

# **Representations of Actors and Agency in U.S. Foreign Policy Discourses, 1949–2019**

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**DOCTORAL DISSERTATION**

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# Preface

This dissertation has been the result of a progression of events that was first set in motion many years ago. In 2005, I was accepted into the University of Helsinki to study English Philology and soon afterwards made the choice to pursue Political Science as my minor without initially really knowing how these two disciplines were going to fit together. Over the course of my studies, I discovered that the study of language and politics fit together rather nicely: I discovered a passion for studying political language in the United States in particular as well as a fondness for the study of diplomacy and international relations. Thus, the ball was set rolling. Less than a year after completing my Master's Degree in 2011, I was back meeting with Professor Minna Palander-Collin, who had been the advisor for me Master's thesis, to discuss a doctoral dissertation examining the foreign policy discourses of the United States. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Several more years have passed since then. For the majority of that time, I have worked on my dissertation part-time alongside a full-time job, with the patient support and guidance of my thesis advisors, Minna Palander-Collin and Carla Suhr, to whom I owe a debt of gratitude. Towards the end of this journey, I was fortunate to receive a grant from the Finnish Cultural Foundation, which enabled me to take a study leave to finalize my thesis and for the first time in eight years focus full-time on my research. I am also grateful to the University of Helsinki for the travel grants I received over the years, enabling me to attend conferences in Finland and abroad – an invaluable opportunity for a part-time doctoral candidate to engage with the academic community and to present my own research.

I chose to pursue an article-based dissertation, a decision that turned out to be both a source of teeth-grinding frustration and unexpected success along the way. Now, with the benefit of hindsight, I am happy for having made that choice: navigating the occasionally rocky world of academic publishing has taught me much not only about the content but also the context of doing academic research. This choice has also enabled me to share my research in interdisciplinary channels, something I felt was important due to my own academic interests beyond linguistics and the interdisciplinary nature of my research topic. Completing this dissertation has been a rewarding journey both personally and professionally, and I look forward to exploring the new paths now opened at the conclusion of this project.

My family has steadfastly supported me throughout these years, and my mother in particular has been a tireless cheerleader, offering endless encouragement. Finally, last but certainly not least, thanks are owed to two good boys, Remi and Rusko, for making sure that regardless of workloads or deadlines I was nonetheless routinely required to go outside and get some air, exercise, and sun (or, alternatively, rain or snow) and for constantly reminding me of the life outside work and study.

Helsinki, August 2021  
Sonja Kuosmanen

# Abstract

This thesis is within the field of linguistics and explores foreign policy discourses in the context of the United States. The aim is to investigate representations of actors and agency within the U.S. discursive foreign policy space, using different case studies and genres of texts related to the United States as a foreign policy actor. These representations are investigated through systematic, comparative, and diachronic analysis of corpora of texts.

Foreign policy discourse in this thesis is approached as constructing and making sense of a complex international environment, built around representations of nations, identities, and ideologies. However, foreign policy discourse is also a strategic tool for influencing others' perceptions of that international environment in ways that are meant to benefit those disseminating these representations. An investigation of foreign policy discourses in various genres of text can reveal underlying assumptions and ideologies about the international identity of the United States as well as how it as a nation positions itself in relation to the rest of the world. The presence of patterns and developments can be validated within the texts with linguistic analysis.

There are four case studies in total examining different genres of text, including U.S. presidential inaugural speeches, news articles on an international conflict, and human rights reports produced by the U.S. State Department. The analysis of discursive representations is done using linguistic tools from discourse analysis, systemic-functional linguistics, and corpus linguistics.

The findings from the case studies point to the centrality of U.S. values, interests, and influence within the discursive U.S. foreign policy sphere. Choices are made in the identification and, alternatively, obfuscation of actors and agency for both allies and adversaries, both strategically to support community building and to navigate considerations of diplomatic relations. Naming practices in wartime journalism point to complex patterns in the interaction of the media and political leadership. The use of discourse analytical, systemic-functional, and corpus linguistic tools in identifying the roles and processes that actors are associated with makes it possible to point to systematic choices within the texts that serve to construct ideological representations. Many of the patterns identified in this thesis are such that they are difficult to detect on the level of an individual text but visible in an examination of corpora of texts.

# Tiivistelmä

Tämä väitöskirja sijoittuu kielitieteen alalle ja käsittelee ulkopoliittisia diskursseja Yhdysvaltojen kontekstissa. Tavoitteena on tarkastella toimijoiden ja toimijuuden representaatioita Yhdysvaltojen diskurssiivisessa ulkopoliittikan ympäristössä hyödyntäen erilaisia tapausesimerkkejä ja tekstilajeja, jotka liittyvät Yhdysvaltoihin ulkopoliittisena toimijana. Näitä representaatioita tutkitaan systemaattisen, vertailevan ja diakronisen tekstikorpusten analyysin kautta.

Tässä väitöskirjassa ulkopoliittiset diskurssit käsitteellistetään monimutkaisen kansainvälisen ympäristön rakentajina ja jäsentäjinä, joissa keskeisiä ovat valtiot, identiteetit ja ideologiat. Ulkopoliittiset diskurssit ovat kuitenkin myös strateginen työkalu vaikuttaessa muiden toimijoiden käsityksiin ulkopoliittisesta ympäristöstä tavoilla, joista representaatioita levittävät toimijat pyrkivät hyötymään. Ulkopoliittisten diskurssien tarkastelu erilaisissa tekstilajeissa voi paljastaa piileviä oletuksia ja ideologioita, jotka liittyvät Yhdysvaltojen kansainväliseen identiteettiin sekä siihen, miten se valtiona asemoi itsensä suhteessa muuhun maailmaan. Havaitut säännönmukaisuudet ja kehityskaaret voidaan todentaa teksteissä kielellisellä analyysillä.

Väitöskirjaan sisältyy yhteensä neljä tapausesimerkkiä. Ne käsittelevät erilaisia tekstilajeja sisältäen Yhdysvaltojen presidenttien virkaanastujaispuheita, kansainvälistä konfliktia käsitteleviä uutisartikkeleita ja Yhdysvaltojen ulkoministeriön tuottamia ihmisoikeusraportteja. Diskurssiivisia representaatioita analysoidaan käyttäen diskurssianalyysin, systeemis-funktionaalista kieliopin ja korpuslingvistiikan menetelmiä.

Tapausesimerkeistä nousevat löydökset osoittavat yhdysvaltalaisten arvojen, intressien ja vaikutuksen keskeisyyden Yhdysvaltojen diskurssiivisessa ulkopoliittisessa ympäristössä. Teksteissä tehdään valintoja, joilla liittolais- ja vihollistoimijoita ja toimijuutta vaihtoehtoisesti korostetaan ja häivytetään. Nämä valinnat palvelevat sekä strategista kansainvälisten yhteisöjen rakentamista että diplomaattisten suhteiden navigointia. Nimeämiskäytännöt sodan-aikaisessa journalismissa viittaavat monimutkaiseen vuorovaikutussuhteisiin median ja poliittisten johtajien välillä. Diskurssianalyysin, systeemis-funktionaalisen kieliopin ja korpuslingvistiikan arvo toimijoihin liittyvien roolien ja prosessien jäsentämisessä auttaa tunnistamaan systemaattisia kielellisiä valintoja, joilla ideologisia representaatioita rakennetaan. Monet väitöskirjassa tunnistetut säännönmukaisuudet ovat vaikeasti havaittavia yksittäisen tekstin tasolla, mutta todennettavissa tekstikorpuksia tarkasteltaessa.

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# 1. Introduction

This thesis explores foreign policy discourses in the context of the United States. As one of the two global superpowers during the Cold War and the only one remaining since, the words of U.S. presidents, media, and foreign policy apparatus have wielded considerable influence all over the world. Here, foreign policy discourse is viewed both as representing and making sense of a complex international environment, but also as a strategic tool for influencing others' perceptions of that environment in a way that is meant to benefit those disseminating those representations. The central argument of this thesis is that an investigation of foreign policy discourses in various genres of text can reveal underlying assumptions and ideologies about how the United States as a nation positions itself in relation to the rest of the world; how these assumptions may develop and shift over time; and, finally, how the presence of patterns and developments can be validated within the texts with linguistic analysis.

The aim of this thesis is to investigate representations of actors and agency in the U.S. discursive foreign policy space. The analysis focuses on representations of different foreign policy actors operating in that space in the words used by political leaders, the foreign policy apparatus, and the media in the United States. It explores representations of agency in various grammatical and textual forms and the types of actions and processes associated with those actors. This is accomplished using a variety of case studies, methods of textual analysis, and genres of texts related to the United States as a foreign policy actor. The focus is not on foreign policy discourses *du jour*, but on investigating patterns of representation for foreign policy actors in texts through the systematic, comparative, and diachronic analysis of corpora of texts. Furthermore, this thesis aims specifically to explore ways of tracking these patterns in the analyzed texts. The selected case studies cover topics ranging from international cooperation in presidential inaugural addresses to journalism in overseas conflicts and war-time and international human rights. The common thread running through each of these case studies is the construction of relationships between the United States and actors operating in the U.S. foreign policy environment.

The ways in which these relationships are constructed in turn reflect upon perceptions of the United States as a foreign policy actor. Investigated genres of text have been selected because they have established conventions of production, are published with regularity, and are relevant to foreign policy issues because they disseminate information, evaluations, and representations of the United States as an actor on the international stage.

This section introduces the central aims and arguments of this thesis. It also offers an overview of the theoretical framework, of the materials used in the case studies, and the overall structure of the thesis. While the analysis here is situated within the discipline of linguistics and particularly within the sub-discipline of discourse analysis, the subject area of foreign policy rhetoric and discourse is relevant to other fields as well, including international relations, North American studies, and communications. Where relevant, research from other such disciplines is also presented in various sections of this thesis. Likewise, the findings of this thesis will hopefully be of interest and benefit to scholars of political language not only within but beyond linguistics.

## 1.1. Theoretical Overview

The theoretical framework of this study is built on the concepts of discourse, politics, identity, ideology, and nation (these concepts will be further contextualized and defined for the purposes of this thesis in section 2). Politics and language are mutually intertwined to the extent that Chilton (2004: 6) argues that one would not exist without the other. Studying the use of language in politics can serve as a tool for exposing underlying power relations that maintain a status quo (see, for example, van Dijk 1997, 1998; Fairclough and Fairclough 2012) or uncovering representations and assumptions held by people in positions of decision-making and influence (see, for example, Chilton 1996). Political language is also pervasive in modern media and society (Wodak 2009: 3). Political discourses are a force both for the maintenance of the status quo and for transformation; a framework for individuals in negotiating their own identities as well as for persuading others of the value of their ideological beliefs (Chilton 2004; Charteris-Black 2004; Wodak 2009; Fairclough and Fairclough 2012).

Discourses in general serve a role not only in constructing social structures (Fairclough 1992) but also in allowing individuals to cognitively process and mediate their roles in relation to those social structures (Chilton 2005). Ideologies in turn serve as a resource for individuals to enact group identities and

operate as representatives of those groups (van Dijk 1998: 141–144). Among the different kinds of group identities that individuals in modern society possess, national identities are among the most essential (Hall 1996b: 611–612) and carry with them a wide range of conceptualizations, attitudes, and conventions (Wodak et al. 2009: 4). Anderson's (1983) model of national identity as an imagined community is an oft-quoted way to conceptualize the complexity of nations and nationalism: the *perception* of a community limited by boundaries and membership among its citizens that in actuality constructs the community into being. National identities are not limited to prominent occasions of national celebration or symbolism; Billig (1995) refers to “banal nationalism” as the routine and mostly ideologically invisible enactment of a modern system of nation-states that, despite its apparent timelessness, is in fact the result of historical and socio-discursive forces.

The concept of a nation presupposes the existence of a system of nations and a system for the negotiation of inter-national relationships (Billig 1995; Giddens 1985: 263–264). There is a strong tendency to personify modern states and to imbue them with personalities and with strategizing and decision-making capabilities (Chilton and Lakoff 1995). National identity also includes conceptualizations about the roles and cultures of other nations (De Cillia, Reigis and Wodak 1999: 153). Neumann and Coe (2009) have proposed a concept of international identity, a self-image of a nation that is constructed specifically on the basis of relationships with foreign entities, including historical narratives, geopolitical frames, and representations of different foreign entities. Studying different aspects of such an international identity can reveal assumptions and metaphorical frames that inform political leaders and foreign policy experts in their decision-making (Chilton 1996) but that are also used strategically in the routine of foreign diplomacy to promote values and narratives favorable to that nation in its international relationships (McEvoy-Levy 2001). Foreign policy statements can also reveal meta-representations held by key actors about other entities in the international realm (Chilton 2004).

This thesis focuses on the United States, examining texts produced by the U.S. president, the U.S. State Department, and U.S. media. The president of the United States leads U.S. foreign policy and is the commander in chief, and thus wields considerable influence in the United States and globally in foreign policy affairs. The modern U.S. presidency has indeed been called the rhetorical presidency (Tulis 1987) due to the fact that presidents are able to use their bully pulpit to address national audiences in order to mobilize support for their initiatives. In crafting foreign policy, the president is supported by the various agencies and

officials of the foreign policy bureaucracy. The public words of U.S. foreign policy leadership and apparatus are indicative of how these key operators wish the United States to be perceived domestically and abroad (McEvoy-Levy 2001: 3) as well as revealing underlying assumptions and conceptualizations of the foreign policy space within which the country operates (Chilton 1996: 31). The U.S. media, while largely commercially independent and with strong traditions of political neutrality and journalistic tradition (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 198), is heavily reliant on governmental sources when it comes to foreign policy matters (Malek and Wiegand 1997). However, there is also a strong interdependence between decision-makers, the media, and citizens in the formation and perception of public opinion (Malek and Wiegand 1997).

## 1.2. Materials and Methods

The material in this thesis consists of a variety of genres of text. This study has not made use of previously existing corpora of texts; instead, each case study uses a corpus of texts that has been specifically collected for that study. Both the genres and the timeframes covered are diverse, including presidential inaugural addresses, newspaper articles covering the Persian Gulf conflict, and U.S. State Department reports on human rights. Both inaugural addresses and human rights reports are available in openly accessible online sources, while the newspaper reports were retrieved from a restricted online database, processed with optical recognition software, and saved as text files in order to be analyzed with corpus linguistics software. The size of the corpora used in the individual case studies varied from over 33,000 words (inaugural addresses) to over three million words (newspaper reports on the Persian Gulf conflict).

