian, New York Times (2004) Iraqi Recounts Hours of Abuse By U.S. Troops (5th May)

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴⁴¹ Willing, Richard & Diamond, John, USA Today (2004) interrogation targets have been subjected to sleep deprivation (13th May)

factual narratives including ‘handcuffed,’ ‘beaten’ and ‘left in the sun’. However, the lasting physical and psychological impact of being subjected to coercive treatments such as those mentioned above was never mentioned. In the report by the *Wall Street Journal* describing the experience of Najim Abdulhussein who had been arrested as a result of mistaken identity, as another example, it was described that he had been subjected to harsh interrogation techniques including being forced to stand upright for over thirteen hours, as well as threats of permanent separation from his family. Describing his treatment under US custody, the *Wall Street Journal* provided a detailed description of his immediate response to coercive interrogation techniques such as threats towards the safety of family members. The emotional distress imposed by US interrogation was demonstrated through his testimony that when the ‘American soldier [interrogating] told him he was sending soldiers to his house to rape his wife. ‘[he] broke down and started crying like a child and begged him to stop.’⁴⁴² Within the text above, the distress caused by threats made during the interrogation process was presented through reports of his reactions such as ‘broke down and started crying like a child’. However, the news narrative failed to explain the context, severity and significance of the threats made against the victim’s family, which meant that the response of the victim remain difficult to comprehend and empathised with. As a result, despite a detailed description of the immediate response of distress by the detainee under coercive interrogation, the significance of the physical and psychological effect on its victim remained omitted.

Similarly, the lasting consequences of the physical and psychological coercion suffered by the victims were also de-emphasised within the texts by the *New York Times*. The report published by the *New York Times* describing the experience of Khraisan al-Aballi, for example, described how he was ‘stripped naked and forced to stand and kneel for hours; kicked and beaten with a stick; [and] ordered to confess with a gun to his head.’⁴⁴³ Reporting the impact of such coercive interrogation techniques, the *New York Times* described that:

‘[a] year later, Mr. Aballi still has the marks from the handcuffs on his wrists, as well as a deep scar of anger at Americans who he says moved too quickly from suspicion

⁴⁴² Fassihi Farnaz, Wall Street Journal, (2004) Iraqi Detainee Gets To Go Home at Last -- With Tale of Ordeal --- Grocer Nabbed From Home Tells of Harsh Questioning; Burned With a Cigarette (12th Jan)

⁴⁴³ Fisher, Ian, New York Times (2004) Searing Uncertainty for Iraqis Missing Loved Ones (1st June)

to torture and have not respected Iraqis enough to provide information as basic as whether his brother is alive or dead.’⁴⁴⁴

Similarly to the *Wall Street Journal*’s coverage of the trauma experienced under US custody suffered by Mr. Abdulhussein, the *New York Times*’ report of Mr. Aballi’s experience under US custody did not provide any significant detail of the physical and psychological effects suffered by the victim, mentioning only medical facts such as ‘marks from the handcuffs on his wrists.’⁴⁴⁵ Thus, the true impact of the coercive interrogation techniques on its victims was withheld from the record, facilitating the removal of its moral significance.

Through such lack of detailed descriptions of the impact of officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques on the detainees subjected to physical and psychological coercion under US custody, both the consequences of coercion as a means of intelligence gathering and its moral significance were concealed by the news narratives. As a result, the news narratives contributed to a general discourse that enabled the trivialisation of suffering inflicted by coercive treatments towards detainees under US Custody, as well as the erosion of any associated moral responsibility. Consequently such erosion of moral significance and responsibility of coercive treatments towards detainees contributed to support a discourse of moral distancing that enabled both consequentialist moral reasoning and technical rationality within the discursive framework of Administrative Evil.

Comparison: Effects of Torture by Others on Its Victims

On the other hand the lasting trauma and legacy suffered by victims of torture and other forms of violence inflicted by others were presented very differently. While the severity and significance of the effects of both the unauthorised abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib and the officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques on its victims were de-emphasised through lack of detailed descriptions and the use of unemotional and factual language, the presentation of the impact suffered by victims of violence and torture by others, emphasised the enduring nature of the impact of their experiences. Reports describing the experience of Sister Diana Ortiz a Catholic nun and co-founder of the Washington, D.C.-based Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International, emphasised the lasting legacy of her personal experience under torture within the news narratives In a news report published by

⁴⁴⁴ *ibid*

⁴⁴⁵ *ibid*

USA Today on 29th June 2004, the effect of torture and the lasting psychological impact of her experience under torture was described in significant detail:

‘If Sister Diana Ortiz isn't expecting to smell it a whiff of tobacco smoke can devastate her. She trembles, her hands perspire, her breathing becomes laboured, her stomach churns. Sometimes, she even feels a throbbing on her back at the spots where her captors in Guatemala seared her at least 111 times with cigarettes more than 15 years ago.’⁴⁴⁶

In this narrative, the detailed account of the lasting psychological impact of Sister Diana Ortiz’s experience of torture, such as involuntary responses to tobacco smoke, provided detailed specific insight into the long-term physical and psychological legacy of torture she had suffered. Within the news text, the enduring impact of torture was also presented through her own testimony that ‘[e]ven talking about it right now makes me go back in time. My body automatically remembers it. It's very difficult to explain.’⁴⁴⁷ Through the detailed and personalised account, the experience of the torture suffered by Sister Diana Ortiz and its lasting legacies of physical and psychological suffering are presented with concrete images that enable visualisation and identification with her suffering. The possibility to imagine and visualise the lasting physical and psychological suffering enabled the moral significance of her suffering to be emphasised through comprehensible images that can be identified with. Furthermore, while the moral significance of both the unauthorised abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib and the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques is de-emphasised through the omission of its effects on the detainees being held under US custody, the severity and significance of the torture to which Sister Diana Ortiz was subjected, were emphasised through a more detailed and personal account of its effects. Unlike the news presentations of the effects of both the unauthorised abuse and the officially sanctioned coercive interrogation, which contributed to the discourse of trivialisation enabling erosion associated moral responsibility, the presentation of the torture of Sister Diana Ortiz, a more worthy victim, emphasised its evil through detailed and graphic accounts of its lasting damage.

⁴⁴⁶ Freiss, Steve, *USA Today* (2004) What makes the effects of torture linger? ; Psyche damaged when body can neither fight nor flee, scientists say (29th June)

⁴⁴⁷ *ibid*

5.2.2. Impact of coercive treatments toward detainees on the US

While there was a lack of attention on the effects of the coercive treatments suffered by the victims under US custody, its consequences for the US military and its war effort in Iraq received extensive coverage. In the discursive presentation of the consequences of the use of coercive treatments for the US military and its war, effort was focused on three main areas: the international image of the United States and its armed forces; its implications for the safety of members of the US forces in the areas of conflict; and its influence on domestic morale.

The first area of focus in reporting the effect of the coercive treatment of detainees by the selected newspapers was the impact of the international reputation of the United States and its armed forces. The focus of attention on its negative impact of on the United States contributed to facilitate a US-centric discourse of consequentialist calculations that replaced traditional moral standards with conditional calculations of cost and benefit. In a news report published on 11th May 2004 by *USA Today*, the comment of Army Sgt. Jason Rogers, an Arabic-speaking interpreter, was quoted stating that 'it will be harder now for Iraqis "to give their hearts and minds" to their American liberators.'⁴⁴⁸ In another editorial published on 13th May 2004, it was also stated that:

'whatever the world might think of US leaders and their policies, there is no doubt that there's nothing worse for this country's image than seeing youthful Americans, wearing the colours or uniform of this nation, behaving badly... giving the world another piece of America to despise.'⁴⁴⁹

In the statement cited above, criticisms towards the abuse of prisoners emphasised the negative impact of the reported acts of violence and abuse on the public image of the US military and of the United States. Similarly, negative consequences of the coercive treatment of detainees for the international image of the US are also emphasised by the reports of the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. In a news report published on 12th August 2004, the *New York Times* suggested that:

'it is probable that Al Qaeda and other groups will seize upon these images and videos as grist for their propaganda mill, which will result in, besides violent attacks,

⁴⁴⁸ Ritter, John *USA Today* (2004) Poll: War opposition up amid Iraqi abuse scandal ; Americans appalled by images of prisoners' mistreatment (11th May)

⁴⁴⁹ Brennen, Christine, *USA today* (2004) Golden behavior at Games can help buff USA's image (13th May)

increased terrorist recruitment, continued financial support and exacerbation of tensions between Iraqi and Afghani populaces and U.S. and coalition forces’⁴⁵⁰

In a report published by the *Wall Street Journal*, it was also argued that ‘the evidence of acts of torture has produced outrage throughout the Middle East and has dramatically undercut US efforts to build good will.’⁴⁵¹

In addition to the damage to the international reputation of the US, the news media also emphasised the effect of the scandal on the safety of US personnel and on the war effort in Iraq. *USA Today* reports emphasised the impact of the unauthorised abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib on the USA’s international reputation and the negative consequences for US personnel stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan. In a report by *USA Today* on 13th May 2004, it was argued that ‘[f]or the United States, the mistreatment of prisoners also may have transformed places like Abu Ghraib into insurgency recruiting stations’ and ‘the United States has said it now plans to remedy that by releasing several thousand of these young men, many of whom may emerge bitter toward Americans in uniform.’⁴⁵² Commenting on the publication of the explicit images of abuse, *USA Today* also cited the comment by National Review's Jonah Goldberg that ‘[n]ow we'll all have to live with the consequences -- and some of us will die from them.’⁴⁵³ The negative impact of the publication of the prisoner abuse scandal on the safety of US troops was also heavily emphasised by the *Wall Street Journal*. An editorial published by the *Wall Street Journal*, for example, commented that:

‘at a time when it is critical to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people, a few renegade corrections officers have endangered the lives of thousands of their fellow soldiers in the field.’⁴⁵⁴

Concern for the safety of US troops in Iraq following the scandal was further re-iterated through the words of another US soldier, 1st Lt. Justin Engelhardt, 28 years old, of Denison,

⁴⁵⁰ Preston, Julia, New York Times (2005) Officials See Risk in the Release of Photos and Videotapes of Iraqi Prisoner Abuse (12th Aug)

⁴⁵¹ Hitt, Greg & Fassihi, Farnaz, Wall Street Journal (2004) On Arab TV, Bush Tries to Appease Anger Over Abuse --- Military in Iraq to Change Its Treatment of Detainees; Touring Abu Ghraib Prison (6th May)

⁴⁵² Lynch, David J, USA Today (2004) Some in Baghdad say U.S. troops no longer wanted ; Iraqis who say they welcomed Saddam's fall now speak of mistrust and hostility, especially after abuse at Abu Ghraib: ‘The American occupation is like a cancer’ (13th May)

⁴⁵³ Umansky, Eric, USA Today (2004) Only photos made story of abuse front-page news (17th May)

⁴⁵⁴ Hanson, Victor Davis Wall Street Journal (2004) Abu Ghraib (3rd May)

Iowa, 'A lot of Marines may get killed because of these idiots [the Army prison guards].'⁴⁵⁵ The possibility of adverse repercussions was also cited in the reports of consequences of the officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques. A commentary published by *USA Today*, observed that 'the only thing torture is good at is causing pain and deepening hatred.'⁴⁵⁶ It was also argued in a public comment published by the *Wall Street Journal* that:

'[t]hese policies ultimately restrict our freedoms by making foreign travel even more dangerous, encouraging the abuse of American prisoners, aiding and abetting the recruitment of terrorists and devaluing our collective humanity.'⁴⁵⁷

Finally, news coverage of the prisoner abuse scandal by the selected newspapers also emphasised the impact of the published photographs of abuse on the morale of both US military forces and domestic populations. It was argued that revelations of the explicit images of abuse photographs could contribute to turning public opinion in the US against the War in Iraq. In the report of a public survey published by *USA Today* on 11th May 2004, it was reported that 'prisoner abuse could become a pivotal event in turning public opinion against the war just as the disastrous 1968 Tet Offensive had galvanised Americans against the Vietnam War.'⁴⁵⁸ In addition, the news media also emphasised the negative impact of the scandal on morale both among US intelligence personnel and the US domestic population. It was reported by *USA Today*, that:

'the Schlesinger panel and the Army say the scandal's fallout could hinder the ability to gather intelligence. The Army officially said there are two reasons: Interrogators could use undue caution for fear of being accused of abuse, and enemies now have a better idea of the limits on interrogation methods.'⁴⁵⁹

Similarly, coverage by the *Wall Street Journal* also emphasised the negative impact on the morale among US military intelligence and its hindrance on intelligence gathering as a result of the scandal. As reported in a news report published by the *Wall Street Journal*, 'Maj. Anthony Henderson, the battalion executive officer, fears such disturbing images of U.S.

⁴⁵⁵ Philips, Michael, M, *Wall Street Journal* (2004) The Abu Ghraib Fallout: Marines in Iraq See Prison Photos Creating Enemies (10th May)

⁴⁵⁶ *USA Today*, (2004) Cruelty is never justified (13th May)

⁴⁵⁷ Sen Ron, *USA Today* (2004) Letters to Editors: Torture Violates Our American Principles (1st of July)

⁴⁵⁸ Ritter, John, *USA Today* (2004) Poll: War opposition up amid Iraqi abuse scandal ; Americans appalled by images of prisoners' mistreatment (11th May)

⁴⁵⁹ Moniz, Dave *USA Today* (2004) Prisoner-abuse report cites poor planning, leadership (26th Aug)

forces will weaken public support for the war and the troops.’⁴⁶⁰ The frustration towards the restraints imposed on US interrogation regulations is also further illustrated in the comment by Heather McDonald published by the *Wall Street Journal*, arguing that:

‘[a]n interrogator who so much as requests permission to question a detainee into the night could be putting his career in jeopardy. Interrogation plans have to be triple-checked all the way up through the Pentagon by bureaucrats who have never conducted an interrogation in their lives...These self-professed guardians of humanitarianism need to come back to earth.’⁴⁶¹

5.2.3. Summary: Framing the Effects of Torture

In this section, I examined how the effects of both unauthorised acts of abuse at Abu Ghraib and Sanctioned use of Coercive Interrogation Techniques have been presented. Examining how the physical and psychological impact suffered by victims of coercive treatments under US custody were presented by the news narratives, the first discursive feature observed is the lack of coverage on the experiences and long-term effects on its victims. Such lack of reference contributed to concealing the physical and psychological suffering inflicted as a result of coercive treatments. In addition, in the events where the short term and long term physical as well as psychological impact of both unauthorised acts of abuse inflicted on its victims were mentioned in the reports, such consequences have been described in the narratives with factual and unemotional language that contributed to suppress empathy and emotional outrage among readers. On the other hand, coverage of physical and psychological impact inflicted by others on ‘worthy victims’ in the news narratives emphasised the lasting impact of torture suffered by the victims through detailed graphic languages, which contributed to encouraging empathy among readers.

By concealing the physical and psychological impact inflicted on victims as a result of both unauthorised acts of abuse and sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, the news narratives contributed to facilitate the removal of its associated moral responsibilities. Furthermore, the news narratives also demonstrated an US-centric focus of attention on the effects of both unauthorised acts of abuse and sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques on the US and its personnel. Describing the effect of coercive

⁴⁶⁰ Philips, Michael M, Wall Street Journal (2004) The Abu Ghraib Fallout: Marines in Iraq See Prison Photos Creating Enemies (10th May)

⁴⁶¹ MacDonald, Heather (2005) Too Nice for Our Own Good (6th Jan)

treatments on its victims, while little attention were paid to physical and psychological impacts suffered by victims, the news narratives emphasised loss of faith and changing opinions towards US occupation among victims and their families. In addition, unlike the effect of coercive treatment on its victims, the impact of both unauthorised acts of abuse at Abu Ghraib and sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques received extensive coverage. Describing the consequences of coercive treatments towards detainees, the news narratives emphasised potential damage to international image of the US, concerns for the safety of US personnel abroad, as well as loss of domestic morale and support. Despite emphasis on the negative impact of coercive treatments of detainees on the US, which may encourage criticisms, the news narratives contributed to facilitate the discourse of moral reasoning where acts are evaluated by its objective and its effectiveness in achieving its objective. Such framing contributed to further erode its associated moral responsibilities by focusing public attention and discourse on conditional calculations of cost and benefit. As a result, legitimisation of coercive treatment towards detainees becomes possible where the perceived objective outweigh potential cost.

5.3. Conclusion

Presenting the acts of coercive treatment of detainees under US custody, this chapter examined how the acts of unauthorised abuse as well as the coercive interrogation techniques, were presented by the news narratives. By de-emphasising the amount of violence inflicted in both the acts of unauthorised abuse and the officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques, the news narratives de-emphasised its moral significance. Despite the emphasis on graphic details in describing the acts of abuse at Abu Ghraib, which may contribute to encourage moral outrage, the severity and significance of coercive interrogation techniques was trivialised, facilitating the erosion of moral responsibilities, which through the discourse of moral inversion, encouraged possible tolerance among readers. Presenting the officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques, the news narratives also contributed to facilitate the process of moral inversion by de-emphasising the moral significance and responsibility of using physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering, which enabled the focus of attention on the emphasis of technical responsibilities. As a result, through the above mutually reinforcing processes within the construction of coercive interrogation techniques, the selected newspapers contributed to facilitate the process of

moral inversion which enabled the use of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering to be presented as acceptable.

On the other hand, presenting the effects of violence inflicted in both the acts of unauthorised abuse and the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, the news narratives de-emphasised the physical and psychological effects suffered by victims as a result. Through a lack of reference and the use of factual and unemotional descriptions facilitating suppression of empathy, the news narratives facilitated the removal of moral responsibilities by presenting violence against detainees as morally inconsequential. In addition to de-emphasising the effects of coercive treatments suffered by detainees, the news narratives also focused attention on how the US as a country was affected by the coercive treatment of detainees. The news narratives thereby contributed to support the discourse of consequentialist cost and benefit calculations, which also facilitated the process of moral inversion that enabled the legitimisation of coercive interrogation techniques.

6. Presenting the Causes of Violence towards Detainees and Its Moral Judgement

In this chapter, I will examine the narrative presentation of the contexts and causal factors employed by the officially sanctioned harsh interrogation techniques, such as stress positions, prolonged isolation and environment manipulation, as well as the occurrence of abuses towards detainees by US personnel, by the newspapers. This chapter will also examine how the moral evaluation of both the officially sanctioned use of interrogation techniques and the abuse at Abu Ghraib were represented by the selected newspapers. As explained by Entman, through the selection of some aspects of a perceived reality making them more salient in a communicating text, frames contribute to the process of communication in four major ways, namely; defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgements and suggesting remedies.⁴⁶² Through the identification of contexts and causal agents, as well as providing moral evaluations, the framing of the context and causes together with moral judgements of US detention policies and practices by the news media, directly contributes to constituting social knowledge regarding the use of coercive treatments towards detainees by presenting interpretations of events, as well as suggesting appropriate responses. Therefore this chapter will examine how the contexts, causes and moral interpretations of US detention policies and practices are presented, as well as their potential influence in constituting social knowledge regarding the use of harsh interrogation techniques.

This chapter will be divided into two main sections devoted respectively to analysing the causes and contexts of US detention policies and practices, and its moral evaluation. The first section will begin by examining the presentation of causal factors and circumstances leading to the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib. This section will then continue to examine the context and reasoning cited by the newspapers to explain the use of harsh interrogation techniques as a means of intelligence gathering. In order to reveal the presence of frames, this section will examine the presentation of the reasons behind the acts of violence and abuse committed by others and its comparison to that of the treatment of detainees under US custody. In the second section, this chapter will examine the moral judgement of both the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques and the unauthorised acts of abuse as presented by the newspapers. This section will examine firstly the narrative labels

⁴⁶² Entman (1993) P,52

attributed to both the unauthorised abuse of prisoners and the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, as well as reasons on which moral evaluations have been made within the texts of the selected newspapers. In order to reveal the presence of latent frames within the news narratives, this chapter will also examine the news presentation of causes in explanation for the acts of violence and atrocities committed by others as well as their judgement within the news narratives.

6.1. Framing the Causes

As described previously, the first section of this chapter will examine the causal factors and context identified and emphasised by the news narratives in explanation of coercive treatments towards detainees, as well as how they have been presented.

