

(日本語要約)

## 日米のイラク政策についての報道と世論の分析

——日米比較の観点から——

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本論文は、日米のイラク政策についてのメディアの報道と世論の関係を分析するものである。まず、著者は2002年10月から2004年12月31日までの『朝日新聞』と『ニューヨークタイムズ』ののすべてのイラク戦争関連記事について、内容分析を行なった。『朝日新聞』の場合、ブッシュ政権のイラク政策の評価はほぼ一貫して否定的であり、同政権のイラク政策を支持していた小泉政権のイラク政策についても、ほぼ一貫して否定的だった。一方、『ニューヨークタイムズ』の場合、ブッシュ政権のイラク政策の評価は戦争直前や戦争中は肯定的だったが、大規模戦闘が終結した2003年5月ごろから否定的な論調が増え、2004年末にかけて、この傾向はさらに強くなっていった。日米のイラク政策についての両紙の内容分析を数量化した上で、次のような仮説を構築し、各種世論調査のデータとの相関関係を分析し、仮説検証を行なった。まず、「アメリカのイラク政策について、『朝日新聞』で否定的な論調が増えれば増えるほど、アメリカを“好きな国”と回答する日本人が減る」とした仮説1については、実証された。また、「日本のイラク政策について、『朝日新聞』で否定的な論調が増えれば増えるほど、日本における小泉内閣の支持率が減る」とした仮説3や、「アメリカのイラク政策について、『ニューヨークタイムズ』で否定的な論調が増えれば増えるほど、アメリカにおけるブッシュ大統領の支持率が減る」とした仮説4についても、高い負の相関関係が認められた。これらに対して、「アメリカのイラク政策について、『朝日新聞』で否定的な論調が増えれば増えるほど、アメリカのイラク政策に同調する小泉内閣の支持率が減る」とした仮説2については、実証されなかった。この結果については、同政権の支持率は歴代政権の中でも比較的高く、アメリカのイラク政策に対するメディア報道だけで政権を判断する基準になりきれない、いう事実に関連していると推定される。しかし、自衛隊のイラク派遣など、日本の政策に直接関係する時期については、アメリカのイラク政策について、『朝日新聞』で否定的な論調の増加と、小泉政権の支持率との負の相関が認められた。仮説検証には含めなかったが、さらに分析したところ、2004年の1年間については、ブッシュ大統領の支持率と、日本におけるアメリカを“好きな国”と回答する率との両者の関係には相関関係があることも認められた。これについては、支持率に対する報道が、アメリカのメディアを経由して日本でも頻りに報道されるためであると推測される。

# Public Opinion and the Media during the Period of the Iraq War: A Comparative Analysis between the US and Japan

Kazuhiro Maeshima

## Introduction

This paper investigates interrelationships among public policy process, public opinion and news media coverage about the War in Iraq. Special attention will be paid to the media's negativity toward the American Iraq policies. The research question is whether a leading newspaper's negativity on particular issues affects the views of citizens. Based on this research question, four hypotheses are tested, and three are confirmed. First, poll data concerning the Japanese sentiments about the United States worsens when the ratio of negative stories of the US policies *the Asahi* carries becomes higher. Second, *the Asahi's* oppositional treatments on the Japanese governmental Iraq policies deteriorate public support for the Koizumi Cabinet. Third, there is moderate congruence between *the New York Times'* unhelpful coverage of the US governmental policies on Iraq and US presidential approval ratings. In contrast to these, one hypothesis is rejected: *the Asahi's* negative contents toward United States policies over Iraq do not have much affect on the popularity of the Koizumi Cabinet in Japan, except the period during which the Cabinet pronounced a strong support for the actions of the United States in the Iraq War. This study further discovers that the US presidential approval ratings during the year of 2004 have a certain congruence with Japanese sentiments about the United States.

Along with these findings, this paper argues the results of both quantitative and qualitative content analysis of *the Asahi* and *the New York Times* about the War in Iraq. The data presented herein are products of a series of studies the author has conducted. The results of the content analysis reveals that articles of *the New York Times* and *the Asahi* have quite different portrayals of the US policies over Iraq: While *the Asahi* is always strongly negative, *the New York Times* was

supportive until the end of the actual battle, but in a later stage, *the New York Times* also became gradually critical toward their government. Also, even in the later stage, the basic trends of their negativity are not exactly the same. The two papers are quite different in the degree of their negativity, and their topics about the War differ remarkably.

## I. Public Opinion, the Media and the Policy Process

In order to generate hypotheses to test in this research, this section looks at two types of preliminary studies. This selection first briefly reviews political science literature about the connections among public opinion, the media and the public policy process. Then, results of the content analyses of major liberal newspapers in both Japan and America (*the Asahi* and *the New York Times*) during the period of the Iraq War are explained. The data have been gathered and analyzed by the author.

### A) Literature Reviews

The notion that public opinion somehow conditions public policy is appealing. Democratic theory presupposes that citizens will make informed choices about the issues of the day. Citizens expect their views to be considered in public policy because their political leaders are chosen to represent and serve the interest of their constituencies. Several scholars, however, believe that this premise of democratic theory does not hold well. These scholars assume that people do not possess even the most elementary knowledge about politics. In his class study, *The American People and Foreign Policy* (1960), Gabriel Almond argues that public opinions are often swayed by the pervasive and destructive nature of "mood swings." Vulnerable opinions especially exist in the lower social strata which feel powerless. Unlike the premise of democratic theory, Almond concludes that public reaction to foreign policy is moody, rather than thoughtful. The mood may vary from indifference to fatalism to anger, but it is almost always a "superficial and fluctuating response."<sup>(9)</sup> More recent studies, however, discover a certain rationality to public sentiments. Shapiro and Page (1992) discover that public attitudes change, but even in the short run they are less erratic than often presumed. Page and Shapiro find that American collective public opinion about issues ranging from racial equality to the MX missile,

welfare to abortion are remarkably coherent, notwithstanding fluctuations in the opinions of individuals. Their research also indicates that changes in public attitudes are quite reasonable instead of being volatile and meaningless and should not be attributed to shifts in "mood."