These different genres have been chosen for a number of reasons. Firstly, they are all produced by actors closely involved in communicating U.S. foreign policy to national and international audiences: the U.S. president as commander in chief and a leader in foreign policy decision making; the U.S. State Department officials and apparatus in contributing to the drafting and implementation of foreign policy; and the media in communicating representations, evaluations, and events about topics relevant to foreign affairs and policy both to U.S. audiences and political decision makers. These genres are all informed by long traditions of established practices, and the production process for the texts typically involves multiple contributors and editors. They are produced with regularity, which allows a systematic and diachronic analysis of similar

texts. Finally, they cover topics relevant to international relations that involve the United States and foreign actors engaged in various kinds of activities.

The study brings together a methodological framework for tracking patterns in the examined texts. At the core of the analysis is the examination of representations of actors, their mutual relationships, and the activities they are engaged in. Discourse analysis offers avenues for analyzing discursive representations of actors and agency (van Leeuwen 1996, 2008), including various strategies for signaling inclusion and exclusion, choices of naming actors, and “coordinates” (Chilton 2004: 138) for how different actors are placed in relation to one another according to various axes such as space, time, and modality.

Because of both the size of the textual material and the aim of analyzing the material in ways that point to the specific linguistic expressions of observed patterns, the analysis also makes use of the tools of systemic-functional linguistics (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004) and corpus linguistics (Baker and McEnery 2015a). Systemic-functional linguistics, and particularly the analytical framework of Transitivity, is valuable in categorizing patterns of representation according to different kinds of processes and participant roles. These categories of processes and roles can be quantified, compared, and tracked over time. Corpus linguistics is used for the analysis of the biggest corpora in the case studies. Its value is in the quantification of linguistic patterns through the analysis of frequencies and statistical tests (Baker 2010: 94), used here to examine patterns of naming in large corpora of newspaper articles.

### **1.3. The Aims and Structure of This Study**

The aim of this study is to investigate representations of actors and agency in discursive U.S. foreign policy space as well as the types of actions undertaken by those actors. The themes explored in the individual case studies cover actors and agency in international collaboration, patterns of naming for key actors in newspaper articles covering an international conflict, and rhetorical inclusion and exclusion of actors in the field of international human rights. The thesis aims to uncover patterns of representation and underlying ideological assumptions through the use of specific linguistic tools and the systematic, comparative, and diachronic analysis of corpora of texts relevant to foreign policy discourses.

There are five sections in this thesis as well as four case studies included in appendices. The sections cover the theoretical and analytical framework of the study, present an overview of the materials and methodology used in the case

studies, and finally, draw together and discuss the findings from the case studies.

Section 2, *Towards Foreign Policy Discourse*, lays out the theoretical groundwork for the examination of discursive representations and identities in foreign policy contexts. The section covers various frameworks of conceptualizing language and discourse in politics; discusses the links and mutual dependencies between conceptualizations of discourse, ideology, and identity; presents approaches to studying national identity through discourse; and, finally, discusses the concept of nation-ness, presents a model of international identity, and discusses the relevance of examining discourses used in foreign policy contexts by different stakeholders.

In section 3, *The U.S. Context: State and Media*, the specific contexts and texts of U.S. political leadership, media, and foreign policy are presented. Because the case studies in this thesis focus on representations used in texts produced by U.S.-based actors and institutions, the relevant political and media contexts and genres are discussed. The section covers the role of the U.S. president in leading foreign policy and the nature and relevance of the presidential inaugural address. The media environment in the United States is also discussed, as are the interdependencies of the media and government in covering international events. The role of the media in times of conflict is also addressed, focusing particularly on the Persian Gulf War, which is the case study for media texts in this thesis. Finally, the section covers foreign policy rhetoric and public diplomacy, the actors within the U.S. government involved in crafting it, and its purpose in building and maintaining climates of belief – not only among the audiences for which public diplomacy statements are crafted, but also among the people involved in crafting those statements. The human rights reports produced by the U.S. State Department are also introduced.

Section 4, *Materials and Methods*, presents the materials used in each of the case studies in further detail and explains the methods used in the analyses. The overall methodological framework is based on discourse analysis. However, the analysis also makes use of additional methodological tools from systemic-functional linguistics and corpus linguistics. The section presents each of these methods, explaining the central terminology and added value for the analysis here.

In section 5, *Key Findings and Contributions*, the case studies are presented in detail, including their research questions and findings. The findings are then placed in the context of previous research on the topics. The value and contribution of the findings from the case studies is discussed. Finally, this section



evaluates the benefits and appropriateness of the chosen case studies and methodology in achieving the aims of this thesis.

This thesis is based on four case studies that are included here in appendices. The case studies have all been published in international peer-reviewed journals, some in open access journals of linguistics and others in multidisciplinary publications. They cover a variety of textual genres, from presidential inaugural addresses (Article 1) to newspaper reports (Articles 2 and 3) and human rights reports published by the U.S. State Department (Article 4). The articles, their titles, and journals of publication are:

**Article 1:**

Kuosmanen, S. (2015) “With friends and former foes”: The functional roles of international collaborative partners and their relationships with the United States in inaugural addresses of American presidents since 1949. (Published in *SKY Journal of Linguistics* 28: 225–248.)

**Article 2:**

Kuosmanen, S. (2021) Terms of reference and objectivity in US press reports in the Gulf War in 1990. (Published in *Journalism*, Volume 22, Issue 8: 2053–2070. Published online ahead of print in 2019.)

**Article 3:**

Kuosmanen, S. (2020) Terms of reference and discursive representations: A case study with Saddam Hussein in the 1991 Gulf War. (Published in *Token: A Journal of English Linguistics* 10: 227–250.)

**Article 4:**

Kuosmanen, S. (2021) Human rights and ideology in foreign policy discourse: A case study of U.S. State Department Human Rights Country Reports 2000–2019. (Published in *Discourse & Society*, Volume 32, Issue 4: 426–442.)

## 2. Towards Foreign Policy Discourse as Representation and Identity

This section presents a theoretical framework for examining identity and change in foreign policy discourses. It starts with a discussion of political language in discourse analysis, connecting the study of (political) discourses to the concepts of ideology and identity. It then expands the concept of national identity into the international realm, into representations of the nation vis-a-vis others in international politics. The evolution of the media environment in which politics is done has similarly had a profound impact on the political realm. While a more detailed discussion of the relationship of the state and the media in the specific context of the United States will be presented in section 3, this section will also discuss the role and impact of the media in each of these sections.

### 2.1. Politics in Language and Discourse

The study of political language as a discipline is as old as politics itself. As is often the case when discussing the field of political discourse analysis, one first starts with Aristotle. In Aristotle's *Politics*, a human being (in this case, a man) is described as "a political animal" who is "furnished with the faculty of language" as well as a natural impulse towards political association (Aristotle 1995: 10–11). Politics can be seen as a struggle for power on the one hand, and as cooperation on the other hand, in mediating conflicts through established practices and institutions (Chilton and Schäffner 2002: 5; Chilton 2004: 3). Chilton (2004: 6) argues that "political activity does not exist without the use of language" and also, conversely, that the need for language originally arguably rose from a need to form and signal group boundaries through human socialization.

The first question that must be asked, however, is how language and politics come together in the study of political discourse. Some authors have highlighted the critical functions of discourse analysis in exposing power relations and particularly inequality and domination in political discourse (see, for example, van Dijk 1998; Fairclough and Fairclough 2012; van Dijk 1997), particularly in the

field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Some (see, for example, Chilton 1996; de Cillia, Reigis and Wodak 1999: 150) also highlight the impact that discursive representations can have on political leaders and the decision-making process. Generally speaking, most studies on political discourse focus on the words produced by politicians and political institutions, though there are complications in drawing boundaries between the political and the non-political (for one discussion on the subject, see van Dijk 1997). Arguments have been made for a broad definition of what counts as political discourse (see, for example, Wodak et al. 2009: 3; Chilton and Shäffner 2002: 6–8) while others have taken a more limited approach, with political discourse being attached specifically to political contexts and actors such as politicians and institutions (see, for example, Fairclough and Fairclough 2012: 17–18; van Dijk 1997: 12–15).

Within the field of discourse analysis, there are also several ways to approach the study of political discourse. Many of these approaches share a commonality in that they view political language as constructing and representing the world and its social rules and interdependencies. However, different approaches propose different frameworks and carry different implications for relationships between individuals, discourses, and societies.

One way to view political discourse is as a social phenomenon and resource for the enactment of identities and power relations. Wodak (2009), for example, views political discourse in the context of the management of power and knowledge. This model highlights the central role of social structures and intertextuality as resources for and enactment of identities, norms, and practices both for individuals and for organizations involved in the operation and dissemination of political decision making and information sharing. This model builds upon Goffman's (1959) work on the concept of performance in interaction and Bourdieu's (1990) concept of *habitus*, highlighting both the construction, negotiation, and hegemony of knowledge in political organizations – and the power dynamics associated with this process – as well as the representation and fictionalization of political decision making.

Other approaches have taken a more cognitive view of political discourse. In a model of political discourse set forth by Chilton (2004), language and social behavior are closely linked but “language and political behaviour can be thought of as based on cognitive endowments of the human mind rather than as social practices” (Chilton 2004: 28–29). Chilton's model draws from the Cooperative Principle outlined by Grice (see, for example, 1989) and the concept of validity claims in communicative actions by Habermas (see, for example, 1979) to highlight the intrinsically cooperative function of communication and how political

discourse can be used to support and subvert this function. Chilton's model highlights discursive representations and meta-representations about the world that can be used to persuade recipients of the message to conceptualize a topic or an event in certain ways. This view of political discourse in terms of cognitive representation shares links with research in areas such as conceptual metaphors (see, for example, Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Chilton and Lakoff 1995). Van Dijk (1990) has similarly argued for the recognition of the link between social cognition and discursive representations, also in the context of political discourse (van Dijk 2002).

While the previous two models highlight representation in somewhat different forms, another approach proposed by Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) emphasizes political discourse as argumentation leading to practical outcomes such as decisions or courses of action. This model connects the agency of individuals who make decisions based on beliefs, desires, and values to social and material circumstances, with structures constraining and enabling individual actors' courses of action (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012: 81). Actors, operating based on these personal and structural circumstances, make representations about the world with the intent of persuading others of specific actions or objectives. At the same time, access to political deliberation and resources is affected both by unequal power relations and institutional structures in modern societies (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012: 235–236).

Finally, another somewhat distinct model of discourse analysis is that of Charteris-Black, who has focused on political persuasive rhetoric and the use of metaphors in particular. This model considers metaphors both in their persuasive functions and within the cognitive framework of conceptual metaphors (see Lakoff and Johnson 1980) in political discourse. Charteris-Black has also integrated some views from the critical study of discourse in his model of Critical Metaphor Analysis (see, for example, Charteris-Black 2004, 2014) in charting the use of metaphors as indicators of underlying ideologies in political speeches, media discourse, and religious texts. Charteris-Black also includes consideration of classical rhetoric in his research of contemporary political speeches (Charteris-Black 2005). His research highlights not only the prevalence of metaphors in political language but also the strategic use of metaphors as a tool in the construction of political identity; charismatic leaders use choices of metaphor in “appealing to others to share a virtuous social identity” (Charteris-Black 2005: 198).

Chilton and Shäffner have identified four strategic functions in political communication (Chilton and Shäffner 1997: 211–215; see also Chilton 2004:

45–46): coercion, referring to speech acts backed by the exercise of power or control, not only as laws or commands but through positions that enable agenda-setting or similar limitations to participants' roles; resistance, opposition, and protest, referring to countering coercion and opposing the imposition of power relations; dissimulation, referring to the control of information by limiting the amount of information shared or sharing outright false information; and, finally, (de)legitimation, which refers to techniques to establish agreement and legitimacy in favor of some parties while delegitimizing others. Furthermore, in a sample analysis of a political speech, Chilton and Shäffner (1997) identify various linguistic structures that support these strategic functions, including the positioning of the speaker, the use of metaphors, and the representation of agency.

In modern daily life, people are constantly exposed to discourses of political persuasions (Wodak 2009: 3), often brought to them by a daily consumption of mass media and social media: televised press conferences, debates, news and press reports, TV shows and movies, YouTube videos and Twitter posts, or even, more recently, TikTok videos. While the object of study in the analysis of political discourse may be a matter of some debate (see above in this section), it is nonetheless a feature of modern societies that politics and media are closely intertwined. Indeed, Fairclough (1992: 67) highlights the role of discourse as political and ideological practice specifically because of its function in establishing, sustaining, and changing power relations. The role of “spin doctors” in the maintenance of politicians' public image and the resources poured into controlling the message attest to the importance of the interdependencies between politics and the media (Chilton 2004: 8; Wodak 2009: 2). The changing media environment has also affected *how* politicians speak: Tyrkkö (2016), for example, found a connection between the emergence and expansion of electronic mass media and a shift to a more we-focused style of speaking.

This thesis views these different ways of conceptualizing political discourse as mutually complementary. Political discourses are relevant to individuals as well as communities and groups; they can be used strategically to persuade and to legitimize, but they equally serve to construct the way the political environment and its boundaries and traditions are conceptualized; and their dissemination is subject to power relations that regulate access to audiences and channels of influence. The interaction of discourses, ideologies, and identities, all concepts that are particularly relevant to the way individuals and groups mediate their roles as social and political actors, will be addressed in more detail in the next section.

## 2.2. Briefly on Discourse, Ideology, and Identity

Having now briefly overviewed the study of political discourses within the field of discourse analysis, it is now relevant to momentarily take a step back and review the assumptions underlying this field when it comes to the interrelations of discourses, ideologies, and identities.

The framework of discourse used in this study draws in large part, though not exclusively, from the work done in the field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This approach is linguistically oriented, focusing on the study of texts (as written or spoken products of language). Within CDA, discourse is viewed as social practice that serve to construct social reality and structures alongside non-discursive or non-linguistic processes (Fairclough 1989; Fairclough 1992). This view of discourse is distinct from the conceptualization of discourse by Foucault (see, for example, 1969/1972), which has been heavily influential in social sciences and humanities but does not share a focus on textual analysis. However, Foucault's work has been incorporated into some approaches within CDA (see, for example, Fairclough 1992) due to its view of discourse as constitutive and interdependent with discourse practices in society (Fairclough 1992: 39).

This conceptualization of discourse has also been prompted to consider the connection between social structures and the mental representations of social actors operating within those structures (Chilton 2005). This missing link brings together discourses and social structures through the addition of the cognitive dimension (Chilton 2005: 23), and some CDA scholars have indeed adopted the role of cognition in their research (see, for example, van Dijk 1995; Wodak 2006). Thus, "relations between society and interaction, and hence between society and discourse," van Dijk (1995: 138) notes, "are necessarily indirect, and mediated by shared mental representations of social actors as group members".

