

**The Iran-US Nuclear Standoff in American Newspaper Opinion Pieces:
A study in Critical Discourse, Classical Rhetoric and Securitisation
Theory**

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A thesis submitted to
Auckland University of Technology
in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

January 2020
Institute of Culture, Discourse, and Communication
School of Language and Culture

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Forough Amin

24/03/2019

Acknowledgement

PhD is a lifetime experience especially when you are studying in another country that is thousands of miles away from your home. Spending more than three years on a research project means a thousand days of hard work, excitement, and frustration. Looking back at the past, I remember all those happy and sad days and believe that, without the warm presence of many people who supported me academically and emotionally, it would not be possible to fulfil this research.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere and deepest gratitude to my primary supervisor Professor Allan Bell for his continuous support of my PhD study and related research. His guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this thesis. Allan Bell is one of the most knowledgeable and professional academics in the field of language studies and a moral and modest human being. I could not have imagined having a better supervisor for my PhD study. By never compromising his high standards and expectations, he made me raise myself. Working with him is the greatest honour of my life and being his last student gives me a feeling of completing the legacy of a great man. I hope he is satisfied with me and my work.

I am also deeply grateful to my second supervisor, Dr Philippa Smith, for her patience, motivation, and knowledge. During the three years of completing my PhD thesis, she has always been available for me with a smiling face and an immense kindness. In all those gloomy days of frustration and disappointment, she helped me stand again and encouraged me to continue by sharing her own motivating experiences. She means more than a supervisor to me.

I would like to thank my examiners Associate Professor Donald Matheson from Canterbury University of NZ and Senior Lecturer Majid KhosraviNik from Newcastle University of UK for their positive attitudes and raising interesting points of discussion. They provided me with constructive feedbacks and possible future research directions.

My thank goes to Dr. Peter White for his generous help and guidance at the initial stages of this thesis when I was in search for appropriate methods of analysis. I would

also like to thank Dr Tof Eklund who as an American academic provided me with invaluable information about the political context of the United States. I should also thank Susan Shaw who as an experienced copy editor helped me a lot in polishing the final drafts of my long chapters. I am thankful to all lecturers at level 11 of AUT Tower whom I always referred to with plenty of questions regarding English language and culture.

I also need to thank my PhD fellows and roommates, Sorowar, Wei, Chien and Ahmed for creating a friendly and peaceful environment where we studied every day from early morning to late afternoon. I learnt from all of them and enjoyed their company. We made good lifetime friends.

The last but not the least, I would like to thank my family and friends especially my dear husband Behzad and my sisters Farnaz and Nazanin who have always been by my side and my best friends Laura, Nima, Azadeh and Sedi who provided me with an immense emotional support and guidance during my hard days.

Abstract

Achievement of the 2015 nuclear agreement deal between Iran and the world powers was officially praised as a remarkable victory in the history of diplomacy by most of the world. However, elites' reactions to it within Iran and the U.S. were contradictory. This study was launched to investigate opinion discourses in four prominent American newspapers with the aim of finding out how they constructed different versions of the nuclear deal. The first objective sought to identify discursive and rhetorical mechanisms through which authors represented and promoted their versions of reality. The second objective intended to place the newspaper opinion discourses in their context of production and consumption and examine them from cultural and socio-political perspectives.

To achieve the above, I drew on three frameworks: Critical Discourse Studies, Classical Rhetoric, and Securitisation Theory (the first time, I believe, that these had been integrated in a single study of opinion discourses). In light of the first objective, I designed a three-dimensional model of analysis examining representational, dialogical, and argumentative features of the opinion pieces by drawing on classical rhetoric, and to accomplish the second objective regarding the relationship between discourses and context, I drew on securitisation theory to demonstrate how these discourses and their context constituted each other.

My findings showed that all newspapers, except one (*USA Today*), took stances of either fully supporting or entirely opposing the nuclear deal, and depending on their positions towards the nuclear deal, they pursued particular patterns of representation and argumentation. Thereby, there were two opposite sets of representative and argumentative strategies employed by the two groups of anti-deal and pro-deal articles. Anti-deal articles, no matter which newspaper they belonged to, portrayed the deal, the negotiations and the countries involved in it in the same way. Pro-deal articles were similarly uniform. All articles in each group applied similar discursive strategies of representation, made similar judgements and predictions regarding the deal, and employed similar argumentation schemes to defend their claims. However, in regards to dialogical features, choice of interactional strategies appeared to be

more associated with the newspapers' statuses and professional principles than with their critical or supporting positions on the deal. While articles from the elite papers (*The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*) opted for a more formal style of writing and a modest authorial voice, those from less prominent papers (*New York Post* and *USA Today*) tended towards a more conversational style and a strong voice. Investigating the opinion pieces from a political perspective, I found that they worked systematically towards either treating Iran's nuclear programme as an urgent security matter (securitisation) or taking it into the realm of normal politics (desecuritisation). Anti-deal articles attempted to keep Iran and its nuclear programme securitised through representing the situation as urgent and threatening, and claiming the inefficacy of the deal in halting the threat. Pro-deal articles, on the other, endeavoured to de-securitise Iran or at least its nuclear programme through picturing the achievement of the deal as a victory for the U.S. and a measure to control Iran and halt its threat.