To those who are involved in politics, public opinion polls have a huge impact on the initiation of new policies. Thus, political leaders have attempted to influence the public and generate a wider support. All of these actions are to exert their political agenda. Samuel Kernell calls this strategy "going public" (Kernell 1997). According to Kernell, "going public" is a presidential strategy when he promotes himself and his policies among Washington elites by appealing to the American public for support (1). Kernell argues that the popularity of presidential initiatives is linked to public evaluation of the president himself. Kernell finds that presidents have gradually replaced the earlier "bargaining" style with "going public" in the last 50 years. Recent examples, such as President Clinton's unprecedented amount of travel outside of Washington, illustrate the process and serve as a basis to compare Clinton's style with those of his recent predecessors. According to the Kernell, this public leadership strategy is necessary because modern presidential-congressional relations have become very tense. Congress has been in an era of "individualized pluralism" where members of Congress are essentially free agents that can be persuaded to ignore traditional institutional attachments in favor of public pressure from constituents and interest groups.

The popularity of political leaders, however, is not a constant. Every US president and Japanese prime minister has seen his approval ratings wax and wane in public opinion polling for several reasons. Many scholars of public opinion claim that people's views are closely linked to public policy process. Public opinion is, therefore, a referendum of their political leaders' performance in public policy (Ostrom and Simon 1985, Mackuen 1983, Lewis-Beck 1988). Some scholars even found that the public is swayed, in some cases purposefully manipulated, by the public policies their political leaders created. Brace and Hinckley (1992) find a danger of the so-called the public relations presidency. Brace and Hinckley address the democratic implications of the proliferation of opinion polls in relation to executive branch. Specifically, they analyzed how the presidents' daily activities affect their subsequent approval ratings and

pondered the strength of the democratic linkage between American presidents and citizens. According to Brace and Hinckley, the presidents' major domestic policy addresses and foreign travel are "curiously timed to accord with month-to-month changes in approval ratings" (55). The use of military force abroad, foreign policy addresses, and international "rally points" (dramatic, or dramatized events that include but are not limited to the use of force) are more likely to occur in the immediate aftermath of negative, dramatic domestic events (e.g., white House scandals) or amid worsening economic conditions. The authors suggest that these foreign policy activities are preemptive strikes taken to prevent a drop in the presidents' approval ratings that would otherwise follow such negative events. The problem with all this, Brace and Hinckley explain, is that decisions and actions based on what is popular are not necessarily in the best interest of the nation; they may even conflict with what the public actually wants. Thus, the scholars' conclusion is that modern presidents concerned about their popularity may find that the polls control them more than they control the polls. Democracy is not well served in either case. Brace and Hinckley conclude that we should lower our expectations regarding the level of support an incumbent president would receive.

Studies of policy process models stress the role of public opinion and the media. One of the famous models that deal with public opinion is John Kingdon's "policy window" model. Kingdon argues that three "streams" are crucial to form a policy change. One of which, he named, is the "politics stream." According to Kingdon, the "politics stream" is the state of politics and its reaction to the public opinion. When the "politics stream" meets with other "streams," a "window of opportunity" is created, and the possibility of policy change is triggered. Other streams include the "policy stream" (the potential solutions to a problem) and "problem stream" (the attention of government officials who want to generate public policy proposals to ameliorate the problem).

Another notable policy process model about public opinion is the "punctuated equilibrium" model proposed by Baumgartner and Jones (1993). Baumgartner and Jones claim that in the agenda setting stage of public policymaking, issue changes may occur through two distinctly different, yet not mutually exclusive processes. One is an incremental change, the other is a dramatic one. Baumgartner and Jones suggest that the balance of political

power between groups of interests remains relatively stable over long periods of time; however, the balance is punctuated by relatively sudden shifts in public opinion on particular policy problems. The shifts are created first by greater media attention to an issue. Media attention to issues can grow when a small but compelling or influential group of people tells of problems with a policy to which members of the policy community do not effectively respond. When the "equilibrium" of policy process is "punctuated" by a drastic change, Baumgartner and Jones argue that "policy monopoly" by a particular policy community breaks down. Public opinion and the media coverage on particular issues are the key to break down the "equilibrium" of the policy process and "policy monopoly" by the established policy community.

As Baumgartner and Jones suggest, both public opinion and the media are considered as an important actors to form and change the process of public policy. Also, the media is generally assumed to be an important factor in shaping public opinions. Thus, media's agenda-setting role is an increasing area in political communication studies (Maeshima 2006b, 113). At the same time, the contents of the media are presumed to be reflected by public opinion. To some scholars, such as Walter Lippmann, the media is tantamount to public opinion (Lippmann 1922, 1965). Arguably, the influence of the media on policy process is enormous. Thus, the media's portrayal of the War---the topic that this study deals with---is potentially a very important factor to shape public opinion and political agenda.

Paul Krugman suggests an intriguing argument in *the New York Times* (Krugman 2003). Krugman believes that the division between the US and Europe about the Iraq War was partly created by different public opinion. According to Krugman, the difference in public sentiments was formed by different portrayals of the media between America and Europe. He provides two possible theories for the "great trans-Atlantic media divide." One idea is that European media presented the news about Iraq War with blatant anti-American bias. Another account is that US media organizations became shameless cheerleaders for American governmental actions about Iraq. It is not the purpose for this work to examine the validity of the two theories, but the basic tenant of Krugman's theories is very persuasive: the media may affect public opinion and vice versa.

Arguably, the Iraq War is not a popular battle in international media around the world partly because the cause of the conflict itself is controversial and partly because the US policies about Iraq did not receive a full-fledged support by the United Nations. According to critics, the Bush Administration hastily started to attack Iraq without obtaining clear evidence about Saddam Hussein's plot for making the Weapons of Mass Destructions. Since Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq were not found even after the initial major combat, public distrust of the US Iraq policy has grown. Further, the alleged connections between Al Qaeda and Iraq turned out to be incomplete and unreliable. Thus, many critics around the world suggest that the War is actually a purposeful act of invasion of Iraq. Also, prior to the War, so-called, neo-conservation strata (the neo-con) both inside and outside of the Bush administration clearly suggested an aggressive military policy toward Iraq in order to secure the national interests of the United States. This has created the conspiracy-theory-type argument that the Bush administration intentionally started the War in order to secure its Middle East military dominance and the Middle East's energy supplies.