6.1.1. Causes of Unauthorised Abuse at Abu Ghraib

Examining the reports covering the incidents of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib, narratives presented by the US newspapers identified factors including the extraordinary circumstances of war, and more importantly, the failure of the US government in the effective management of detention facilities and the war in Iraq, in their explanation of unauthorised abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib.

The Condition of War and Prison

The first cause identified in explanation of the unauthorised abuse of prisoners is the brutalising context of war and the dynamics of prison management. Emphasising the failure of moral inhibition as a result of extraordinary circumstances, contributes to encouraging empathy among readers towards ‘ordinary individuals’ placed in the context of intense insurgency. In a report published by the *USA Today*, for example, it was explained that:

‘warfare can poison otherwise healthy minds is not new. Eric Dean Jr., whose 1997 book, *Shook Over Hell*, explored the psychological suffering of Civil War and Vietnam combatants, says the Iraqi prison fiasco was inevitable,’ as ‘War is so uniquely horrible that citizens cannot comprehend the brutality of it.’⁴⁶³

In the report above, the *USA Today* cited the brutality of war in explanation of the prisoner abuse scandal, arguing that ‘warfare can poison otherwise healthy minds.’ In another report, the *USA Today* quoted explanation offered by an Air Force psychiatrist, Col. Henry Nelson, who concluded after a visit that ‘Given this atmosphere of danger, promiscuity, and

⁴⁶³ Kluger, Bruce, *USA Today* (2004) Vilified soldier shouldn't be prejudged; just ask her mom (12th May)

negativity, the worst human qualities and behaviours came to the fore.’⁴⁶⁴ Emphasising the brutality of war, the *USA Today* supported the explanation that the abuse of prisoners was caused by external circumstances, namely the brutalising effect of war.

Similarly, reports by the *New York Times* also cited the brutality of war as contributing to the unauthorised abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib. For example, it was stated in a report by the *New York Times*: ‘This is war. It's not right, but war's not right. Given the circumstances, I don't see how they would not do something -- after seeing their buddies dragged through the streets.’⁴⁶⁵ In addition, Hostility and violence amongst inmates was also cited by the *New York Times*, contributing to the abuse of prisoners. According to the accounts of prisoners as cited by the *New York Times*:

‘One evening after fierce riots had erupted at the prison in late November, a group of soldiers rounded up the five former Iraqi generals, who were suspected of instigating the revolt. On their way to the prison's isolation unit, the soldiers stopped the captives, who were handcuffed and blindfolded, and arranged them in a line. Then the guards attacked the prisoners with a barrage of punches, beating them until they were covered in blood.’⁴⁶⁶

In the report above, citing the eruption of riots at the prison, as well as victims’ suspected involvement in the revolt, incidents of abuse became presented as provoked responses towards hostility among inmates at Abu Ghraib. In addition, the brutalising effect of the insurgency was also emphasised by the *Wall Street Journal*. In a report by the *Wall Street Journal*, for example, it was argued that the US had been slowly changed by the Middle-East, as ‘if you choose to play in a tough neighbourhood, perhaps you start adapting to the neighbourhood.’⁴⁶⁷

Emphasising the brutality of war as a causal factor leading to the unauthorised abuse of prisoners, the news media contributed to mitigate the moral significance and responsibilities of Abu Ghraib by evoking two categories of discourse. Firstly, emphasising

⁴⁶⁴ Leinwand, Donna, *USA Today* (2004) Chaotic prison always on the brink ; Vastly outnumbered and poorly equipped, the soldiers guarding Abu Ghraib endured a 'grinding existence' (26th Aug)

⁴⁶⁵ Jacobs, Andrew, *New York Times*, (2004) Shock Over Abuse Reports, but Support for the Troops (8th May)

⁴⁶⁶ Elliot, Andrea, *New York Times* (2004) Unit Says it Gave Earlier Warning of Abuse in Iraq (14th June)

⁴⁶⁷ Seib, Gerald F., *Wall Street Journal* (2004) The Abu Ghraib Fallout --- CAPITAL JOURNAL: It's Time to Wonder What Iraq Is Doing To Change the U.S. (10th May 2004)

the intensity of war and its brutalising effects on its participants, the newspapers evoked the discourse of 'War as Hell.' As explained by Waltzer:

'the hellishness of war drives us to break with every remaining restraint in order to win and those who resist aggression are forced to imitate and perhaps even to exceed, the brutality of the aggressor.'⁴⁶⁸

Through the emphasis on the intensity of insurgency in Iraq and its brutalising effect, the notion of 'War as Hell' was evoked. This supported a discourse that encouraged empathy towards US personnel who may have become corrupted by the tyranny of war in their efforts to suppress Iraqi hostility and violence.

Secondly, in connection to the emphasis on the context of war, the newspapers have also evoked the dynamics of prison and its corrupting effect on human nature as demonstrated by Zimbardo in 1971. In the report published on 12th May 2004 by *USA Today*, it was argued that:

'Psychology scholar Philip Zimbardo discovered the answer in 1971. He conducted a mock prison incarceration in the basement of Stanford University's psychology building. So quickly did the student-guards transform into sadistic tormentors -- forcing captives to strip naked, wear bags on their heads and perform sexual acts -- that Zimbardo cut short the experiment by a week.'⁴⁶⁹

Therefore, the combination of prison dynamics and insufficient discipline and oversight within the military hierarchy meant that 'the barrel corrupts anything it touches.'⁴⁷⁰ Similarly, the experiment by Zimbardo is also mentioned in a comment published by *USA Today* in demonstration of the corrupting effect of prison. As demonstrated by the experiment, it was argued that 'jails are inhumane systems that create conditions for abuse.'⁴⁷¹ The dynamics of prisoner is also mentioned by the *New York Times* in an editorial by a former prison guard in explanation for the unauthorised abuse of prisoners. As explained in the editorial:

⁴⁶⁸ Waltzer (1977) P.32

⁴⁶⁹ Kluger, Bruce, *USA Today* (2004) Vilified soldier shouldn't be prejudged; just ask her mom (12th May)

⁴⁷⁰ *ibid*

⁴⁷¹ Callahan, Elisabeth, *Wall Street Journal* (2004) *Abu Ghraib Guards Were All Too Human for the Job* (24th Aug)

‘prison officers, in charge of people who are usually not nice, are bound to overstep the rules occasionally. The infractions may be relatively minor, like forgetting to unlock the cell of a difficult inmate when it's recreation time, or more serious, like participating in an "adjustment" of an abusive inmate.’⁴⁷²

Evoking the notion of human fallibility in extraordinary circumstances, framing of the unauthorised abuse of prisoners contributed to a discourse of understanding which portrayed the perpetrators as ordinary individuals, ‘cast in a context which disempowers moral pressures and legitimises inhumanity.’⁴⁷³ Through such discourse, readers were encouraged to empathise with the perpetrators of the unauthorised abuse as victims of brutalisation within the context of Zimbardo’s prison dynamics. As explained in a public comment published by *USA Today*:

‘the Iraq prison situation doesn't appear to be about leadership failure at the top or a few bad apples. It is clearly another lesson -- and an ugly one, at that -- in the frailty of being human.’⁴⁷⁴

More importantly, by emphasising external circumstances and frailty of humanity, the newspapers also contributed to support alleviation of moral responsibilities through the discourse of consequentialist moral reasoning where, as acts are evaluated through the objectives it serves, the lack of malignant objective facilitated the removal of guilt.

Failure in Effective Management and Oversight

More important were the most commonly emphasised explanations of the abuse as failures of the US Military in its effective management of prison staff in Iraq. Shortly after the publication of the images of abuse and sexual humiliation at Abu Ghraib, a public comment published by *USA Today* on 6th May 2004, for example, criticised the failure of the US military in acknowledging and rectifying the pattern of mistreatment of detainees by US forces, stating that ‘Warning signs about abuses of Iraqi detainees had been flashing for months.’⁴⁷⁵ On 7th May 2004, the *USA Today* also cited the opinion by retired CIA representative Milton Bearden, which argued that the abuse witnessed at Abu Ghraib represented ‘an almost total breakdown of discipline in this administration, an administration

⁴⁷² Conover, Ted, New York Times (2004) My Life as a Guard (7th May)

⁴⁷³ Zimbardo (1989) P.166

⁴⁷⁴ Williams, Myles, USA Today (2004) Prison abuses, beheading don't compare (14th May)

⁴⁷⁵ USA Today (2004) *Why* was pattern of abuse ignored for so long? (6th May)

that prides itself on discipline.’⁴⁷⁶ In the reports above, the *USA Today* emphasised the failure to impose strict regulation and discipline, as well as to respond to allegation of abuse as the main reason leading to the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib. Similarly, the *New York Times* also emphasised failure in management and oversight within the US military as a causal factor leading to the unauthorised abuse of prisoners. It was reported on 4th May, for example, that:

‘the military’s investigative report into abuses of detainees in Iraq, by Maj. Gen. Antonio M. Taguba, described broader problems in the prison system and pervasive flaws in the leadership, training and morale of the military police at Abu Ghraib and elsewhere.’⁴⁷⁷

The report also cited an example of disciplinary failure within the US military, where:

‘after several detainees were beaten in May 2003 at Camp Bucca, another detention site in Iraq, nothing was done to make clear to the military police elsewhere that such actions were not to be tolerated.’⁴⁷⁸

In the reports above, the *New York Times* emphasised flaws in the leadership, training and morale of the US military police, as well as failure to clarify regulations regarding to the treatment of detainees as causes of abuse towards detainees.

Similarly, reports published by the *Wall Street Journal* also emphasised the role of disciplinary failure within the US military in facilitating abuse at Abu Ghraib. In a public comment published by the *Wall Street Journal*, for example, it was also argued that:

‘The Abu Ghraib abuse resulted rather from the Pentagon’s failure to respond adequately to the Iraq insurgency and its inability to maintain military discipline in the understaffed facility. As the avalanche of prisoners taken in the street fighting overwhelmed the minimal contingent of soldiers at Abu Ghraib, order within the ranks broke down as thoroughly as order in the operation of the prison itself. The

⁴⁷⁶ Diamond, John, Drinkard, Jim & Moniz, Dave, *USA Today*(2004) Rumsfeld faces lawmakers ; Questioning on prison scandal may be heated (7th May 2004)

⁴⁷⁷ Filkins, Dexter, Shanker, Thom, *New York Times* (2004) Army Punishes 7 With Reprimands For Prison Abuse (4th May)

⁴⁷⁸ *ibid*

guards' sadistic and sexualized treatment of prisoners was just an extension of the chaos they were already wallowing in with no restraint from above.'⁴⁷⁹

As a result of such lack of discipline and oversights, therefore, an environment was created which enabled the misconduct of US personnel to occur.

In addition to specific disciplinary failure in prison management, the news narratives also emphasised general failures in management of the War in Iraq, including appointment of unsuitable interrogation staff, as well as lack of trained troops in prisoner management and experienced military interrogators, as contributing to the unauthorised abuse of prisoners. As reported by *USA Today*:

'An internal Army report on the scandal said military police guarding Abu Ghraib, west of Baghdad, were untrained for such duty. The entire Army has only two specialised battalions trained for guard duty. One is in Afghanistan and the other in Kuwait.'⁴⁸⁰

The lack of trained personnel and the employment of inexperienced prison staff at Abu Ghraib was again emphasised in a report published on 15th June 2004 describing that:

'In a scramble for personnel, commanders wound up staffing Abu Ghraib with reserve military police who had never taken the Army's four-week course for prison guards. And because the military intelligence unit sent to Abu Ghraib was short of interrogators, commanders patched together substitutes from other military units and from private contractors,' and the 'shortage of trained personnel appears to be one of the keys to what went wrong.'⁴⁸¹

Reports by the *New York Times* also cited the employment of private contractors with little training or experience, and congressional oversight, contributing to the misconduct of the US military. In an example cited by the *New York Times*:

'thirty-three-year-old Steven Stefanowicz, fresh out of the Navy, arrived at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq as a contract interrogator last October, just as the prisoner

⁴⁷⁹ McDonald, Heather, Wall Street Journal (2005) Too Nice for Our Own Good (6th Jan)

⁴⁸⁰ Diamond, John, Drinkard, Jim & Moniz, Dave, USA Today (2004) Rumsfeld faces lawmakers ; Questioning on prison scandal may be heated (7th May 2004)

⁴⁸¹ Eisler, Peter & Moniz, Dave, USA Today, (2004) U.S. missed need for prison personnel in war plans ; Shortage haunts military months later at Abu Ghraib (15th June)

abuses were getting under way. He had no military experience in interrogation. ... But just three months later, Maj. Gen. Antonio M. Taguba began his investigation of prisoner abuses and found that Mr. Stefanowicz was directing some of the military police officers linked to abuses. He was, therefore, “directly or indirectly responsible” for the abuses, the general wrote.’⁴⁸²

Indeed, it was argued in an editorial published by the *New York Times* that ‘many of the worst moments of the Iraqi occupation have involved private military contractors “outsourced” by the Pentagon. With no public or Congressional oversight.’⁴⁸³ Coverage by the *Wall Street Journal* also emphasised the lack of experience and training among prison staff as contributing towards the mistreatment of prisoners and explained:

‘interrogators and analysts at Abu Ghraib, some of whom say they had little experience interrogating prisoners, knew little about the enemy they were fighting. And they were working within a military-intelligence system that was never designed to incarcerate and interrogate thousands of prisoners for months on end.’⁴⁸⁴

Therefore, the result was:

‘a confused operation, plagued by low morale and unrelenting pressure to produce under dangerous circumstances. Though none of the soldiers interviewed for this article acknowledged witnessing the alleged abuse, many said they can see how it occurred given the conditions at Abu Ghraib.’⁴⁸⁵

Therefore, as emphasised by the news narratives, the failure of the US authority in the establishment of discipline and for oversights in Iraq, as well as the failure in providing qualified and experienced prison staff and interrogators, contributed to create an environment where misconduct and abuse were allowed to fester. As commented on by former pentagon advisor on interrogations, Mark Jacobson, ‘had the policies that were in place at Gitmo from

⁴⁸² Brinkley, Joel, *New York Times*, (2004) 9/11 Set Army Contractor On Path to Abu Ghraib (19th May)

⁴⁸³ Singer, P. W., *New York Times* (2004) Nation Builders and Low Bidders in Iraq (15th June)

⁴⁸⁴ Cooper, Christopher & Jaffe, Greg, *Wall Street Journal* (2004) Under Fire: At Abu Ghraib, Soldiers Faced Pressure to Produce Intelligence --- Analysts, Interrogators Say Many Were Ill-Prepared; Quotas, Unsafe Conditions --- In a Tent, as the Shells Flew. (1st June 2004)

⁴⁸⁵ *ibid*

detention to interrogation been fully implemented with proper oversight, none of this likely would have happened.’⁴⁸⁶

In the above reports, the news narratives emphasised the failure of the US government and its responsibilities in the unauthorised abuse of prisoners. Despite such an emphasis, however, the news media’s criticisms on the grounds of failure in management and oversight continued to support a discourse of technical rationality, which considered only professional and effective policy implementation.

Confusion over US Detention Policies

In connection to the failure of the US military in its effective management of its detention facilities and the war in Iraq, the influence of US policies regarding the status and treatment of detainees was also emphasised by the news narratives. As a result of the reinterpretation of the Geneva Conventions and the redefinition of the status of Prisoner of War following the attacks on the World Trade Centre and subsequent War on Terrorism, an environment of confusion was created which contributed to the abusive treatment of the detainees. Since the attacks on 11th September 2001, the US administration has sought legal justifications for torture, which facilitated the erosion of international humanitarian standards. In January 2002, a memorandum was authorised by the US Attorney General which stated that Al-Qaeda suspects and Taliban fighters did not qualify for the status and protection of Prisoner of War status under the Geneva Convention. Another memorandum authorised in August 2002, giving an extremely restricted definition of torture was also proposed, which excluded all but the most severe forms of torture. Such reinterpretations of international humanitarian standards, it was reported within the news narratives, contributed to create an environment of confusion that resulted in the proliferation of violence towards detainees under US custody.

The migration of detention policies and practices from Guantanamo Bay, for example, was emphasised by the *Wall Street Journal*, which described that:

‘rules for tough interrogations were put into effect and routinely used at Iraq’s Abu Ghraib prison after they were discarded as too harsh for use on al Qaeda detainees at

⁴⁸⁶ Eisler, Peters & Morrison, Blake, USA Today (2004) General promised quick results if Gitmo plan used at Abu Ghraib ; But Miller asked for extra guards and legal adviser (23rd June)

Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, according to documents and statements from people familiar with both complexes.’⁴⁸⁷

In addition, the *Wall Street Journal* also emphasised that ‘the rules of interrogation were more loosely applied in Iraq.’⁴⁸⁸ Similarly, the migration of interrogation rules to Iraq as a result of confusion was also emphasised by the *USA Today*. In a reported by the *USA Today*, for example, it was also argued that:

‘Rules violating the Geneva Conventions were invented for dealing with proven terrorists in specific places or circumstances. However, as President Bush, who referred to Iraqi insurgents as ‘terrorists,’ and other top civilian authorities failed to make that clear to the soldiers in the field a state of confusion was created. Subsequently, ‘The Guantanamo rules migrated to Iraq, where the Geneva Conventions were supposed to apply.’⁴⁸⁹

Consequently, confusion over policy application meant that ‘Gradually this came to be applied to hundreds of suspects, many of them innocent.’⁴⁹⁰ As a result, as emphasised by the *USA Today* failure of the US authority in clarifying the legal status of detainees during the war in Iraq contributed to the assumption among US guards in Iraq, that violence towards detainees was authorised or condoned. Similarly, the influence of harsh interrogation policies used during the War on Terrorism and policy migration were also emphasised by the *New York Times* as causes of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib. It was argued, for example, that:

‘Non-doctrinal approaches, techniques and practices were developed and approved for use in Afghanistan and GTMO [Guantanamo naval base] as part of the Global War on Terrorism (G.W.O.T.). These techniques, approaches and practices became confused at Abu Ghraib and were implemented without proper authorities or safeguards. Soldiers were not trained on non-doctrinal interrogation techniques such as sleep adjustment, isolation and the use of dogs.’⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁷ Cooper, Christopher & Jaffe, Greg, *The Wall Street Journal* (2004) *Iraq Prison Rules Seen as Too Harsh For Guantanamo* (15th June)

⁴⁸⁸ *ibid*

⁴⁸⁹ *USA Today* (2004) *Army abuse report seeks to skirt blame, evade spotlight* (27th July)

⁴⁹⁰ *USA Today*, (2004) *How innocent Iraqis came to be abused as terrorists* (10th June 2004)

⁴⁹¹ *New York Times*, (2004) *Latest Report on Abu Ghraib: Abuses of Iraqi Prisoners 'Are, Without Question, Criminal* (26th Aug)

Therefore, as a result of the confusion caused by the reinterpretation of the status of prisoners and their acceptable detention and treatment, it was argued by the newspapers that an environment of confusion was created that enabled abuse and mistreatment. Emphasising confusion caused by reinterpretation of international law and migration of policies from Abu Ghraib, the newspapers did imply a degree of governmental responsibility in the scandal. However, focusing only on aspects of policy implementation, the emphasis on policy confusion continued to support the discourse of technical rationality, where it was the actual implementation of US detention policies, rather than its fundamental choice in favour of the use of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering that was questioned.

Summary

Analysing the causes of the unauthorised abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, the news narratives contributed to support a discourse that encouraged mitigation of its moral significance as well as its associated responsibilities and guilt. This was achieved firstly through emphasising the corruption of normal moral inhibitions under the exceptional circumstances of war and prison dynamics in explanation of the scandal. By emphasising the context of war, the presentation of the unauthorised abuse of prisoners contributed to a framing that encouraged understanding and empathy towards the perpetrators as victims of their circumstances. Most importantly, emphasising the role of external circumstances such as the brutality of war and prison dynamics, the news narratives also contribute to alleviation of guilt through consequentialist moral reasoning by emphasising lack of malignant intentions.