Overall, this research showed that the newspaper opinion pieces studied here actively participated in political debates regarding the nuclear deal and appeared to attempt to influence the American foreign policy in line with their ideological beliefs and political interests.

Chapter One

Introduction

The field of political dispute is addressed to what we might call problems without solution in as much as they are dilemmas or uncertainties for which there is no agreed external evaluative standard.

(Finlayson, 2007, p. 550)

1.1. Identifying the Problem: The Iran nuclear dispute

Iran's nuclear programme is undoubtedly one of the major non-military international conflicts of the last two decades. No country's nuclear programme has received as much attention and concern as has that of Iran. In spite of all the international attempts, from 2003 until the present (February 2019), to settle the dispute, it remains unresolved. These attempts have ranged from coercive pressure, such as the imposition of sanctions, to diplomatic measures, such as negotiation. The achievement of the nuclear agreement deal (known as JCPOA) between Iran and certain world powers (known as the 5+1 countries) in 2015 was considered by the leaders of the signing countries, as well as by many experts, to be a breakthrough ending the dispute. However, serious opposition to it in both Iran and the United States, and, especially, President Trump's assuming office in 2017, proved that the period of reconciliation was short and shaky. Eventually, the agreement deal did not survive under attacks from its critics and was officially abandoned by the U.S. in May 2018.

As an Iranian, I have been concerned about this dispute since day one. I am similar to my fellow countrymen in that all aspects of my life, from economic conditions to health and travel, have been affected by severe sanctions for more than a decade (although I am from a generation of people who were born with sanctions in place).¹

¹ Iran has been under sanctions by the U.S. since 1979, after the 'hostage crisis'.

Thus, as a result of the significant influence of this dispute on the lives of Iranians and their relations with the world, I was curious and also hopeful about the result of the nuclear negotiations. In fact, I was one of those Iranians who were happy on 14 July 2015 (the day when the achievement of the agreement deal was announced). I was happy about an endless number of matters, from prices and the inflation rate falling to the government's purchase of new aeroplanes and the expansion of its relationships with the world. In fact, the agreement deal was seen as the key to heaven by many Iranians, including me. Therefore, as a discourse analyst who is interested in the social construction of reality, I was keen to know how the world reacted to the agreement deal. Observing the huge disagreement and debate occurring in the media, upon choosing my PhD topic (in August 2015), I decided to study the representation of the deal in global media.

One of the most interesting and thought-provoking series of debates was occurring among American elites and was with regard to the efficacy of the nuclear agreement deal in preventing Iran from building nuclear weapons. Opposing claims made by politicians and experts showed that there was no agreement among American elites on what constituted a good deal. Such disagreement weakened the deal (finally leading to its breakdown) and worsened the dispute. On the one hand, the nuclear deal was endorsed and praised as a historic deal and the first such accord with an enemy; on the other hand, it was rejected and condemned as a historic mistake and the U.S.' worst diplomatic accord (positive evaluations usually included some critique of the deal; however, negative evaluations saw no merit in the nuclear deal and totally discarded it). The two groups of appraisals were at the extreme ends of the spectrum.²

Nevertheless, such disagreements on political matters are normal. As indicated by Finlayson (2007, p. 550), parties to a political dispute rarely agree on a similar solution. However, in spite of such differences, the two groups of American supporters and opponents of the deal shared some attitudes and goals. Both held negative attitudes towards Iran and were suspicious of its trustworthiness (although their degrees of

² The situation in Iran was also similar to that of the U.S. On the one hand, the government and its supporters celebrated the deal as a victory that saved the country from its miserable isolation and crushing economic hardship; and, on the other, critics of the government, mainly fundamentalist groups and parties, denounced it as a deception by the West, which brought shame to the country.

enmity and pessimism were different). In other words, Americans were united in the idea that Iran's access to nuclear power is a threat to the U.S.' interests and even to its survival; however, they diverged on which measures would be appropriate for halting Iran's nuclear programme.

As indicated above, the main battlefield of this discursive war on the nuclear deal was the news media, particularly the press and TV news channels. During a more-than-decade-long period of nuclear negotiations, as well as the period after the achievement of the agreement deal, politicians, representatives and elites from various sides (within Iran and the U.S.) employed news media as channels for disseminating their own versions of reality. Newspapers' opinion sections, for example, were filled with commentaries, editorials and op-eds written by famous politicians or political/military experts, who provided interpretations, predictions or solutions regarding the issue. In the American media context, two approaches were noticeable in the opinion pieces written about the Iran nuclear deal: one constructed Iran as a threat to the U.S. through negative 'Other' representation and prescribed more pressure and sanctions to be imposed on it; the other, while accepting and repeating the same threatening image of Iran, insisted that negotiations and the resultant nuclear deal could successfully control the threat and there was no need for continuing the conflict.