#### B) Content Analyses of *the Asahi* and *the New York Times* on the War in Iraq

This section summarizes the basic trends of *the Asahi* and of *the New York Times* about their articles of the War in Iraq. The author has examined the news stories on the War both of *the Asahi* and of *the New York Times*. In order to examining thoroughly, the content analysis is not limited to the period of actual battle (from March 20 to May 1, 2003). The period of analysis is from October 1, 2002 to December 31, 2004. Articles are collected from two databases, *the Asahi Shimbun database (Kikuzo)*, and the *LEXIS-NEXIS (the New York Times)*. Regarding the War in Iraq, both newspapers produced virtually numerous stories during this period. There are total 16084 *Asahi* and 15245 *New York Times* articles that contained the word "Iraq" in this period. Except on Sundays and holidays *the Asahi* has morning and evening editions daily, thus, the total number of articles about Iraq exceeds that of *the New York Times* (Although *the Asahi* has five different regional versions, this study uses the version that is printed in Tokyo). These articles include stories where Iraq issues are not the primary focus of the article, such as stock market forecasts or sports page news. Thus, stories were selected for analysis based upon the criteria that the news is essentially focusing

on Iraq. Overall, 4624 *Asahi* and 4320 *New York Times* articles are selected from both newspapers.

Content analysis methodology has been frequently used in studies of political communication (Maeshima 2006a, 55-57). In order to systematically investigate the two papers' news contents, the author employ both quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the two newspapers. Quantitative content analysis counts frequencies of particular issues to identify basic trends in both written and electronic texts. This is a powerful tool to reveal certain tendencies of articles because they are clearly displayed in numbers. However, quantitative content analysis cannot examine the tone and intensity of particular types of descriptions or the images of photographs or cartoons. This is, obviously, because the content of these cannot be counted. Thus, quantitative content analysis sometimes misses the whole impressions of the texts. In order to alleviate this problem, my work puts an emphasis on both quantitative and qualitative content analysis methods. Qualitative content analysis literally investigates the texts of the media without quantifying them. Instead, qualitative content analysis explores the tone and impressions of the texts. Also, it may scrutinize the nuances of a particular article or of even a particular sentence. In this way, qualitative content analysis attempts to comprehensively inspect hidden intentions of the writers of the texts.

The author has three strategies in content analysis. First, several key concepts are qualitatively chosen from each article. The number of key concepts depends on the article. Some have only one concept, others have more than five. On average, about three to five concepts are extracted from an article. Each key concept is recorded as a phrase which explicitly describes an idea in the article, such as "neo-conservative commentators' criticisms on the UN's nuclear inspection in Iraq" or "the Iraq war's growing impact on Iraqi citizens, especially their lifelines." These key concepts are further analyzed both quantitative and qualitative ways. In quantitative analysis, major key concepts are tabulated so that their frequencies are observed. The counts are presented chronologically for the purpose of comparison.

Second, qualitatively examining the key concepts obtained by the first part, the main topic or storyline of the article is determined. The main topic or storyline is literally the most important ingredient of the newspaper articles.

They are the cores of the journalist's views about "what is news." They also provide crucial indications for comprehending basic trends in comparing newspapers. In qualitative investigations, the key concepts become crucial earmarks in probing the whole storylines of the article. In most cases, the main idea corresponds with the title of the article. Nevertheless, for the purpose of content analysis, the main idea is recorded with a full sentence as opposed to the title, which sometimes consists of only a phrase.

Third, the author specifically investigates the portrayals of five issues and examines whether an article is negative toward actors and their actions. These are: (1) US policies of Iraq (including President George W. Bush's views of Iraq); (2) Japanese government's support for the US policies of Iraq (including Prime Minister Koizumi's views on Iraq); (3) the United Nations role on the issues in Iraq; (4) Saddam Hussein; (5) French policies of Iraq. This part of the analysis requires both qualitative and quantitative analysis partly because negative portrayals of particular issues have to be observed qualitatively and partly because the qualitative results should be counted. If an article's general tone of the US actions in Iraq is critical, the article is recognized as N (negative). If the tone of an article is neutral or supportive on the actions, the article is regarded respectively M (middle-ground) or S (Supportive). Unless an article is very short or focuses on a particular actor, the article usually contains more than one actor. If an article contains more than one actor, all actors in the article become object of analysis.

Regarding the portrayals of the five issues, the number of article is not an accurate indicator itself. This is because there are huge discrepancies in the numbers of articles during the 26-month period of analysis. The numbers of articles peaked when the War in Iraq was started, the number became much smaller during the period of rebuilding Iraq. Thus, the negativity about each issue is tabulated in ratio of negative articles among all stories about subjects to explore (e.g. stories about the US and Japanese policies on Iraq). Also, for the purpose of comparison, the negativity is monthly tabulated. The coding of articles is an important factor in content analysis. In order to systematically analyze the stories in the two newspapers, a code system was developed in this study. Coding must be reflected in an accurate analysis of the newspaper contents. I first attempted to read as many articles in both *the Asahi* and *the New*

*York Times* as possible and filter out a common theme, key dimensions, and key words from them. However, I had to modify coding strategies occasionally when a significant news event was additionally found. Each time latent concepts came to be visible in a later period of analysis, I had to return to the initial section and check the coding of each article again.

In a separate sheet of note, the main topic and key concepts of each article are recorded. Also, other noticeable descriptions, including the tone of the language and sources of the news are noted. Several key concepts are consistently found throughout the analysis. Some, however, appear in only a certain period. Obviously, this is because some events are frequently discussed in the media during particular periods.

### Main Topics (Major Storylines) and Key Concepts

Analyzing main topics is the first step to understand the differences or similarities of the two papers' news about the Iraq War. *The Asahi* and *the New York Times* sometimes show quite distinctive differences in their choice of the main topics. The main topics of the Iraq War also varied in the periods of analysis.