In addition, the news presentation of the unauthorised abuse of detainees also contributed to mitigating the significance of Abu Ghraib by emphasised procedural failures such as the ineffective management of detention facilities and the war in Iraq, as well as confusion as a result of ambiguous policy interpretations. Emphasising the failure of the US government in the prevention of abuse of detainees under US custody, the newspapers supported highly critical framing of US detention practices. However, the focus of attention on failures in policy implementation by both the US government and the military, continued to support the framing of the unauthorised abuse of prisoners as a result of technical errors in the process of policy implementation. Through identifying causes, frames therefore suggest solutions to the problems identified. The news narratives therefore contributed to a discourse

of technical rationality through suggesting the effect of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib was rectifiable through administrative reforms in the condition of detention facilities, supervisory structure of the military, and pursuit of accountability along the chain of command of the US military. Therefore, through the establishment of responsibility and accountability, as well as with promises of reform, closure is achieved by the reassurance that lessons have been learned in ensuring professionally implemented detention and interrogation policies. Such closure was demonstrated in reports such as that published by the *New York Times*:

‘you will see in the weeks ahead that we are a nation of justice,” [Powell] said, insisting that, in investigating the abuses, the United States would follow “the values that we have always held dear.”⁴⁹²

In addition, through attainment of technical rational solutions, the news narratives also offered reassurance that US moral superiority remained intact. As explained by Rajiva:

‘the abuse was aberrant and that in correcting its mistakes, the American government was displaying an example that would reassure the world and reiterate the difference between America and its enemies.’⁴⁹³

6.1.2. Causes of Officially Sanctioned Use of Coercive Interrogation Techniques

Examining the coverage regarding the context and reasons leading to the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, the newspapers emphasised two main categories of rationalisations, including the perception of a state of exception, as well as the need for intelligence in the extraordinary circumstance of the War on Terrorism in order to save American lives. Emphasising the state of exception and the need to save American lives in the War on Terrorism, this presentation of the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques contributed to a consequentialist moral reasoning where means are justified by its objectives, supporting the discourse of Administrative Evil.

State of Exception and Supreme Emergency

Explaining the official use of physical and psychological coercion as a means of intelligence gathering, the first reason emphasised by the newspapers was the exceptional circumstances of the War in Iraq and the War on Terrorism, as well as a new breed of enemies. Evoking the notion of the State of Exception, the news narratives contributed to the

⁴⁹² Cowell, Alan, *New York Times*, (2004) Powell, on Trip to Mideast, Vows Justice on Iraq Abus (16th May)

⁴⁹³ Rajiva (2005) P.36

construction of a state of “Supreme Emergency” where normal politics is suspended and where the usual checks and balances on the exercise of power can be dispensed with.’⁴⁹⁴ Therefore:

‘States are permitted to take any measures deemed necessary for their survival – including pre-emptive war, the suspension of constitutional rights, preventive detention or any other extraordinary measure.’⁴⁹⁵

In a report published by *USA Today*, for example, the emphasis on the exceptional state of the War on Terrorism may be demonstrated through the words of Senator Inhofe who was cited within the text, ‘We’re in a different kind of world than we’ve ever been in before, And I believe that we need to be tougher than we have ever have been before...’⁴⁹⁶ It was argued that ‘In the war on terror, we confront an enemy that seeks to inflict large-scale civilian casualties by surprise attack.’⁴⁹⁷ Therefore, it becomes imperative that the US authority be allowed to use all means necessary in order to prevent possible future attacks. Therefore, as a ‘growing concern about the increasingly violent Iraqi insurgency that was claiming American lives daily,’⁴⁹⁸ narratives appealing to the notion of the State of Exception, contributed to encourage the perception amongst readers that the use of coercive interrogation techniques would be necessary against an unconventional enemy. The *New York Times* also cited the need to obtain information on possible future attacks as emphasised by a senior intelligence official, who argued that:

‘Let’s keep in mind what the objective is -- to get information that will save American lives, and there is an absolute necessity to use effective interrogation to gain insights on plans to kill Americans.’⁴⁹⁹

The image of the War on Terrorism as an exceptional war against a new breed of enemies was most strongly emphasised by the *Wall Street Journal*. As emphasised in a report, ‘in this fight the enemy does not play by our rules or by any rules at all. WMD will be in terrorist

⁴⁹⁴ Jackson (2005) P.99

⁴⁹⁵ Jackson (2005) P.99

⁴⁹⁶ Shapiro, Walter, *USA Today*, (2004) *For senator, outrage is more outrageous than abuse* (12th May)

⁴⁹⁷ Gonzales, Alberto R, *USA Today* (2004) *Terrorists are different* (10th June)

⁴⁹⁸ *USA Today*, (2004) Pressure at Iraqi prison detailed ; Rice aide went to Abu Ghraib (18th June)

⁴⁹⁹ Jehl, Douglas, & Johnston, David, *New York Times*, (2004) C.I.A. Expands Its Inquiry Into Interrogation Tactics (29th Aug)

hands eventually; conventional wisdom recognizes this reality.⁵⁰⁰ Therefore, as advocated by John Yoo, 'it makes little sense to deprive ourselves of an important, and legal, means to detect and prevent terrorist attacks while we are still in the middle of a fight to the death with al Qaeda.'⁵⁰¹

Presenting the War on Terrorism as a war of uncompromising binary opposition, the news narratives invoked the notion supreme emergency where the total war of survival enabled the removal of conventional rules of war in what becomes perceived as a total war, where survival of the state is at stake. The notion of supreme emergency a powerful one as it evokes the 'ticking time bomb' scenario that has been widely portrayed in fictional drama creations such as *24*. Therefore, by evoking the notion of supreme emergency, the newspaper supported a discourse that identified the US military with the fictional heroes such as Jack Bauer in *24* who, in order to prevent imminent disasters, often used means of coercive interrogation techniques. In addition, such a discourse also contributes to encourage projection of fictional scenarios of supreme emergency on to real-life events. Through such connections, the news narratives contributed to support a discourse of consequentialist moral reasoning where the requirement of supreme emergency and the need to win the war of survival facilitated justification of the recourse to physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering.

Intelligence Value of Detainees

While the discourse of supreme emergency enabled the removal of traditional moral inhibitions towards the use of physical and psychological coercion as a means of intelligence gathering, emphasis on the security risks and potential intelligence value of detainees further strengthened its justification. As a result, the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques was not only presented as acceptable under the extraordinary circumstances of insurgency, but also necessary in order to secure co-operation and extract vital intelligence.

The potential of value of detainees under US custody as a source of information for the prevention of future attacks was emphasised by *USA Today* and the *Wall Street Journal*. In a report published by the *USA Today*, for example, readers were reminded that:

⁵⁰⁰ Kaspraov, David, Wall Street Journal (2003) Stop the Moral Equivalence (19th May)

⁵⁰¹ Yoo, John, Wall Street Journal (2004) Terrorists Have No Geneva Rights (26th May)

‘inmates at Abu Ghraib did produce some highly valuable intelligence. One female detainee, for example, provided detailed information on the disguises and whereabouts of ousted Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.’⁵⁰²

A statement by Colonel Thomas Papas was also cited, emphasising the need for coercive interrogation techniques in order to obtain information that ‘could potentially save countless lives of American soldiers’, as a ‘detainee can provide information related to safe houses, facilitators, financing, recruitment and operations of foreign fighter smuggling into Iraq.’⁵⁰³ In a report published by the *Wall Street Journal* it was argued that, ‘to win the war on terror, the U.S. will require vastly better intelligence than it has had so far. Terrorist suspects are potentially among the most valuable sources of intelligence.’⁵⁰⁴ In addition to their potential as sources of intelligence, the news narratives also presented the detainees as uncooperative and dangerous. Following the kidnapping and execution of Nicolas Berg, the necessity to obtain information was demonstrated through the statement of Senator Inhofe cited by *USA Today*, which stated that: ‘it shows the kind of people we're dealing with and why we have to get information from these cellblock people.’⁵⁰⁵

Saving American Lives

Most importantly, the fundamental emphasis of the news narratives was its necessity in saving American lives, which supported not only toleration but also justification for the use of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering. The need for sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques was presented repeatedly by emphasising the ‘growing concern about the increasingly violent Iraqi insurgency that was claiming American lives daily’⁵⁰⁶ and the need to ‘get information that will save American lives.’⁵⁰⁷ In a report published by the *New York Times*, for example, the need to save American lives was emphasised through the words of a former intelligence official that, ‘there is an absolute necessity to use effective interrogation to gain insights on plans to kill Americans.’⁵⁰⁸ It was also argued by the *Wall Street Journal* that:

⁵⁰² USA Today, (2004) Pressure at Iraqi prison detailed ; Rice aide went to Abu Ghraib (18th June)

⁵⁰³ Eisler, Peter, USA Today, (2004) Non-Iraqi captives singled out for harsh treatment, records say ; Foreign fighters seen as threat (6th July)

⁵⁰⁴ The Wall Street Journal, (2004) Rendering Al Qaeda (11th Mar)

⁵⁰⁵ Shapiro, Walter, USA Today, (2004) For senator, outrage is more outrageous than abuse (12th May)

⁵⁰⁶ USA Today, (2004) Pressure at Iraqi prison detailed ; Rice aide went to Abu Ghraib (18th June)

⁵⁰⁷ Jehl, Douglas, & Johnston, David, New York Times, (2004) C.I.A. Expands Its Inquiry Into Interrogation Tactics (29th Aug)

⁵⁰⁸ *ibid*

‘To win the war on terror, the U.S. will require vastly better intelligence than it has had so far. Terrorist suspects are potentially among the most valuable sources of intelligence.’⁵⁰⁹

As a result, it became imperative that freedom be given to ‘mining [of] these assets’ ‘when it might save American lives.’⁵¹⁰ Emphasising the need to prevent future attacks and save American lives, the news narratives therefore contributed to the discourse of consequentialist justification, which enabled the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques to not only be accepted within the State of Exception, but also actively justified.

Through emphasising the exceptional circumstances of the War in Iraq, the War on Terrorism, and most importantly, the need to save American lives, the news narratives supported a discourse of which encouraged empathy towards the sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques by invoking the notion of necessity and supreme emergency, despite possible moral unease towards the actual methods of interrogation. More importantly, by emphasising the importance of saving American lives, the news narratives also contributed to further strengthen the discourse of consequentialist moral reasoning where acts of physical and psychological violence towards detainees became justified through the objectives they were intended to serve. As explained by Dillard and Ruchala, as the wellbeing of the organisation becomes accepted as being synonymous with the wellbeing of the individual, violence may become authorised by virtue of the actions furthering the ultimate goals of the organisation.⁵¹¹ Consequently, supporting the discourse of consequentialist moral reasoning, the news narratives also supported the discourse of Administrative Evil

6.1.3. Explaining Atrocities by Others

The causes and reasons of acts of violence committed by other actors were presented very differently. Unlike the presentation of the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques and unauthorised abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, there was little coverage on the causes leading to violence committed by others such as the Iraqi insurgents. Unlike the news presentations on the coercive treatment of detainees by US personnel which encouraged empathy and understanding, the presentation of atrocities committed by others focused on the less legitimate reasons including the intention to prevent the progress and

⁵⁰⁹ The Wall Street Journal, (2004) Rendering Al Qaeda (11th Mar)

⁵¹⁰ The Wall Street Journal, (2004) Rendering Al Qaeda (11th Mar)

⁵¹¹ Dillard, & Ruchala (2005) P.612

reconstruction of Iraq, religious fanaticism, and irrational hatred towards the US and its people. Such disparity in emphasis could be observed by the framing of incidents such as the attack on US soldiers in Fallujah, as well as the kidnappings and executions of US citizens by Iraqi insurgents.

Presenting the acts of killing, kidnapping and abuse committed by others, the first reason identified in the explanation of violence towards US troops and citizens in Iraq, was the intention to disrupt the progress of democratisation and reconstruction of Iraq through violence and intimidation. In a commentary published by *USA Today*, the intention which motivated the series of beheadings by terrorist groups were described as ‘clearly meant to terrify the public into forcing a pull-out of all foreigners from Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the entire Middle East so extreme Islam can blossom throughout the region.’⁵¹² With the intention of:

‘terrifying Americans, driving them out of the Middle East and destabilizing U.S. allies there,’ the kidnappings and execution were also described in another comment published by the *USA Today* as ‘political, psychological [ploys] to show the enemy is merciless, vengeful and will stop at nothing’ designed to ‘cause maximum shock in the Western public and particularly the American public.’⁵¹³

In the reports cited above, for example, the representation of violence committed by others published by the *USA Today* emphasised the intention to drive out foreign influence in order to support growing extremism. Emphasising the unjustifiable anti-progress objectives of the Iraqi insurgents, the *USA Today* contributed to de-legitimise their acts of violence through consequentialist moral reasoning. Similarly, the *New York Times* also emphasised the intention to destabilise post-war Iraq as a reason behind the acts of violence by Iraqi insurgents. As reported in June 2004, ‘the attacks could be the opening salvo in an attempt to derail the imminent handover of power.’⁵¹⁴ It was also emphasised by the *Wall Street Journal* that the objective of the Iraqi insurgency were ‘simply to retake power and to return Iraq to its horrible past.’⁵¹⁵ Through presenting the acts of violence by Iraqi insurgents as being motivated by the disruption of the reconstruction of Iraq, the *New York Times* also supported

⁵¹² USA Today, (2004) Beheadings can't deter battle (23rd June)

⁵¹³ USA Today, (2004) Koran doesn't call for beheadings, Islamic cleric says (21st June)

⁵¹⁴ Wang, Edward, (2004) Attacks Intensify As Iraq Stumbles Toward Transition ()

⁵¹⁵ Bremer, L Paul (2005) The Right Call (12th Jan)

a de-legitimising presentation of violence committed by emphasising unjustifiable anti-progress objective.

The second reason cited in the explanation for the acts of violence committed against US personnel by insurgents, was the fanatical religious belief of a perverted Islam, which advocated violence towards foreigners. Following the kidnapping and execution of Nicolas Berg, it was argued by *USA Today* that:

‘Berg's killers were members of al-Qaeda who said his death was revenge for the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib. However, al-Qaeda believes it is a religious duty to kill all non-Muslims in Islamic countries regardless of what they have done.’⁵¹⁶

It was also reported that ‘The Islamic militants who beheaded two American hostages in the past two months justify their actions in part as an expression of their faith.’⁵¹⁷ As explained by Jackson, in order to remove the possible identification of the enemy as legitimate soldiers in the War on Terrorism, ‘they needed to be portrayed as simply evil or mad rather than as rationally calculating revolutionaries or political dissidents.’⁵¹⁸ Therefore, through the portrayal of Iraqi insurgents as fanatics motivated by religious extremism, the reason for their acts of violence became presented as irrational and therefore illegitimate. Through demanding recognition of the connection between Islam, the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the acts of violence by insurgents in Iraq, the reports by the *Wall Street Journal* emphasised the role of the Islamic religious fanaticism in motivating acts of violence against US citizens. It was argued, that:

‘religion is no innocent bystander in the violence perpetrated by Muslims’ as it was the permission of killing ‘as punishment for murder or other villainy in the land,’ that was ‘how Nicholas Berg's executioners justified their travesty.’⁵¹⁹

While not explicitly citing Islamic extremism as motivating the attacks on US troops and citizens, editorial opinions by the *New York Times* also emphasised the irrationality and fanaticism behind the execution of Nicolas Berg and argued that ‘They killed him out of the same madness that drove their comrades in al Qaeda to slaughter thousands on September

⁵¹⁶ Kiely, Kathy & Welch, William M (2004) Abu Ghraib photos cause gasps in Congress ; Lawmakers see more than 1,800, debate releasing them to public (13th May)

⁵¹⁷ Despeignes, Peronet (2004) Koran doesn't call for beheadings, Islamic cleric says (21st June)

⁵¹⁸ Jackson, (2005) P.60

⁵¹⁹ Manji, Irshad, Wall Street Journal(2004) Blind Faith (20th May)

11th, 2001.⁵²⁰ Emphasising irrational motivations such as religious fanaticism, therefore, the news narratives further supported the de-legitimisation of violence committed by Iraqi insurgents as unjustifiable through consequentialist moral reasoning.

The third motivation driving the acts of violence committed by Iraqi insurgents was their universal hatred of the US and a desire for revenge following the prisoner abuse scandal. The execution of Nicolas Berg had been referred to being committed 'in retaliation for mistreatment at Abu Ghraib',⁵²¹ or 'in apparent revenge for the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. troops.'⁵²² The vengeful statement by the perpetrators of the execution of Eugene Armstrong was also cited by the *New York Times* stating that 'Now Mr. Bush, we will make you drink from the same cup from which you made our brothers in Abu Ghraib drink',⁵²³. The *New York Times* also reported supportive messages among Islamic militants regarding the execution of Nicolas Berg, as revenge for the abuse of prisoners, as 'web sites of militant groups expressed joy over the beheading and ran photos from the video side by side with photos of the abuse of Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib prison.'⁵²⁴ The *Wall Street Journal* also cited that the incidents of beheadings were demonstrations of 'a primordial sense of retaliation and revenge'.⁵²⁵ In addition to the desire for revenge following the abuse of prisoners, a generalised hostility towards foreigners was also emphasised by the newspapers. *USA Today*, following the killing of four Americans in Fallujah, cited a local Iraqi official, 'every foreigner in Fallujah is a target' and that 'resistance attacks are legitimate.'⁵²⁶ The killing of US troops at Fallujah was also described by the *New York Times* as an 'Act of Hatred.'⁵²⁷ The hatred towards the US among Iraqis could also be observed through statements such as 'Fallujah is the graveyard of Americans!'⁵²⁸ The killing of Americans in Fallujah was also described by the *Wall Street Journal* as 'displays of Sunni Iraqis' hatred'⁵²⁹, and it was argued that the killings were an 'expression of hatred designed to insult and

⁵²⁰ Editorial, New York Times, (2004) Nicholas Berg's Death (14th May)

⁵²¹ Lynch, David J USA Today (2004) Some in Baghdad say U.S. troops no longer wanted (13th may)

⁵²² Johnson, Peter, USA Today (2004) A death caught on tape: Should it run or not? ; Graphic images pose dilemmas for TV news (12th May)

⁵²³ Wong, Edward, New York Times (2004) Iraqi Video Shows Beheading of Man Said to Be American (21st Sep)

⁵²⁴ Allam, Abeer, New York Times (2004) In Arab World, Press Coverage Of Beheading Varies Widely (13th May)

⁵²⁵ Riley, Naomi Schaefer, Wall Street Journal (2004) Taste -- Houses of Worship: In Allah's Name? (26th June)

⁵²⁶ Johnson, Kevin USA Today (2004) Fallujah leaders' defiance could hinder U.S. ; 'The resistance attacks are legitimate,' city manager says (5th April)

⁵²⁷ Burns, John, New York Times, (2004) Act of Hatred, Hints of Doubt (1st April)

⁵²⁸ Gettleman, Jeffrey, New York Times, (2004) 4 From U.S. Killed In Ambush In Iraq; Mob Drags Bodies (1st April)

⁵²⁹ Wall Street Journal, (2004) World-Wide (1st April)

frighten.’⁵³⁰ Through the portrayal of violence by Iraqi insurgents as being motivated by revenge and hatred, the attacks on US citizens becomes depoliticised and portrayed as purely the result of irrational emotions such as hatred, anger and vengeance. As explained by Jackson, ‘it is not about politics, ideology or foreign policy, but about irrational hatred.’⁵³¹ In conjunction with the emphasis on the US effort in the investigation and prosecution resulting from the prisoner abuse scandal, as well as the lack of mentioning the cause of discontent among Iraqi insurgents, the newspapers presented an image whereby hostility towards the US in Iraq was presented as not only irrational, but also unfounded. As a result, acts of violence committed by others such as the Iraqi insurgency became presented as unjustifiable through consequentialist moral reasoning.

As explained by Jackson, in order to construct the image of the evil enemy:

‘the enemy needed to be stripped of any genuine and justifiable political grievances; they needed to be portrayed as simply evil or mad rather than as rationally calculating revolutionaries or political dissidents.’⁵³²

Examining the causal reasons cited as motivations behind the acts of violence committed by others such as Iraqi insurgents, one may notice that while acts of abuses by the US had been framed as being caused by strategic necessity and unintentional disciplinary failures as a result of war, the framing of attacks by others was with an emphasis on negative motivations such as disruption of the reconstruction process, as well as irrational hatred. Such disparity in the framing not only contributes to a framing of violence by others that discouraged empathy among readers through the de-legitimisation of its causes, but more importantly enabled a moral differentiation between the US and the ‘Others’, through the perceived difference in causes. As explained by Jackson, ‘the Iraqi prisoner abuse scandal which began in May 2004 was disturbing because it upset the fundamental identities established through the official discourse.’⁵³³ As a result of such a disparity in the framing of the reasons and motivations which led to the abusive treatment of both sanctioned and unauthorised by US military, as well as that of the violent attacks and killings by insurgents, the perceived distinction in the identities of the good Americans and evil enemies is restored.