These opposing approaches towards the nuclear deal pursued by the elites and media made it very difficult to understand what the deal really was and how it would affect the U.S.: whether it was terribly harmful to the U.S. and its allies or gloriously advantageous to them and to the world. The importance of these opposing discourses³ is that they destabilised the deal and public attitudes towards it. Thereby, it seems imperative to understand why and how different pictures of reality were constructed and how each side attempted to persuade the public and elite decision-

³ The term 'discourse' is used in a variety of senses in this study ranging from a system of knowledge to a linguistic object and from language associated with a particular field (e.g. 'political discourse' or 'newspapers' discourse') to a specific way of perceiving the world (e.g. 'Conservative discourse'). In this regard, Weiss and Wodak (2003) mention that level of *abstractness* can be the criterion in defining the meaning of discourse (e.g. system of knowledge or a linguistic object). Fairclough also refers to two factors of *perspective* (e.g. 'Conservative discourse') and *topic* (e.g. 'political discourse') for identifying discourse. The term is discussed and elaborated on in section 3.1.2.

makers. The existence of such opposing portrayals of an outside reality (nuclear negotiations) and contradictory evaluations of a political document (the nuclear deal) is a reminder of the constructivists' claim that social reality is always intersubjectively and discursively constructed.

From such a perspective, what has made Iran's nuclear programme a significant concern for Americans in general is that it is perceived as one of the *greatest threats* to *vital national interests* of the United States. The first two items on the list of vital U.S. national interests provided by The Commission on America's National Interests (2010) are as follows (Graham, 2010):

- 1) Prevent, deter, and reduce the threat of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons attacks on the United States or its military forces abroad;
- 2) Ensure US allies' survival and their active cooperation with the US in shaping an international system in which we can thrive;

Since Iran's nuclear activities are perceived as a threat to the survival of the U.S. as well as its Middle East allies (i.e. Israel and Saudi Arabia), most Americans oppose them (such a perception is, in itself, partly a result of the discourses of elites that represent Iran as an enemy). In fact, the reason that the nuclear capability of Iran, but not that of Pakistan or India, for example, is seen as a threat by Americans is linked to many historical, political, cultural and ideological factors (some of them are referred to in chapter eight). This can be partly explained in terms of the systemic constructivist theories that argue that states' friendly or hostile views towards each other affect the ways in which they interpret each other's actions and react to them.

The inextricable situation regarding Iran's nuclear programme can be associated with the deep distrust between Iran and the United States that began, for Americans, with the *hostage crisis* in 1979 (and, for Iranians, even earlier with the *coup d'état* in 1953). The profound suspicion about the intentions and trustworthiness of the 'Other' was noticeably evident in the process of nuclear negotiation and can be regarded as one of the main factors behind the lingering (persistence) of the conflict. Neither Iran's inflexibility on the nuclear issue, in spite of all of the international pressure, nor the U.S.' tough and firm stance in opposing Iran's nuclear programme can be explained by

rationalist theories of international relations that explicate conflicts according to the principle of 'rational-choice decision' (Moshirzadeh, 2007). To understand the behaviour and intentions of the various sides of this conflict properly, we need constructivist theories that discuss international issues in terms of ideational and normative factors. The distrust between the two countries is so deeply rooted in their cultures and histories that it could not be easily substituted with trust and respect.

Based on the above explanations, in order to understand the discourses of American newspapers regarding the nuclear deal, including their discursive mechanisms of persuasion and their impetuses and goals, it is necessary to integrate discourse analysis with historical and socio-political considerations. In this research, insights for conducting the former (discourse analysis) is derived from critical discourse studies (CDS), as well as classical rhetoric, and the knowledge of the latter (socio-political context) is provided by constructivist international relations, especially securitisation theory. All these approaches share an interest in discursive and intersubjective construction of social reality (see the following sections).