During the run-up period of the War (from October 1 2002 to March 19, 2003), two topics are dominant in both papers: the role of the United Nations and the US decisions about Iraq. However, the two papers contain a stark difference in the ratio of the two topics among other stories on the War in Iraq. While *the Asahi* puts more focus on the role of the United Nations (49 percent of the whole stories on the Iraq War), *the New York Times* spends 65 percent of its stories on the US decisions about Iraq. The two papers' key concepts are more distinctive. Based on the analyzed number of key concepts, the NYT's main concern is what the US action about Iraq should be and how well the Bush Administration prepared for the War. Other NYT's key concepts are that the United Nations is a dysfunctional organization which Saddam Hussein can manipulate to allow his scheme to build Weapons of Mass Destructions. One of the most frequently appeared concepts in *the Asahi*, on the other hand, is the American hasty preparation of the War. Based on my analysis, the *Asahi* is often very critical about the half-baked rationality for the War and the self-righteous attitude of the United States. Therefore, another key concept of *the Asahi* is that

the United Nations has the key role to stop the actions of the United States.

The difference of the two papers is more manifested during the period of actual battle (from March 21 to May 1, 2003). While the two most frequently appeared topics are the same (the development of the War and the US strategies), the *Asahi* has more diverse topics than *the NYT*. *The Asahi's* topics include reactions from the international community, including Europe and Asia, and Iraqi civilian casualties and anti-war protests. Key concepts of the two papers are also more different. *The New York Times* focuses on the view from the United States. For example, repeated key concepts of *the NYT* include in-detail stories about the strategies of the Bush Administrations, the lives of the troops in Iraq and the opinion of US citizens. The families and local towns of those who were sent to Iraq and were participating in the War are often featured in the paper. The key concepts of *the Asahi* are reflected by the topic and more varied.

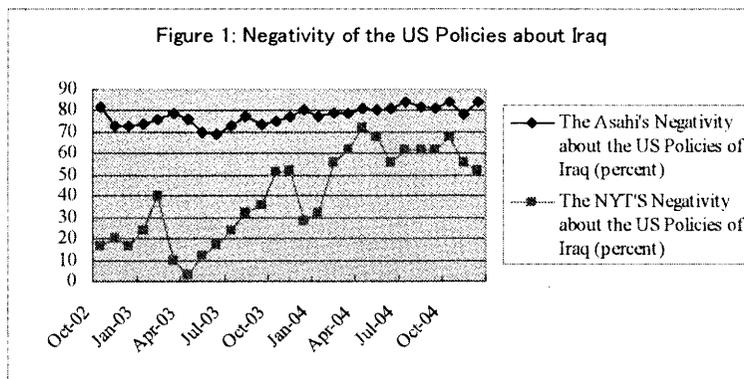
After the end of the actual battle of the War in Iraq (May 1, 2003), *the Asahi* and *the New York Times* feature a greater number of different topics and key concepts. *The Asahi* articles contain numerous stories about the Japanese involvement in Iraq. The vast number of topics and key concepts are about developments concerning Japanese engagements in Iraq, such as Japanese contribution to the rebuilding Iraq and captured Japanese civilians. The top five most discussed topics as well as most recurrent key words from May 1, 2003 to December 31, 2004 are as follows: 1) the Iraqi Special Law in Japan (July 26, 2003); 2) the first arrival of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces in Samawa, Iraq (Feb. 4, 2004); 3) the release of the three captured Japanese civilians in Iraq (April 20, 2004); 4) the extension of sending Japanese SDF in Iraq (December 31, 2004); 5) the murder of the first captured Japanese civilian (October 30, 2004).

Just as in *the Asahi*, *the New York Times'* the largest share of the main topics and key concepts is about the US strategies of rebuilding Iraq, including the governmental actions and daily lives of their military, and captured US civilians. Interestingly, the newspaper pays more attention to the lives of the Iraqi civilians than in the previous periods. Recurring key concepts include civilian casualties of the War, sectarian violence between Shiite and Sunni Muslims, and various topics such as education, female liberation, and rebuilding infrastructures.

Both *the Asahi* and *the New York Times* are very critical of scandals. Two prominent scandals during the post War period are the fabrications of heroic deeds of US Army private Jessica Lynch and tortures of the captured Iraqis in the Abu Ghraib jail. Both incidents appear as main topics in both papers around the time of the scandal revealed (spring 2003, fall 2003, respectively). However, *the Asahi* continuously includes these key concepts in their articles for a longer period of time than *the New York Times*.

### Negativity of Particular Actors

The content analysis of the portrayals of five specific actors reveals that there are intriguing similarities and disparities between *the Asahi* and *the New York Times*. First, both papers have different patterns of treatments about the US policies over Iraq. As Figure 1 (Negativity of the US Policies about Iraq) suggests, the basic trends of the negativity of both papers are not exactly the same. *The Asahi* is strongly negative throughout the period of analysis, *the New York Times* is supportive until the end of the actual battle, but in a later stage, *the New York Times* also becomes gradually critical toward their government.



The two papers are different in the peak periods of negativity and in their degree of negativity. During the run-up period of the War, for example, the *Asahi* is much more negative than *the New York Times*. While the degree of negativity among articles in *the Asahi* rises sharply toward the end of the actual battle (May 2003), the amount of negative article do not much increase in *the New York Times* during the same period. Both papers, however, become more

negative after the end of the actual battle. *The Asahi* continues to be more negative than *the New York Times* until the fall of 2003. The point of departure is the end of 2003. *The NYT*, however, became very harsh toward the Administration when Weapons of Mass Destructions were not actually found. In some months, *the New York Time* becomes more negative than *the Asahi*, and the negativity gap between the two papers grows small toward the end of year 2004.

Except the US policies about Iraq, other actors are not fully covered by both papers or are featured for a limited period. During the run-up period of the War, both the United Nations and France often appeared in both papers. While the portrayals of these two actors are very positive in *the Asahi*, *the New York Times* contains more negative than positive stories. Neither the United Nations nor France is constantly reported by the two media organizations. It is assumed that France's different treatment by the two papers derives from that fact that the country was publicly opposed the US invasion into Iraq. Previous study of the author (Maeshima 2006a, 2007) found that *the Asahi* portrayed the United Nation as the last place to halt the War; thus, the paper's coverage of the UN may be very supportive.