Groups are central when ideology is discussed in relation to discourses. "[I]deologies are essentially social and shared by *groups*" (van Dijk 1998: 140; emphasis in the original). This is not in reference to "any arbitrarily composed collectivities" (van Dijk 1998: 140) but groups constituted when its members share social representations about a shared history, experiences, and goals; share a common social identity as a part of each member's individual (mentally represented) identity; and act or are acted upon as representatives of that group (van Dijk 1998: 141–144). Van Dijk views ideologies as socio-cognitive systems of belief that form the foundation for social groups,

and the role of discourses as social and societal practices that reproduce and modify these beliefs through social action (for a discussion on ideology and discourse, see also van Dijk 2013). Some scholars also emphasize the role of ideologies in social conflict and the reproduction of domination, social order, and relations of power (see, for example, Fairclough 1989; van Dijk 1998; Fairclough and Fairclough 2012). The mass media prioritizes the views of certain societal actors and institutions over others in both what topics are regarded as newsworthy and who is in a position to be interviewed and covered, reproducing dominant views and ideologies (Richardson 2007: 134–135; see also van Dijk 1988).

The discursive constructions of social groups and ideologies are also connected to the issue of identities. Identity has become a central concept not only within discourse analysis but across the humanities and social sciences (for a selection of studies and approaches to the study of identity, see, for example, Hall and du Gay 1996; de Fina, Schiffrin and Bamberg 2006; Dolón and Todolí 2008). However, in this multitude of research, “[c]urrent conceptions of identity stress the fluidity, complexity and context sensitivity of identities” (Grad and Martín Rojo 2008: 5). What unifies a complex web of identities as well as approaches conceptualizing them is that they all carry social implications for how actors place themselves or are placed in relation to others (for one extensive overview of the various approaches to conceptualizing identity in discourse analysis, see Grad and Martín Rojo 2008). Identities are, in essence, about individuals creating meaning as social actors in interaction with and in relation to others (Grad and Martín Rojo 2008; see also van Dijk 2013).

One way to approach the concept of identity is as the result of discursive representations arising from individuals interacting with and being constrained by socio-historical structures (Grad and Martín Rojo 2008: 5; Hall 1996a: 4). Another is to view it, to put it in Goffman’s (1959) terms, as performance, wherein an individual actor draws on available cultural meanings and resources to present themselves to others in certain ways. Lemke (2008: 21) highlights the importance of actors’ agency in constructing their identities within the social and cultural frameworks available to them. The work by Ricoeur (1991) on narrative identities has also been influential in discourse studies (Grad and Martín Rojo 2008: 10; Wodak et al. 2009: 11): Ricoeur proposes conceptualizing identity through narration, in which “the narrative constructs the durable character of the individual... in constructing the sort of dynamic identity proper to the plot” (Ricoeur 1991: 77), thus bridging the two conflicting characteristics of identities: permanence and change.

Power relations play an important role in many scholars' conceptualization of identity formation through discourses (see, for example Grad and Martín Rojo 2008; Lemke 2007; Hall 1996a: 4). Hall (1996a: 4–5) emphasizes the functions of difference and exclusion in identity, in not only creating an in-group but also demarcating the unity of that group by separating it from and contrasting it to an 'other'. The interdependencies of discourses, power relations, and ideologies operate through the production of consent among the public, thus maintaining current social structures and institutions that benefit from the status quo (Fairclough 1989: 33–34). The media holds a powerful role in not only privileging and legitimatizing certain representations and voices in its coverage of societal events, but also in the cumulative, repetitive effect of the modern mass media (Fairclough 1989: 49–55; see also Machin 2008 for a study of news production as an institutional practice with established discursive conventions, assumptions, and values).

This conceptualization of ideology, discourse, and the role played by the media in disseminating discourses also implicates a connection between language and social change (Fairclough 1992). In modern times, the advancement of information technology and communication technology in particular has had a transformative effect, leading to an environment where public spheres extend from local to national and international levels (Chouliriaki and Fairclough 1999: 3–6). The maintaining and transforming force of discourses are thus closely linked to the operation of the mass media (Wodak 2009: 17–19). Actors' identities are increasingly fragmented and uncertain due to the technological and social changes and possibilities brought about by modern societies (Iedama and Caldas-Coulthard 2008). Following the discussion of discourse, ideology, and identity in this section, the next section will focus on the concept of national identity and the representation of nation states as actors.

### **2.3. On National Identity**

In terms of the creation and maintenance of identities, nation states have a unique advantage in comparison to many other groups in that states maintain the ultimate monopoly on the use of sanctioned violence (Bloom 1990: 73) – echoing the frequently cited Weberian definition of a state as “a human community that (successfully) claims *the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory (Weber, 2009: 78; emphasis in the original). However, as both Bloom (1990: 56) and Fairclough (1989: 90–93) state, it is also in the interest of ruling classes to promote unity and generate consent



rather than simply coercing citizens into complying with the political institutions and structures of the state. In inspiring a sense of belonging in its citizenry, the concept of national identity is crucial.

National identities are “one of the principal sources of cultural identity” and are thought of as “part of our essential nature” (Hall 1996b: 611–612). As Wodak et al. (2009: 4) put it, “national identity’ is a complex of similar conceptions and perpetual schemata, of similar emotional dispositions and attitudes, and of similar behavioural conventions, which bearers of this ‘national identity’ share collectively and which they have internalized through socialization”. The wording of the quote above points to a type of conceptualization of national identity essentially as a socio-psychological phenomenon (Bloom 1990; Billig 1995; Chilton 2004; Wodak et al. 2009), implying that it is not simply a cognitive representation held by individuals but also serves to construct the social reality in which individuals operate.

As Anderson (1983: 3) notes, nation, nationalism and nationality have been difficult concepts to define and have eluded theoretical clarity. In his own work, Anderson proposes a conceptualization of nation as the oft-quoted imagined political community, imbued with certain characteristics: the community is imagined because its members never know or meet all of their fellow community members; it is a real community because, while imagined, it is imagined into being rather than being falsely perceived to be real; the community is limited and finite both in its boundaries and its membership, and also posits the existence of other nations; it is sovereign; and, finally, it is a community that presupposes a horizontal comradeship among its members (Anderson 1983: 5–7).

Wodak et al. (2009: 4), in their investigation of discourses of national identity, posit that there is in fact no single national identity, and that “different identities are discursively constructed” and “are therefore malleable, fragile and, frequently, ambivalent and diffuse”. Discourses of national identities are found not only among the national elites but across the public and private spheres of life and in formal and informal settings (Wodak et al. 2009; De Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak 1999). The enactment of national identity can be viewed as the routine enactment of roles, norms, and practices, echoing Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus*; narratives about the uniqueness and common history of the group (see, for example, Martin 1995; Hall 1996b); or as the continuous legitimation of and competition for power relations in society to maintain the advantaged status of national elites (see, for example, Fairclough 1989).

Hall (1996b: 613–615) has identified five main aspects that comprise national belonging or identity. The first aspect is the narrative of the nation,

retold in the media, literature, national symbols, and rituals among others, connecting the destinies of individual lives with an overarching national narrative and destiny. The second aspect is the primordial nature of national identity, emphasizing origins, continuity, timelessness, and tradition. The third aspect concerns the invention of norms and rituals to create shared traditions. The fourth aspect is the foundational myth of the nation, the story locating the origin of the nation in history and myth. Finally, the fifth aspect is the idea of an original people of the nation. However, Hall (1996b: 617) also highlights the fact that national cultures, while represented as unified, are actually marked by internal divisions and differences: “Modern nations are all cultural hybrids.”

Martin (1995) identifies three core elements in identity narratives: a relationship to the past (particularly to collective memories of real or imagined traumatic events), a relationship to space (referring to spaces that are narratively identified as belonging to and sustaining the group), and a relationship to culture (the identification of cultural traits that serve as emblems of identity). Martin also points out that while individuals produce such narratives, collective identities cannot be authored by any single individual; however, particular actors such as political leaders are in a position to tap into narrative currents to strategically steer collectives of people into favorable directions.

Martin, as well as Fairclough (1992) and van Dijk (1997) among others, also highlight the role of power relations in the formation of political ideologies and identities. Fairclough (1992: 87) in particular discusses the naturalization of ideologies in society to the extent that they become “naturalized and achieve the status of ‘common sense’”, discussing the concept of hegemony to describe the unstable equilibrium of power, leadership and domination between classes and blocs within society (Fairclough 1992: 91–96). The media plays a critical role in naturalizing hidden relations of power and discourses in society due to the one-sidedness of the interaction involved in designing messages for mass audiences (Fairclough 1989: 49–50). Indeed, Anderson (1983: 44–45) connects the emergence of nations as imagined communities to the development of the capitalist printing press. Thus, ideologically charged practices and perspectives can come to be seen as natural and neutral. “Ideology is most effective when its workings are least visible” (Fairclough 1989: 85).

Offering an alternative view, Chilton (2004) proposes a different conceptualization of the way language, politics, and identity interact. While approaches stressing the role of power on political and national identities focus on political activity as a struggle for dominance and legitimacy, Chilton highlights the fact that politics can be seen not only as conflict, but also cooperation. In Chilton’s

approach, political discourse is partly based on representations drawn from spatial cognition and metaphorical reasoning of the world – spatial metaphors that also enable the cognitive concepts of group and identity. The formation of a group identity is at least partly accomplished through an individual's subjective experience about worlds of actors and actions – experiences that are achieved through communication with others. Representation and interaction are thus linked with one another. Political language, then, can also be about getting others to share a common view (Chilton 2004). Cap (see, for example, 2008, 2010) has expanded on Chilton's model of the discursive representation of political space with a theory of proximization in which political actors seek to legitimize their actions through the construction of shared discursive space. Within this space, represented threats are strategically placed in spatial, temporal, and axiological relation to the speaker and audience, thus seeking to persuade the audience of the validity of the speaker's proposed plan of action, such as military intervention.

Bloom (1990: 55–62) highlights the role of “nation-making” and a mechanism of psychological identification with the state through which individual citizens recognize the legitimacy of the state, become loyal citizens, and come to identify with and experience the symbols of the state. Bloom identifies what he terms the national identity dynamic, a potent political force that can be mobilized in times of war or crisis when the population feels compelled to defend and enhance their common identity (Bloom 1990: 113–114). However, Billig (1995) also highlights a less prominent type of everyday patriotism that he calls “banal nationalism”, the routine, everyday enactment of a nation: an ideological foundation and set of habits that maintain and reproduce nation-states even in times when highly visible, patriotic ‘flag-waving’ is not called for. Banal nationalism, Billig (1995: 93–94) argues, fools many observers into claiming that nation-ness is a natural state of affairs that implies an absence of ideology.

Fairclough (1992: 90) highlights the fact that ideological conventions can be hard to detect when they are naturalized and automatized, and even practices of resistance and change may not be recognized as ideological. However, in his discussion of banal nationalism, Billig specifies that in the cases of nations and nationalism, perceptions are shaped at a very fundamental level. “Nationalism involves assumptions about what a nation is: ... it is a theory of community, as well as a theory about the world being ‘naturally’ divided into such communities” (Billig 1995: 63). As discussed at length by Giddens (1985), a modern nation state is not a natural nor an ahistorical phenomenon, but

rather the result of specific cultural, historical, and societal forces that has in the modern era become so universal as to appear timeless. In a world of nations, inter-national relations can appear similarly natural. However, the international realm brings with it added complexities in conceptualizing actors, relationships, and identities. The next section will expound upon these topics.

## 2.4. The Case for International Identity

There is a tendency in the talk and study of international relations to represent nations as coherent personalities, as evidenced by the frequent phrases when reporting the foreign policy actions taken by various countries: the United States “decides”, France “has declared”, and so forth (Bloom 1990: 2). Chilton and Lakoff (1995) note that this personification of states is a prevalent metaphor not only in everyday talk of foreign affairs but in academic research on international relations, wherein states are imbued with character traits and personalities, form relationships, strategize, make decisions and take actions, and affect (and are affected by) the actions of other similarly personified states. However, Giddens (1985: 289) also adds that modern nation-states do appear in many ways as actors, operating as “bounded administrative unities” and legal personalities in an international system of other similarly unified agents.

Of course, nations are not individuals in and of themselves and require the involvement of human beings to operate. For example, when studying the foreign policy rhetoric of the United States, what we are in fact studying are the texts of individual people: in this study, those individuals either operate in the institutional position of speaking on behalf of the U.S. government (the president, key officials, voices of government bureaucracy) or are tasked with reporting on the activities of the U.S. government for media consumption (journalists). The uncovered representations are held or at a minimum promoted by these individuals – not, of course, by the United States itself, as it does not have independent cognitive capacity. The U.S. foreign policy contexts relevant to this study are presented and discussed in more detail in section 3. This section, however, first lays out a conceptual framework for national identity in an international context and presents a conceptualization of an international identity.

In their study of Austrian national identity, De Cillia, Reigisl and Wodak (1999: 153) state that the construction of national identity, of an in-group, also implicates stereotypical notions about other nations and their culture and history. Both Billig (1995: 80) and Giddens (1985: 263–264) note that the existence of a sovereign nation-state presupposes the existence of a *system* of similar

nation-states in which international relations are not a consequence but a pre-requirement for the maintenance of nationhood. The nation-state has expanded in administrative power not only to consolidate internal resources, but to address the need to cope with an international network of relations between states that in turn authenticates the nation-state “as the legitimate arbiter of its own ‘internal’ affairs” (Giddens 1985: 256). Trends of globalization are eroding the relationship between the nation-state and national cultural identity (Hall 1991: 22) and new sub-national and supranational identities are emerging in turn (Billig 1995: 133). In discourse analysis, the construction of supranational identities in the European context, for example, has attracted attention (see, for example, Krzyżanowski 2005; Grad 2008). However, Billig (1995: 139–143) argues that the national reflexes of borders and boundaries, of ‘us’ and ‘them’, still persist.

While conceptualizations of national identity presuppose some international elements, a case has also been made for the study of an explicitly international identity. Working with the specific context of the United States, Neumann and Coe (2009; see also Coe and Neumann 2011) propose the concept of international identity as an identity that is explicitly “built, shaped, and reinforced vis-à-vis the rest of the world” (Neumann and Coe 2009: 7). This international identity is distinct in that it is separate from a national identity and relies on a different set of narratives and tropes; it is defined in relation to and in reference to one or more ‘others’; the identity is constructed in international contexts, such as through historical narratives or geopolitical circumstances; and, finally, it makes distinctions between and within foreign entities, such as the leaders and peoples of specific nations (Coe and Neumann 2011). This conceptualization of international identity, echoing Hutcheson et al. (2004), emphasizes “*the constructed and public international self-image based on membership in the world community*” (Neumann and Coe 2009: 6; emphasis in the original).