1.2. Critical Discourse Studies, Classical Rhetoric and Securitisation Theory: Complementary Approaches

As I explain in detail in chapter four (methodology) regarding my search for an appropriate method of analysis, I started this study as a piece of CDS research; I then drew on ideas from classical rhetoric and, finally, arrived at a combination of CDS, classical rhetoric and securitisation theory. Initially, I launched this study in order to understand how American newspaper discourses were constructed in defence of or opposition to the nuclear deal with Iran and how these discourses demonstrated and promoted ideologies and values of American society. Aiming to offer a comprehensive investigation of opinion discourses, I planned to examine not only the *representational* features of newspapers' opinion pieces (as is typical in CDS) but also their *dialogic* and *argumentative* characteristics. In fact, by drawing on Aristotle's ideas in classical rhetoric, I viewed *persuasion* as the primary goal of opinion discourses, and considered *representation* (associated with *pathos*) as only a means of achieving that goal – along with the two other means of *dialogue* (*ethos*) and *argumentation* (*logos*) – not the ultimate aim of it. Through rhetoric, I saw politics as mainly about how to

achieve goals by using persuasive language. In other words, I considered newspaper opinion discourses as examples of political *deliberation* on what path of action to take in response to a situation (I. Fairclough & Fairclough, 2013).

Thereby, looking at the newspaper opinion discourses from this action-oriented perspective gradually led me to search for theories in political science to find out how these theories study discourse and what role they attribute to it in the process of politics. As a result of that investigation, I came across the constructivist theories of international relations (IR) and, particularly, securitisation theory. Learning about constructivist IR and securitisation theory aided me to position the discourses under analysis in their political contexts and realise what ideational factors affected them and what particular political function they served. To put it another way, the securitisation theory informed me about how a political action (securitisation, in this case) is achieved through discourse.

In sum, since CDS embraces any research that critically studies discourse in society and does not advocate any particular methodology, I decided to make use of ideas in classical rhetoric and securitisation theory in order to enrich this CDS thesis. I believe that CDS can benefit by paying attention to specific features of each discourse type it investigates (opinion discourse here) and by drawing on theories and models provided by scholars in the field to which the discourse belongs (politics here). Accordingly, I relied on classical rhetoric, at the textual level, to learn about features and mechanisms of persuasive discourses and employed constructivist IR and securitisation theory, at the contextual level, to realise how these discourses written about the Iran nuclear deal were shaped and what they intended to achieve from a political perspective.

Overall, I believe that two questions should be answered in any study of political discourses: What action is intended to be carried out? How has language been employed to carry out the action? The first question cannot be answered without referring to theories from politics and the second one cannot be answered without seeking help from the field of language (CDS and classical rhetoric here).

1.3. The linguistic-turn and the Emergence of Critical Discourse Studies and Constructivist International Relations

Since the arrival of the linguistic-turn in the mid-20th century, many scholars in social sciences and humanities have focused their research on the role of language, identity, normative beliefs, social construction and, generally, discourse in shaping human knowledge and life. It was in such a discourse-dominated academic atmosphere that *critical* approaches to discourse studies and *constructivist* approaches to IR emerged in the 1990s.

Critical discourse studies, contrary to previous discourse analysis approaches, such as conversation analysis or pragmatics, advocate a problem-oriented approach to the study of discourse. Critical discourse analysts usually choose social problems, such as discrimination, domination, racism, power abuse, etc., as their research topics and examine institutional, political, gender and media discourses as their sites of investigation. The principal tenet of CDS, which has a constructivist origin, is the idea that discourse is both constitutive of and constituted by society (Meyer, 2001). In other words, society constitutes discourse by shaping ideologies, identities, values and attitudes of discourse-producers (their perceptions in general); discourse constitutes society through disseminating and reproducing or resisting those ideologies, identities, values and other social structures, such as power relations, social policies and institutions.

Similar to CDS, the constructivist approach to international relations proposed a new perspective to its field. With its focus on the role of ideational factors in international relations, it opposed the predominant rationalist theories (e.g. neorealism and neoliberalism) that rely on materialistic factors, such as rational-choice decisions, struggle for power, anarchy, and economic interests, in explaining international issues (Walt, 1990; Waltz, 1979). Contrary to them, constructivists argue that nation-states' behaviour and relations are determined, on the one hand, by their domestic ideational factors, such as national identity and culture, and, on the other hand, by systemic ideational factors, such as states' perceptions of each other as enemies or friends (Onuf, 1997; Wendt, 1992). Each of these factors has a discursive character or, at least, a discursive dimension. One of the constructivist IR theories that follows such a

discursive approach to international relations is securitisation theory (Waeber, 1995). According to this theory, security threats do not necessarily need to be there in the outside world; they can be created by politicians or other elites through *discourse (securitisation)*.

1.3.1. Research on the Iran nuclear dispute from discursive and constructivist perspectives

Researchers in both CDS and constructivist IR have endeavoured to explain the Iran nuclear dispute by investigating discourses gathered from media, political speeches, interviews, etc.

Disclosure of Iran's nuclear activities in 2003, the U.N.'s and the U.S.' continuous sanctions on Iran since 2006, several rounds of negotiations between Iran and the world powers from 2003 to 2015, the achievement of an agreement deal in 2015 and the U.S.' withdrawal from the agreement in 2018 have all positioned Iran at the top of the list of world news and inspired researchers to study it. The long period of negotiations and the failure to achieve an agreement indicate the inability of both sides to engage in dialogue and understand each other's discourses. As a result, there have been a great number of studies examining the nuclear issue from a discursive perspective, especially in critical discourse studies and in the constructivist side of international relations.