Saddam Hussein is more frequently reported by both papers, although the number of articles decreases as the time progresses. While his portrayals have been constantly negative in *the New York Times*, *the Asahi* is much less negative. Interestingly, the negativity against Hussein in *the Asahi* is greatly alleviated by the US invasion into Iraq (March 20, 2003) and the capture of Hussein (December 13, 2003).

*The Asahi's* portrayal of the Japanese governments' Iraq policies has been continuously negative. Apparently, a part of the reason of this is that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and his cabinet members had been very supportive for the US actions. Since the *Asahi* is critical against the US policies, the paper was also very vocal about the Primer's decisions about Iraq. The paper is especially unhelpful for the government at the time soon after the Prime Minister Koizumi announced support for the US action to start the War (March 20, 2003) and his Cabinet's decision to send the Self-Defense Forces to Iraq (June 13, 2003). *The New York Times* does not contain many articles about the Japanese governments' Iraq policies, but most of the reports are not negatively depicted.

It may be logical to surmise that those differences of public opinions between the United States and Japan may be one of the significant causes for the different portrayals of the War. This is because any media organizations are supposed to mirror opinion of a certain strata of a society. Since both *the Asahi* and *the NYT* are one of the largest newspapers in their countries, the articles in both papers reflect the public in Japan and the United States, respectively.

## II. Research Design

This section explains the research design. Based upon the above-mentioned literature reviews and the results of the author's content analysis, research question and testable hypotheses are formed. Several pools of data are gathered for testing the hypotheses.

### A) Research Questions

As one of the most renowned and most representative media in Japan and the United States, *the Asahi* and *the New York Times* may affect the views of people. The research question is whether a leading newspaper's negativity on particular issues affects the views of citizens. The underlying concern is that the differences of the portrayals of the War may create different public opinion.

Specifically, there are four questions. First, how do *the Asahi's* negative stories of the US policies about Iraq affect the views of the Japanese public about the United States? The second and third questions are whether *the Asahi's* negative treatments of the US and Japanese policies on Iraq influence public support of the Koizumi Cabinet? Fourth how do *the New York Times* negative articles of US policies on Iraq sway public support for the Bush presidency?

### B) Hypotheses

Corresponding to the above-mentioned research questions, four hypotheses can be designated. First, it is hypothesized that *the Asahi's* negative treatment of US policy may generate negative public view on the United States. Second, it is assumed that the negative treatment of the US policy on Iraq by *the Asahi* may cause a lack of public support of the Koizumi Cabinet. Third, *the Asahi's* opposition toward Koizumi's policies on the War produces lower approval ratings of his cabinet. Fourth, it is also supposed that unhelpful coverage of the

US Iraq policies by *the New York Times* may influence support of the President Bush.

The four hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 1:

The more the US policies of the Iraq War received negative treatment by *the Asahi*, the less Japanese feel favorable to the United States.

Hypothesis 2:

The more the US policies of the Iraq War received negative treatment by *the Asahi*, the fewer the Japanese feel supportive of the Koizumi Cabinet.

Hypothesis 3:

The more the Japanese policies on the Iraq War received negative treatment by *the Asahi*, the fewer the Japanese citizens feel supportive for the Koizumi Cabinet.

Hypothesis 4:

The more the US policies on the Iraq War received negative treatment by *the New York Times*, the fewer the Americans feel supportive for the Bush Presidency.

### C) Data

Along with the above-mentioned data of content analysis, several pools of public opinions data are gathered for this analysis. The following five types of data that are used for examining the hypotheses are: a) content analysis of *the New York Times* around the period of the Iraq War, b) content analysis of *the Asahi* around the period of the Iraq War, c) Japanese public opinion about the United States, d) Japanese Cabinet approval rating, and e) the US Presidential approval rating. In all of the above, the timeline of analysis is from Oct. 1, 2002 to December 31, 2004.

### Japanese Public Opinion Poll

This paper uses the two pools of data gathered by *The JiJi Press (JiJi Tsushin*

sha) in Japan. *The JiJi Press* is the second largest wire service company in Japan after the Kyodo News Service. The first data is about the public approval ratings for the Koizumi Cabinet. The *JiJi Press* conducts the survey on the second Saturday in every month. During the period of analysis, the highest point is 56 (November 2002) and the lowest point is 36(December 2004). Throughout the Prime Minister Koizumi's term, his Cabinet received very warm welcome by the Japanese. When Koizumi took office in the spring of 2001, his Cabinet's popularity is more than 70 point. The Koizumi Cabinet is the second most popular Cabinet (average 48.8 point) among the 19 past Cabinets from 1960. Although the Hosokawa Cabinet in the early 1990's received the highest in popularity (average 59 point), Hosokawa's term was short-lived (8 months). Since the Koizumi Cabinet lasted the third longest (65 months) in history, Primer Koizumi's popularity is remarkable in Japanese politics. (Hirama 2004, Maeda 2005)

The second poll is about the Japanese sentiment toward the United States. Since this poll is unique in character, there is a need for a detailed explanation. *The JiJi Press* has been conducting a public opinion poll about favorable and unfavorable feelings towards foreign countries. Japanese sentiment about the United States is a portion of this poll. The poll has only two questions. One asks a respondent to pick three countries which he/she feels "favorable" among ten countries that are on a prepared list. The other asks the respondent to choose three "unfavorable" countries among the same ten countries. The ten countries include the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Switzerland, India, China, the Republic of Korea, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The polls are conducted monthly by face-to-face interviews between *JiJi* representatives and two thousand respondents randomly selected from every prefecture in Japan. The data is summarized by the percent of respondents who picks a particular country as a "favorable" or "unfavorable" country. Since the original poll, which was started in 1960 with a brief termination in the spring of 1970, the cumulative data is a good indicator about Japanese sentiment toward particular country.

This study focuses on the percent of respondents who chose the US either as a "favorable" or "unfavorable" country. During the period of analysis, the highest point of Japanese favorability of the US was recorded July 2003 (43

points) and the lowest point was witnessed October 2004 (31 points). By contrast, the month of May 2004 (15 points) recorded the highest percentage of the respondents who had an unfavorable image toward the US, and the month of December 2002 had the least unfavorable rating toward the US among Japanese.