Whether one conceptualizes views about a world of nations and one’s role in it through national or international identities, these conceptualizations nonetheless carry real world implications for foreign policy decision making. Bloom (1990: 89) posits that national identity can function as a foreign policy resource that governments can evoke in order to pursue strategic foreign policy aims, but conversely also that foreign policy can be used for nation building. The national identity dynamic (discussed in section 2.3.) can also be triggered by other parties or mobilized in a way that influences the government’s foreign policy decisions in unexpected directions. Bloom (1990: 90–93) uses the

example of McCarthyism in the United States to demonstrate developments in the domestic national identity dynamic that resulted in foreign policy consequences, as Communism and the Soviet Union became adversarial fixtures in U.S. foreign policy decision making for decades.

Chilton (1996) has also explored the role of metaphors in the conceptualization of domestic and international political relations, focusing on the Cold War and U.S. political language in particular. Metaphor, Chilton (1996: 28) argues, “is one of, if not the major, cognitive means that communicating minds have for simplifying and ‘making sense’ of highly complex phenomena” – phenomena such as culture, states, and international relations. The concept of state, for example, is now viewed as axiomatic, but it is in fact maintained by a network of interlinked historically conditioned discourses and by the communicating agents operating in this network (Chilton 1996: 409–412). Chilton’s analysis shows that the discursive representations and conceptual metaphors used both by academics of international relations as well as political leaders and policymakers can affect the way an entire international system of nations is perceived by key individuals. These individuals, in turn, can have a transformative impact in communicating new conceptualizations when supported by favorable external conditions.

In international communication between nations, representations likewise play a role. Routine foreign policy statements are designed for public consumption by the media, the general public, and decision makers both domestically and abroad, aiming to disseminate views and create ideological ecologies sympathetic to the nation’s foreign policy aims (McEvoy-Levy 2001: 2–4). This means that foreign policy statements require consideration not only with national contexts and discourses, but with the added layer of interculturality and the reception of other nations with potentially very different cultural and political contexts. The concepts of face, face-threatening acts, and intercultural conflict in foreign policy rhetoric, for example, have been examined by Chilton (1990) and Flowerdew (1999). As Chilton (2004) notes, foreign policy statements reveal how the surrounding world is represented but also show meta-representations about other entities and actors in the international realm, referring to beliefs actors such as national leaders and other decision makers hold about the intentions and motivations of other foreign policy actors.

On the global stage, the United States continues to be a special case in many ways, including its impact on the cultural and globalizing developments affecting the world of nations. “American political nationalism often presents itself as

the universal voice of reason, addressing a universal audience” (Billig 1995: 149). Similarly, Hall (1991: 28) observes that global mass culture is dominated by homogenizing imagery and styles “within the larger, overarching framework of what is essentially an American conception of the world”. The next section moves from a general consideration of the interface of language, politics, discourse, and identity to examining the context of the United States through the different kinds of texts analyzed in this study: presidential discourse, media discourse, and foreign policy reports.

### 3. The U.S. Context: State and Media

This section focuses on the specific contexts and circumstances of the United States in investigating foreign policy rhetoric. As discussed in the previous sections, conceptualizations of national (and international) identity and representations of the world as well as the role of the United States in it can be found in a variety of textual genres. This study has chosen to focus on three distinctive fields where discourses on nationalism and internationalism are prevalent: the speeches of the president of the United States; war journalism; and human rights reports representing public diplomacy and the language of foreign policy administration. Each genre is discussed in this section separately, including the considerations and peculiarities brought about by the specific contexts of the United States.

However, two concepts central to U.S. political life must first be addressed: American exceptionalism and civil religion. These concepts are both prevalent and fundamental to political life in the United States and underpin much of what will be presented in the later parts of this section.

McEvoy-Levy (2001: 23) defines American exceptionalism in short as “the United States’ moral superiority as well as the uniqueness of its origins, political system, social organization and values and cultural and religious characteristics”. However, Lipset (1996: 17–18), tracing the term to the writings of mostly European travelers and particularly French aristocrat Alexis de Tocqueville in the 1830s, points out that those writers did not use ‘exceptional’ to refer to superiority, but rather to *difference*, the outlier origins of the United States in comparison to other contemporary societies. The concept of American exceptionalism can be seen as “*the ‘para-ideological’ umbrella*” (McEvoy-Levy 2001: 23; emphasis in the original) that has manifested in different ways at different times in American culture and politics (Pease 2009: 7–9), from the Cold War to its aftermath and from manifest destiny to the city upon a hill. However, Lipset (1996: 18) also notes that “[e]xceptionalism is a double-edged concept” and that the same underlying characteristics manifest in ways that are sometimes positive and sometimes negative.



The exceptionalist thinking has operated not only as a function of patriotic identification for its citizens, but also as a political and a foreign policy doctrine and has even informed the ways in which some academic fields have approached the study of U.S. culture, history, and literature, among others (Pease 2009: 11–12). The American exceptionalist creed manifests in five characteristics: liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, populism, and laissez-faire (Lipset 1996: 19). Indeed, Lipset (1996: 31) posits that “[b]eing an American... is an ideological commitment” and because societally divisive issues are framed in terms of morals rather than interests, they also inspire more intense disagreements (Lipset 1996: 26). Dunmire (2019) has examined the temporal dimensions of American exceptionalism, finding that a U.S.-based model of progress and international development is represented in influential policy texts as “an autonomous historical process” (Dunmire 2019: 14) rather than being grounded in U.S. foreign policy interests and conceptualizations.

The concept of American civil religion, most notably described by Robert Bellah (1967), conceptualizes a current of religiosity that runs through national beliefs and practices and political life in the United States. This civil religion posits the existence of a God who favors the United States and of an American chosen people and is routinely invoked in institutionalized political texts, rituals, and symbols (Bellah 1967). Roof (2009) observes that civil religion in the United States is not only a matter of static practice but a subject of ongoing struggle between groups seeking influence and political power in order to mobilize the public and implement their vision. Similarly, U.S. presidents have highlighted certain aspects of civil religion to promote narratives and values favorable to their priorities (Roof 2009: 298–299).

This moralistic approach has also affected the way the United States has approached foreign relations. In entering into an international conflict, the country must define its role in terms of good and evil, as being “on God’s side against Satan” rather than simply defending material interests (Lipset 1996: 20). The Cold War had a particularly transformative effect on the conceptualization of American exceptionalism: “[T]he U.S. nation was structured in a relationship of permanent imagined warfare with an enemy empire. That structure transformed U.S. political practices into permanent exceptions to national political norms.” (Pease 2009: 30). The end of the Cold War prompted a transition in exceptionalist thinking in U.S. foreign policy (McEvoy-Levy 2001) but the events of 9/11 and the War on Terror that followed have again offered opportunities for political leaders to rally public perceptions and assert moral clarity (Kane 2003: 794; Pease 2009: 154). The president of the United States,

as the commander in chief and leader in U.S. foreign policy, is the topic of the following section addressing presidential discourse.

### **3.1. Presidential Discourse and the Inaugural Address**

The president of the United States is a powerful individual within the U.S. political system, with influence in both the domestic and foreign affairs of the country. Presidential rhetoric, in turn, is a central source for the president's executive power, with the ability to address the national audience and persuade them to view themselves in ways compatible with the president's views of government and the world (Campbell and Jamieson 2008: 6–9). The president is also seen as the custodian of national values, which are “memorialized in past presidential discourse” (Campbell and Jamieson 2008: 12). Regardless of the varying oratory skills of individual presidents, presidential speech commands attention from the media and the public (Germino 1984: 1–2).

Rhetorical leadership is at the core of the modern U.S. presidency (Tulis 1987: 4). It is now typical for presidents to bypass the U.S. Congress to appeal directly to the public to seek support for legislation and initiatives, while before the twentieth century, presidents preferred written communication between branches of government (Tulis 1987: 4–5). Beasley (2004: 21) draws a connection between the emergence of the rhetorical presidency and a time of rapid growth as well as fragmentation in the United States around the turn of the twentieth century, with rapidly rising immigration, the end of slavery, and the after-effects of the American Civil War. Tulis (1987: 182–189) notes that the development of the rhetorical presidency has been reflected in and further reinforced by other trends, including the style of presidential campaigning, the expansion of the White House speechwriting staff, and the media environment.

Lim (2002), in a study of presidential inaugural and state of the union addresses from 1789 to 2000, found five trends in presidential rhetoric in the twentieth and twenty-first century presidential rhetoric: a turn to more informal and less intellectual and deliberative styles; a tendency towards abstraction; increased assertiveness; increased evocation of the American people and the president, but less focus on other branches of government; and, finally, a more conversational style. Lim (2002: 346–347) also observes that there has been change not only in the way U.S. presidents speak, but also in the political environment in which they operate. In his earlier study, Tulis (1987: 178–179) expresses a concern for the erosion of the political deliberative process, noting

that the rhetorical presidency may risk forcing the Congress to respond in kind, turning contests of opinions between branches of government into competitions to please or manipulate public opinion.

In this study, the words of U.S. presidents are present in two different contexts. Firstly, the inaugural addresses of U.S. presidents between 1949 and 2013 are examined in Article 1. The inaugural address is a much-studied genre of presidential rhetoric and a highly ritualistic and symbolic speech in which national values are reaffirmed, the unity of the people is reconstituted, and the continuity of the presidency and the system of government is assured (see, for example, Campbell and Jamieson 2008; Beasley 2004; WAUDAG 1990). Corpora of U.S. presidential speeches have been the focus of discourse studies examining diachronic developments across decades and even centuries, as in the analysis of security and insecurity in U.S. presidential state of the union addresses from 1790 to 2014 by Bevitori (2016). Additionally, the words of the president are present, though only indirectly investigated, in Articles 2 and 3, which analyze press reports of the Persian Gulf War in 1990–1991. Inaugural addresses and the role of the president as commander in chief are addressed in further detail in this section below.

In this study, the inaugural address is a specific type of presidential text that is examined in detail. Inaugural addresses are not often appreciated for their rhetorical eloquence as their symbolic function is misunderstood (Campbell and Jamieson 2008: 29). WAUDAG (1990: 190) call inaugural addresses “hard nuts for academic and intellectual cracking” but identify their main purpose as being in the “restoration of ideological normality, which is to say invisibility, in American public discourse”. Beasley (2004: 12) argues that instead of viewing the contrived nature of inaugural addresses as a detriment, their value is precisely in how they provide information about the *ideal*. The inaugural address “articulates the ‘public philosophy’ around which the American polity is organized” (Germino 1984: 15).

Campbell and Jamieson (2008) identify a set of specific elements of inaugural addresses. Firstly, they constitute and re-unify the American people after the divisive election season. Secondly, the inaugural address rehearses and affirms traditional national values, selected and framed in ways that serve to unify the audience while being consistent with the party and philosophy assuming power. Thirdly, the address presents the principles guiding the new administration. Fourthly and finally, the inaugural address enacts the presidential role and demonstrates that the incoming president understands the requirements and the limitations of the role in regard to the U.S. system of government. According

to Beasley (2004: 12), inaugural addresses, alongside state of the union addresses, are “particularly ripe with constitutive rhetorics of American nationalism”. While these elements present the inaugural address as highly ritualistic and symbolic, it can also be used to lay out the ideological foundation for the president’s policy initiatives (Campbell and Jamieson 2008: 48).

While inaugural addresses serve to promote unity, Beasley (2004) also demonstrates in her analysis that this unity is in some ways internally contradictory. Appealing to shared beliefs and values, particularly those related to civil religious themes, is in many ways an efficient way to promote social cohesion and accommodate difference in a diverse democratic nation. However, Beasley also notes that this kind of rhetoric makes it more difficult for presidents to address difference without simultaneously invoking shared national beliefs, and indeed can result in subtly suggesting the exclusion of certain groups from the national unity (Beasley 2004: 66–67).

As mentioned above, another aspect of presidential discourse addressed in this section is war rhetoric. In the governmental framework of the United States, the president is pre-eminent in foreign policy (Scott and Crothers 1998: 7). In controlling articulations of future realities and threats in national security discourse, presidents are also able to pre-emptively legitimize their preferred plans of action in foreign policy decision making, as demonstrated by Dunmire (2011) in the case of the Bush doctrine, a U.S. national security policy of pre-emptive action against adversaries adopted by the administration of President George W. Bush. The executive war powers have broadened over time, and while there is an ongoing struggle between the president and Congress over the limits of that power, the U.S. president now wields considerable discretion in exercising military power (Campbell and Jamieson 2008: 217–218). Campbell and Jamieson (2008) identify five characteristics of presidential war rhetoric: the emphasis on the deliberative and carefully weighed nature of the decision to go to war; the justification of forceful intervention through the use of narratives; the assumed unanimity of the audience in supporting the president’s action; the justified use of force and the legitimatization of the president as the commander in chief; and, finally, the use of strategic misrepresentations to characterize events and situations in order to justify decisions and pre-empt criticism. In short, “in presidential war rhetoric, presidents attempt to prove that military action is or was the only appropriate response to a clear, unavoidable, and fundamental threat” (Campbell and Jamieson 2008: 249).

The Persian Gulf War of 1990–1991 in many ways exemplified the influence wielded by the president and the U.S. political leadership over the media and

public opinion. Following Iraq's invasion of its neighbor Kuwait in August 1990, the administration of President George H.W. Bush launched a campaign of disinformation to build public support for U.S. military intervention against Iraq, ultimately leading to the U.S.-led and highly mediatized Operation Desert Storm against Iraq in January 1991 (Kellner 2004). "In retrospect," Kellner (2004: 136) observes, "the Bush administration and the Pentagon carried out one of the most successful public relations campaigns in the history of modern politics in its use of the media to mobilize support for the war." While the Persian Gulf War is now three decades past, it has served and continues to serve as an object of study for war rhetoric and propaganda (see, for example, Lakoff 1991; Peer and Chestnut 1995; Kellner 2004; and for a recent example, Oddo 2018) and is also a case study in this thesis. Of course, the propensity of the U.S. media to patriotically support the White House in times of international conflict is by no means unique to the Persian Gulf conflict, as evidenced by more recent studies on the U.S. government, a supportive media, and the rhetorical power wielded by presidents (see, for example, Hutcheson et al. 2004; Oddo 2011; Abid and Manan 2016). The next section will discuss the role and peculiarities of the media environment in the United States and address the topic of war journalism specifically.

### **3.2. Media Discourse and War Journalism**

News discourses are pervasive in modern society. In contrast to the multitudes of one-on-one interactions individuals have on a daily basis, media language is heard by mass audiences. "It is the few talking to the many," as Bell (1991: 1) puts it. News represents the world, and different choices in linguistic expression carry different ideological implications and representations (Fowler 1991: 4-5). Thus, while the mass media and news bring the audience's attention to events beyond their immediate surroundings and experience, they also provide only a partial view of the world, a reality that typically reflects "a very limited range of official sources and bureaucratic institutions" (Machin 2008: 67).