⁵³⁰ Bowden, Mark Wall Street Journal (2004) The Lessons of Mogadishu (5th April)

⁵³¹ Jackson (2005) P.63

⁵³² *ibid* P.60

⁵³³ Jackson (2005) P.59

6.1.4. Summary

Presenting the unauthorised abuse of prisoners photographed at Abu Ghraib, the news narratives emphasised a discourse that mitigated its moral significance and guilt towards US detention and interrogation policies. Citing the brutalising circumstances of war and prison dynamics, the news narratives contributed to alleviate moral responsibility and guilt of the prisoner abuse through consequentialist moral reasoning by emphasising the lack of malignant objectives. In addition, emphasising causes such as the ineffective management of both detention facilities and the military operations in Iraq, as well as confusion resulting from policy interpretations, the unauthorised abuse of prisoners photographed at Abu Ghraib was a result of a technical error within a highly stressful context. Therefore, supporting the discourse of technical rationality, the presentation of the unauthorised abuse of prisoners contributed to reassure readers that moral closure may be achieved through administrative reforms, while encouraging readers to empathise with ‘ordinary people’ whose normal moral inhibition failed under the exceptional circumstances of war.

Presenting reasons for the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, the news narratives evoked the notions of the State of Exception and Supreme Emergency which allowed removal of conventional constraint in the conduct of war and treatment towards detainees. More importantly, emphasising the need to save American lives, the newspapers further contributed to support the discourse consequentialist moral reasoning that enabled acts of violence to be justified and authorised by the objective it served.

6.2. Judgement of Coercive Treatment Towards Detainees

As explained by Entman, one of the four functions performed by frames is the provision of moral judgements.⁵³⁴ Through moral judgements contained within the news narratives, readers are encouraged to place events such as the unauthorised abuse of detainees and the sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques into categories of moral acceptability. Therefore in this section, I will examine how the treatment of detainees under US custody has been judged by the newspapers. In order to illustrate the presence of frames within the narratives, this section will also draw upon acts of violence committed by others as a means of comparison.

⁵³⁴ Entman, (1993) P.52

6.2.1. Judgement of Unauthorised Abuse

Following the publication of explicit photographs depicting the violent treatment and sexual humiliation of detainees, discursive labels attributed to the acts of abuse by the newspapers demonstrated significant criticisms.

In a report published by *USA Today*, for example, the photographed acts of abuse were described as ‘disturbing and repulsive.’⁵³⁵ In another report, condemnation of the photographed acts of abuse could also be observed through quotes from the statement by Presidential candidate, John Kerry, who described the acts as ‘absolutely unacceptable and inexcusable.’⁵³⁶ Criticism of the unauthorised abuse of prisoners was also demonstrated in an editorial published by the *New York Times*, which described the photographed abuse as ‘defies basic standards of human decency and the accepted conventions of war.’⁵³⁷ Despite the patriotic stance of the *Wall Street Journal*, the abuse of prisoners was also described as ‘not only repugnant but stupid as well.’⁵³⁸ Through the choices of morally critical discursive labels, the news narratives contributed to present the unauthorised abuse of prisoners as unacceptable.

Following the increasing incidents of kidnapping and execution of foreign nationals such as those of Nicolas Berg, Jack Hensley and Eugene Armstrong however, there was an increasing emphasis on the insignificance of Abu Ghraib in comparison to the acts of violence committed by others, reflecting an ease in criticisms. For example a public opinion published by *USA Today*, demanding greater coverage on the beheading of Nicolas Berg, it was stated that:

‘Although the abuse is an unfortunate, embarrassing episode for which Americans have apologized and feel shame, it was caused by a handful of misdirected individuals. Not one head was cut off, not one hostage taken, not one threat against humanity made, nor was one car bomb or assassination carried out.’⁵³⁹

As previously mentioned, through means of downward comparison, criticisms towards the abuse of prisoners were eased through the argument that ‘others were worse’, as well as

⁵³⁵ USA Today, (2004) Pentagon too slow to decry shameful U.S. acts in Iraq(4th May)

⁵³⁶ Kasindorf, Martin, USA Today (2004) Kerry says Bush should consider apology; Says U.S. needs to reach out after Iraq prison abuse (6th May)

⁵³⁷ The New York Times, (2004) Abuses at Abu Ghraib (1st May)

⁵³⁸ The Wall Street Journal (2004) Abu Ghraib (3rd May)

⁵³⁹ Hammer, Glen, USA Today (2004) Beheadings deserve more news coverage (25th June)

emphasis that apologies have been made by the US. Similarly, comparison of the level of brutality between the prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib, the atrocities committed by Iraqi insurgents at Fallujah, and those under the regime of Saddam Hussein was also emphasised in comments published. One commentary, stated:

‘Humiliation is degrading, but it's not torture. Real torture is what Saddam Hussein did to his people. Real crime is what was done in Fallujah to four Americans who were shot, burned and strung up on a bridge.’⁵⁴⁰

By means of downward comparison, therefore, the critical response towards Abu Ghraib becomes presented as exaggerated by the reaction of the news media towards the leaked photographs.

Similar moral evaluation based on downward comparison could also be observed in coverage by the *New York Times*. In an opinion regarding the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, for example, it was stated that ‘it's not near as bad as what they've done to some of our prisoners.’⁵⁴¹ In the coverage by the *Wall Street Journal*, the emphasis on the comparatively low level of brutality of the prisoner abuse within the historical context could also be found shortly after the publication of the explicit photographs. It was argued that ‘American soldiers are not ethnically cleansing Palestinians from Kuwait or executing Kurdish civilians, crimes that in the past went largely unnoticed in the Middle East.’⁵⁴² As explained in the study of counterfactual thinking:

‘downward counter-factual comparison may lead individuals to recalibrate their scales of moral standards where behaviours that seriously violate default standards of moral behaviour may come to be seen as relatively benign.’⁵⁴³

Therefore, despite the initially recognised criticisms, the moral evaluation of unauthorised abuse of prisoners by the news narratives contributed to mitigate the significance and severity of the criticisms.

In addition, by emphasising outrage towards the scandal among the US population and the effort by the US authority in investigating and prosecuting the identified offenders,

⁵⁴⁰ Debate, USA Today (2004) Prisoner abuse scandal points to failure in U.S. leadership (7th May)

⁵⁴¹ Jacobs, Andrew, New York Times, (2004) Shock Over Abuse Reports, but Support for the Troops (8th May)

⁵⁴² Hanson, Victor Davis, Wall Street Journal (2004) Abu Ghraib (3rd May)

⁵⁴³ Markmen *et al.* (2007) P.653

the newspapers also contributed to support the ‘construction of Americans as essentially decent and peaceful.’⁵⁴⁴ The reassuring image of Americans as essentially decent and peaceful also contributed to further easing the strength of criticisms towards the prisoner abuse scandal while the distinction between the good Americans and the evil terrorists remained intact. This emphasis on maintaining the distinction between the good Americans and evil others can be demonstrated in a statement of Gonzales by *USA Today*, ‘We are nothing like our enemy. While we are struggling mightily to find out what happened (in abuse cases), they are beheading people.’⁵⁴⁵ In a report by the *New York Times*, such distinctions between good Americans and evil others were also reinforced through the emphasis on freedom of information, which allowed the photographed abuse to be revealed. As explained in a letter published by the *New York Times*:

‘The real message of Abu Ghraib to the Arab world is not that there are soldiers capable of committing atrocities. The real message is that, under American rule and even during wartime, their crimes have been revealed to the world and that the perpetrators will be prosecuted.’⁵⁴⁶

The moral distinction between the ‘good Americans and Evil others’ was also emphasised by the *Wall Street Journal* through emphasising US prosecution of the identified offenders, as well as the outrage directed towards the abuse. It was argued by the *Wall Street Journal* that:

‘The salient and remarkable truth here is that America has punished its own for the Abu Ghraib abuses; and it has done so even before Saddam and his henchmen have faced justice for the horrors they propagated in that same prison.’⁵⁴⁷

Emphasising the US effort to prosecute the offenders at Abu Ghraib, the news narrative focused upon the willingness of the American society for self-criticism, as well as reform. As stated in a public letter published by the *Wall Street Journal*, written by the father of Daniel Pearl, who was killed in Pakistan:

⁵⁴⁴ Jackson, (2005) P.76

⁵⁴⁵ Frank, Thomas & Locy, Toni, *USA Today*, (2005) *Gonzales 'troubled and offended' by abuse ; Nominee says he's not responsible for interrogation tactics* (7th Jan)

⁵⁴⁶ The New York Times, (2004) *The Shame of Abu Ghraib: Voices of Revulsion* (4th May)

⁵⁴⁷ The Wall Street Journal (2005) *Abu Ghraib Accountability* (27th Apr)

‘The American public has reacted to the Abu Ghraib atrocities with outrage, seriousness and resoluteness. I am proud of this reaction because I know that self-criticism is a prerequisite to progress and self-improvement.’⁵⁴⁸

Emphasising outrage towards the unauthorised acts of abuse and willingness of the American society to reform, therefore, the newspapers the news narratives also encouraged a sense of moral closure among readers which contributed to mitigate possible outrage.

Examining the judgment of the unauthorised abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, there appears to be a changing emphasis from criticism to the comparatively low level of brutality and US accountability as demonstrated through the prosecution of the offenders and reform. Despite initial criticism of the abuse, the news narratives soon turned to support the discourse mitigating the guilt and moral significance of the scandal by reassuring the image of US moral superiority and encouraging moral closure. As argued in a comment published by the *USA Today*, ‘It's time to get over it. Abu Ghraib was an error in judgment by a couple of people in the military – and that's all.’⁵⁴⁹

6.2.2. Moral Judgement of Harsh Interrogation techniques

Within the news narratives, judgements expressed towards the acceptability of officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques have been mixed.

Criticisms of Coercive Interrogation Techniques

Presenting the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, the news narratives, in particular those published by *USA Today* and the *New York Times*, have expressed criticism towards the use of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering. In the news narratives, criticism of the coercive interrogation techniques focused on several aspects of the issue, including the unreliability of coercion as a means of intelligence gathering, and more importantly, the repercussions of the use of torture or harsh interrogation techniques on the US war effort, in the War against Terrorism and the safety of US personnel abroad.

In presenting the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, the most emphasised criticism of the use of harsh interrogation techniques as a means of intelligence gathering was its negative effects on the international perception of US society,

⁵⁴⁸ Pearl, Judea, Wall Street Journal (2004) Nicholas Berg (18th May)

⁵⁴⁹ USA Today, (2005) Justice fails Pfc. England (10th May)

as well as the treatment of US personnel abroad. In a report published by *USA Today*, criticism of the negative effect of harsh interrogation techniques on the humanitarian image of the US was emphasised through a public survey. It was argued that ‘the public wants the administration to reclaim ‘the moral high ground’ in the war on terrorism.’⁵⁵⁰ Criticisms towards the use of coercive interrogation techniques based on its negative effects on US image was also emphasised in another report published by the *USA Today* in January 2005. It was argued that:

‘the justifications for such [coercive] treatment look like an overreach that helped lead to the Abu Ghraib prison abuses, which undermined post-9/11 efforts to improve the U.S. image in Iraq and the Muslim world.’⁵⁵¹

Similarly, the negative influence of harsh interrogation techniques on the US reputation and the war effort in both Iraq and the War on Terrorism was also emphasised by the *New York Times*. As explained in a report published on 23rd Jan 2005:

‘the practice of torture by Americans is not only ugly in itself. It conjures up the spectre of defeat. We can’t ‘win’ the war in Iraq if we lose the battle for public opinion in the Middle East.’⁵⁵²

In the report above, criticisms by the *New York Times* emphasised the negative influences of torture on ‘the battle for public opinion’ in the Middle East where the use of harsh interrogation techniques would be counterproductive towards the US war effort in Iraq.

In addition, Criticism by *USA Today* of the coercive interrogation techniques also emphasised its repercussions towards US personnel abroad, such as prosecution and inhumane treatments. In a report by the *USA Today*, for example, it was argued that the introduction of coercive interrogation techniques could ‘subject US troops to US disciplinary action and international sanctions if they violated the Geneva Conventions.’⁵⁵³ It was also argued in another report by the *USA Today*, that the use of harsh interrogation techniques also undermined the US war effort through increasing the safety risks faced by US personnel abroad, as ‘abusing terror suspects only invites abuse of captured US soldiers in current and

⁵⁵⁰ Locy, Toni *USA Today* (2005) Poll: Most object to extreme interrogation tactics (13th Jan)

⁵⁵¹ *USA Today*, (2005) Gonzales has chance to show he's more than a 'yes man' (6th Jan)

⁵⁵² Rich, Frank, *New York Times* (2005) On Television, Torture Takes a Holiday (23rd Jan)

⁵⁵³ Moniz, David & Squitiri, Tom, *USA Today* (2004) Memo warned of prison tactics (21st May)

future conflicts.’⁵⁵⁴ Criticisms based on possible repercussions towards captured US personnel was also emphasised by the *New York Times*. A commentary published by the *New York Times*, for example, stated, ‘to demand humane treatment of Americans, should they unfortunately be detained, we must comply with the Geneva Conventions.’⁵⁵⁵ Through the use of harsh interrogation techniques, it was emphasised that the US has violated the rule of reciprocity regarding the humane treatment of prisoners and thus opened US personnel up to abuse. Similarly, criticisms on the grounds of repercussions were also emphasised by the *Wall Street Journal*. In a comment written by Senator John McCain, published by the *Wall Street Journal*, for example, it was argued that:

‘While our intelligence personnel in Abu Ghraib may have believed that they were protecting U.S. lives by roughing up detainees to extract information; they have had the opposite effect. Their actions have increased the danger to American soldiers, in this conflict and in future wars.’⁵⁵⁶

In another public commentary published by the *Wall Street Journal*, the possible repercussions of coercive interrogation policies towards ordinary US citizens abroad was also emphasised as criticisms to coercive interrogation techniques. It was argued that:

‘These policies ultimately restrict our freedoms by making foreign travel even more dangerous, encouraging the abuse of American prisoners, aiding and abetting the recruitment of terrorists and devaluing our collective humanity.’⁵⁵⁷

It was argued that not only does the policy of harsh interrogation techniques contribute to damaging US reputation within international society, but it also contributes to encouraging the mistreatment of US citizens through the erosion of international humanitarian standards.

The third area of criticism cited by *USA Today* and the *New York Times* regarding the use of coercive interrogation techniques emphasised the inefficiency of coercion as a means of intelligence gathering. *USA Today* cited that:

⁵⁵⁴ USA Today (2005) Voice of experience; McCain's proposals on prisoners are about U.S. -- and how it's seen (5th Aug)

⁵⁵⁵ New York Times, (2005) It's Simple: Don't Torture (25th Nov)

⁵⁵⁶ McCain, John, Wall Street Journal (2004) In Praise of Do-Gooders (1st June)

⁵⁵⁷ Wall Street Journal (2004) Torture Violates Our American Principles (1st July)

‘Early in the Bush administration's detention of foreign terrorism suspects, FBI agents told Pentagon officials that the military's harsh interrogation tactics in Cuba would produce ‘unreliable results’’,⁵⁵⁸

The inefficiency of coercion as a means of intelligence gathering was mentioned more often in the reports of the *New York Times*. As indicated in the statement by a senior military officer, ‘most of our useful intelligence came from battlefield interrogations, and at the battalion, brigade and division-level interrogation facilities.’⁵⁵⁹ Indeed, as explained in a report published on 7th Sep 2004:

‘American interrogators working in Iraq have obtained as much as 50% more high-value intelligence since a series of coercive practices like hooding, stripping and sleep deprivation were banned.’⁵⁶⁰

As explained by General Miller:

‘In my opinion, a rapport-based interrogation that recognizes respect and dignity, and having very well-trained interrogators is the basis by which you develop intelligence rapidly and increase the validity of that intelligence.’⁵⁶¹

Therefore, despite the emphasis on the possible intelligence value of detainees under US custody, criticisms cited by *USA Today* and the *New York Times* also argued that coercion did not appear to be an effective method of intelligence gathering.

On rare occasions, the pain and suffering of others caused by the use of coercion as a means of intelligence gathering were mentioned as part of the negative judgement of the officially sanctioned use of harsh interrogation techniques. Among the over 500 reports by the selected newspapers regarding the prisoner abuse scandal and the use of harsh interrogation techniques, there were only a handful of occasions in the coverage by *USA Today* and the *New York Times*, where the pain and suffering caused by such policies were cited as part of their criticisms. It was only briefly mentioned in a comment published by

⁵⁵⁸ Johnson, Kevin & Locy, Toni, *USA Today* (2004) FBI had warned Pentagon on tactics ; Urged less harshness for detainees in Cuba (8th Dec)

⁵⁵⁹ Jehl, Douglas & Schmitt, Eric *New York Times* (2004) Prison Interrogations in Iraq Seen As Yielding Little Data on Rebels (27th May 2004)

⁵⁶⁰ Filkins, Dexter, *New York Times* (2004) General Says Less Coercion of Captives Yields Better Data (7th Sep)

⁵⁶¹ *ibid*

USA Today, that ‘the only thing torture is good at is causing pain and deepening hatred.’⁵⁶² On another occasion, the suffering caused by torture was also mentioned in an editorial published by the *New York Times*, which observed that ‘it permanently scars the victim even when there are no visible marks on the body,’⁵⁶³

As demonstrated by the various areas of criticisms as cited above, reports by the selected newspapers have indeed expressed criticisms towards the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques. However, the emphasis of the criticisms within the news narratives was focused on aspects of consequentialist calculations based on the effectiveness of coercion as a means of intelligence gathering, and the possible repercussions of such policies, including hindrance of the US war effort and the possibility of reprisals. In his study of *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Bauman explained that through the emancipation of rationality from normative pressures, or effectiveness from ethics, ‘science cleared the way to genocide through sapping the authority and questioning the binding force, of all normative thinking.’⁵⁶⁴ Based upon consequentialist calculations of cost and benefit, such criticisms can easily be overturned in conditions where the risk of attack and loss is high, and reciprocity in humane treatments towards enemy personnel may not be honoured. Furthermore, such emphasis on consequentialist cost and benefit calculations also demonstrated that despite expression of criticisms, the newspapers continued to support the discourse of consequentialist moral reasoning within the framework of Administrative Evil.

Sympathetic Judgement towards Coercive Interrogation techniques

On the other hand, the news coverage of the harsh interrogation techniques also expressed sympathetic moral evaluations towards the use of coercion as a means of intelligence gathering. In the news narratives, sympathetic judgements towards the use of harsh interrogation techniques emphasised the disassociation of officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques from torture, as defined under international humanitarian legislation, as well as the need for such policies as a necessary evil in order to save American lives.

Within the news narratives, moral judgements presented by *USA Today* and the *Wall Street Journal*, emphasised legal differentiation between the officially sanctioned harsh

⁵⁶² USA Today, (2004) Cruelty is never justified (13th May)

⁵⁶³ Hochschild, Adam, New York Times, (2004) What's in a Word? Torture (23rd May)

⁵⁶⁴ Bauman, (1989) P.108

interrogation techniques and torture as defined under international humanitarian conventions. For example, it was explained in a report published by *USA Today* that while:

‘Some methods used by the military, such as sleep deprivation, might not qualify as violations under U.S. or international law. But most of the incidents uncovered [At Abu Ghraib] are clear violations.’⁵⁶⁵

In the explanations above, the *USA Today* supported the argument that most the officially sanctioned interrogation techniques, such as sleep deprivation, did not constitute a violation under the international humanitarian standards, and therefore would be legal and hence morally acceptable. The differentiation between the officially sanctioned harsh interrogation techniques and torture was also emphasised by the *Wall Street Journal*. For example, it was argued in a commentary by John Yoo published by the *Wall Street Journal*, that the exclusion of detainees captured in the War on Terrorism from the protection of the Geneva Convention and the re-definition of torture were not to condone torture, but ‘leaves room for interrogation methods that go beyond polite conversation.’⁵⁶⁶ In another commentary written by Heather McDonald, it was also argued that ‘Stress works, say interrogators. The techniques that the military has used to date come nowhere near torture.’⁵⁶⁷ Emphasising the distinction between the officially sanctioned interrogation techniques and actual torture, the newspapers emphasised that that despite the ‘mild coercion’ involved, coercive interrogation techniques sanctioned by the US authorities did not reach the severity of torture. Furthermore, emphasising moral evaluations based on considerations of legality and technical definition of torture, the newspapers contributed to a discourse that substituted amoral responsibilities with legal obligations. As a result the newspaper discourse continued to support the discourse of Technical Rationality, where moral judgements are made solely on the professional and regulated implementation of government policy.