During this research period, the United States was the second most favored country after Switzerland. Unlike the United States, many Japanese do not regularly receive enough news about Switzerland. Thus, one may wonder why that country is more favored than the US about which information is inundated in Japan by the media. Since the polls do not ask respondents about the reason for their choice, it is assumed that the "peaceful" image of the mountainous country may have contributed to the good image of Switzerland. Katumi Muroya, who did a research about *the JiJi* poll data during the past 45 years (from June 1960 to May 2005), claims that the Japanese favorable image of Switzerland in part comes from its politics of permanent neutrality (Muroya 2005). Muroya also finds that the 45-year average point of Japanese favorability to the US is 31. Thus, it is considered that Japanese sentiment toward the United States during the period of this study is considered relatively favorable.

### The US Presidential Approval Rating

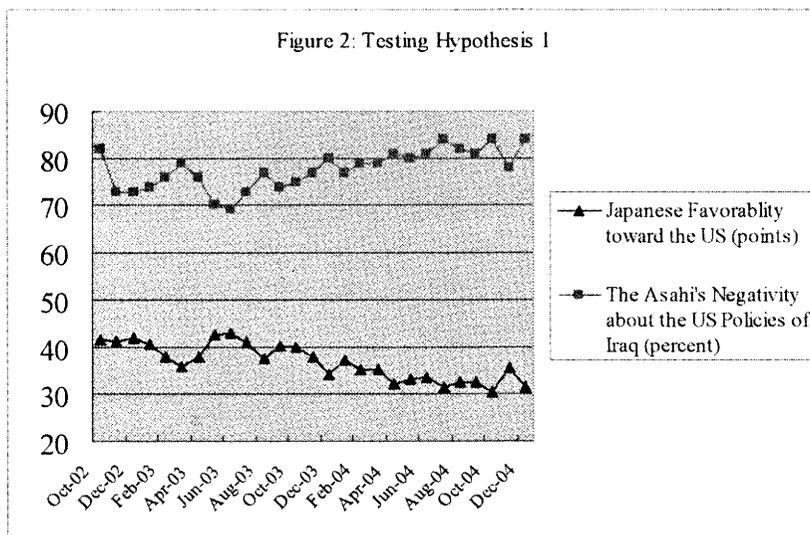
Regarding the US Presidential approval rating, this study uses data from the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. The Center is a non-profit and non-partisan research institute and has conducted a wide range of public opinion polls. During the period of analysis, the highest point for the approval rating is 74 (April 9, 2003) and the lowest point is 43 (April 1-4, 2004). Prior to the period of research, President Bush's popularity recorded its highest point soon after the 911 incident (86 point, September 21-25, 2001). After that, his popularity gradually declined as the time passed.

### III. Results

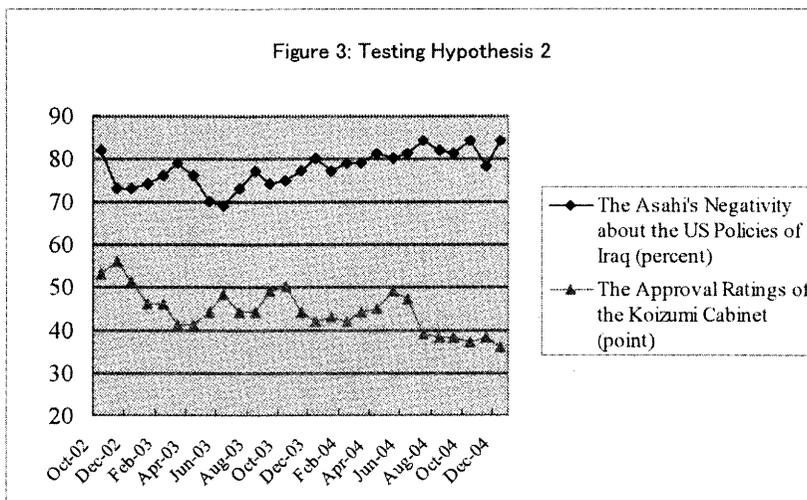
This section discusses the results of the tests of the four hypotheses. Although hypothesis 2 is not verified, hypotheses 1, 3, and 4 are confirmed. Additionally, this section explains the implications of the results in public policy process, and the possible limitation of this research.

### A) Hypotheses Testing

Among the four tests, hypothesis 1 is relatively clearly proved. The poll data about the Japanese sentiments about the United States deteriorates as the ratio of negative stories of US policies *the Asahi* carries becomes higher (Figure2). Correlation coefficient between them is  $-0.77$  and is statistically significant. Figure 2 indicates that there is a clear relationship between the amount of negative coverage of the Iraq War and the decline in the positive image of the United States among Japanese. The more the Iraq War receives negative treatment by *the Asahi*, the less the Japanese feel favorable to the United States. Four periods need to be paid attention to. First, toward the time the Iraq War started (the end of March 2003), the negative news of the US policies surges in number. Japanese sentiments toward the US corresponded to the change. Second, the media became less negative during the short period around the time when the actual battle ended in the early part of May 2003. The data of favorability also improved by a few points during this period. Third, both Japanese sentiment toward the US and *the Asahi's* treatment of the US policy over Iraq turned substantively sour soon after the end of the actual battle. Fourth, both data were temporally ameliorated in January 2004. Fifth, however, the former ratings returned soon until they hit bottom in October 2004. The data of November 2004 shows a slight surge, but still is very small in number.