Bell (1991: 52-55) views news as layers of embedded talk in which most of the information journalists use is second hand, the produced text contains speech events by others, and much or even most of what is reported is what others have said rather than done – particularly when reporting on political and diplomatic affairs (Bell 1991: 60). However, the dominance of institutions and individuals with authority or financial power in news is less a result of deliberate oppression and more a by-product of the established production processes

of news making (Bell 1991; Fowler 1991; Machin 2008): journalists are under constant time-pressure and therefore have incentives to economize time and effort, resulting in a routine of news gathering that leads journalists to prioritize either written sources already available in an appropriate format or so-called newsmakers, individuals who have speaking rights on behalf of the organizations they represent. Thus, journalists often rely on access to governmental sources and information (Richardson 2007: 127; Machin 2008).

The media environment in the United States is a part of an Anglo-American model of journalism, characterized by commercially funded media, newspapers that developed early with little state involvement and thus dominated over non-commercial media, an informational style of journalism, and strong traditions of political neutrality and journalistic tradition (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 198). In the United States, the commercial press began particularly early and developed into a sizable industry that in turn transformed its role in politics (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 202–203). Furthermore, the legal tradition of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution resulted in a more absolutist model of press freedom than in Europe (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 229). The traditional wisdom has been that an independent media could foster democracy and serve as a watchdog on political leaders, though views have differed on whether this has been accomplished in practice, both in terms of the extent of media independence from the state (Malek and Wiegand 1997: 16–17) and the effect of business interests and pressure on media reporting (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 227).

Partisan bias in media reporting in the United States has been an oft-debated topic both in academic research and within the media itself. U.S. media has been accused of harboring a liberal agenda (Kuypers 2014), but comparisons of different U.S. media outlets have varied in their findings on the presence of bias (Niven 1999; Groseclose and Milyo 2005). Views on this bias in the media have been similarly varied (see, for example, Weinberg 2010; Hotchkiss 2012; Engel 2014). It should be noted that in U.S. journalistic tradition, while individual newspapers may have a strong political identity in their editorials, this identity does not extend to news reporting, which has a strong assumption of political neutrality and traditions of journalistic practice that emphasize objectivity (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 219). However, as Machin (2008) points out above, the routine production processes in news making inevitably introduce biases.

In the realm of foreign policy making, the media's role in informing the public is particularly important due to the limited access and first-hand

knowledge that the audience has on foreign policy matters (Malek and Wiegand 1997: 18). The government, however, wields great influence over the reporting of foreign policy in the media due to its ability to control the flow of information: journalists receive information through controlled channels (briefings, press releases, leaks, meetings), the executive branch of the government has influence in setting the public agenda on foreign policy matters, and journalists themselves often lack familiarity with the history and context of events taking place elsewhere in the world (Malek and Wiegand 1997). However, there is ultimately mutual interdependency between policymakers, the media, and citizens in the formation, representation and perception of public interest and opinion (Malek and Wiegand 1997). In an influential study that explored factors promoting the choice of newspaper stories in world news, Galtung and Ruge (1965) identified a variety of interlinked factors, including an emphasis on negativity, elite nations and individuals, dramatic events, and compatibility with existing stereotypes (Galtung and Ruge's model of news values has also since been revisited by, among others, Harcup & O'Neill 2017).

In times of crisis and war, the “inexorable intertwining of political leaders and mass media, particularly news media, in the construction, articulation, and dissemination of national identity” is emphasized, as Hutcheson et al. (2004: 47) find in their study of War on Terror discourses in the United States. Wars in and of themselves are highly newsworthy events, and in times of conflict, mainstream media typically depends on the military and the government to provide access to information, sources, and interpretations of the events taking place (Richardson 2007: 180–186). In the United States, the commercial media, in its competition for audiences and profits, is wary of going against public opinion and the official government line in times of war (Kellner 2004: 146). However, in their study of the persuasiveness of military interventionist appeals by UK leaders before the Iraq War, Hart and Fuoli (2020) also found that audiences required credible evidence in addition to authoritative speakers to be persuaded of the validity of the proposed action.

Kellner's 2004 analysis revisited the Persian Gulf War of 1990–1991, which he (2004: 136) called “one of the first televised events of the global village in which the entire world watched a military spectacle unfold via global TV satellite networks”. The Persian Gulf War has exemplified and continues to exemplify a successful case of government efforts to shift and mobilize U.S. public opinion to support war, as has been evidenced by the breadth of studies on the conflict across different fields (see, for example, Kellner 2004; MacArthur 2004; and, more recently, Oddo 2018). The role of journalism and media in the



war has been examined not only from a U.S. perspective but also internationally (see, for example, Mowlana, Gerbner, and Schiller 1992).

As also previously mentioned in section 3.1., the Persian Gulf War also represented an instance where U.S. political leadership exerted considerable influence on the national media coverage of the events unfolding in the Gulf (see MacArthur 2004 for a detailed behind-the-scenes study of U.S. media agencies and their interactions with the Bush administration during the conflict). The administration of President George H.W. Bush employed the strategic use of rhetoric that demonized Iraqi President Saddam Hussein (Lakoff 1991) and the systematic feeding of disinformation and propaganda to journalists, as detailed by Kellner (2004) and Oddo (2018) among others. The media, in turn, played a role in choosing and echoing supportive rhetorical representations (Pancake 1993) and adopting the terminology of the military (Staczek 1993). Similar strategies and patterns have later been found in relation to both the War on Terror and the later Iraq War (see, for example, Hutcheson et al. 2004; Lule 2004; Abid and Manan 2016). By focusing on U.S. newspaper articles, Articles 2 and 3 explore whether, and how, news reporting was affected over the course of the conflict, whether systematic changes could be uncovered, and whether different newspapers showed different approaches and reporting practices.

Indeed, while studies have generally highlighted the supportive stance that U.S. media outlets took in the lead-up to and during the U.S.-led military operation against Iraq, Peer and Chestnut (1995) found a comparably more critical stance in print media reports in comparison to broadcast news in the lead-up to the U.S. military operation. Thus, to some extent, voices critical of the war were represented in news reports on the conflict. Despite the extensive efforts made by the Bush administration to promote support for war, there was dissent among U.S. political elites over launching a military operation against Iraq (Peer and Chestnut 1995). Hackett and Zhao (1994) and Hackett (1997), who explored the framing of opposition to the use of force against Iraq in U.S. newspapers, found that the press did afford some visibility to anti-war sentiments, though both the sentiments and the evaluations of their legitimacy in the press were colored by militarized narratives of the moral character of the United States and the Vietnam War. Similarly, in the later Iraq War, Nikolaev and Porpora (2007) found that editorials and opinion pieces in print media did show a critical, though limited, debate of a war against Iraq.



### 3.3. Foreign Policy and Public Diplomacy

While the president of the United States is pre-eminent in foreign policy matters, the role of advisors and bureaucracies is also central in the U.S. model of foreign policy (Scott and Crothers 1998: 7). The foreign policy bureaucracy is a significant institutional player in providing advice and implementing policy decisions, but its “expertise and control of information place it in a position to shape the formulation of policy by performing much of the generation and consideration of policy alternatives” (Scott and Crothers 1998: 9). Similarly, the crafting of foreign policy involves multiple individuals, governmental organizations and suborganizations, other legislators and non-governmental actors in what McEvoy-Levy (2001: 3) calls “competitive strategic political communication”. Policy reflects and shapes the use of persuasive rhetoric and discourse and vice versa (Chilton 1996: 58; McEvoy-Levy 2001: 13).

While easily dismissed as an empty smokescreen, public diplomacy is by its nature meant for public and media scrutiny and serves a variety of functions. The cumulative routine of U.S. diplomatic rhetoric serves to construct and maintain shared beliefs and interpretative ideological frames, domestically and abroad, among the general public and the elites, that are favorable to U.S. foreign policy aims and support addressing specific foreign policy aims and international events (McEvoy-Levy 2001: 2–4). At the same time, the interactive use of language can reveal how political elites want the United States to be perceived at home and abroad (McEvoy-Levy 2001: 3) as well as underlying belief systems, conceptualizations and communicative habits (Chilton 1996: 31). Current and former government officials are also frequently involved in media reports on current national and international events, not only participants in the events themselves as news makers but as commentators and background experts interpreting the events and providing predictions and assessments, as so-called news shapers (Soley 1992). A sample study of national and local U.S. newspapers found a prevalence of government sources and routine channels such as press conferences and press releases in national newspapers (Brown et al. 1987), pointing to close links between government bureaucracy and media.

Foreign policy rhetoric is a central component of crafting foreign policy. Rhetoric both conveys and is shaped by policy; it is used to create a shared climate of belief and reflects the practices and traditions of the institutions from which it is drawn (McEvoy-Levy 2001: 13). Thus, the stakeholders involved in crafting policy both shape and are shaped by their own use of language. In his investigation of metaphors of security and containment in Cold War discourses,

Chilton (1996: 415) highlights the role played by “various institutionalized communities of experts in producing and reproducing strategic discourses”. Chilton’s analysis was focused on the Cold War and particularly on the United States. More recently, Dunmire (see, for example, 2014) has examined U.S. national security strategy discourses in the post-Cold War era and found a conceptualization of national interest that pre-supposed the continued dominance of U.S.-based democratic and economic structures on the global stage. Other studies have addressed “state of exception” discourses used by U.S. security agencies in the post-9/11 era that were used to justify and maintain a sense of continuing threat and a corresponding suspension of norms in the U.S. judicial system, politics, and society (Martin and Simon 2008; Hunter and McDonald 2017). “[I]n theorizing international relations,” Chilton (1996: 406) observes, “theorists are probably unable to disentangle their theoretical conceptions from their preconceptions, and from their prescriptions that become reality”. Political theorists and policy makers also often share concepts and discourses, meaning that these conceptualizations impact policy as well (Chilton and Lakoff 1995: 37).

These conceptualizations and representations play not only into internal policy considerations but also into communication between states. Public diplomacy is the public, official voice of the state, which in the U.S. context is also often primary among the means through which international leaders, governments, and other organizations make evaluations about the United States and its intentions, particularly when they do not otherwise maintain close U.S. relations (McEvoy Levy 2001: 2). Chilton, whose analysis focuses on the use of conceptual metaphors in foreign policy and international relations, contrasts the intra- and international realms of communication thusly:

Within the state, it is in discourse that policy is conceptualized and contested in the light of perceived constraints. Between states, validated interlocutors depend on natural language communication (and sometimes miscommunication). ... The process of communication involves the contesting of meanings, and one place we can observe this contest well is in the cooperative and conflictual reformulation or rejection of metaphor in discursive interaction. (Chilton 1996: 411)

The metaphor of a state as a person is ubiquitous both in political theory and everyday talk, but it can also be used strategically, in highlighting or hiding aspects or characteristics of certain states as favorable or unfavorable (Chilton

and Lakoff 1995: 56–57). When treating sovereign states as persons or agents, another aspect that requires negotiation in communication between them is the concept of face. Both Chilton (1990) and Flowerdew (1999) have done case studies to analyze how strategies of face-threatening and face-saving operate in cross-cultural diplomatic contexts. Flowerdew's analysis of negotiations between Britain and China over the future of Hong Kong in the 1990s found that British representatives' lack of understanding of the Chinese concept of face led to a breakdown in talks. Chilton (1990) examined politeness strategies in U.S.-Soviet communication between Reagan and Gorbachev. His analysis showed that both leaders used a variety of rhetorical and metaphorical choices in their responses to the other leader in order to simultaneously balance diplomatic and domestic considerations.

In this study, Article 4 addresses texts related to foreign policy and public diplomacy by examining the annual human rights reports produced by the U.S. State Department. The reports have been published since 1977 and now serve as a frequently used resource for U.S. diplomatic and foreign policy efforts, by human rights groups, and in academic research (Poe, Carey, and Vasquez 2001; McMahan 2009). The U.S. State Department Human Rights Reports can thus be viewed as a strategic tool of public diplomacy in that they promote a vision of human rights within the United States and across the world that is favorable to U.S. interests. At the same time, however, the reports can also be analyzed for the underlying ideological assumptions and representations that are used by the foreign policy experts drafting these reports. As this section has discussed, these representations can be the result of conscious, strategic choices or, alternatively, implicit assumptions that reveal how career officials and other experts themselves conceptualize the human rights environment.

While this section has briefly discussed the materials used in this study in the societal and political context of the United States, section 4 will present the analyzed materials in detail and present the methodology used in the analysis.

## 4. Materials and Methods

Thus far, this study has laid out the theoretical foundation for this thesis in section 2 and the contexts of the studied phenomena in section 3. Here in section 4, the focus shifts to presenting the specific materials in this thesis as well as the methodological approaches and tools used.

### 4.1. Materials in This Study

The core of this thesis is centered on four case studies. Each of these articles examines a unique set of texts, and most also use different genres of texts. Both the textual genres and the specific case studies have been chosen for a specific purpose. The genres covered in the case studies are political speeches, wartime media press reports, and public government reports. In their study of Austrian national identity, Wodak et al. (2009) used a variety of textual genres, including commemorative speeches and addresses delivered by politicians but also group conversations and qualitative interviews with Austrian citizens in their data. One of their stated reasons for this choice was that “various discursive constructs of national identity are given different shapes according to the context and to the public in which they emerge” (Wodak et al. 2009: 3). While the textual data used in this study is more centered on the language of the government and the media, the rationale for choosing these texts is similar: all these texts serve to construct representations of (particularly international) identity in various shapes and contexts. As sections 2 and 3 have shown, political and media language are also intertwined to a significant extent and have mutual influence.

Table 1 gives an overview of the types of textual materials used in the four case studies (Articles 1–4, included in this thesis as appendices). The analyzed texts consist of inaugural addresses by U.S. presidents between 1949 and 2013; newspaper articles from U.S. newspapers covering developments in the Persian Gulf conflict in 1990–1991; and executive summaries from Human Rights Country Reports between 2000 and 2019 produced by the U.S. State

Department for five countries (China, Germany, Iraq, Israel, and Russia). More detailed information about the analyzed textual data can be found in each of the Articles included with this thesis.

**TABLE 1: Composition of analyzed materials for Articles 1–4**

ARTICLE	TYPE OF TEXTUAL MATERIAL	TIME PERIOD COVERED	TOTAL WORD COUNT	NUMBER OF TEXTS
<b>Article 1</b>	Presidential inaugural addresses	1949–2013	33,683	17 addresses
<b>Article 2</b>	U.S. newspaper articles	July–December 1990	3,105,158	3,480 articles
<b>Article 3</b>	U.S. newspaper articles	December–July 1991	3,021,269	3,119 articles
<b>Article 4</b>	Executive summaries of U.S. State Department human rights reports	2000–2019	66,966	100 executive summaries

All these text types are influential reflections of the phenomenon that is at the core of this thesis: representations of relationships between the United States and the rest of the world, and what those representations reveal about identity, either national or international. These text types are not *ad hoc*, but rather informed by long traditions and established practices; they are produced with regularity, allowing a diachronic study of changes and developments; they are, to some extent, all authored and edited by multiple individuals (the inaugural addresses are of course ultimately performed by the U.S. president but typically include input from speechwriters and other staff as well); the texts are disseminated by actors who have a wide reach and sizable audiences, domestically in the United States or also abroad; and they all include a component of international actors, as represented entities, intended recipients, and/or as named and unnamed sources of information embedded in the texts.