More importantly, sympathetic judgments towards the use of harsh interrogation techniques was demonstrated through the emphasis on the need for more effective means of intelligence gathering in order to prevent potential attacks by both terrorists as well as insurgents. As argued in a report published by *USA Today*, although the identified perpetrators of the prisoner abuse scandal must be held accountable, ‘it also would be a

⁵⁶⁵ Willing, Richard, *USA Today*(2004) Legal issues in prosecuting abuse perpetrators (6th May)

⁵⁶⁶ Yoo, John, *Wall Street Journal* (2004) Terrorists Have No Geneva Rights (26th May)

⁵⁶⁷ McDonald, Heather, *Wall Street Journal* (2005) Too Nice for Our Own Good (6th Jan)

mistake to forget that the interrogation of detainees is intended to provide crucial information to deter attacks on our homeland and on our troops.’⁵⁶⁸ Invoking the scenario of the ticking time bomb, it was also argued in a commentary published by *USA Today* that:

‘to protect the United States against another 9/11-style attack, it makes little sense to deprive ourselves of important, and legal, means to detect and prevent terrorist attacks. Physical and mental abuse is clearly illegal. But should we also take off the table interrogation methods that fall short of torture such as isolation, physical labour, or plea bargains?’⁵⁶⁹

In the report above, the commentary invoked not only the ticking time bomb scenario but also memories of the attacks on the World Trade Centre which, defined as an exceptional attack on ‘our way of life’⁵⁷⁰, appealed to the notion of total war and supreme emergency where traditional convention of war are lifted. Therefore, emphasising the importance of preventing potential attacks, the reports above contributed to the discursive presentation of the officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques as a necessary evil that must be considered in order to save American lives within such context of total war.

The framing of harsh interrogation techniques as a necessary evil was further emphasised in reports by the *Wall Street Journal*. It was argued that ‘to succeed in the war on terror, interrogators must be allowed to use carefully controlled stress techniques against unlawful combatants.’⁵⁷¹ In another comment by John Yoo, it was also argued that:

‘It makes little sense to deprive ourselves of an important, and legal, means [of coercive interrogation techniques] to detect and prevent terrorist attacks while we are still in the middle of a fight to the death with al Qaeda.’⁵⁷²

Similar to the discourse of the *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal* also evoked the notion of supreme emergency and the need to prevail in a total war where survival is at stake. As explained by Kellner, ‘the discourse of evil [and its implication of totalising and absolutistic opposition] raises the stakes and violence of conflict and nurtures more apocalyptic and

⁵⁶⁸ Brooks, Vincent K, *USA Today* (2005) Guilty are held accountable (3rd May)

⁵⁶⁹ Yoo, John, *USA Today*, (2005) Terrorists are not POWs (2nd Nov)

⁵⁷⁰ Bush, George W, (2001) Cited in Jackson, (2005) P.47

⁵⁷¹ McDonald, Heather, *Wall Street Journal* (2005) Too Nice for Our Own Good (6th Jan)

⁵⁷² Yoo, John, *Wall Street Journal* (2004) Terrorists Have No Geneva Rights (26th May)

catastrophic politics, fuelling future cycles of hatred, violence and war.’⁵⁷³ Emphasising the uncompromising binary opposition between the US and Al-Qaeda in ‘a fight to the death’⁵⁷⁴ and the need to prevail, the news narratives therefore contributed to justify the use of coercive interrogation techniques by presenting it as a necessary evil. Similarly, such position was also adopted by the *New York Times*. In a report published by the *New York Times*, for example, the narratives cited a warning against over-reaction towards the prisoner abuse scandal by the Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker who was cited saying:

‘We’ve got to be darn sure that we are not overreacting in a way that is removing lawful tools or setting conditions that would cause people to be hesitant and to second-guess and to think that we would not stand behind them if they’re acting in good faith to do what is proper in this situation.’⁵⁷⁵

In this statement, the emphasis on good faith, upon which the acts of interrogation were based, by the *New York Times* encouraged to empathy with US interrogators who may be forced to adopt coercive interrogation techniques as a necessary evil as the extraordinary circumstances of the War on Terrorism, and prevention of future attacks, may take precedence over humanitarian values. As argued in an editorial published by the *New York Times*:

‘extraordinary circumstances are different from general policies that allow foot soldiers and even innocent bystanders to be swept up in messy, uncontrolled and probably fruitless detentions.’⁵⁷⁶

Emphasising the need to prevent future attacks and to save American lives, therefore, the newspapers contributed to support the discourse of consequentialist moral reasoning within the framework of Administrative Evil, where acts are judged on the objectives it serves.

Moral judgments towards the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques have been mixed. Presenting the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, the news narratives expressed criticism towards the use of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering. However, such criticism has

⁵⁷³ Kellner, (2002) P.145

⁵⁷⁴ Yoo, John, Wall Street Journal (2004) Terrorists Have No Geneva Rights (26th May)

⁵⁷⁵ Schmitt, Eric New York Times, (2004) Army Report Says Flaws in Detention Did Not Cause the Abuses at Abu Ghraib (23rd July)

⁵⁷⁶ New York Times, (2005) The Prison Puzzle (3rd Nov)

focused upon its ineffectiveness as a means of intelligence gathering, as well as the potential for repercussions and the damage towards the US international reputation and war effort. Focusing on the calculation of cost and benefit, the news narratives contributed to a discourse of consequentialist calculation which, despite criticisms in the narratives, enabled coercive interrogation techniques to be justified in circumstances where the perceived gain may outweigh the potential of repercussions. In contrast, positive moral evaluations by the news presentation of officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques emphasised the technical rational distinction between coercive interrogation techniques from the legal definition of torture under international humanitarian standards. Through such emphasis, the newspapers provided reassurance based on technical rationality by emphasising that, coercive interrogation techniques such as sleep deprivation and stress positions did not constitute torture or violate international humanitarian standards. More importantly, the moral evaluation by the newspapers of the sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques also emphasised the need for military intelligence in order to prevent future attacks and to save American lives, supporting the discourse of consequentialist moral reasoning. Consequently the perceived need to prevent potential attacks and loss of US lives, outweighed the suffering of a few suspected insurgents or terrorists, contributed to facilitate a discourse where the use of violence as a means of intelligence gathering became not only justified but also necessary.

6.2.3. Judgement for Violence Committed by Others

Unlike the presentation of violence against detainees under custody which encouraged sympathy among readers, the acts of violence and abuse committed by others such as Iraqi insurgents, received universal condemnation within the news narratives. Condemnation of incidents such as the attacks, kidnappings and execution of US citizens by Iraqi insurgents was demonstrated through the wide-spread use of negative adjectives, its description, demand for denunciation from religious and political leaders as well as the media in the Middle East, together with demands for retaliation and punishment of the perpetrators.

Examining the presentation of the violence perpetrated by others such as Iraqi insurgents, the news narratives demonstrated extensive use of negative labels in their description of the incidents of attacks, kidnappings and executions. Presenting the kidnapping and execution of foreigners in Iraq, narratives by *USA Today* referred to the killings such as that of South Korean worker Kim Sun-II as acts of ‘atrocities’⁵⁷⁷ which were

⁵⁷⁷ Hammer, Glen, *USA Today*, (2004) *DEBATE*: Beheadings deserve more news coverage (25th June)

described as ‘brutal’⁵⁷⁸, ‘vile and coldblooded.’⁵⁷⁹ Similarly, reports published by the *New York Times* also described the execution of Nicolas Berg as ‘murder’ and an ‘atrocities.’⁵⁸⁰ In describing the attack and killing of four US security workers at Fallujah, reports by the *New York Times* referred to the deaths of the US victims as an ‘atrocities’⁵⁸¹. The discursive label of ‘atrocities’⁵⁸² was also adopted by the *Wall Street Journal* in reference to the kidnappings and executions of foreign nationals. Similarly, reports by the *Wall Street Journal* also described the killing of US security workers at Fallujah as a ‘massacre’⁵⁸³, which was so barbaric that ‘the mob could have cooked and eaten its victims without making things very much worse.’⁵⁸⁴ As explained by Entman, the choice of discursive labels for the incidents contributes to place them in categories that either elicit or omit moral evaluation.⁵⁸⁵ Through the attachment of negative labels such as ‘atrocities’, ‘murder’, and the association of a barbaric image, violence committed by Iraqi insurgents was placed in the category of ‘criminal evil’⁵⁸⁶ that eliminated the possibility of empathy towards its perpetrators.

In addition to the definition of violence towards US citizens by Iraqi insurgents as criminal evil, the news narratives also emphasised the inexcusability of such violence against US citizens, together with requests for universal denunciation and condemnation from both religious and political leaders within the Middle East. In an editorial published by the *New York Times*, the attack and killing of American security workers in Fallujah was described as ‘inexcusable’ and ‘unconscionable.’⁵⁸⁷ A similar emphasis on the unforgivable nature of the execution was also stressed through arguments that:

‘To justify the public decapitation of Nicholas Berg, an American citizen in Iraq, as revenge for the humiliation and mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners by American soldiers is to sanction terrorism.’⁵⁸⁸

In a comment published by *USA Today*, the execution of Nicolas Berg was described as ‘intolerable.’⁵⁸⁹ While the moral evaluation of the prisoner abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib

⁵⁷⁸ USA Today, (2004) Maintain U.S. resolve, even in face of American's brutal murder(23rd June)

⁵⁷⁹ USA Today, (2004) Cruelty is never justified (13th May)

⁵⁸⁰ Nc.Neil, Donald, G Junior (2004) There's No Escape When War Turns Ghoulish [CORRECTED] (16th May)

⁵⁸¹ Herbert, Bob (2004) No End In Sight (2nd April)

⁵⁸² Henninger, Daniel (2004) Are Beheadings The Face of Evil Or Just Politics?

⁵⁸³ Wall Street Journal (2004) The Fallujah Massacre (1st April)

⁵⁸⁴ Hitchens, Christopher, (2004) Fallujah (2nd Apr)

⁵⁸⁵ Entman, (1991) P.18

⁵⁸⁶ ibid

⁵⁸⁷ Herbert, Bob (2004) No End In Sight (2nd April)

⁵⁸⁸ New York Times, (2004) A New Wave of Shock and Outrage in America (13th May)

encouraged closure following the US investigations and prosecution of the photographed perpetrators, the collective responsibility of the Muslim world for the attacks against US citizens was emphasised in the demand for its denunciation and condemnation. In a comment published by *USA Today*, such emphasis could be observed through the demand that ‘the followers of Islam to root out those who are hijacking that religion’ and ‘it is up to Arabs to alter the racist and violent nature of that culture by rooting out those who are ruining its reputation.’⁵⁹⁰ Coverage of the beheading of Nicolas Berg by the *Wall Street Journal* also demanded the re-evaluation of Islam by moderate Muslims as ‘religion is no innocent bystander in the violence perpetrated by Muslims.’⁵⁹¹ In the public letter by the father of Daniel Pearl, an American journalist kidnapped and executed in Pakistan, requests were also made to Islamic leaders to:

‘join the courageous Muslims who have denounced, in unambiguous language, not only the killing of Nicholas Berg, but the growing practice of killing innocent human beings as a means of communicating grievances, irrespective of how valid or urgent the grievance.’⁵⁹²

In *Manufacturing Consent*, Herman and Chomsky explain that the framing of atrocities committed against worthy victims are often characterised by the search for responsibility at the top.⁵⁹³ Similarly, through emphasising the requests for denunciation of the attacks on US citizens, moral evaluations of the violence against US citizens not only emphasised its inexcusability, but also a collective responsibility among Muslim societies for condoning such violence, while coverage of the US abuse of prisoners emphasised the limited responsibility of the offenders.

While the sense of moral closure was encouraged in the framing of the abuse of prisoners and the sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques by the US, framing of violence by Iraqi insurgents emphasised demands for retaliation. This was described by *USA Today* in reference to the military operation in Fallujah following the attacks of the security workers, ‘the killings last Wednesday required a quick and aggressive response.’⁵⁹⁴ As

⁵⁸⁹ USA Today, (2004) Prison abuses, beheading don't compare (14th May)

⁵⁹⁰ USA Today, (2004) Maintain U.S. resolve, even in face of American's brutal murder (23rd June)

⁵⁹¹ Manji, Irshad, Wall Street Journal(2004) Blind Faith (20th May)

⁵⁹² Pearl, Judea, Wall Street Journal (2004) Nicholas Berg (18th May)

⁵⁹³ Herman & Chomsky, (2002) (P.43)

⁵⁹⁴ Squitieri, Tom USA Today (2004) Fear of losing control drives assault ; Fallujah fighting puts U.S. at 'a

promised by Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt, 'We will respond. It will be deliberate and precise and be overwhelming. . . . We will kill them or we will capture them.'⁵⁹⁵ Covering the kidnapping and execution of US citizens in Iraq, comments published by *USA Today* also expressed demands for accountability and prosecution of the offenders. In response to the kidnapping and executions, it was stated that 'for the murderers to use the name of God while committing this heinous act is intolerable. They need to be found and brought to justice.'⁵⁹⁶ Demands for retaliation were also published stating 'If they fail to surrender, let's level every city or location they are in'.⁵⁹⁷ The emphasis on the demand for punishment and retaliation for the attacks and violence against US citizens was most strongly demonstrated in reports published by the *Wall Street Journal*. In a comment published by the *Wall Street Journal* regarding the killings of the US security workers in Fallujah, it was demanded that 'the rebels in Iraq who ambushed those American security workers in Fallujah ought to be hunted down and brought to justice.'⁵⁹⁸ In addition, 'the photographic evidence should be used to help round up those who committed these atrocities, and those who tacitly or overtly encouraged it.'⁵⁹⁹ Retaliation through military force was also urged, as:

'the proper response to a crime is punishment, and the sooner the people of Fallujah see that the U.S. military is capable of inflicting punishment on terrorists the less likely they will be to support them or exult in the ambush of Americans.'⁶⁰⁰

Comparing the news presentation of violence committed by US personnel and others, the news narratives demonstrated a disparity in the moral evaluation between the acts of abuse and the harsh treatment of detainees committed by the US and those of the attacks and killing of US citizens by others. Unlike the presentation of the coercive treatment of detainees under US custody, violence committed by others such as Iraqi insurgents received universal condemnation as well as a demand for retaliation that encouraged outrage among the US public.

turning point,' experts say (7th Apr)

⁵⁹⁵ Johnson, Kevin, *USA Today* (2004) Military response vowed in Fallujah ; Attack, mutilation of U.S. civilians 'bestial' (2nd April)

⁵⁹⁶ *USA Today* (2004) Prison abuses, beheading don't compare (14th May)

⁵⁹⁷ *ibid*

⁵⁹⁸ Bowden, Mark, (2004) *The Lessons of Mogadishu* (5th Apr)

⁵⁹⁹ *ibid*

⁶⁰⁰ Melloan, George (2004) *There'll Be More Fallujahs To Test U.S. Resolve* ()

6.2.4. Summary

The physical and psychological violence inflicted on detainees under US custody, the unauthorised abuse of prisoners and the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques were presented differently. Presenting the scandal at Abu Ghraib, news narratives expressed criticism of the unauthorised abuse of detainees. However such criticisms were also mitigated through emphasising the relative insignificance of the photographed acts of abuse as well as reassuring US moral superiority as demonstrated through the prosecution of the perpetrators as well as willingness to self-criticise and reform. Despite the initial criticisms, the news narratives contributed to a discourse that facilitated reassurance of US moral integrity while mitigating the guilt of Abu Ghraib.

The officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques however, received mixed judgements by the newspapers. Criticising the use of physical and psychological coercion as a means of intelligence gathering, the news narratives emphasised its ineffectiveness in obtaining workable intelligence as well as the potential repercussions towards the US international reputation and war efforts. However, such negative judgements were based upon consequentialist calculations of cost and benefit and can be easily overturned. More importantly, despite the expression of criticisms, the news narratives continued to reproduce a discourse of consequentialist moral reasoning within the framework of Administrative Evil. On the other hand, sympathetic moral judgements presented by the newspapers emphasised the disassociation of coercive interrogation techniques from the legal definition of torture, supporting the discourse of technical rationality which emphasised professional and regulated policy implementation. More importantly, the newspapers also emphasised consequentialist justification of coercive interrogation techniques by emphasising the imperative need to save American lives. By supporting the discourses of consequentialist moral reasoning and technical rationality, therefore, the moral evaluation of both unauthorised abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib and officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques contribute to support the discursive framework of Administrative Evil where acts of violence become presented as morally acceptable and even justifiable.

7. Conclusions

In late April 2004, a series of explicit images depicting Iraqi detainees abused and humiliated by US soldiers at Abu Ghraib were published by the US news media. Since 2002, there have been reports of the mistreatment of prisoners in Guantanamo Bay Naval Base and other detention facilities, as well as the systematic use of interrogation techniques amounting to torture under international humanitarian legislation. As early as the terrorist attacks on 11th September 2001, many arguments have emerged in support of the use of 'harsh interrogation techniques', or 'Torture Lite' in order to obtain information and prevent future attacks. By November 2001, as noted by Luban, 'the Christian Science Monitor found that 32% of surveyed Americans favoured torturing terror suspects.'⁶⁰¹ It was also reported by Dershowitz that:

'During numerous public appearances since September 11th 2001, I have asked audiences for a show of hands as to how many would support the use of non-lethal torture in a ticking bomb case. Virtually every hand is raised.'⁶⁰²

Following the revelation of the explicit images of abuse at Abu Ghraib, there has remained a significant level of tolerance towards the use of 'coercive interrogation techniques', despite the graphic and disturbing images of physical violence and sexual humiliation. In a survey conducted by Gallup in 2005, 52% of the 1006 interviewed replied that they approved of the way the US was treating prisoners being held at Guantanamo Bay,⁶⁰³ despite the reports of abuse. In 2006, a survey conducted by the BBC also demonstrated a higher level of leniency towards torture as a means of intelligence gathering among US public opinion compared to that of other Western countries including Germany, the U.K., France, as well as to the worldwide average percentage.⁶⁰⁴

By applying the theoretical framework of administrative evil, this thesis examined the US media discourse within the context of the War on Terrorism in order to understand this significant level of tolerance shown towards the coercive treatment of detainees under US custody, by examining the possible contribution of the news media.

⁶⁰¹Luban (2006) P.35

⁶⁰²Alan Dershowitz, Cited in Luban (2006) P.35

⁶⁰³Gallup Poll April 2005 (2005) (<http://brain.gallup.com/documents/questionnaire.aspx?STUDY=P0504021>
Last Visited 8th Dec 2005)

⁶⁰⁴BBC (2006) (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/6063386.stm> Last Visited 25th Aug 2011)

In this concluding section, I will firstly present a summary of the findings from the analysis of the narratives presented by the news media. In this part of the concluding section, I will present a detailed account illustrating how the discourses of Administrative Evil, including consequentialist moral reasoning, technical rationality and dehumanisation of victims, have been supported by discursive mechanisms within different aspects in the news presentation of the coercive treatment of detainees under US custody. In the following section, I will then discuss the limitations of this study, regarding its scope and the focus of its examination. Then I will discuss the implications of this study on the media-state relations within the US political system, and consider the role of the news media within the context of war. Finally and most importantly, I will also discuss the implications of this study on modern liberal democratic societies within the context of war.

7.1. Summary of Findings

In this thesis, I have analysed different aspects of news narratives, examining the extent to which the discursive features identified may have supported the discursive framework of Administrative Evil and the process of moral inversion. In the first section of this concluding chapter, I will present a summary of the findings. I will firstly present a brief recap of the theoretical framework of administrative evil. I will then account in detail how the conditions facilitating the process of moral inversion and the legitimisation of evil have been supported by the elements of framing within the different aspects of the news presentation of the coercive treatment of detainees under US custody.