Many CDS scholars (mostly Iranian) have examined media and political discourses in the contexts of Iran and the U.S. as well as other Western countries (Ahmadian & Farahani, 2014; Atai & Mozaheb, 2013; Behnam & Mahmoudy, 2013; Kheirabadi & Alavi Moghaddam, 2012; Khosravinik, 2014; Rasti & Sahragard, 2012; Sharififar & Rahimi, 2015). These groups of studies have focused on the issue of *representation* or *framing* in discourse and investigated the ways in which negative representation through legitimising 'Self' and delegitimising 'Other' has boosted the tensions. These studies examine linguistic and discursive strategies employed by media and politicians for constructing their versions of reality. They have also considered the ideological implications of such discursive representations and the role of such discourses in reinforcing discrimination against Iran and supporting the unjust system of global power relationships, etc.

Moreover, in international relations, including security studies, many constructivist scholars have attempted to explain this international dispute in terms of ideational and discursive factors (Austin & Beaulieu-Brossard, 2018; Duncombe, 2016; Hurst, 2016; Moshirzadeh, 2007; Reinke de Buitrago, 2016; Rubaduka, 2017; Shoaib, 2015). They have emphasised the role of domestic culture, national identity, emotions and rhetoric in turning Iran's nuclear programme into an international security conflict. In light of such discursive and constructivist understandings, the Iran–U.S. stand-off on the nuclear issue can be described as part of a bigger struggle for *identity* and *recognition*. Both Iran and the U.S see the other as an enemy threatening its values and identities, and refuse to recognise the 'Other' as a normal state; therefore, the two countries continue to misrepresent each other.

These two groups of research have similar epistemological foundations as they agree on the importance of discourse and ideas in shaping people's perceptions of the social world. Both CDS, which is associated with critical theory, and constructivist IR indicate that language and the knowledge we acquire through it are not neutral; they are always political, ideological and normative. Meaning and language are socially constructed and there are no value-free social facts or realities. However, they differ in their scopes and approaches. In fact, each of them centres on a particular level of discourse and pursues a different objective in its investigation. While research conducted in CDS follows an analytical methodology, research in constructivist security takes an interpretive approach to analysis. To put it another way, in the case of the Iran nuclear dispute, the former concentrates on linguistic and rhetorical analyses to demonstrate mechanisms of 'Other' representation in discourses of Iranian and American elites and media, but the latter opts for political description and interpretation of how discursive representations can influence relations between the two countries (i.e. Iran and the U.S) without necessarily presenting any analysis of specific examples. Depending on their natures as linguistically oriented or politically oriented disciplines, both groups of studies offer important information; either language analysis or political interpretation is the focal concern of each. Thus, in my case, combining these frameworks resulted in a more comprehensive understanding of the political discourses.

1.4. Research Questions

As mentioned above, this thesis intends to illustrate that a combination of CDS, classical rhetoric and securitisation theory can work well for the study of opinion discourses about the Iran nuclear dispute. To meet my research objectives, I collected a corpus of 20 opinion articles and editorials from four leading American newspapers (*The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *New York Post* and *USA Today*) and developed five research questions:

RQ 1: In what ways was social reality regarding the Iran nuclear dispute (social actors, actions and phenomena) constructed differently in the discourse of the four newspapers?

This question investigates the representational features of the newspaper articles. It seeks to find out how the situation regarding the dispute, including the countries that were involved and the deal itself, was described in each opinion discourse. For answering this question, I examine linguistic and rhetorical devices and strategies that were employed by the newspaper authors in their constructions of social reality.

RQ 2: In what ways did the different authors employ different strategies to engage with readers as well as opinion-holders and did they express different values and norms?

Question two relates to the dialogic aspect of the opinion discourses. It asks about different ways of building the author–reader relationship in the texts. By examining the authors' use of meta-discourse markers (engagement and stance markers), I discover how they built solidarity with their readers and displayed their authority. In addition, by investigating parenthetical elements (i.e. non-essential elements that are added to a sentence with the purpose of providing more clarification or expressing an opinion), I am able to recognise values and norms that the authors have advocated.

RQ 3: What positions did the authors take on the Iran nuclear dispute and how did they support their positions?

Question three is about the argumentative dimension of the opinion discourses (the logical strategies employed by the authors). It asks whether each author supported or

opposed the nuclear deal with Iran, and what argumentative strategies or topoi s/he drew on to prove his/her position.

RQ 4: How did social structures appear to influence opinion discourses?

Question four is about the effect of social structures such as identity, ideology, values and myths on the construction of the newspapers' discourses. To answer this question, I attempt to identify traces of such social structures in the discourses.