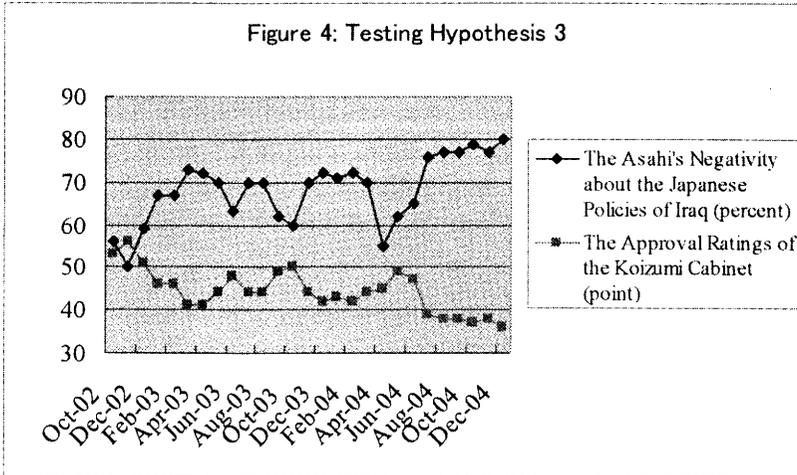
The test results of Hypothesis 2 and 3 exhibit interesting discord. Figure 3 suggests that the monthly approval ratings of the Koizumi Cabinet during the period of study are relatively stable. *The Asahi's* negative coverage toward US Iraq policies, however, has more fluctuations, with a tendency of gradual decline throughout the period of analysis. *The Asahi's* negative contents toward United States policies about Iraq do not have a large impact upon the popularity of the Koizumi Cabinet in Japan. Correlation coefficient between them is -.11



and is not statistically significant enough. Thus, hypothesis 2 is rejected.

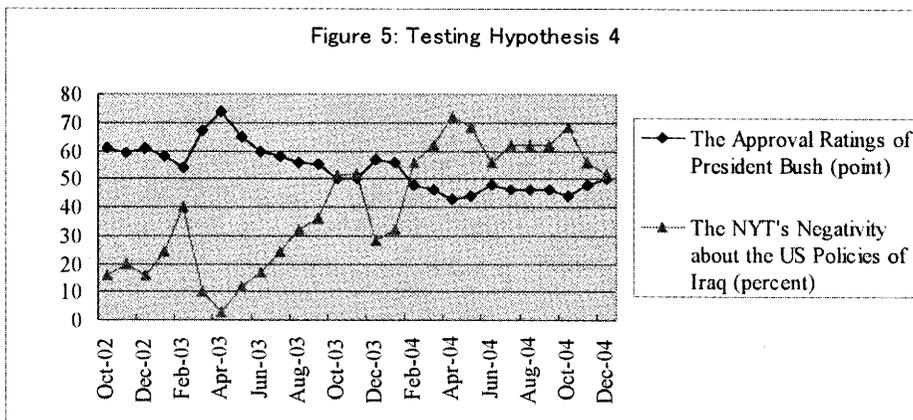
In contrast to this result, the *Asahi's* oppositional treatments of the Japanese government Iraq policies present a moderate negative congruence with public support for the Koizumi Cabinet (Figure 4). The *Asahi's* negativity of their government's Iraq policies has been kept negative except two brief periods (April to June 2003, April to May 2004). The stable curve in the data is similar to those of the Cabinet approval ratings, except for the fact that the two are reverse sides of the same coin: the *Asahi's* small surges in negativity correlate with imperceptible increases of the Cabinet popularity. In addition, from May 2004 to the end of 2004, both approval ratings of the Koizumi Cabinet and *the Asahi's* affirmative stories of its Iraq policies display slow-paced drops in number. Therefore, it appears that there is certain congruence between the ratings and

the paper's portrayals of Japanese policies about Iraq. Correlation coefficient between them is  $-0.64$  and there is an enough statistical significance. Thus,



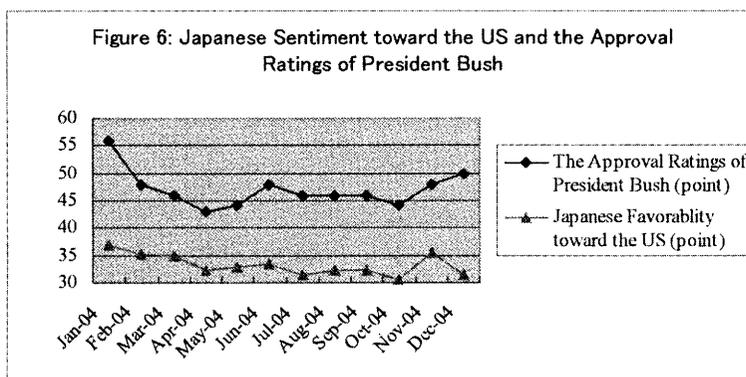
hypothesis 3 is confirmed.

Hypothesis 4 is also proved. There is a moderate negative relationship between *the New York Times'* unhelpful coverage of the US government's policies of Iraq and their presidential approval ratings (Figure 5). Correlation coefficient between them is  $-0.62$  and is statistically significant. Except for the few periods of recovery, the coverage of the paper becomes increasingly negative toward their government's policies on Iraq. By the same token, presidential approval



ratings manifest a gradual drop until the end of 2004.

Furthermore, there is one interesting tendency is revealed when we look at the data during the year 2004 (Figure 6). The Japanese sentiments about the United States display similar change in their number with the presidential



approval ratings in 2004.

#### B) Implications of the Results in Policy Process

Since the media is an intermediary between the public and the political regime, the public policies generated by their political leaders play an important role in altering public opinion. Public opinion is a referendum of their political leaders' performance in public policy as well as an indication of how another country's policy is internationally accepted. The above-mentioned hypotheses testing discovered that policy and public opinion is closely related. This confirms the previous studies of public opinion explained in the literature review section.

In the hypothesis 1 testing, both Japanese sentiment toward the US and *the Asahi's* negative treatment took a turn for the worse every time some Iraq policy was developed. In the beginning of the Iraq War (March 2003), the discussion of the Iraqi Special Law in Japan (June to July 2003), and the first arrival of the Japanese Self Defense Forces to Iraq (February 2004) are the events that altered the past trends negatively. Also, several developments further made both data decline. These developments include the capture of the first three Japanese civilians in Iraq (April 2004) and the murder of the first captured Japanese civilian (October 2004). Conversely, the end of the actual battle in the Iraq War

(May 2003) lifted numbers in both data.