7.1.1. Administrative Evil

In this thesis, I examined the news presentation of the coercive treatment of detainees under US custody, both the unauthorised acts of abuse and the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, through the application of the theoretical framework of administrative evil. As explained previously, the concept of administrative evil as a new form of evil unique to the modern age was introduced by Adams and Balfour. It was argued that the modern age, within its emphasis on technical rationality in approaching social and political issues, enabled a new form of masked evil which allowed ordinary people to engage in acts of evil through participation in modern organisations as well as social and public policies without active intention. As suggested by Adams and Balfour, acts of evil occur along a continuum of awareness ‘from acts that are committed in relative ignorance to those that are committed knowingly and deliberately or what we would characterise as masked and

unmasked evil.’⁶⁰⁵ Administrative evil therefore falls under the category whereby individuals and organisations engage in acts of evil without intention or recognition of any wrong doings.

As previously outlined, administrative evil which is unique to the modern age has its roots in the technical analytic thinking which has not only underlined the modern age but also displaced traditional moral responsibilities through the process of moral inversion. The process of moral inversion, which enables the abdication of moral responsibility and facilitates the legitimisation of Administrative Evil, is associated with three conditions as specified by Kelman. One of the three conditions facilitating the abdication of moral responsibility is the substitution of technical rationality, which considers only whether the activity has been carried out according to the best available technological knowledge in a regulated and cost-effective manner, for moral responsibility.⁶⁰⁶ Under such a condition, acts of violence are evaluated and authorised on the basis of technical efficiency and regulated professionalism. The second condition that facilitates the process of moral inversion is consequentialist moral reasoning, where violence is authorised by virtue of the actions furthering the ultimate goals of the organisation, which must be accepted as synonymous with the wellbeing of the individuals.⁶⁰⁷ As a result, the consequentialist rationality becomes dominant where the means are justified by the ends it serves. Finally, the third condition that facilitates the abdication of moral responsibility is the dehumanisation of the victim. In the words of Zimbardo, ‘one of the worst things we can do to our fellow human being is deprive them of their humanity, render them worthless by exercising the psychological process of dehumanisation.’⁶⁰⁸ Through the process of dehumanisation, the moral responsibilities associated with the acts of violence are further eroded through the removal of morally significant victims. As a result of the above three conditions, a process of moral inversion is created under which, associated moral responsibilities are removed, and violence becomes authorised and evaluated as merely a means to an end.

7.1.2. Discourse of Technical Rationality

In the discursive framework of Administrative Evil, one of the three conditions facilitating the legitimisation of authorised violence is the erosion of moral responsibilities through the discourse of technical rationality, which considers only the effective and

⁶⁰⁵ Adams & Balfour (2009) P.12

⁶⁰⁶ Dillard & Ruchala (2005) P.612

⁶⁰⁷ ibid

⁶⁰⁸ Zimbardo, Cited in Adams & Balfour (2009) P.18

regulated implementation of policies. In the news narratives, this condition was facilitated through the mutually reinforcing processes of de-emphasising the moral significance of the violence inflicted by the US and the focus of attention on the emphasis of technical responsibilities, which considered only as effective and regulated implementation of government policies.

Presenting the unauthorised abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, erosion of moral responsibilities through the discourse of technical rationality was firstly demonstrated through presentation of unauthorised abuse of prisoners as a result of technical failures. In the presentation of human agency, such discourse may be firstly observed in the presentation of the active agency. Presenting the perpetrators of abuse at Abu Ghraib, the news narratives emphasised the individual responsibilities of the perpetrators through detailed description of names and their individual roles in the scandal. More importantly, through emphasising the negative characteristics of the perpetrators, such as a history of violence, poor disciplinary records, and weakness in personalities, the unauthorised abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib was presented as a result of unqualified prison staff. In addition, presentation of the unauthorised abuse of prisoners as a result of technical error was also observed in the presentation of the causes of abuse at Abu Ghraib. Within the coverage, the news narratives also emphasised the failure of the US military and administration in its ineffective management of both the detention facilities at Abu Ghraib and the War on Terrorism itself, as well as confusion in the reinterpretation of detention policies. Through framing the abuse of prisoners as a result of technical errors in policy implementation, the news narratives contributed to a discourse that through focusing on technical responsibilities de-emphasised its moral significance. Such de-emphasis of moral significance was further reiterated as the severity of abuse committed at Abu Ghraib were de-emphasised in the presentation of the actual acts of violence committed and their effect through the means of downward comparison by the news narratives. As a result, despite the explicit images of abuse, the news narratives contributed to a discourse that mitigated its moral significance and severity, through focusing on aspects of technical responsibilities. Through the emphasis on technical responsibilities, the news narratives enabled moral closure through the efforts of the US administration in prosecuting the perpetrators and the administrative reforms.

In presenting the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, the erosion of moral responsibilities was facilitated by the process of disassociation from the acts

of unauthorised abuse, and de-emphasising the direct involvement of US military intelligence in inflicting these acts of violence. In the presentation of the active agency, such a process of disassociation was demonstrated by the removal of the active agency through discursive mechanisms such as nominalisation and passive voices. In descriptions of the actual acts of officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques, the lack of detailed descriptions also contributed to removing the violence inflicted in the process. In addition, the disassociation of coercive interrogation techniques from the direct involvement in inflicting violence was further strengthened by distancing officially sanctioned interrogation techniques from the unauthorised abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib. The process of distancing was demonstrated by the emphasis on the unauthorised and irrational nature of abuse and the outrage expressed by the US military. As a result, by disassociating the US military intelligence from direct involvement in inflicting physical and psychological violence on detainees, the news narrative contributed to absolve its moral responsibilities. Presenting the effect of the coercive interrogation techniques, such an erosion of moral responsibilities was further enhanced through de-emphasising the lasting effects of the coercive interrogation techniques inflicted on its victims.

As moral responsibilities associated with the coercive treatment of detainees became eroded, the news narratives enabled the focus of attention to emphasise the technical responsibilities, which considered only the effective and regulated implementation of government policies. Within the narrative presentation of the active agency in the implementation of the coercive interrogation techniques, the emphasis on technical responsibilities was demonstrated through the image of professionalism attributed to US military intelligence. Presenting the actual acts of coercive interrogation techniques, the news narratives also focused attention on aspects of technical responsibilities, which emphasised the regulated and supervised application of coercive interrogation techniques by the US military. Such an emphasis on the regulated application of coercive interrogation techniques was also demonstrated through the presentation of the officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques as being below the level of violence that would constitute torture under international legal definitions. Emphasising aspects of technical responsibilities, the news narratives contributed to further de-emphasising the moral significance of using physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering, which in turn further facilitated the focus of attention on technical responsibilities. As a result, through such

mutually reinforcing processes where considerations of moral responsibilities were replaced by considerations of technical responsibilities, the news narratives contributed to facilitate the process of moral inversion where authorised violence became considered as acceptable.

7.1.3. Consequentialist Moral Reasoning

In addition to the mutually reinforcing process where considerations of moral responsibilities became replaced by considerations of technical responsibilities, another condition facilitating the process of moral inversion is consequentialist moral reasoning. This is where the means are evaluated through the objectives they are designed to serve and the effectiveness in achieving the said objective. In the presentation of both the unauthorised abuse of prisoners and the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, the discourse of consequentialist moral reasoning has also been emphasised.

Presenting both the unauthorised abuse of detainees and the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, the discourse of consequentialist moral reasoning was demonstrated through the focus of attention on its possible impact on the US. Criticising the use of violence against detainees, news narratives emphasised its negative impact on the image of the US within international society, its damage on US war efforts in Iraq, and possible repercussions as a result of the scandal. Despite expression of criticisms however, the focus on consequentialist moral reasoning contributed to restrain public discussions of the coercive treatment of detainees under US custody within the parameters of cost and benefit calculations. As a result of such constraints, moral inhibitions towards violence against detainees, both the unauthorised acts of abuse and the sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, becomes conditional to the possibility of negative repercussions.

In the presentation of the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques, the news media also contributed to encouraging a sympathetic opinion among readers through the discourse of consequentialist moral reasoning. When presenting the US military intelligence personnel, news narratives emphasised their benign motivation such as the need to save lives. Through such an emphasis readers were encouraged to empathise with the use of coercive interrogation techniques through consequentialist moral reasoning where the use of violence was authorised under the perceived state of exception where obtaining information was presented as vital to the objective of saving American lives. Such a discourse of consequentialist moral reasoning was further emphasised in the reasons cited for the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques and its moral judgement.

Emphasising the intensity of the insurgency in Iraq, as well as presenting the War on Terrorism as a new form of uncompromising war between the forces of good and evil, the news narratives invoked the notion of the State of Exception, which enabled conventional restraints of war to be removed. As previously explained, the emphasis on consequentialist moral reasoning contributed to a discourse that replaced absolute moral inhibitions with conditional calculations of cost and benefit where violence may be authorised as a result of a perceived necessity. Therefore by emphasising the perceived necessity to save American lives within a State of Exception, the news narratives contributed to the process of moral inversion whereby readers were encouraged to sympathise with and even accept the officially sanctioned use of coercion as a means of intelligence gathering.

7.1.3. Dehumanisation of Victims

The third condition facilitating the process of moral inversion and authorised violence is the dehumanisation of victims. Describing the coercive treatment of detainees under US custody in Iraq, the news narratives were also characterised by the discourse of dehumanisation and emphasis on the image of ‘deadly victims.’⁶⁰⁹

The discourse of dehumanisation was most strongly demonstrated in the presentation of detainees under US custody. Within the narratives, the discourse of dehumanisation is firstly demonstrated by the omission of names, social and family backgrounds as well as their experiences under US custody. The lack of reference to the names and personal information of the victims of the photographed abuse and harsh interrogation techniques diverts attention away from the victims under US custody. As a result, acts of violence towards the detainees were presented as being without human victims, thereby removing its associated moral responsibilities. In addition, in the rare incidents where the names and victims of abuse under US custody were covered, the reports mostly consisted of an unemotional and factual narrative of the events while the detainees remained little more than a name. Such discourse contributed both to deprive the detainees of a credible and meaningful voice as well as minimising empathy among the readers. More importantly, through the omission of names and deprivation of a meaningful voice, the status of the detainees became relegated to those of ‘neither alive nor dead, but interminably spectral’⁶¹⁰ through the process of de-realisation where their lives became no longer viable and their suffering devoid of any significance. The

⁶⁰⁹Lifton, (2000) P.476

⁶¹⁰Butler (2004) P.33

dehumanised image of detainees under US custody was also strengthened through the presentation of a sub-human existence in the portrayal of detainees and their family with an undignified impression of chaos, filth and desperation. As a result, readers were encouraged to overlook the pain, humiliation, and suffering of the victims under US custody.

In addition, the dehumanisation of detainees under US custody also emphasised the presumption of guilt through negative characteristics attributed to the detainees. Through the use of negative references, such as thieves, rapists and insurgents, the news narratives emphasised a generalised association of detainees under US custody with criminal characteristics and the Iraqi insurgency, presenting an image that the detainees under US custody were lowly and unsavoury individuals who deserved their fate. Detainees under US custody were also presented as being hostile and disobedient towards US prison guards. Through such narratives, the newspapers contributed to suppress emotions such as empathy towards detainees under US custody, as even if they were subjected to abuse or coercive interrogation techniques as a result of mistaken identity, the negative and criminal characteristics attributed by the news coverage contributed to the removal of guilt.

The most important feature in the framing of detainees under US custody in the image of deadly victims was the process of demonization. This was demonstrated through the generalised association of detainees with the Iraqi insurgency and terrorist activities. Despite revelations by the International Committee of the Red Cross that an estimated ‘70% to 90% of the persons deprived of their liberty in Iraq had been arrested by mistake’,⁶¹¹ one may observe widespread reference to the detainees under US custody as ‘insurgents’, ‘foreign fighters’ and ‘suspected terrorists’. The image of deadly victims contributed to emphasising an absolute and uncompromising binary opposition of good against evil. The result of such polarisation, in the words of Jackson, ‘moralises the conflict, transforming it into a cosmic struggle between the forces of goodness and light against the forces of darkness and evil.’⁶¹² The conflict is therefore escalated into the struggle for survival in which all restraints by international conventions on the conduct of war are removed. Through such a discourse of demonization, the use of coercive forces and harsh interrogation techniques against detainees under US custody were not only presented as understandable but also necessary.

⁶¹¹ Report of the international committee of the red cross (ICRC) on the treatment by the coalition forces of prisoners of war and other protected persons by the Geneva Conventions in Iraq during arrest, internment and interrogation (Feb 2004)

⁶¹² Jackson (2005) P.69

7.1.4. Summary

In this thesis, the theoretical concept of administrative evil and the process of moral inversion provided a useful framework with which the possible contribution of news narratives to the significant levels of tolerance shown towards the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques despite the scandal of prisoner abuse could be investigated. Presenting the unauthorised abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib as a result of technical failures including the ineffective management of the military and detention operations in Iraq, as well as confusion in policy interpretations, the news narratives contributed to mitigating the moral significance of the scandal while encouraging moral closure through the prosecution of the perpetrators and administrative reforms. More importantly, through facilitating the conditions of moral inversion, namely the erosion of moral responsibilities and the emphasis on technical responsibilities, consequentialist moral reasoning, and dehumanisation of victims, the news narratives also enabled the use of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering to be presented as acceptable and even tolerated. The news narratives did however criticise albeit to differing degrees, both the unauthorised acts of abuse and the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques. However, although these criticisms emphasised the negative repercussions on the US state and demanded accountability within the US military and government, they remained confined within the discourse of consequentialist moral reasoning where the inhibition of violence became conditionally dependent upon the calculations of potential gains and possible repercussions and technical rationality which demanded regulated and professional policy implementation. Consequently, despite existence of criticisms, the newspapers continued to support the reproduction of the discourse of Administrative Evil. In contrast, frames demonstrated in the news presentation of violence inflicted by 'others' emphasised the humanity of its victims, the pain and lasting suffering inflicted in the process and its unconditional condemnation. This contributed to illustrate the possible alternative presentations which were not emphasised in the presentation of the coercive treatment of detainees under US custody. Therefore, through the process of moral inversion, the news narratives contributed to facilitating an environment where the evil of the officially sanctioned use of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering may become presented as tolerable and even legitimised.

7.2. Limitations of this Study

By examining the media representation of both the unauthorised abuse and the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques inflicted on detainees under US custody, this study presented the role of the US news media within the War on Terrorism and demonstrated how, through facilitating the process of moral inversion, it has contributed to a discourse legitimising the use of coercive interrogation techniques. However, this study is also limited as a result of its focus on a single area within the network of communication, as well as its limited selection of data.

The first category of limitations within this study lies in the limited selection of database. Examining news coverage between the revelation of the prisoner abuse scandal in April 2004 and the end of 2005, this study examined news narratives published immediately after the scandal within the limited time frame of one year. Through such criteria of sampling, this study was able to capture a snapshot of the news narratives and its possible influence on public opinion in the immediate aftermath of the scandal. However, as a result of the limited time frame of the data, this study is unable to account for possible changes in the media representation of the treatment of detainees under US custody and public opinion towards US detention policies beyond 2005. In the years after the initial publication of the images depicting the acts of abuse at Abu Ghraib, additional images of abuse also surfaced in 2006 and 2009. In 2007, accounts of previously unpublished events at Abu Ghraib were also revealed in a memoir by a soldier previously stationed at Abu Ghraib. As more images and accounts surfaced, then the increasing availability of such information may also have contributed to possible changes within media framing and the public perception of the treatment of detainees under US custody as well as the acceptability of coercive interrogation techniques. Therefore, in order to examine the continual development and possible changes of US public opinion towards the use of officially sanctioned coercive interrogation techniques, further studies will be required examining the media coverage of the US treatment of detainees after the end of 2005.

Secondly, this study examined news narratives published by three of the most widely circulated newspapers within the US at the time of sampling, namely *USA Today*, the *New York Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. As this study adopted a more qualitative approach in its methodology, the sample of data remained limited to a small number of newspapers. Therefore, the results of this study would only be representative of narratives presented by

the three dominant newspapers selected for this project. While narratives presented by the three selected newspapers demonstrated a discursive pattern in support of the process of moral inversion, narratives presented by other newspapers may also support an alternative discourse. Therefore, in order to examine whether such a pattern of frames supporting the process of moral inversion may also be observed within narratives published by other newspapers, further studies would be required in order to expand the scope and to test the findings of this study.

Thirdly, as the media consists of multiple outlets in addition to the newspapers, this study would only account for part of the media discourse contributing to the representation of the treatment of detainees under US custody as well as the more generalised issue of torture. Therefore, in order to understand how the use of physical and psychological violence towards detainees under US custody has been presented by other news media outlets, such as television news broadcasts and internet blogs, further research should also be conducted analysing how the coercive treatment of detainees under US custody has been presented by the above news media outlets. The public perception of using physical as well as psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering may also be heavily influenced by fictional portrayals within popular literature and drama, such as that of the controversial television drama *24*.⁶¹³ Therefore, in order to understand further the public perception of torture, studies should also examine how the use of physical and psychological coercion as a means of intelligence gathering has been portrayed within fictional creations and its possible contribution to the legitimisation of torture.

In addition to the limitations stemming from its selection of data, this study is also constrained by its focus of attention. Within the political system, the news media may be described as being situated within a network of communication. As ideas and frames spread through the network of communication, they interact with pre-existing schemas within each location situated in the network, forming opinions, judgements and new schemas. Examining the narrative presentation of the coercive treatment of detainees under US custody by the news media, this study focused its attention on one particular part of the communication process, namely the discursive output produced by the news media. As a result, this study can only account for the possible discursive mechanisms within narratives that supported a

⁶¹³ *24* was a American television drama series produced for the Fox Network depicting 24 hours of anti-terrorist operations led by main character federal Jack Bauer through method of real-time narration.

discourse in which coercive treatment of detainees under US custody became presented with a more acceptable and even legitimised image and their possible influence on social knowledge of the issue of torture. In order to accurately account for the extent to which such an image presented by the news media may have influenced public opinion towards the use of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering, further studies should examine how the images and framing presented by the news have interacted with pre-existing schemas within the location of the US general public as recipients.

In addition, if we accept the above model of the knowledge network and post-structuralist view of knowledge and discourse as the basis of analysis, then agency and structure would be mutually constitutive in the continuous process of interacting frames. While agency is constituted by the discourse and social knowledge within the network of communication, the agents are also able to influence the reproduction of discourse and social knowledge through their input into the structure. Within such framework, Agents may possess, to a degree, autonomy in deciding what kind of discourse they want to produce. However, it would be difficult to determine the level of autonomy agents enjoy as their decisions are also influenced by the discourse and social knowledge existing in structure. For example, it may appear that the journalists choose to conform and support discourse produced by the government by supporting the discourse of Administrative Evil. However, it would be impossible for this study to determine how much of that was a result of conscious deference to political elite or whether it was the result of the journalists' need to maintain the 'good American' image and the image of 'moral superiority of liberal democracy' in order to avoid challenging their own fundamental beliefs as shaped by the structure as well as identities built on that foundation. Therefore, as this study can only present a snap shot of discourse within a particular location of the network of communication, further studies should also examine the extent to which utterance produced by agents was a result of conscious deference and conformity towards US government discourse or reflection of pre-existing values and beliefs sustained by the journalists as constituted by the structure.

While this study examined how the news presentation of the treatment of detainees under US custody may have contributed to encouraging tolerance and legitimisation of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering through the discourse of Administrative Evil, further studies would also be required to provide a broader and more complete understanding.

7.3. Implications for Media-State Relations

The result of this study carries implications in two main areas, including the study of media state relations as well as considerations of moral standards within liberal democratic societies. The first aspect in the implication of this thesis concerns the relationship between the state and the news media within the context of war.

There have been many theoretical models describing the role of the media within the political system and its relationship with the state. Models of press-state relations can be largely divided into three main categories, including the traditional ideal of a watchdog media, a completely submissive lapdog model, and a semi-autonomous watchdog model. In the lapdog model, the media is described as being completely submissive towards the most powerful groups within the political system. Unable to demonstrate any independent power, the lapdog media accepts narratives and discourses of the authority without criticism as well as presenting all issues according to the framing of the highest political powers. The press is, in the words of Mills cited by Donohue, Tichenor and Olien ‘at the disposal of the elites of wealth and power.’⁶¹⁴ In *Manufacturing Consent*, the propaganda model of the media proposed by Herman and Chomsky argues that:

‘Through a set of ‘filters’ including the size, ownership and profit orientation of media organisations, dependence on advertising income, reliance on the government and other elite groups for information, negative responses and punitive actions towards the media as means of discipline and the control of dominant ideology, themes and narratives that does not conform with the institutionalised themes are suppressed or ignored.’