RQ 5: How did opinion discourses seek to influence social structures?

The last question specifically investigates the role of discourse in the field of politics. It is concerned with the goal of the newspaper articles to securitise or de-securitise Iran and its nuclear programme.

Overall, the first three questions are concerned with textual characteristics of the newspapers' opinion discourses. By drawing on CDS and classical rhetoric, I detect differences or similarities in linguistic/rhetorical patterns of the newspapers' opinion discourses and, through answering the next two questions, I explain how these differences or similarities in discourse were constituted by or intended to constitute society. Indeed, questions four and five deal with the relationship between discourse and society and are answered by drawing on CDS and securitisation theory. Question four asks how similarly or differently society shaped the newspapers' discourses, and question five enquires about the ways in which the discourses endeavour to shape society.

1.5. Structure of the Thesis

The above questions are attempted to be answered in the next eight chapters of this thesis. This chapter introduces the topic of the research, reviews the field of the study, and presents the rationale for undertaking the research as well as the significance of the study. The introduction chapter is followed by two review chapters: one (i.e. chapter two) offers a brief history of Iran's nuclear dispute as the topic of the research as well as a critical review of previous studies addressing the same topic from a discursive point of view in CDS and international relations; the other review chapter (i.e. chapter three) introduces the three frameworks that have been drawn upon in

conducting this research project. The chapter is divided into three main sections providing overviews of the origins, principles, concepts and methodologies of CDS, classical rhetoric and securitisation theory.

Chapter four presents the methodology of the thesis. It includes the objectives of the study, the design, the analytical and interpretive frameworks and the procedure followed in conducting the analysis. Firstly, I describe and explain the type of data gathered for the analysis, the sources of the data and the process of data collection. Then, I narrate my journey to design my frameworks of analysis and interpretation and, finally, I explain how I applied that method in the form of a hermeneutic process called the *interpretive arc* (Bell, 2011).

The next three chapters present the outcome of the analyses conducted on the newspapers' texts. Each of these chapters deals with one of the three textual properties of the opinion discourses that are consistent with three features of persuasive texts (rhetoric) as argued in classical rhetoric.

Findings from the four newspapers are compared and contrasted in each respective chapter. Chapter five deals with the representational dimension of the opinion pieces and the mechanisms of representation. It also observes how representations might trigger emotions in the readers (*pathos*). Chapter six is concerned with the dialogical features of the newspapers' articles. It looks into three aspects of *ethos* (Aristotle's other means of persuasion) through examining how authors' interactions with readers and other opinion-holders were realised in the texts and what values and norms were expressed. Chapter seven examines the argumentative features of the articles (*logos*). It identifies topics that authors chose for their discussions and scrutinises the types of schemes (*topoi*) on which authors founded their arguments. It also demonstrates how representational elements and dialogical features assisted the authors in making their claims appealing.

Chapter eight (discussion) focuses specifically on the relationships between the newspapers' opinion discourses and their national and international contexts. It demonstrates which social structures (e.g. identity, ideologies, myths and historical

experiences) left traces on the opinion discourses, and how the produced discourses worked to de/securitise Iran's nuclear programme.

Finally, chapter nine concludes the thesis by summarising the findings, explains the outcomes of the research objectives and discusses this study's contribution to political discourse studies and securitisation theory through the case of the Iran nuclear dispute. Then, I present the limitations of this research as well as suggestions for further studies at the end of this chapter.

Chapter Two

Iran's Nuclear Programme: The context of the situation

In this chapter, I offer a brief overview of developments related to Iran's nuclear programme since its launch during the previous Iranian regime. Then, I review the past research on this topic that was undertaken during the six years between 2012 and 2018. The review of literature comprises two sections; one deals with studies on Iran's nuclear programme collected from language-related fields, and the other embraces studies on the same topic, from the fields of politics and international relations. The former mainly includes research on *media discourses* in Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) while the latter includes research on *government discourses* in Security Studies.

2.1. History of Iran's Nuclear Programme

Iran's nuclear programme was launched in the 1950s when Iran and the United States signed a nuclear agreement as a part of the 'Atoms for Peace' programme. In 1967, the United States provided Iran with a 5-megawatt nuclear research reactor in order to establish the Tehran Nuclear Research Centre. The support of the United States (U.S.) and other Western countries for Iran's nuclear programme continued until 1979. In that year, as a result of an Islamic revolution, the pro-American government of Shah (king of Iran) collapsed. As a result of the change of regime, the relationships between Iran and the U.S. (the West in general) changed, and, consequently, most international nuclear cooperation with Iran stopped. However, in 1981, Iran announced that it intended to continue its nuclear activities and started negotiations with different countries (e.g. Argentina, France, Russia, China) to gain assistance in launching its nuclear programme (Tarock, 2006).