Article 1 focuses on the inaugural addresses of U.S. presidents between 1949 and 2013. The transcripts for the addresses were retrieved online from the website of the Avalon Project (2008). This amounted to seventeen inaugural addresses delivered by eleven presidents, starting from the inaugural address of Harry S. Truman and concluding with the second inaugural address of Barack Obama (later inaugural addresses have taken place after the publication of the article). Article 1 investigates how international collaboration and international partners are represented in the inaugural addresses using the tools of systemic-functional linguistics, which will be presented in detail in section 4.3. below. Portions of the inaugural addresses that discuss collaboration with international partners are analyzed using the systemic-functional framework of Transitivity, exploring functional grammatical categories that show how prevalent international collaboration is as a theme, what kinds of participant roles actors are placed in, and what types of activities are represented.

Articles 2 and 3 both focus on U.S. newspaper articles on the Persian Gulf War, starting from just before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 to the post-war period following the U.S. military operation in 1991. The articles focus on examining changes in the naming of national leaders and particularly Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in U.S. newspaper articles in 1990 and 1991. The Persian Gulf War was chosen as the case study for Articles 2 and 3 for several reasons. Firstly, the conflict offers a concise timeline of events, starting from Iraq's invasion of neighboring Kuwait in August 1990 to Operation Desert Storm and Iraq's surrender in spring 1991. Secondly, it represents a transformative time in U.S.-Iraqi relations, as the two countries turned from uneasy allies in their opposition to Iran to long-term adversaries (Oddo 2018: 41–42). Finally, the conflict has received considerable critical attention in previous research, meaning that a diachronic examination of a large corpus of newspaper articles has a baseline and a point of comparison with which to start.

Article 2 covers the period from July 1, 1990, to December 31, 1990, reaching the precipice of Operation Desert Storm. It investigates developments in the news reports in the build-up to the U.S. operation, focusing on changes in the terms of reference used for Iraqi, Kuwaiti, and U.S. leaders using the methods of corpus linguistics (presented in section 4.4. below). Article 3 continues from and builds on the analysis in Article 2, examining terms of reference for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein with a study of discursive representations associated with those terms. The analysis in Article 3 uses a combination of corpus linguistics and systemic-functional analysis. Altogether, the corpora for Articles 2 and 3 includes a total of over six million words and over six and a half

thousand articles from three major U.S. newspapers (*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal*). The articles were collected with a search in the ProQuest Historical Newspaper database for “Iraq” and Kuwait”. The retrieved articles, which were in pdf format, were then processed with an optical character recognition software, checked for any mistakes the software may have made, and finally saved as text files so that they could be analyzed using corpus analysis software.

In Article 4, the analysis is centered on human rights reports published annually by the U.S. State Department on the human rights situations of countries around the world. The reports are distributed and openly accessible through the U.S. State Department website ([www.state.gov/](http://www.state.gov/)). The article examines the executive summaries of five country reports (China, Germany, Iraq, Israel, and Russia) that were chosen based on their varying relationships with the United States, ranging from established long-term allies to adversaries, and covers a period of twenty years from 2000 to 2019. This amounts to a total of one hundred executive summaries that are analyzed for various aspects: themes of human rights that are prevalent, added, or discontinued over time; narratives of the ideal for human rights and how to advance towards them; representations of actors and the allocation of agency in particular; and the way terrorism is treated as a potential justification for human rights abuses in the reports. The analysis is both comparative and diachronic, exploring both how countries may be treated differently and how (and whether) changes can be observed over time.

The following three sections present the methodologies used in Articles 1–4 in further detail, explaining the framework and the central terminology. We start with a presentation of relevant methodology in discourse analysis; continue to the framework of systemic-functional linguistics and Transitivity, which allow both for a qualitative examination of processes and actors and the quantification of categories; and, finally, conclude with corpus linguistics, which is the most quantitatively focused method among those covered here.

## 4.2. Methods of Analyzing Discourse

Discourse analysis is a varied field even within the narrower focus of political discourses. As evidenced by the discussion in sections 2 and 3, political language can be examined through the lens of identity-building and ideology, narratives, cognition, socio-historical and intertextual forces, metaphors, and the operation of power relations in the production and maintenance of

discourses. The analysis in this study is focused on the representation of discursive foreign policy space, actors operating in that space, and the types of actions undertaken by those actors. The approaches presented in this section have been used in various combinations with the analytical tools of systemic-functional linguistics and corpus linguistics, which are explained in further detail below in sections 4.3. and 4.4., respectively.

Methods for analyzing the representation of actors is key in this thesis, and the work of van Leeuwen (1996, 2008) has influenced the approach taken here. Van Leeuwen lays out various strategies of representation of social actors that are connected to rhetorical or linguistic choices: various manifestations of inclusion and exclusion, agency, representations of social actors as groups or individuals, and categorizations through aspects such as functionalization and relational identities. The study of agency for social actors, for example, is a sociological as well as a grammatical concept and is realized in texts in various different ways, including but not limited to choices of subjects and objects and the systemic-functional categories of Agents (Van Leeuwen 1996: 32–33). Charteris-Black (2014: 102) identifies the representation of agency as including not only methods of referring to social actors but also analyzing the choices of verbs associated with those actors. Various aspects of the representation of actors and agency are addressed and investigated in this study across Articles 1–4. The specific focus in each Article varies based on the type of material analyzed, and thus the specific questions of actors and agency also varies between the case studies, but in each case both actors and their actions are investigated.

What these actors and contexts have in common is that they are all involved in activities of an inter-national nature. The analyzed texts address audiences domestically or abroad on issues of conflict, cooperation, or community between nations in various forms. When discussing matters of an international nature, the discussion is often centered around nations. As noted above in section 2.4., both Bloom (1990) and Chilton and Lakoff (1995) are among those who have highlighted the tendency to treat nation states as discrete personalities. In the inaugural addresses analyzed in Article 1, for example, U.S. presidents make various rhetorical choices in representing cooperation and cooperative partners, and one of those choices is on who is included or excluded. Strategic references to “we” is an often-used rhetorical tool in political discourse (Charteris-Black 2014: 103). In the inaugural addresses, when references are made to a “we” in connection with international cooperation, who is included? Which actors, countries, or regions are mentioned, and in what kinds of roles and contexts? Choices of referring to social actors as individuals or groups



– what van Leeuwen (2008) calls assimilation and individualization – are also relevant in different contexts.

Another aspect that is considered in the analysis is the naming of actors. Van Leeuwen (2008: 3) discusses “nomination” realized in the use of a proper name, and its contrast, “utterance autonomization”, where the agency is attributed to an impersonal agent, such as a report. Other studies have focused on the terms used to refer to specific individuals; after all, “clearly it is significant whether a political leader is referred to as ‘Gorby’ or ‘Mr Gorbachev’,” as Fowler (1991: 4) notes. In her exploration of the labels and naming practices used for women in reporting sexual violence in British media, Clark (1992: 209) states that “[n]aming is a powerful ideological tool” and that different labels carry “[d]ifferent connotations of legitimacy and approval”. Similarly, both Mills (2003) and Page (2003) have traced the negotiation of naming practices of professional women in media reporting, finding that naming practices are connected to discursive representations and identities and subject to ideological contestation. Charteris-Black (2014: 103–104) likewise draws a connection between naming and ideology and adds that the media plays an important role in arbitrating mainstream practices of naming.

Yet another aspect to be considered in the analysis is the way texts represent agency through strategies of inclusion and exclusion of human agency in particular. Nominalizations and the deletion of grammatical participants are among the strategies van Leeuwen identifies for suppressing and backgrounding the agency of certain participants while attributing agency to faceless processes or events (van Leeuwen 1996: 38–42). Similarly, human agency can be hidden behind abstractions, such as through the use of institutionalization and instrumentalization, whereby social actors are represented through institutions and the means of carrying out actions (van Leeuwen 2008).

There are also those who have examined not only the representation of actors but also discursive construction of realities that are built around those actors. Chilton, for example, has proposed a framework for investigating what he calls discourse worlds, essentially “the projection of ‘who does what to whom, when and where’” (Chilton 2004: 54). Furthermore, authors of texts build these discursive worlds and place entities in them using various axes, including time, space, and modality, with various linguistic resources to build representations of these axes (Chilton 2004: 56–61). In his analysis of President Clinton’s announcement of military action against Serbian forces in 1999, Chilton (2004: 138) analyzes “coordinates” in the speech, including invoked entities, geographical frames, and historical narratives.

The aim of this study is ultimately to uncover systematic change in the way actors are represented in foreign policy discourses in various genres of text. Thus, the analytical framework of discourse analysis is supported by the methodological tools of systemic-functional linguistics and corpus analysis. By combining representative and sizable corpora of texts with methodological tools that also enable categorization and quantification, the aim is to uncover patterns and developments that may not be observable on the level of a few individual texts. The following two sections will present systemic-functional linguistics and corpus linguistics, respectively, and discuss how they were used in the case studies.

### **4.3. Systemic-Functional Linguistics**

Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a framework based most notably on the work of M.A.K. Halliday (see, for example, Halliday and Matthiessen 2004 for an in-depth introduction). It approaches the use of language as a system of choices, represented in metafunctions: the interpersonal metafunction, representing the enactment of social relationships; the textual metafunction, which is connected to relevance to contexts; the logical metafunction, which constructs logical connections between clauses; and, finally, the experiential metafunction, which construes representations of experience (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004). This study is concerned with the experiential metafunction. As Butt et al. (2000: 46) put it, “Our language builds up pictures of reality – in terms of things... and events and circumstances – that form the landscape of our human experience.” SFL provides resources and tools for patterning and categorizing this experience.

Each metafunction is associated with a framework of describing and structuring language according to that specific metafunction. The analytical framework connected to the experiential metafunction of language is called Transitivity and is, as Fowler (1991: 70) puts it, “an essential tool in the analysis of representation”. Transitivity as a system is built to analyze processes taking place in the world and the participants and circumstances connected to those processes; its representation of experience is “a flow of events, or ‘goings-on’... chunked into quanta of change by the grammar of the clause” (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 170). Because the function of Transitivity is to investigate representation, it has also been used in discourse analysis as an analytical tool: Page (2003), Oddo (2011), Charteris-Black (2014), and Abid and Manan (2016) are among the more recent studies referenced elsewhere in this thesis that have utilized

the analytical tools of Transitivity. Oddo (2013: 242) includes Transitivity in a toolkit of three tools for rhetorical analysis with which “analysts see how rhetors choose to define events, participants, and circumstances – how they highlight and hide human agency.”

As already mentioned above, the grammatical system of Transitivity is built around various kinds of processes taking place in the world. The choice of a Process Type in turn implicates the other participants and elements in the clause. It should be noted that the system of Transitivity here is separate from transitivity as a grammatical category referring to transitive and intransitive verbs. Thus, to avoid confusion, this study will capitalize terms when used in their systemic-functional meaning (Transitivity, Process Type, Actor), similarly to Butt et al. (2000: 47). There are various categories of Process Types, enabling both an analysis of the kinds of actions and events represented in text, but also quantification of the different categories of Processes. The different Process Types not only cover various ways of doing things in the world, but also ways of sensing and being.

Material Processes are processes of “*doing*, usually concrete, tangible actions” (Egins 2004: 215; emphasis in the original). The Material Process “construes a quantum of change in the flow of events as taking place through some input of energy” (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 179). Material Processes, in turn, implicate different participant categories: an Actor that “is the constituent of the clause who does the deed or performs the action” (Egins 2004: 216), a Goal “at whom the process is directed, to whom the action is extended” (Egins 2004: 216), and a Range that serves as a continuation of the Process or expresses its extent, such as playing a game of tennis, with tennis being designated as the Range (Egins 2004: 218). Rarer participants are Beneficiaries, who benefit in some way from the Process. Another category of Process Types where there is a clear, identifiable action or event is that of Verbal Processes, which represents acts of saying in a broad sense, from an individual person quoting the words of another in conversation to the way news reports and academic texts source other texts. Indeed, Verbal Processes “cover any kind of symbolic exchange of meaning” (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 253). The participant categories implicated by the Verbal Process are the Sayer, the Verbiage (the represented statement, story, report, or something else) and the Receiver, “the one to whom the verbal process is directed” (Egins 2004: 235).

Another two Process Types can be connected to (particularly human) psychology and behavior: Mental Processes and Behavioral Processes. Mental Processes represent mental reactions rather than actions. In these

representations, the being whose mental space is being represented, who is thus “endowed with consciousness”, is called the *Senser* and the mental reaction being represented as the *Phenomenon* (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 203). The types of mental reactions can be, to use Halliday and Matthiessen’s (2004: 208) categorization, about perception, cognition, desire, or emotion. Behavioral Processes represent the outer manifestations of those mental activities and are thus situated somewhere between mental representations and material actions (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 250). Typically, a Behavioral Process includes only one participant, the *Behaver*, who like the *Senser* is also a conscious being, and in some cases the represented Behavior as a separate Range-like element (Egins 2004: 233–234).

The final two categories of Process Types to be covered relate to processes of being and possessing attributes. Existential and Relational Processes are concerned with “*states of being*” (Egins 2004: 237; emphasis in the original). The first of these, Existential Processes, posit that something exists or used to exist, often using the structure of “there is” followed by the *Existent*, which is the phenomenon, event, or other entity being established as existing (Egins 2004: 238). Relational Processes are similar in that they too are about ways of being, but in this case, there is a relationship being established between two terms, often using the verb “be” (Egins 2004: 239). Halliday and Matthiessen identify various ways of categorizing different Relational Processes, including ways of possession, attribution, and identification (see Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 210–248 for the full discussion on these relational categories). The participant to which a quality or description is being assigned is called the *Carrier*, and the assigned quality is called an *Attribute* (Egins 2004: 239).

Finally, there are Circumstantial elements that are not Process Type dependant and are used to describe aspects of the represented processes, such as timing, location, manner, and cause (for a full discussion of Circumstance, please see Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 259–280).