In the propaganda model, the above filters are so institutionalised within the media that journalists, despite their intentions of integrity and good will, are only able to achieve objectivity within the constraints of the filters.

The second category of theories describes the media as retaining varying degrees of autonomy. In the theory by Bennett, the indexing model of press-state relations suggests that:

⁶¹⁴ Donohue *et al.* (1995) P.120

‘mass media news professionals, from the boardroom to the beat, tend to “index” the range of voices and viewpoints in both news and editorials according to the range of views expressed in main-stream government debate about a given topic.’⁶¹⁵

Within such a model, the pattern of media indexing varied from issue to issue, dependent on the nature of the issue as well as the contemporary political climate. As explained by Bennett:

‘On some issues that are of little consequence for the corporate economic order, normative vigilance may be relaxed to allow a greater range of voices to enter the news. In other cases, the clean opinion divisions among institutional power blocks required for easy indexing simply may not be present, leaving journalists with little common normative guidance for developing a story.’⁶¹⁶

In the model of cascading activation, Entman explained that:

‘a dominant frame in the earliest news coverage of an event can activate and spread congruent thoughts and feelings in individuals’ knowledge networks, building a new event schema that guides responses to all future reports.’⁶¹⁷

The activation and spread of government framing is influenced by institutional and personal motivation of the media and journalists such as economic pressure and normative values, as well as the level of congruence of the frame and established schemas that dominate the political culture, allowing the news media to form different opinions.

Following the First Gulf War, the attack on the World Trade Centre as well as the scandal of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib, the ability of the media in challenging and influencing government policies was re-emphasised as a result of the increasing availability of images. As a result of the advancement in satellite technology and mobile communication, journalists were able to utilise their own observations and sources instead of relying solely on routine official sources. As cited by Livingstone and Van Belle:

‘When journalists turn to alternative sources, when they rely on first-hand accounts of witnesses, or when they tell a story in their own voice, officially who usually cue issue priorities and frames are displaced, if only temporally.’⁶¹⁸

⁶¹⁵ Bennett (1990) P.106

⁶¹⁶ *ibid* P.122

⁶¹⁷ Entman (2004) P.7

The erosion of the government monopoly on information and the possibility of event-driven journalism as a result of advancing communications technology contributed to an increasing instability within the power relations between the state and the media. As argued by supporters of event driven journalism, the challenge of technological advancement in imaging and communication technologies to the existing structure of media-state relations could be most effectively illustrated through incidents such as the scandal of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib. As argued by Gowing:

‘photos taken casually for private purposes – albeit obscene – suddenly threatened the accountability of the most senior political and military figures in asymmetric ways that no one had ever thought possible.’⁶¹⁹

Following the revelation of the scandal, high-level officers within the US military were summoned by Congressional committees. Media exposure of the scandal also resulted in official enquiries that challenged the accountability of the US government and the legitimacy of its policies.⁶²⁰

In addition to the advancement and increasing accessibility of communication technology, the changing nature of contemporary warfare also contributed to the changing dynamics of power between the media and the state. As explained by Smith:

‘contemporary warfare is fought not for victory but to create political or strategic conditions, non-state actors are strongly present, and the key to war is the struggle for the will of “the people” because war is fought among the people.’⁶²¹

As the role of legitimacy becomes increasingly important within the context of contemporary warfare, the potential impact of images as a key weapon within the context of contemporary warfare becomes increasingly important. As explained by Gow, ‘although ‘the image alone will not necessarily be enough and will likely have narrative or other complements, but they are necessary in striking decisive blows.’⁶²² The lasting impact of the prisoner abuse scandal, demonstrated the increasing ability of the US media to assume the ideal role of watchdog by

⁶¹⁸ Livingston & Van Belle (2005) P. 47

⁶¹⁹ Gowing (2009) P.50

⁶²⁰ Gow (2007) P.204

⁶²¹ Cited in Gow (2007) P.197

⁶²² Gow (2007) P.205

providing critical journalism and substantial challenge to the legitimacy of government practices.

As demonstrated by the study of the news presentation of the unauthorised acts of abuse at Abu Ghraib, the news narratives did express criticisms of the scandal as well as demands for accountability among US government officials and the military chain of command. However, by emphasising the individual responsibilities of perpetrators, failures in the effective management of Abu Ghraib prison and the war in Iraq, as well as confusion in policy interpretation, the news narratives presented the unauthorised abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib as a result of unintended technical errors. Therefore, despite demands for accountability at high levels of both the US military chain of command and the US government, the news narratives contributed to reinforce government framing of the scandal as a result of a technical error in policy implementations that could be rectified through the prosecution of those responsible and administrative reforms. Therefore, instead of performing the role of a critical watchdog by challenging dominant government frames, news framing of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib presented a discourse of 'damage control' that mitigated the moral severity of the initial criticisms generated by the explicit images. Furthermore, by emphasising the stressful and brutalising context of insurgency in Iraq and weaknesses in the personalities of the majority of the perpetrators, the new presentation also contributed to a discourse that encouraged empathy towards the unauthorised abuse of prisoners by means of a downward comparison and presentation of the abuse as a failure of normal moral inhibitions under extreme circumstances. By supporting the discursive conditions including the erosion of moral responsibilities and the emphasis on technical responsibilities, consequentialist moral reasoning and dehumanisation of detainees under US custody, the news presentations of the coercive treatment of detainees under US custody further contributed to support the discursive framework of Administrative Evil which facilitated the legitimisation of sanctioned use of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering.

As described above, it was argued that the advancement and increasing accessibility of both imaging and transmitting technology granted the news media a new level of power and independence in its ability to challenge the legitimacy of government policies and practices through the power of images. Despite the initial shock presented by the explicit images and initial criticism of both the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib and the sanctioned

use of coercive interrogation techniques, however, the news media failed to present a sustained challenge to the legitimacy of the physical and psychological violence inflicted upon detainees under US custody both in Iraq and elsewhere. Instead, through means of interpretation and discursive framing, the news narratives facilitated a supportive discourse towards the coercive treatment of detainees which not only de-emphasised the severity and significance of the unauthorised abuse, but also enabled the sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques to be presented as tolerable and even legitimate through the discursive framework of Administrative Evil. Therefore, in contrast to the suggestion of the model of event-driven journalism occurring as a result of technological advancement and the power of image⁶²³, the ability of the news media in assuming the ideal role of independent watchdog within the political system remained limited. The result of this study, therefore, reflects the role of the news media as more representative to that of the Indexing Hypothesis and Propaganda Model where critical challenges to dominant government frames are only possible in the event of a lack of consensus among political elites. Despite the presence of criticisms, they were both limited and short-lived. More importantly, as demonstrated within this study, where the media were able to produce criticisms and challenged the legitimacy of government policies, the scope of the criticisms remain constrained within the dominant discursive framework of Administrative Evil, failing to question the fundamental failure of our modern moral safeguards.

The study of the news presentation of the coercive treatment of detainees under US custody raised questions regarding the role of the news media within liberal democratic societies within the context of war. The role of the news media within the context of war has been characterised by the often conflicting demands of patriotic loyalty and its ideal role as a watchdog within the liberal democratic society. Studies such as that of Bennett *et al.* on *When the Press Fails*⁶²⁴ criticised the failure of the news media in challenging government discourse within the War on Terrorism while demanding a more independent news media capable of performing its ideal role as the watchdog. While comments such as those of Newt Gingrich, former Speaker of the House⁶²⁵ and Garry Kasparov⁶²⁶ published by the *Wall Street Journal* criticised the lack of positive coverage and support for the US military,

⁶²³ Gow, James & Michalski (2007) & Gowing, (2009)

⁶²⁴ Bennett, *et al.* (2007)

⁶²⁵ Gingrich, Newt, Wall Street Journal (2004) Double Standards on Abu Ghraib (7th May)

⁶²⁶ Kasparov, Gary, Wall Street Journal (2004) Stop the Moral Equivalence (19th May)

hindering the US war effort not only in the War in Iraq but also the War on Terrorism in general. Having demonstrated the failure of the news media in providing effective scrutiny towards the use of physical and psychological violence against detainees under US Custody, this study should prompt us to consider the role of the news media in the context of war. We must question whether, as liberal democratic societies, the need for an independent news media as a democratic safeguard within the political system should be sacrificed in support of the war effort, as well as the implication of such a sacrifice.

7.4. Torture within a Democratic Society

The results of this study also have wider implications on how a liberal democratic society such as the US may govern itself within the context of the War on Terrorism. In the words of Adams and Balfour, 'Our capacity for cruelty and administrative evil has been briefly unmasked, and so has our hypocrisy and reluctance to confront the full implications of these sorry events.'⁶²⁷ Within the context of the War on Terrorism, it appears that the moral safeguards within the liberal democratic society have failed again in providing effective checks against legitimisation of violations against basic human rights. Through the theoretical framework of administrative evil, Adams and Balfour demonstrated how, through consequentialist reasoning, procedural re-definition of torture and dehumanisation of detainees, the US military facilitated the process of moral inversion that opened the road to abuse. However, examining the presentation of the treatment of detainees under US custody by the news media, this study demonstrated the existence of a wider discourse that facilitated the process of moral inversion, enabling the use of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering to be presented as acceptable and even legitimised. As a liberal democratic state where the use of cruel and unusual punishments have been specifically prohibited within its constitution, the level of tolerance within US public discourse towards the use of physical and psychological violence as a means of intelligence gathering carries particularly significant implications for modern democratic societies.

Considering the implication of the discourse of Administrative Evil that contributed to the legitimisation of physical and psychological violence towards detainees under US custody and the significant level of tolerance among US public opinion, important lessons may be drawn from studies of the Holocaust. In his book *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Bauman warned:

⁶²⁷ Adams & Balfour (2009) P.155

‘To put it bluntly, there are reasons to be worried because we know now that we live in a type of society that made the Holocaust possible, and that contained nothing which could stop the Holocaust from happening.’⁶²⁸

As one of the most significant atrocities of modern times, the Holocaust serves as a vivid demonstration of the scale of violence the modern state is capable of inflicting. More importantly, in the words Bauman, ‘[The Holocaust] showed what the rationalising, designing, controlling dreams and efforts of modern civilisation are able to accomplish if not mitigated, curbed or counter acts.’⁶²⁹ Modern genocide, as explained by Bauman:

‘is a means to an end: a necessity that stems from the ultimate objective, a step that one has to take if one wants ever to reach the end of the road. The end itself is a grand vision of a better and rationally different society.’⁶³⁰

Through a steady process of segregation, dehumanisation and demonization, perpetrators of the Holocaust removed its victims from ‘the universe of obligation,’⁶³¹ rendering their humanity morally invisible. The bureaucratic and functional division of labour resulted in ‘the irrelevance of moral standards for the technical success of the bureaucratic operation.’⁶³² Most importantly, in order to achieve the objective of regeneration, institutionalised mass murder was adopted as a means to an end ‘so that an objectively better human world could be established.’⁶³³ Examining the news presentation of the coercive treatment of detainees under US custody, significant parallels may be observed to the enabling processes that facilitated the legitimisation of large-scale genocide in the Holocaust. Through emphasising the need to save US lives in the exceptional state of the War on Terrorism, the news narratives presented an ‘end’ for which coercive interrogation techniques become presented as necessary. Emphasising the considerations of technical responsibilities, which considered only the effective, professional and regulated implementation of government policies, news presentation also facilitated a discourse that rendered moral standards irrelevant. Furthermore, through the process of dehumanisation and demonization, victims of coercive treatment

⁶²⁸ Bauman (1989) P.88

⁶²⁹ *ibid* P.93

⁶³⁰ *ibid* P.91

⁶³¹ *ibid* P.27

⁶³² *ibid* P.101

⁶³³ *ibid* P.92

whilst under US custody were also removed from the 'universe of obligation.'⁶³⁴ Supporting the discursive framework of Administrative Evil, it appeared that the news narratives may be contributing to the emergence of a 'just torture discourse' where, like the authorised killings of the Holocaust, the officially sanctioned use of physical and psychological violence towards detainees can become legitimised and even justified despite moral inhibitions of a liberal democratic society.

As argued by Adams and Balfour:

'the torture and abuse at Abu Ghraib should prompt us not only to punish the perpetrators and better train their replacements but also to think more deeply about the contradictions and challenges of how we govern ourselves as a democracy in the context of the Global War on Terror.'⁶³⁵

In light of the enabling discourse facilitating the presentation of violence against detainees under US custody as acceptable, the lessons of the Holocaust suggest that this study should also prompt us to reconsider the basis of public ethics within our modern democratic society as characterised by scientific technical rationality. Under the Nazi government in Germany, the modern scientific analytical mind-set that emphasised technical rationality and procedural efficiency enabled, both directly and indirectly, the perpetuation of the Holocaust. Modern scientific analytical thinking in problem solving provided mechanisms that facilitated the systematic and institutionalised killing on an unprecedented scale. More importantly, as argued by Bauman, 'Science cleared the way to genocide through sapping the authority, and questioning the binding force, of all normative thinking, particularly that of religion and ethics.'⁶³⁶ Removed of its moral and normative significance, acts of violence such as those witnessed in the Holocaust were reduced to adiaphoric 'means to an end' 'measurable against technical but not moral values.'⁶³⁷ Within the context of the War on Terrorism, the process of moral inversion through discourses with an emphasis on technical responsibilities and consequentialist moral calculations, and dehumanisation of victims, also enabled the use of violence as a means of intelligence gathering to be reduced to a similar status as adiaphoric instruments evaluated against standards of effective and professional implementation and

⁶³⁴ Bauman (1989) P.27

⁶³⁵ Adams & Balfour (2009) P.155

⁶³⁶ Bauman (1989) P.108

⁶³⁷ *ibid* P.215

efficiency in obtaining its designed objectives. Like the Holocaust, the moral safeguards of civilised societies appeared to again be failing in defending the sanctity of basic human rights. However unlike the Holocaust, such moral failures were manifested within the public discourse of a liberal democratic society where the sanctity of basic human rights has been encoded within its constitution. The significant level of tolerance within US public opinion towards the officially sanctioned use of coercive interrogation techniques should serve as an early warning against the destructive potential of 'human instrumental-rational potential',⁶³⁸ where calculations of efficiency and effectiveness become dominant in the process of political decision making. Joseph Weizenbaum, a Professor at MIT and analyst of the social impact of information technology, warned that the capacity of genocidal action has been increased following developments in science and technology. He warned that:

'Germany implemented the 'final solution' of its 'Jewish Problem' as a textbook exercise in instrumental reasoning. The same logic, the same cold and ruthless application of calculating reason, slaughtered at least as many people during the next twenty years as had felled victims to the technicians of the thousand-year Reich.'⁶³⁹

Within the context of the War on Terrorism, the result of this study demonstrated a renewed relevance of the lessons of the Holocaust. The discourse of Administrative Evil manifested within the news presentations of the coercive treatment of detainees under US custody and its possible contributions to support a discourse in which authorised violence as means of intelligence gathering can be legitimised should prompt us to reconsider the importance of a standard of morality based upon unconditional responsibility to others. In the words of Bauman:

'Responsibility which means responsibility for the Other ... has nothing to do with contractual obligation. It has nothing in common either with my calculation of reciprocal benefit. It does not need a sound or idle expectation of reciprocity... I am not assuming my responsibility on behest of a superior force, be it a moral code sanctioned with the threat of hell or a legal code sanctioned with the threat of prison... I become responsible while I constitute myself into a subject.'⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁸ Bauman (1989) P.116

⁶³⁹ Cited in Bauman (1989) P.115

⁶⁴⁰ Bauman (1989) P.183

Such responsibility as the foundation of moral behaviour arises out of the proximity of the other. In the Holocaust, erosion of the responsibility to the other through social separation enabled mass killing to be perpetrated without protest. In the context of the War on Terrorism, our unconditional responsibility was silenced through the discourse of moral inversion which masked the evil of torture. Through images and narratives the public needs to be shown the humanity of our victims as well as their suffering at our hands. In the words of Butler:

‘if we continue to discount the words that deliver that message to us, and if the media will not run those pictures, and if those lives remain unnameable and un-grievable, if they do not appear in their precariousness and their destruction, we will not be moved. We will not return to a sense of ethical outrage that is, distinctively, for an Other in the name of an Other.’⁶⁴¹

It is only then we may ‘hear the face as it speaks in something other than language to know the precariousness of life that is at stake’⁶⁴² and be reminded of our existential responsibility towards that face. Finally, as Bauman reminded, ‘on many occasions moral behaviour means taking a stance dubbed and decreed anti-social or subversive by the powers that be and by public opinion.’⁶⁴³ Within the context of the War on Terrorism, the results of this study should also prompt us to critically examine the level of violence, we as liberal democratic societies, may be prepared to inflict in the name of saving American lives. The significance and urgency of this question would be best expressed in the words of Paul Hilberg regarding the Holocaust: ‘In 1941 the Holocaust was not expected and that is the very reason for our subsequent anxieties. We no longer dare to exclude the unimaginable.’⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴¹ Butler (2004) P.150

⁶⁴² *ibid* P.151

⁶⁴³ Bauman (1989) P.183

⁶⁴⁴ *ibid* P.200

Appendix: List of Articles Examined

USA Today (164)

- Lynch, David J (2003) Iraqi lawyer's tip led to rescue of POW (4th Apr)
- Lynch, David J & Parker, Laura (2003) Rescued soldier doing well after first surgery ; Iraqi who helped troops find injured Pfc. Lynch 'very happy' to be safe (4th Apr)
- Gerber, Robin (2003) Finally equalize sexes in combat (23rd Apr)
- Walt, Vivienne (2003) 2 Iraqis killed as gunfire erupts at another protest ; City residents, U.S. troops tell different stories (1st May)
- Kelley, Jack & Strauss, Gary (2003) There are a lot of bad guys here,' troops say ; U.S. sends backup to problem city (9th June)
- Kasindorf, Martin, Kelley, Jack and Strauss, Gary (2003) Troops, families await war's REAL end ; As deaths mount, danger and distance weigh on the minds of those in Iraq, loved ones back home (12th June)
- Jones, Charisse (2003) Lynch's friends line streets ; Ex-POW, wounded in Iraq, gets hero's welcome today (22nd July)
- Jones, Charisse (2003) Lynch comes home full of thanks ; She praises kind Iraqis, U.S. troops, fallen friend (23rd July)
- Jones, Charisse (2003) Lynch wrestles with hero status ; All ex-POWs 'should've been treated equally (12th Nov)
- Page, Susan (2004) Grisly video could shake confidence ; Images of corpses may stick with Americans (1st Apr)
- Johnson, Kevin (2004) Military response vowed in Fallujah ; Attack, mutilation of U.S. civilians 'bestial' (2nd Apr)
- Shapiro Walter (2004) Each of us frames horror in own way (2nd Apr)
- Johnson, Kevin (2004) Many Iraqis distance themselves from killings in Fallujah (2nd Apr)
- Johnson, Kevin (2004) Fallujah leaders' defiance could hinder U.S. ; 'The resistance attacks are legitimate,' city manager says (5th Apr)
- Squitieri Tom (2004) Fear of losing control drives assault ; Fallujah fighting puts U.S. at 'a turning point,' experts say (7th Apr)
- Moniz, David, (2004) At least 3 prisoners killed by U.S. personnel ; General: Army 'disgusted' by mistreatment (5th May)
- Dimand, John & Squitieri, John (2004) Prisoners' deaths add new furor ; Bush to go on Arabic TV to address abuse in Iraq (5th May)
- Willing, Richard (2004) Legal issues in prosecuting abuse perpetrators (6th May)
- Kasindorf, Martin (2004) Kerry says Bush should consider apology ; Says U.S. needs to reach out after Iraq prison abuse (6th May)
- Michaels, Jim (2004) Tour provides glimpse of life at Abu Ghraib ; Most prisoners are kept not in cells but in 25-man tents (6th May)
- Cauchon, Dennis, Hampson, Rick and Howlett Debbie (2004) Abuse scandal meets disbelief in hometowns ; Relatives and friends say two in photos not like that (7th May)
- Diamond John, Drinkard, Jim, and Moniz Dave (2004) Rumsfeld faces lawmakers ; Questioning on prison scandal may be heated (7th May)
- Lynch, David J (2004) Prisoners lived in fear of guards, freed Iraqi says (10th May)
- Diamond, John (2004) Early signs were given secondary priority ; Gravity of scandal eluded Pentagon (10th May)
- Eisler, Peter & Squitieri, Tom (2004) Red Cross reports widespread abuse of Iraqis ; Group says it gave multiple warnings to U.S. last year (11th May)
- Ritter, John (2004) Poll: War opposition up amid Iraqi abuse scandal ; Americans appalled by images of prisoners' mistreatment (11th May)
- Drinkard, Jim & Squitieri, Tom (2004) Bush: U.S. owes debt to 'superb' Rumsfeld ; Photos reportedly show sexual abuse by soldiers (11th May)