Sensitivities regarding Iran's nuclear programme, as mentioned in Khosravinik (2015), arose in **2002** when Mujahedin-e-ne Khalq (an organisation, then based in Iraq, which

opposes the Islamic Republic of Iran) declared that Iran had built covert nuclear facilities. Then, in **2003**, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) announced that it had learned about the existence of two undeclared nuclear sites in Iran. Subsequently, the Iranian reformist government of *Khatami* signed an agreement with France, Germany and the U.K. to suspend the nuclear enrichment programme voluntarily and cooperate with the IAEA by approving an additional protocol (NPT). This new protocol allowed further access to Iran's nuclear sites by the IAEA. In exchange for Iran's new obligations, the three European countries assured Iran that its rights to peaceful nuclear energy would be recognised. Towards the end of **2005** and after *Ahmadinejad* assumed office as the new president, Iran moved towards resuming its nuclear enrichment under the new president's revolutionary ideology. This time, the three European powers offered a package to Iran in return for abandoning enrichment, but Iran rejected the offer as inadequate and sustained its enrichment programme. The situation continued on the same route for the whole eight-year period of Ahmadinejad's presidency although there were some discontinuous and unsuccessful rounds of negotiation during this period as well. In response to Iran's enrichment-related activities, from 2005 to 2012, the UN Security Council, U.S. Congress and EU adopted several resolutions that imposed more sanctions on Iran, and these affected its economic, diplomatic and military activities.

However, in **2013**, the new Iranian president, *Hassan Rouhani*, took a different direction with regard to the nuclear issue, which, by then, had turned into an unresolvable problem for both Iran and the entire world. As the first step, three days after his inauguration, Rouhani called for the renewal of negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme. In **September 2013**, during the UN General Assembly meeting in New York, foreign ministers of the P5+1 (U.K., U.S., France, China, Russia and Germany) and Iran's foreign minister – Javad Zarif – met. There was also a phone conversation between the U.S. and Iranian presidents; this was the first such conversation since the Islamic revolution of 1979. In **November 2013**, Iran and the P5+1 signed an initial agreement called the Joint Plan of Action, which was a broad framework to guide negotiations towards a comprehensive solution. In **January 2014**, after several rounds of negotiations in Geneva and Vienna, implementation of the Joint Plan of Action

began. In this regard, the IAEA issued a report on Iran's compliance with the deal. In **February 2015**, another report by the IAEA confirmed that Iran was maintaining its commitments under the interim deal. In **April 2015**, Iran and the P5+1 agreed on a general framework that drafted the broad parameters of a nuclear deal. In **May 2015**, EU and Iranian negotiators met in Vienna to continue their drafting of a comprehensive agreement. Eventually, on **14 July 2015**, after two years of intensive negotiations, Iran and the six world powers (P5+1) reached the final agreement on the framework of Iran's nuclear programme in order to settle this long-lasting dispute. A brief time line of the main events related to Iran's nuclear dispute and negotiations is provided in Table 2.1.

Table 2. 1. Time line of Iran's nuclear dispute and negotiations

Years	Events
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosure of Iran's nuclear activities
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khatami's (Iranian reformist president) acknowledgement of Iran's nuclear facilities • Iran's agreement to IAEA's request for inspections • IAEA's report concluding that Iran failed to meet its obligations • U.K., Germany and France's diplomatic efforts to solve the nuclear issue
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election of Ahmadinejad as president of Iran • Iran's resumption of its nuclear activities
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IAEA's reporting of Iran to the Security Council • U.S., China and Russia joining the three European countries and, thus, forming the P5+1 • First Security Council resolution against Iran
2006–2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Security Council passing six resolutions and imposing gradual sanctions on Iran
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election of Rouhani as the president of Iran • Meeting of Zarif (Iran's foreign minister) and Kerry (the U.S.' secretary of state) at the UN • Rouhani and Obama's phone conversation • Iran and the P5+1 reaching an interim agreement (joint plan of action) • Partial lifting of sanctions on Iran
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to meet July and November's deadlines for reaching a comprehensive agreement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of deadline to June 2015
2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April's announcement of a framework deal restricting Iran's programme in return for removal of sanctions • Several extensions of negotiations for finalising the agreement in June and July • Agreement on final deal reached on 14 July after 17 days of continuous negotiations

2.2. Previous Studies on Iran's Nuclear Programme

There has been a large body of research on the issue of Iran's nuclear programme since its disclosure in 2002. It extends over a wide range of disciplines from international relations and politics (e.g. security studies, peace studies, foreign policy and diplomacy) to language and communication (e.g. media studies, translation studies and critical discourse studies). Within each discipline, again, there exists a range of theoretical perspectives (e.g. neo/realism, structuralism, constructivism, etc.) and methodologies (e.g. case study, survey, interview, content analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, etc.). For the purpose of the present research, I decided to limit the scope of the reviewed literature to studies that examined Iran's nuclear programme from a constructivist discursive perspective. In the following sections, I have presented a number of studies from each of the two groups of disciplines, which were published during a period of six years covering three years before the achievement of the deal (2012 to 2015) and three years after it (2015 to 2018).