While these six categories of Processes – Material, Verbal, Mental, Behavioral, Existential, and Relational – sound neatly demarcated, there is nonetheless some overlap between different Process Types and in practice the categories shade into one another (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 172). Additionally, as also discussed particularly in Articles 3, there are challenges involved when working with texts that use complex sentence structures and figurative language and cover multifaceted topics on politics and international relations. There are often multiple overlapping levels where the same clause elements can be included in multiple levels of Processes at the same time. In (1) taken from

Article 3, “President Hussein” is an Actor in a Material Process that is in turn embedded in the reported speech of a Soviet source through a Verbal Process representing, in turn, his belief of a state of things through a Mental Process. (1) is also an illustration of the intertextual nature of news reporting affecting analysis of the textual material.

- (1) [Mr. Vorontsov, the Soviet representative]<sup>Sayer</sup>, [said]<sup>Process:Verbal</sup> [[Moscow]<sup>Senser</sup> [had “reason to believe”]<sup>Process:Mental</sup> [[President Hussein]<sup>Actor</sup> [was ready to withdraw]<sup>Process:Material</sup> [unconditionally]<sup>Circumstance</sup> [in a very short time frame.]<sup>Circumstance</sup>]<sup>Phenomenon</sup>]<sup>Verbiage</sup> (*The New York Times*, 26 February 1991)

Additionally, determining the appropriate Process Type can in some cases offer different competing interpretations. However, Transitivity is nonetheless a useful tool in exploring what types of Processes are used, whether there are changes in the types of Processes represented over time, and what in kinds of roles certain actors are placed.

Transitivity is used in this study in Articles 1 and 3. Article 1 focuses on expressions of international cooperation in the inaugural addresses of U.S. presidents and specifically on instances where the addresses discuss cooperation with international partners. The instances are analyzed using Transitivity to investigate what kinds of activities (Process Types) the addresses discuss, and whether there are observable patterns or changes in the kinds of activities represented, as well as who is represented in the different kinds of Participant roles associated with those activities. Article 3 takes a somewhat different approach in that all the instances analyzed are of one specific individual, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, in U.S. newspaper reports on the Persian Gulf War. In this case, the focus is on investigating what kinds of Participant roles and Process Types Hussein is associated with, and whether different terms of reference can be associated with different Processes and Participant roles. Article 3 combines Transitivity analysis with the tools of corpus linguistics, which will be presented in the next section.

#### 4.4. Corpus Linguistics

This study uses various corpora of texts, but in some cases the volume of texts and thus the size of the corpus used necessitated the support of electronic tools in investigating patterns in the newspaper reporting of the Persian Gulf conflict.

Corpus linguistics is a methodology that focuses on using real-world examples of language, uses calculations of frequencies and statistical tests to uncover linguistic patterns, and allows for the quantification of those patterns to support conclusions (Baker 2010: 94). As a methodology, corpus linguistics has “a quantitative flavour” (Baker and McEnery 2015b: 2), as it involves the use of specific software and frequency-based tools of analysis to identify quantitative patterns for further investigation. Corpus linguistics and discourse analysis in its various permutations have also been combined in a variety of different approaches and topics (see, for example, Page 2003; Partington 2003; Charteris-Black 2004; Haarman and Lombardo 2009; Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnery 2013; Baker and McEnery 2015a; Tyrkkö 2016).

In this study, corpus tools are used in the analysis of media discourse in Articles 2 and 3. The developing conflict in the Persian Gulf, which is the case study covered in Articles 2 and 3, generated a considerable amount of media attention and thus also media texts. The corpora of newspaper articles analyzed in the Articles total over 6 million words, thus necessitating a level of quantitative analysis. Gerbner et al. (1986) have noted that the power of the media is in the cumulative repetition of its representations. A combination of discourse analysis and corpus linguistics have been increasingly used to investigate representations in the media on a variety of topics. Partington (2003), for example, used a corpus of White House press briefings to investigate various discourse features and communicative strategies used both by White House officials and journalists; Charteris-Black (2004), investigating conceptual metaphors in both political and media discourse, also used corpora of British newspapers to analyze metaphors of conflict in sports reporting and humanizing and nature-based metaphors in financial reporting; Haarman and Lombardo (2009) analyzed broadcast news on the 2003 Iraq War in the United States, United Kingdom, and Italy, comparatively investigating various strategies of evaluation in the news in different countries; Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnery (2013) used diachronic analysis to study changes in the discursive representations of Muslims in the British press; and Tyrkkö (2016) conducted a wide-ranging corpus study of shifts in personal pronoun use in Anglo-American political speeches between 1800 and 2000.

Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnery (2013: 22–23) highlight a risk in discourse analysis of looking at a small sample of media texts that contain problematic representations while ignoring a larger number of texts that might show more varied or positive instances, thus overlooking the full story in the analysis. Widowson (1998), for example, has posited that this is a central risk in the critical

analysis of discourse. Hardt-Mautner (1995) also recognizes the risk of selective sampling of texts for analysis but at the same time observes that a qualitative, hands-on analysis of a large amounts of texts requires a team of researchers or, alternatively, the assistance of electronic software for analyzing the textual data – a solution that corpus linguistic tools can provide. While there are challenges and considerations to doing discourse analysis with corpus linguistic tools, including the choice of the corpus used and the danger of reading too much into the statistical results of the analysis, corpus analysis is a useful tool in bridging quantitative and qualitative analysis when used in combination with other methods of discourse analysis (Hardt-Mautner 1995). Baker (2012: 248) proposes a model in which the quantitative and qualitative methods inform each other and support subsequent stages, for example with corpus linguistic methods identifying patterns in the text that can then be investigated with more qualitative methods.

Corpus analysis involves the use of electronic tools for investigating various aspects of the corpus, including the analysis of frequencies (of searched words or phrases within a corpus), concordances (searched words or phrases placed in the context of the immediate surrounding text), collocations (words or phrases that statistically co-occur), keywords (words that are statistically more frequent in the analyzed corpus than another comparable corpus), and the allocation of grammatical roles (for an introduction to the various aspects of the theory, building, and analysis of corpora, see, for example, Baker 2010). This study has used AntConc (version 3.4.4w; Anthony, 2011) and Sketch Engine (version 2.33.2-SkE-2.133.2-3.80.13). For descriptions and discussions of the capabilities of AntConc and Sketch Engine, see Anthony (2004) and Kilgarrieff et al. (2014), respectively. AntConc, which is used in Articles 2 and 3, is a free-use software for corpus analysis that enables the investigation of concordances, collocates, and key words within the corpus. Sketch Engine, used in Article 2, complements AntConc's capabilities with its part-of-speech tagging, which allows grammatical and morphological analysis, for example of a specific phrase when used as a noun or verbs used in connection with an individual in a subject position. In Article 2, the methodology in the analysis draws heavily from corpus linguistic tools; in Article 3, corpus analysis is combined with systemic-functional analysis, presented above in section 4.3.

The corpus for Article 2 consists of newspaper articles on what is initially a developing conflict between Iraq and Kuwait, and later an internationally escalating confrontation, between July and December 1990. Article 2 explores central actors in the Persian Gulf conflict, focusing on three key nations (Iraq,



Kuwait, and the United States) and their political leaders as well as a group of actors identified as officials. For political leaders, different terms of reference categorized as low, mid, or high-prestige terms are investigated, examining both the comparative normalized frequencies of the different terms, changes in their usage in comparison to other terms, and differences between newspapers within the corpus. For officials, pre-modifiers are analyzed to explore how the articles identify different expert backgrounds over the course of late 1990. Article 3 serves as an expansion of the approach and results in Article 2, focusing specifically on terms of reference used for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in newspaper articles between January and July 1991 during the U.S.-led military operation as well as in the post-war period. The analysis combines corpus linguistic analysis with systemic-functional tools of Transitivity, exploring the different discursive frames used in the newspaper articles and their connections to different terms of reference.

Many of the previous textual analyses examining media representations of Iraq and its leader in connection with the Persian Gulf War and the later Iraq War include or focus on editorials and opinion pieces (see, for example, Hackett and Zhao 1994; Nikolaev and Porpora 2007). In contrast to editorials, which in U.S. newspapers often exhibit a strong political identity, news reports carry an assumption of political neutrality and objectivity (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 219). This was why corpora compiled for Articles 2 and 3 specifically includes *only* news reports from the three examined newspapers. The corpora can also be claimed to be representative of the body of reporting in those newspapers, as all the news articles on the conflict retrieved by the search in the ProQuest Historical Newspaper database are included, totaling millions of words and thousands of articles.

In both Articles 2 and 3, the corpus used for the study is further divided into month-specific sub-corpora to enable the examination of diachronic and comparative patterns and changes over the development of events in the Persian Gulf. A major focus in both Article 2 and 3 is the use of naming practices for specific individuals and changes in the use of those naming practices. Table 2 shows a sampling of the examined terms of reference, those for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, retrieved from the compiled corpus in Article 2 using AntConc.



**TABLE 2: Terms of reference for Saddam Hussein in the Article 2 corpus**

<b>Term of reference</b>	<b>Jul-90</b>	<b>Aug-90</b>	<b>Sept-90</b>	<b>Oct-90</b>	<b>Nov-90</b>	<b>Dec-90</b>
Saddam + Hussein	23.09 (75)	11.38 (1127)	10.76 (732)	13.11 (632)	11.99 (527)	13.57 (652)
Honorific + Hussein	16.62 (54)	4.62 (458)	3.33 (227)	6.35 (306)	4.89 (215)	5.27 (253)
Saddam	5.85 (19)	13.10 (1297)	10.49 (714)	11.82 (570)	10.86 (478)	13.16 (632)

*Reported frequencies normalized per 10,000 words. (Raw frequencies in parentheses.)*

These three different categories of references include those using first name and last name (such as “Saddam Hussein”), those with an honorific such as “President” or “Mr” followed by the last name, and references using only the first name (“Saddam”). These three categories can be investigated by comparing frequencies in each sub-corpus. Different newspapers have different guidelines for the use of names and titles for high-profile individuals such as government officials and leaders: guidelines such as those for *The New York Times*, for example, mandate the use of “courtesy titles” (Siegal and Connolly, 2015: 79) in newspaper reports, while other newspapers may employ different practices. Thus, the use of different naming practices such as Mr. Hussein over Saddam Hussein may not be significant per se. However, changes over time in how different names are used for specific individuals can point to developments in how those individuals are represented in the media.

## 5. Key Findings and Contributions

This thesis has sought to explore representations of actors and agency in U.S. foreign policy discourses in presidential addresses, in media news reports, and in the reports of the U.S. State Department. Foreign policy discourses are both a strategic tool of diplomatic influence and a way of representing a complex system of nations, actors, and relationships for decision makers as well as the public. The analysis here has sought to reveal underlying assumptions and ideologies about how the United States as a nation has positioned itself in relation to the rest of the world; to examine how these assumptions have developed over time; and, finally, how the presence of these developments could be validated within the texts using discourse analytical, systemic-functional, and corpus-assisted tools. This section discusses the contribution from findings in the case studies (Articles 1–4 included as appendices), contextualizes them in relation to other research done on the topic, and explores avenues for further exploration.

Table 3 lists the research questions from each individual case study. Similarly to Wodak et al. (2009) in their study of national identity, the case studies in this thesis approach foreign policy discourses from a variety of viewpoints. In some cases, the focus is centered on the United States working with international partners (Article 1) or placing itself in opposition or contrast to an international, adversarial actor (Article 2). In other cases, the focus turns instead to the international actors themselves, either on an adversarial basis (Articles 2 and 3 and, to some extent, Article 4) or through international alliances (Articles 1 and 4). The case studies use different genres of texts, somewhat different methodologies, and ask somewhat different questions based on the type of textual material used. The common core, however, is on studying representations and narratives of actors, agency, and the types of activities they are engaged in either in cooperation or in opposition to the United States.

These different perspectives can be connected to the different types of coordinates analyzed by Chilton (2004) and serve to construct a foreign policy space from a U.S. perspective, filled with geopolitical frames, relations with other actors, and narratives about the past and present. The discursive

**TABLE 3: Research questions in the case studies (Articles 1–4)**

<b>Article</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Research questions</b>
Article 1	Presidential inaugural addresses (1949–2013)	<p>What do representations of international cooperation between the United States and foreign partners reveal about the U.S. as an international collaborator?</p> <p>What patterns are observed in the types of systemic-functional Processes and Participant roles used in the speeches?</p>
Article 2	Newspaper reports on the Persian Gulf conflict (1990)	<p>How do diachronic changes in frequencies for different terms of reference of U.S., Iraqi, and Kuwaiti leaders reveal about shifting representations in newspaper reports?</p> <p>What do changes in the types of officials cited as sources in the articles reveal about which points of view are highlighted during the events leading up to U.S. military action?</p>
Article 3	Newspaper reports on the Persian Gulf conflict (1991)	<p>Can different terms of reference for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein be associated with different discursive representations and how do these representations develop during or after the U.S.-led military operation?</p> <p>Are different discursive representations connected to different types of systemic-functional Processes and Participant roles?</p> <p>How do representations used in newspaper articles compare to findings from previous research on media reporting on the Persian Gulf War?</p>
Article 4	U.S. State Department country human rights reports (2000–2019)	<p>What do the reports show about the types of themes central to international human rights from a U.S. perspective?</p> <p>Which actors are given or denied agency in the reports, what does this indicate about allocations of responsibility and blame, and are standards applied equally to countries with different relationships with the United States?</p> <p>What narratives are promoted for the advancement towards an ideal U.S. model of human rights?</p>

representations used in that space may develop and change over time. New allies or adversaries may rise to the forefront as a result of gradual or sudden developments around the world, formerly strong familial or adversarial relationships may lose relevance or transform over time, or domestic circumstances within the United States may have effects that are reflected in U.S. actions internationally. In some cases, there may also be discursive practices and representations that endure *in spite of* developments taking place in the U.S. foreign policy environment. At the same time, in addition to examining representations of the past and present, projections about the future are also important in the analysis of political discourse (Dunmire 2011, 2019).

There are strong, enduring themes and narratives of a community built on freedom across the different case studies. The (assumed) aspiration for freedom shared by people around the world is invoked repeatedly and consistently in inaugural addresses by U.S. presidents (Article 1) and as justification for countering Iraq's actions against Kuwait (Articles 2 and 3) and placed at the center of the framework of human rights promoted by the United States (Article 4). The invocation of freedom has been studied among others by Coe (2007), who found it to be a common theme in presidential speeches, and by Pavlick (2019) in U.S. history textbooks, underscoring the overall importance of this theme in informing the national character and political tradition of the United States.