- Eisler, Peter & Squitieri, Tom (2004) Red Cross: U.S. got several warnings on abuse ; Group cites mistreatment at multiple facilities in Iraq (11th May)
- Kluger, Bruce (2004) Vilified soldier shouldn't be prejudged; just ask her mom (12th May)
- Shapiro, Walter (2004) For senator, outrage is more outrageous than abuse (12th May)
- Shapiro, Walter (2004) Senator 'outraged' by reaction to prisoner abuse (12th May)
- Zoroya, Gregg (2004) Whistleblower asked mom's advice ; She knew he was bothered before abuse scandal broke (12th May)
- Locy, Tony (2004) Court-martial will lay foundation for other cases (12th May)
- Lynch, David J (2004) Some in Baghdad say U.S. troops no longer wanted ; Iraqis who say they welcomed Saddam's fall now speak of mistrust and hostility, especially after abuse at Abu Ghraib: 'The American occupation is like a cancer' (13th May)
- Kiely Kathy & Welch William M. (2004) Abu Ghraib photos cause gasps in Congress ; Lawmakers see more than 1,800, debate releasing them to public (13th May)
- Komarow Steven (2004) Role as U.S. ally gets riskier and riskier for Arab nations such as Kuwait, Jordan (13th May)
- Page, Susan (2004) Convergence of factors raises costs of Iraq war ; As images erode U.S. credibility, analysts watch for tipping points in opinion (13th May)
- Diamond, John & Willing, Richard (2004) U.S. interrogators face 'gray areas' with prisoners ; Analysts: Abu Ghraib events went too far, appear illegal (13th May)
- Moniz, Dave (2004) U.S. missed chances to stop prison abuses ; Warnings came before scandal broke (14th May)
- Diamond, John & Johnson, Kevin (2004) American's killer likely Zarqawi, CIA official says ; Voice on video matches audiotape of terror leader (14th May)
- Diamond, John & Locy, Toni (2004) Military intelligence, CIA officers under scrutiny ; None has been charged in abuse at prison despite MPs' allegations (17th May)
- Cauchon, Dennis (2004) Former guard has a history of complaints ; Graner faced abuse charges while working at Pa. prison (17th May)
- Umansky, Eric Umansky (2004) Only photos made story of abuse front-page news (17th May)
- Nichols, Bill (2004) Report highlights USA's rights efforts (18th May)
- Zoroya, Gregg (2004) Hometown says soldier was always eager to please ; Neighbors support first to face court-martial (18th May)
- Cauchon, Dennis & Locy, Toni (2004) Soldiers' defense: Right and wrong got blurred (18th May)
- Lynch, David J (2004) Reporters given tour of improved Abu Ghraib ; Prisoners get more visits, better tents (18th May)
- Diamond, John (2004) Report: Harsh interrogation OK'd for 1 inmate ; Lt. Gen. Sanchez approved prison techniques (19th May)
- Connable, Ben (2004) A Marine sees what defeatists don't ; My view from Iraq is better than the media's (and closer to reality) (19th May)
- Komarow, Steven (2004) First prisoner-abuse trial draws world news media ; Some Iraqis say soldiers deserve death (19th May)
- Diamond, John (2004) Sanchez says he never saw interrogation document (20th May)
- Moniz, Dave (2004) More soldiers could face charges soon, general says ; Military leaders deny there was 'culture of abuse' (20th May)
- McWhorter, Dianne (2004) Till case reminds us of people's capacity for brutality ; Themes from 1955 lynching echo in Iraqi prison abuses (20th May)
- Moniz, Dave & Squitieri Tom (2004) Memo warned of prison tactics (21st May)
- Diamond, John and Parker, Laura (2004) 'Time': Report to Congress short pages (24th May)
- Moniz, Dave (2004) Pentagon considers replacing its top general in Iraq (25th May)
- Parker, Laura (2004) Defense lawyers want England's statements erased (25th May)
- Moniz, Dave and Squitieri, Tom (2004) Timing of general's departure questioned (25th May)
- Moniz, Dave and Squitieri, Tom (2004) 5 more GIs may face abuse charges ; Soldiers identified from photos taken at Abu Ghraib (27th May)

- Locy, Toni (2004) Some MPs face courts-martial (28th May)
- Locy, Toni (2004) Special report: Hidden identities hinder probe ; 'Bond,' 'Doe' aliases muddle abuse cases (28th May)
- Moniz, Dave and Squitieri, Tom (2004) 3rd of detainees who died were assaulted ; Shot, strangled, beaten, certificates show (1st June)
- Stone, Andrea (2004) Lawmakers in both parties urge Congress to probe abuse ; They say military inquiry not enough in prison scandal (8th June)
- Leiwand, Donna (2004) Report alleges abuse outside Iraq (9th June)
- Locy, Toni (2004) Document warns Guantanamo employees not to talk (11th June)
- Cauchon, Dennis (2004) Lawyer wants Rumsfeld, others to testify in prison-abuse case ; Reservist's attorney: Higher-ups knew of practices (14th June)
- Moniz, Dave & Eisler, Peter (2004) U.S. missed need for prison personnel in war plans ; Shortage haunts military months later at Abu Ghraib (15th June)
- Morrison, Blake et al (2004) Pressure at Iraqi prison detailed ; Rice aide went to Abu Ghraib (18th June)
- Loci, Toni (2004) CIA contractor charged in prisoner's death ; Afghan died after 2 days of beatings (18th June)
- Despeignes, Peronet (2004) Koran doesn't call for beheadings, Islamic cleric says (21st June)
- Hampson, Rick (2004) Many accept risks of working overseas ; Pay is high, and Americans fill vital global role (21st June)
- Turley, Jonathan (2004) Abu Ghraib images bring lessons closer to home ; U.S. should embrace taped interrogations (22nd June)
- Komarow, Steven (2004) Generals ordered to testify on abuse ; Abu Ghraib case will be kept in Iraq (22nd June)
- Eisler Peter & Morrison, Blake (2004) General promised quick results if Gitmo plan used at Abu Ghraib ; But Miller asked for extra guards and legal adviser (23rd June)
- Biskupic, Joan & Loci, Toni (2004) Interrogation memo to be replaced ; Justice Dept. official calls legal advice overly broad (23rd June)
- Squitieri, Tom (2004) Charges considered in death of Iraqi general ; Army probes interrogation that ended with suffocation (25th June)
- Moniz, Dave & Squitieri, Tom (2004) U.S. Army re-examines deaths of Iraqi prisoners ; Some may have been exposed to heat, cold (28th June)
- Squitieri, Tom (2004) Documents give different explanation for inmate's death (28th June)
- Friess, Steve (2004) What makes the effects of torture linger? ; Psyche damaged when body can neither fight nor flee, scientists say (29th June)
- Biskupic, Joan & Loci, Toni (2004) Court curbs terror policies ; Detainees entitled to have hearings on confinement (29th June)
- Leinwand, Donna (2004) Some Iraqi guards as bad as prisoners, MPs say ; Let inmates escape, gave them weapons (1st July)
- Eisler, Peter (2004) Non-Iraqi captives singled out for harsh treatment, records say ; Foreign fighters seen as threat (6th July)
- Parker, Laura (2004) Hearing rescheduled in abuse case ; Aug. 3 date set for proceeding on whether to court-martial England (13th July)
- Hampson, Rick (2004) WWII guidebook to Iraq contains lessons that are relevant today (16th July)
- Diamond, John (2004) Top commanders in Iraq allowed dogs to be used ; Sanchez's memos to subordinates indicate OK of interrogation tactic (19th July)
- Parker, Laura (2004) Testimony: Iraqis abused 'for fun' ; Investigators in scandal speak at hearing for accused soldier (4th Aug)
- Parker, Laura (2004) Soldier England described as troublemaker at Iraqi prison (5th Aug)
- Parker, Laura (2004) Interrogators saw prison abuse but didn't report it (6th Aug)
- Parker, Laura (2004) Chaotic picture of Abu Ghraib emerges ; England's hearing reveals confusion (9th Aug)

- Turly, Jonathan (2004) 372nd unit deserves better homecoming (9th Aug)
- Moniz, Dave & Squitieri, Tom (2004) Report on Iraq abuse cites interrogators, clears leaders ; No one above rank of colonel implicated in prison scandal (19th Aug)
- Jenkins, Michael Brian (2004) World becomes the hostage of media-savvy terrorists (23rd Aug)
- Knox, Noelle (2004) Soldier accepts blame in Abu Ghraib case (24th Aug)
- Leinwand, Donna & Moniz, Dave (2004) Iraq abuse report holds top officials responsible ; Commission cites Rumsfeld, others (25th Aug)
- Noelle Knox (2004) Higher-ups at Abu Ghraib could face abuse charges (25th Aug)
- Leinwand, Donna & Moniz, Dave (2004) Report: Poor planning set context for abuse ; Commission says government made mistakes in prewar decisions and didn't adjust when things went sour (25th Aug)
- Leinwand, Donna (2004) Chaotic prison always on the brink ; Vastly outnumbered and poorly equipped, the soldiers guarding Abu Ghraib endured a 'grinding existence' (26th Aug)
- Moniz, Dave (2004) Prisoner-abuse report cites poor planning, leadership (26th Aug)
- Komarow, Steven (2004) 30 more implicated in Iraq abuse ; Inquiry faults intelligence unit, reveals loss of 'moral values' (26th Aug)
- USA Today (2004) Directives at Abu Ghraib were 'never clarified adequately' ; Leaders of recent report on abuse say interrogators had varying rules (27th Aug)
- Parker, Laura (2004) Ex-comrade: England tormented Iraqis ; Prosecutors want hearing wrapped up (31st Aug)
- Parker, Laura (2004) England may face more charges ; Prosecutors push for court-martial (1st Sep)
- Squitieri, Tom (2004) 2 dozen soldiers may be charged in Bagram prison deaths (2nd Sep)
- Parker, Laura (2004) Errors in investigation erode espionage case ; Doubts grow about alleged 'spy ring' at Guantanamo (8th Sep)
- Squitieri, Tom (2004) CIA hid many Iraq prisoners, generals say ; As many as 100 'ghost detainees' (10th Sep)
- Potter, Beth (2004) Reservist pleads guilty in prison scandal ; Says he was ordered 'to humiliate' Iraqis (21st Oct)
- Locy, Toni (2004) Former detainees allege torture in U.S. custody (28th Oct)
- Johnson, Kevin & Locy, Toni (2004) FBI had warned Pentagon on tactics ; Urged less harshness for detainees in Cuba (8th Dec)
- Parker, Laura (2005) Court-martial begins for Abu Ghraib figure (7th Jan)
- Frank, Thomas & Locy, Toni (2005) Gonzales 'troubled and offended' by abuse ; Nominee says he's not responsible for interrogation tactics (7th Jan)
- Locy, Toni (2005) Poll: Most object to extreme interrogation tactics (13th Jan)
- Parker, Laura (2005) Defense rests in Iraq abuse case ; Attorneys make surprise move; Graner does not take the stand (14th Jan)
- Parker, Laura (2005) Abuse trial focuses tightly on Graner's actions ; Wider questions on interrogation tactics unsettled (17th Jan)
- Moniz, Dave & Squitieri, Tom (2005) Rumsfeld offered to quit over Iraq abuse ; Says Bush declined to accept resignation (4th Feb)
- Locy, Toni (2005) Afghanistan 'trophy photos' led to soldiers' demotions (18th Feb)
- Squitieri, Tom (2005) Pentagon report on prisoner abuse met with skepticism; probe to go on (11th Mar)
- Keveney, Bill (2005) Fictional '24' brings real issue of torture home ; TV hero's tactics debated in world after Abu Ghraib (14th Mar)
- Moniz, Dave & Squitieri, Tom (2005) U.S. works to repair damage of Abu Ghraib ; Preventive measures set up, but image is battered (28th Apr)
- USA Today (2005) Private's plea doesn't take higher-ups off the hook (3rd May)
- Brooks, Vincent K. (2005) Guilty are held accountable (3rd May)
- Moniz, Dave (2005) Army will demote general in Abu Ghraib scandal to colonel (6th May)

- Turley, Jonathan Military scapegoats walk a well-worn path ; The grunts of Abu Ghraib fit lock-step into a history of injustice in our armed forces (7th June)
- USA Today, (2005) Voice of experience ; McCain's proposals on prisoners are about U.S. -- and how it's seen (5th Aug)
- Moniz, Dave (2005) Captain says concerns about prisoner abuse weren't priority (28th Sep)
- Yoo, John (2005) Terrorists are not POWs (2nd Nov)
- Moniz, Dave (2005) Five soldiers charged with abusing Iraqis (8th Nov)
- Moniz, Dave (2005) Pentagon interrogation rules allow exceptions (9th Nov)
- Diamond John & Kiely, Kathy (2005) Abu Ghraib inflamed the debate over abuse (10th Nov)
- Slavin, Barbara (2005) Abuse of detainees undercuts U.S. authority, 9/11 panel says ; Image in Muslim nations at low point (15th Nov)

Debate

- Debate (2003) Lynch deserves high honor (9th Apr)
- Debate (2004) Pentagon too slow to decry shameful U.S. acts in Iraq 2004 (4th May)
- Debate (2004) Regret, but no tears, for abuse of Iraqis (6th May)
- Debate (2004) Why was pattern of abuse ignored for so long? (6th May)
- Debate (2004) Prisoner abuse scandal points to failure in U.S. leadership (7th May)
- Debate (2004) Stepping down is right thing (11th May)
- Debate (2004) Orders don't absolve abusive soldiers (12th May)
- Debate (2004) Rumsfeld resignation would not solve problems in Iraq (11th May)
- Debate (2004) Cruelty is never justified (13th May)
- Debate (2004) Prison abuses, beheading don't compare (14th May)
- Debate (2004) All-too-common human frailty at root of Iraq prison abuse (18th May)
- Debate (2004) Uncommon courage (18th May)
- Debate (2004) How innocent Iraqis came to be abused as terrorists (10th June)
- Debate (2004) Terrorists are different (10th June)
- Debate (2004) Ally or obstacle? Iraqi cleric deftly counters U.S. moves (16th June)
- Debate (2004) Beheadings can't deter battle (23rd June)
- Debate (2004) Maintain U.S. resolve, even in face of American's brutal murder (23rd June)
- Debate (2004) Beheadings deserve more news coverage (25th June)
- Debate (2004) No 'systemic' failure (27th July)
- Debate (2004) Army abuse report seeks to skirt blame, evade spotlight (27th July)
- Debate (2004) Pentagon doesn't get it: Buck stops higher up (25th Aug)
- Debate (2004) Soldiers made scapegoats for prisoner abuse (27th Aug)
- Debate (2004) Hold officials accountable (27th Aug)
- Debate (2004) Report details abuses, cites those responsible. Now what? (27th Aug)
- Debate (2004) Ask tough questions about abuse and assign responsibility (1st Sep)
- Debate (2004) Where is greater Muslim outcry over beheadings in Iraq? (28th Sep)
- Debate (2005) Gonzales has chance to show he's more than a 'yes man' (6th Jan)
- Debate (2005) Let the evidence speak (17th Jan)
- Debate (2005) World watches as justice is delivered -- but unevenly (17th Jan)
- Debate (2005) Justice fails Pfc. England (10th May)
- Letters (2005) As champion of rule of law, U.S. needs to answer for abuse (13th June)
- Letters (2005) Close Guantanamo and regain 'moral high ground' (22nd June)
- Debate (2005) Clueless about torture (2nd Nov)
- Debate (2005) Misplaced outrage (14th Nov)
- Debate (2006) Despite Zarqawi's death, terrorism cycle will continue (14th June)

New York Times (319)

- Schmit, Eric (2004) Inquiry Ordered Into Reports of Prisoner Abuse (17th Jan)
- Shanker, Thom (2004) 6 G.I.'s in Iraq Are Charged With Abuse Of Prisoners (21st Mar)
- Carter, Bill & Steinberg Jacques (2004) To Portray The Horror, News Media Agonize (1st Apr)
- Gettleman, Jeffery (2004) 4 FROM U.S. KILLED IN AMBUSH IN IRAQ; MOB DRAGS BODIES (1st Apr)
- Burns, John F (2004) Act of Hatred, Hints of Doubt (1st Apr)
- Herbert, Bob (2004) No End In Sight (2nd Apr)
- Editorial (2004) Four Deaths in Falluja (2nd Apr)
- Gettleman, Jeffery (2004) Mix of Pride and Shame Follows Killings and Mutilation by Iraqis (2nd Apr)
- Gettleman, Jeffery (2004) Falluja's Religious Leaders Condemn Mutilation, but Not Killing, of Americans (3rd Apr)
- Sandweisse, Martha A (2004) Death on the Front Page (4th Apr)
- Belluck, Pam (2004) As Violence Escalates, Some Changes of Heart on War (8th Apr)
- Barstow, David (2004) Security Firm Says Its Workers Were Lured Into Iraqi Ambush (9th Apr)
- Editorial (2004) Abuses at Abu Ghraib (1st May)
- Shenon, Philip (2004) OFFICER SUGGESTS IRAQI JAIL ABUSE WAS ENCOURAGED (2nd May)
- Shanker, Thom (2004) Horrific Scenes From Abu Ghraib (2nd May)
- Editorial (2004) The Nightmare at Abu Ghraib (3rd May)
- Filkins, Dexter & Shanker, Thom (2004) ARMY PUNISHES 7 WITH REPRIMANDS FOR PRISON ABUSE (4th May)
- Filkins, Dexter (2004) General Will Trim Inmate Numbers at Iraq Prison (5th May)
- Hauser, Christine (2004) Iraqis Line Up, Hoping to See Jailed Relatives (5th May)
- Fisher, Ian (2004) Iraqi Recounts Hours of Abuse By U.S. Troops (5th May)
- Filkins, Dexter (2004) A Prison Tour With Apologetic Generals (6th May)
- Hauser, Christine (2004) Many Iraqis Are Skeptical of Bush TV Appeal (6th May)
- Johnston, David & Risen, James (2004) Photos of Dead May Indicate Graver Abuse (7th May)
- Lewis, Neil A & Lichtblau, Eric (2004) Red Cross Says That for Months It Complained of Iraq Prison Abuses to the U.S. (7th May)
- Conover, Ted (2004) My Life as a Guard (7th May)
- Audouard, Antoine (2004) When Liberators Become Tyrants (7th May)
- Editorial (2004) The Military Archipelago (7th May)
- Jacob, Andrew (2004) Shock Over Abuse Reports, but Support for the Troops (8th May)
- Editorial (2004) Mr. Rumsfeld's Defense (8th May)
- Cohen, Roger (2004) They've Apologized. Now What? (9th May)
- Dexter, Filkins (2004) Prison Chief Defends Using M.P.'s to Help Interrogators (9th May)
- Stevenson, Richard W (2004) Abuse Scandal: The Aftershocks (9th May)
- Filkins, Dexter (2004) FIRST TRIAL SET TO BEGIN MAY 19 IN ABUSE IN IRAQ (10th May)
- Liptak, Adam (2004) First Baghdad Court-Martial May Set Table for Later Ones (11th May)
- Jehl, Douglas (2004) Head of Inquiry On Iraq Abuses Now in Spotlight (11th May)
- Schmitt, Eric (2004) Pentagon Official Says Asking Army to Help Iraq Interrogators Did Not Lead to Prison Abuse (11th May)
- Lewis, Neil A (2004) Red Cross Found Abuses At Abu Ghraib Last Year (11th May)
- Krugman, Paul (2004) Just Trust Us (11th May)
- Sante, Luc (2004) Tourists and Torturers (11th May)
- Johnson, Kirk (2004) Guard Featured in Abuse Photos Says She Was Following Orders (12th May)
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