Regarding the hypothesis 2 testing, it is assumed that the Asahi's negative treatment about the US Iraq policies may be only a small factor to access the Koizumi Cabinet. As discussed before, the Koizumi Cabinet had been very popular, and there are several other bigger factors, such as the economic conditions, may have a larger contribution to the ratings. Although hypothesis 2 is rejected, there are two occasions in which we can find a certain relationship between *the Asahi's* negative coverage about the US policies of Iraq and the approval ratings of the Koizumi Cabinet. One occasion is that the Koizumi Cabinet pronounced a strong support for the US decision to start the Iraq War (March 2003), the other is the time of the passage of the Iraqi Special Law in Japan (July 2003). Both occasions are related to Japanese policies about Iraq. Also, in testing hypothesis 3, two periods (April to June 2003, April to May 2004) display a moderate increase in the Koizumi Cabinet's popularity, during which the Asahi's coverage on the Cabinet recorded a moderate improvement. Both periods are considered recovery periods after important negative policies were declared in public (pronouncing a support for the US invasion to Iraq and the first SDF dispatch to Iraq).

Also, in the test of hypothesis 4, a few periods of recovery in presidential approval rating are related to several changes of policies. One of those periods is the summer of 2004, when the Bush Administration seriously warned the public about the imminent danger of Al Qaeda terrorism and raised the terrorism warning label up to "Orange," the second most dangerous situation. The Administration at that time also explained the possible targets and detailed ways to attack the targets with bombing by a suicidal attack of pick-up trucks. Secretary of Homeland Security Thomas Ridge named September 2004 as a "National Preparedness Month" for terrorism. Although these warnings turned out to be a false alarm, the presidential approval rating of the period was temporally lifted. Since the Bush Administration was allegedly very tactful about public relations, there were some discussions about whether the terrorism warning incident was sort of public manipulations to soar the presidential approval ratings. Whether this was an intentional manipulation is not certain; analysts agree that the summer of 2004 is a typical period of "rally" by the people who faced a danger in their country and had an urge to support their

political leader (Maeshima 2004) .

Additionally, this study found that there is some similarity between Japanese public sentiment toward the US and the US presidential approval ratings (Figure 6). Correlation coefficient between them is .70 and is statistically significant as well. Japanese media constantly report those rating; thus, there is a possibility that the two data displayed similar changes over time. If this is the case, US presidential policies affect the citizens even outside of the United States. Also, it is assumed that this correlation may be caused by the internationalization of media contents because Japanese media organizations usually received news of presidential ratings from the US media. The US media may have an international influence, which affects public sentiment across the Pacific. This study may confirmed the so-called "CNN effect.". The effect is due to the development of popular 24-hour international television news channels which has had a major impact on the international understanding of policies of both the US and other countries (Livingston 1997).

### C) Possible Limitations of the Tests

Although the author believes that the hypotheses tests are valid in their methodology, there are possibly some limitations in all four tests. The hypotheses tests 2, 3, and 4, for example, involve media portraits of policies and their influence on political leaders' approval ratings. The ratings seem to be, however, an amalgam of several influences, and there are other factors that can contribute to the ratings. Previous studies suggest that there are several components that condition these ratings. Two of those components are the time constraint and the economic situation. Time appears to be a very important factor. Presidential and prime minister approval is characterized by a gradual and steady erosion over the course of a presidential term, and while events and developments may temporarily delay or even reverse this decline over the short-term, it cannot be forestalled indefinitely (Cronin 1980, Stimson 1976, Maeda 2005). Economic circumstances also can be powerful conditioning factors. While prime ministers and presidents can make marginal adjustments, they cannot overcome endemic problems or worldwide economic trends (Lewis-Beck 1988, Maeda 2005). Also, scholars find that there is a certain congruence between the approval ratings of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and the

approval ratings of the Prime Ministers' Cabinets (Maeda 2005).

Also, the nature of the content analysis methodology is not perfectly free from some biases by the coder, the author himself. No matter how the coder attempts to be objective to the text, there is a possibility that he might unconsciously reject a certain standpoint. Since the author of this work is not a US citizen, his perspectives may not be neutral toward the US government's position. Although the author believes himself to be non-partisan, there is some possibility that he is influenced by a particular political ideology.

In addition, one can argue that the choice of papers may create some bias. One of the basic methods of comparative politics is to compare similar political systems and actors. The reason why the author selected *the New York Times* and *the Asahi* is that both are arguably the most respected newspaper in their countries, and also they are considered politically liberal. Nevertheless, the author cannot deny the fact that comparative content analysis of more conservative print media, such as *the Sankei* in Japan and *the Washington Times* in the US, may generate different results.

As for the choice of the media, this research limits its comparison to only print media for the sake of analysis. The importance electric media in recent years cannot be more emphasized than ever before. In the modern era, television has penetrated into our daily lives more than newspapers. In addition, the diffusion of the internet, especially the impact of blogs, has altered the traditional political communication system. The author would like to conduct a similar analysis of these electronic media in the future.

## Conclusion

The content analysis of this study finds that *the Asahi* has been strongly critical of the diplomatic hastiness and warmongering nature of the Bush Administration. Compared with *the Asahi*, *the New York Times'* attitude toward the Administration was not as cynical, at least until the end of the official combat. *The NYT*, however, turned out to be very harsh about the Administration after the fact that the no Weapons of Mass Destructions were actually found.

Using these data of content analysis, the four hypotheses are tested in this paper. These hypotheses are created to investigate the connection between public opinion and the portrayals of leading media organizations. Since the

media is an intermediary between the public and politics, public policies are important determinants of the change of public views about their political leaders. Among the three accepted hypotheses, it is intriguing that *the Asahi's* treatments' of the US Iraq policies may affect the Japanese sentiments about the United States. As discussed, the Japanese views of the United States perhaps reflected, and possibly originated by the views of US citizens because the US presidential approval rating and the Japanese feeling toward the US demonstrated some congruence. This interrelationship may be caused by the "CNN effect," which is an impact of the international satellite network.

Both Primer Koizumi and President Bush approval ratings alter after portrayals of their Iraq policies by their countries leading liberal print media are changed. Those results indicate that the media have a strong impact on the public image of their political leaders. Nevertheless, there are not strong relations between *the Asahi's* coverage of US Iraq policies and public support for the Koizumi Cabinet support.

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#### Newspapers' databases (for content analyses)

Asahi Shimbun's database *Kikuzo*

*Lexis-Nexis database* (The New York Times)

#### Public Opinion Polls

*Jiji Yoron Chosa* (conducted by Jiji Tsushin sha)

Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (<http://people-press.org/>)