There are also more infrequent references to communities of affluence that are often used in connection with narratives of freedom. Barack Obama, in his first inaugural address in 2009, invokes a community of "those nations like ours that enjoy relative plenty" and the responsibility of that community in addressing global poverty, though that invocation did not endure in subsequent inaugural addresses (Article 1). For a time, the U.S. State Department human rights reports also include an evaluation of the economic standard of living, GDP development, and "progress" of the examined countries towards economic liberalism, thus explicitly making a connection between human rights and economic reform (Article 4). In the case of the Persian Gulf War, a keyword analysis of a corpus of newspaper articles (Article 2) shows concurrences between Kuwait and its wealth (assets, banks, and accounts) as much as its people and territory. Thus, while narratives of freedom may be placed at the forefront in high-profile events such as inaugural addresses, in practice invocations of freedom often carry with them an added undercurrent of liberal economic development.

The analysis in Article 4 examines the origin of these freedoms more closely and finds an interpretation of human rights based on narratives and traditions drawn from U.S. political tradition. After all, as President Carter already puts it

in his inaugural address in 1977, “[o]ur moral sense dictates a clearcut preference for these societies which share with us an abiding respect for individual human rights”. Echoing the findings by Pavlick (2019), the types of freedoms emphasized in the U.S. State Department reports reflect those outlined in the United States’ Bill of Rights, including freedom of speech, religion, and press freedom. Furthermore, the narrative for the establishment of these freedoms is based in an American-esque origin story: the establishment of a constitution or a constitution-like set of laws and judicial structures to ensure that the rights of the people are respected. Article 4 traces the progression of one transformative example in the case of Iraq, which after the Iraq War and the ousting of President Saddam Hussein is represented as now having left the “previous regime” behind and is now set on “course” and progressing along this desired path.

Within the community for freedom, the United States is placed in the center of its own cooperative sphere, with other international partners given roles mostly as recipients and beneficiaries of U.S. influence and action (Article 1). In the human rights reports, the agency and inclusion of the ordinary citizenry in different countries is downplayed and the role of governments and authorities highlighted (Article 4). In the case of the Persian Gulf conflict, the leaders of the “victim” nation are underrepresented in U.S. newspaper reports in comparison to U.S. and Iraqi leaders (Article 2). In the early decades following World War II, there are metaphors of friendship and family invoked in the inaugural addresses of U.S. presidents, such as Western “proven friends of freedom” (from the inaugural address of President Eisenhower in 1953) and “neighbors... who share our freedom” (Ronald Reagan in 1981). This metaphor of a family also naturally places the United States as the head, “the master of its own house” (John F. Kennedy in 1961). However, in subsequent addresses, geographical specifications have fallen out of use and have been instead replaced by more generic references to allies that allow audiences to draw their own boundaries vis-à-vis the United States.

A similar shift to genericity can be identified in connection with the enemies of the United States. In the analysis of early presidential inaugural addresses in Article 1, the Soviet Union naturally dominates this role. John F. Kennedy, in his inaugural address, repeatedly invokes “both sides”, and several presidents make references to “us” as the two superpowers and give agency to their Soviet counterparts. However, after the end of the Cold War, new geopolitical frames for enemies are not established; rather, references are made more generically to “those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent” (Barack Obama’s inaugural address in 2009). Dunmire (2011: 64) identifies a similar pattern of unnamng enemies in post-9/11 U.S. national

security strategies. This genericity again allows listeners to draw their own boundaries regarding the United States and adversity and also avoids the issue of highlighting, and potentially lending credence to, any individual adversarial actors. This example also again shows a distinction made between freedom-loving peoples and unsympathetic national leaders, who in some cases oppress those essential freedoms. In the human rights reports in Article 4, which are by format country-specific, this distinction is again made often, pointing to the failures of governments and authorities in implementing human rights. At the same time, the reports use rhetorical strategies to avoid assigning direct, overt responsibility for abuses, including passive voice and nominalizations in attributing agency to events and developments. These choices can be attributed at least partly to efforts at diplomatic face-saving (see, for example, Chilton 1990).

Article 1 also tracks the transformation of one inter-national relationship from adversarial to friendly. After the fall of the Soviet Union, it takes several decades to move from “we are building bonds with nations that once were our adversaries” (the first inaugural address of Bill Clinton in 1993) to finally acknowledging that there has been a change from “sworn enemies into the surest of friends” (the second inaugural address of Barack Obama in 2013). In this case, the shift from enemy to at least tentative ally is a slow, gradual progression. A different transformational case is that of Iraq in the U.S. State Department human rights reports, which is examined in Article 4. While the human rights reports are meant to represent, and are written in a style consistent with, impartiality and objectivity, Iraq’s 2002 human rights country report, just prior to the start of the Iraq War, shows strongly evaluative language that departs from the general style used in the reports. In contrast to the slow shift away from an adversarial Soviet Union, the Iraqi transformation is more abrupt, perhaps because the adversarial nature of Iraq is so personified in Iraqi President Saddam Hussein (Articles 2 and 3).

As discussed in sections 2 and 3, there is a strong interdependence between politics and media, and media messaging as pervasive and cumulative in modern society. In foreign policy matters, the U.S. media is particularly reliant on governmental sources of information, but also has a strong role in shaping the public perception of events abroad as the audience does not have first-hand access to the events themselves (Malek and Wiegand 1997). Prior to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, Iraq and the United States were uneasy allies in their opposition to Iran (Oddo 2018: 41–42). The efforts of the Bush administration and Kuwaiti interest groups to influence public perceptions of Iraq’s actions and to rally support have also been extensively documented (see, for example,

Kellner 2004; MacArthur 2004; Oddo 2018). The conflict in the Persian Gulf resulted in a long-lasting adversarial phase in the relationship between the United States and Iraq that would not ultimately be resolved until the later Iraq War (this is also examined in connection with the analysis of human rights country reports in Article 4).

The focus of the analysis in Articles 2 and 3 is on choices of naming for governmental actors in the reports, examining diachronic changes in the use of naming practices over the course of the developing international conflict in the Persian Gulf. Sizable corpora of news texts were collected for the case studies in both Articles 2 and 3. Because of the concern identified by Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnery (2013: 22–23) among others on the risk of overgeneralizing from a small sample of media texts, combined with the sheer volume of media reporting on the conflict, the analysis in both Articles 2 and 3 is partly quantitative. At the same time, as both Mills (2003) and Page (2003) have observed, there are complex relationships in the negotiation between ideological representations and naming practices that also require qualitative analysis. Thus, the case studies combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to address this.

The comparative analysis in Article 2 includes several different terms of reference for both the U.S. and Iraqi presidents and Kuwaiti leaders as well as an examination of pre-modifiers for sources identified as officials. What the analysis shows is that the conflict is presented in the newspaper articles more as a juxtaposition of the United States and Iraq than between Iraq and Kuwait, focusing particularly on Saddam Hussein. Kuwaiti leaders are overlooked in comparison to U.S. and Iraqi leaders. The role of President Bush is highlighted particularly when military tensions are high: immediately after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August and at the end of 1990 when U.S. military action against Iraq begins to appear more likely. These are also the times when the journalists in their background sourcing turn most to officials associated with the (Bush) administration, the military, or the Pentagon. By contrast, the mid-fall phase of the developing conflict in the Persian Gulf is a time of international mediation, during which journalists also use sources identified as foreign, such as Saudi, Soviet, and French officials. During this time, more high-prestige terms of reference for Saddam Hussein are also used somewhat more frequently.

The analysis in Article 2 shows that the press reacts to an escalating international crisis with an extensive shift in its naming practices. More prestigious terms of reference for President Bush are increasingly used throughout the fall of 1990 while for Saddam Hussein, the terms of reference shift generally from more high-prestige terms towards lower-prestige terms. The significance of this

shift is not in the choices of names used in any individual news article, but rather in the cumulative scale of the shift. Both Page (2003) and Charteris-Black (2014: 103–104) draw attention to the ideological implications of naming choices in the media in particular, and Charteris-Black also highlights the special role media has in arbitrating mainstream naming practices. The shift in terms of reference used is systematic enough that it cannot be attributed to decisions made by individual journalists and is unlikely to be fully explained by external influence. Choices of naming reflect not only the content of reporting but also journalistic practice. In this case, the newspaper reports react to the events in the Gulf not only in their content but also in ways quite fundamental to the aspiration of objective reporting.

Article 3 expands on the results of Article 2 in investigating the naming practices for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein specifically in newspaper reports in further detail. Whereas Article 2 covers the time period from just before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait to the end of 1990, Article 3 focuses on events taking place over 1991, covering the time of Operation Desert Storm, the ceasefire and peace negotiations over the spring, and sometime after into the summer. Article 2 shows shifts in the patterns of naming practices used for national leaders in news reports; Article 3 focuses specifically on Saddam Hussein, a central player in the conflict, and explores the use of different terms of reference for the Iraqi president during the U.S.-led military operation and the post-war period in further detail. Additionally, Article 3 compares different newspapers and analyzes a sample of concordances to investigate discursive frames used in connection with different terms of reference.

The analysis identifies a somewhat frequent pattern of representations of Saddam Hussein that portrays him as a dangerous and unstable individual. Furthermore, there are several cases where the representations of Saddam Hussein as a dangerous individual are attributed to the words of President Bush. However, these representations are not the majority in the analyzed samples: the majority are of a national leader operating in ways that are not necessarily benevolent or constructive, but nonetheless within the purview of a leader of Iraq. A third category is representations from the points of view of other Middle Eastern actors and familial and tribal connections. However, there are also marked differences between individual newspapers. These findings are similar to those by Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEney (2013) in their analysis of media representations of Muslims: perhaps a negative slant overall, but less monolithic and more ambivalent than might be expected based on previous analyses. However, it should also be noted that while the representations of Saddam Hussein



as an unstable individual are a minority of the total, they nonetheless persist and even strengthen after the end of the military operation, when it can be assumed that the immediate fervor of the war itself has subsided. This suggests that these frames, once adopted and repeated sufficiently in the media, have a degree of permanence that also later support the arguments made by President George W. Bush in the run-up to the Iraq War (Oddo 2011; Abid and Manan 2016).

To summarize, the case studies show patterns of both permanence and change in the representations of actors and agency in foreign policy discourses. In the words put forth by U.S. governmental actors, there are enduring elements of strategic community building (McEvoy-Levy 2001) that appear integral to U.S. identity: as a leader of a group aspiring for freedom (and ideally also economic freedom), including like-minded ally nations and, more universally, as a supporter of freedom-loving peoples around the world. The concepts of freedoms and human rights to be advanced are heavily based on U.S. political and societal traditions and narratives of its origin, imposing a framework and path on the rest of the world for advancement towards the ideal. After the end of the Cold War and the end of the moral clarity of “both sides”, a generic frame has remained in place and alliances and adversities have been constructed on a more individual basis, as in the case of Iraq. In the media, the shift in naming practices in newspaper articles following Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait point to a contrasting of U.S. and Iraqi leaders and the strengthening of identity-affirming representations (Hutcheson et al. 2004) even independently of efforts at external influence. At the same time, similarly to Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnergy (2013), negative portrayals of an enemy Other do not dominate news coverage and newspapers diverge in their choices. However, negative frames, once established, also appear to endure beyond active confrontation.

The choice was made in this thesis to explore several different kinds of genres and large quantities of texts rather than conducting an extensive and in-depth study of one genre or a small number of texts. Thus, there are several avenues for future research from each case study. Building on Articles 2 and 3, a comparative study of news articles for the Persian Gulf War and the later Iraq War could reveal how representations of the same enemy could have carried over or shifted over time. A closer examination of the attribution of some representations to U.S. governmental sources in Article 2 – identified Bush administration representatives and unnamed background officials, for example – could reveal more about how source representations operate within the articles. The systemic-functional analysis of international cooperation carried out in Article 1 could be expanded to other genres of presidential rhetoric, particularly the

State of the Union address, to examine whether these speeches show similar patterns or might reveal additional aspects to the same developments. Finally, the analysis of the framing of human rights reports in Article 4 could be contrasted with a comparative analysis of the public remarks made by U.S. Secretaries of State in connection with the publication of the annual report, a topic already briefly addressed in the case study itself.

Ultimately, this thesis has sought to explore representations of actors and agency in texts on foreign policy discourses. A diversity of different case studies, materials, and methods was chosen so that representations of the United States and other international actors could be explored in a variety of different contexts, thus revealing underlying ideologies and exposing common patterns. Overall, the findings point to the placement of the United States and its values, interests, and influence in the center of its sphere of influence. Choices are made in the identification and, alternatively, obfuscation of actors and agency for both allies and adversaries. Many of these choices are strategically made to draw boundaries between actors (represented to be) sympathetic or antagonistic to the United States while drawing lines that are fluid and ambiguous enough to promote community building and navigate the face-saving and threatening aspects of diplomatic interaction. Changes in naming practices in wartime journalism point to ambivalent and complex patterns in the interaction of the media and political leadership in foreign policy matters.

This thesis also contributes to a systematic examination of linguistic patterns of representation and agency that show how, specifically, these ideological patterns are realized on the level of the texts. These include patterns in choices of grammatical or systemic-functional roles for certain actors, representations of certain types of activities, and choices in the inclusion and exclusion of actors in different kinds of contexts. The use of systemic-functional and corpus linguistic tools makes it possible to concretely point to systematic, cumulative textual choices that serve to construct ideological representations, from the use of certain types of functional Agents and Processes to patterns of frequencies in the choices of names. Because the focus of the analysis is on identifying patterns, this means that the analysis here is less able to address features that may appear only in individual or a small number of texts. However, at the same time, many of the patterns identified in this thesis are such that they are difficult to detect on the level of an individual text but visible in an examination of corpora of texts. Ultimately, it is these patterns of representation that are most indicative of enduring, underlying assumptions and ideologies of the United States as a foreign policy actor.

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# Appendices

**APPENDIX 1:** “With friends and former foes”: The functional roles of international collaborative partners and their relationships with the United States in inaugural addresses of American presidents since 1949.

**APPENDIX 2:** Terms of reference and objectivity in US press reports in the Gulf War in 1990.

**APPENDIX 3:** Terms of reference and discursive representations: A case study with Saddam Hussein in the 1991 Gulf War.

**APPENDIX 4:** Human rights and ideology in foreign policy discourse: A case study of U.S. State Department Human Rights Country Reports 2000–2019.

## Appendix 1

### **“With friends and former foes”: The functional roles of international collaborative partners and their relationships with the United States in inaugural addresses of American presidents since 1949**

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The article is openly accessible at: [www.linguistics.fi/julkaisut/sky2015.shtml](http://www.linguistics.fi/julkaisut/sky2015.shtml).

## Appendix 2

### **Terms of reference and objectivity in US press reports in the Gulf War in 1990**

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Issue 8: 2053–2070. The published article is available at:  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884919847310>.



## Appendix 3

### **Terms of reference and discursive representations: A case study with Saddam Hussein in the 1991 Gulf War**

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## Appendix 4

### **Human rights and ideology in foreign policy discourse: A case study of U.S. State Department Human Rights Country Reports 2000–2019**

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<https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926521992146>.

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