2.2.1. Language-oriented studies

In the discourse-oriented body of literature that I gathered from the fields of language and communication, almost all studies were carried out by Iranian scholars. Moreover, nearly all this research focused on media discourse and drew on CDS approaches, particularly van Dijk's socio-cognitive model and van Leeuwen's social actor representation. There were also a few studies employing other frameworks, such as content analysis (Khanjani, 2017), narrative analysis (Oppermann & Spencer, 2018) and appraisal analysis (Ghane, Allami, & Mahdavi, 2017). Apart from media discourse, some researchers looked into other discourses like Congress debates (Oppermann & Spencer, 2018), IAEA reports (Behnam & Mahmoudy, 2013) and

political speeches (Sharififar & Rahimi, 2015). Some of these studies that have been published in peer-reviewed journals are discussed here.

Representation in Western media

Kheirabadi and Alavi Moghaddam (2012) examined the representation of Iranian and Western actors in news articles written on the topic of Iran's nuclear programme by international news agencies and newspapers (Associated Press, Reuters, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, AFP, etc.). Collecting 50 news articles published by these newspapers and agencies between November and December 2010, they adopted van Leeuwen's (2008) socio-semantic network of social actors to study them. Their study focused on two mechanisms of Inclusion/Exclusion to discover which actors were highlighted in the news and which ones were backgrounded or suppressed. Their findings showed that, while Western figures were included in the news with their personal identities as *peace-seekers*, *experts* and *law-makers*, Iranian figures were either excluded or categorised with mass nouns (collectivised) or negative titles (*Islamic regime*, *Shia regime*). They also found that 83 per cent of quotes were from Western sources and that means that the voice of the Iranian side of the debate was almost entirely suppressed.

In another study by Shojaei, Youssefi, and Shams Hosseini (2013), headlines and lead paragraphs of 10 news articles published in five U.K. and five U.S. newspapers were analysed, according to van Dijk (1998) Ideological Square and Fairclough's (1995) notion of intertextuality, linguistic categories of lexicalisation and collocational patterns. These news articles were written about three topics: Iran's nuclear programme, sanctions against Iran and the Syrian crisis. Their study showed biased reporting of the events in terms of the use of negative collocational patterns for describing Iran's activities (e.g. *develop weapons*, *attempt to obtain weapons*, *armed itself*, *nuclear armed Iran*, etc.), 'Self/Other' representation (legitimate Self versus delegitimate Other; punisher Self versus defiant Other; powerful and cautious Self versus dangerous and suspicious Other) and sourcing of voices or intertextuality (no voice given to Iranian officials). They concluded that the Western newspapers under study attempted to depict a negatively responsible and guilty image of Iran.

Youssefi, Baghban Kanani, and Shojaei (2013), in a similar manner to that of Shojaei et al. (2013), also collected news reports from five U.K. and five U.S. newspapers to analyse their headlines and lead paragraphs. Their corpus consisted of 20 articles written about sanctions against Iran and dated from June to October 2010 as well as from January to July 2012. Again, they worked within van Dijk's (1998) Ideological Square and Fairclough's (1995) notion of intertextuality. More devices, such as transitivity, modality, presupposition and metaphors, were added to their analytical repertoire. Analysing news reports by applying these frameworks and categories, they concluded that the news, both explicitly and implicitly, projected a negative image of Iran and Iranian officials/organisations to legitimise the imposition of sanctions. In terms of intertextual properties of the texts, they stated that particular verbal processes were systematically selected for characterising the reported speech, in an attempt to depict Iran and Iranian officials/organisations as *belligerent*, *guilty*, *unwise* and *irrational*. Moreover, they reported that the inclusion of Westerners' voices in the news articles served to empower and justify what they said or did.

Two other similar studies, Rashidi and Rasti (2012) and Atai and Mozaheb (2013), investigated discourse in Western media by drawing on van Leeuwen (1996) and van Dijk (1998), respectively. Focusing on five categories from van Leeuwen's inventory of social actor representation (inclusion/exclusion, activation/passivation, association/dissociation, individualisation/assimilation and personalisation/impersonalisation), Rashidi and Rasti (2012) found out that Iran was mostly passivated in these media (*The Economist*, *The Express*, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*) except in relation to sensitive or negative actions like enriching uranium. Iranian actors were also shown to be assimilated and impersonalised in terms of their identities. Atai and Mozaheb's (2013) examination of five British media (*The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, *The Independent* and BBC) revealed the recurrence of a few themes associated with Iran and its nuclear programme, including: Iran's programme as *a threat to the world*; Iran as *defiant and boastful*; and Iran's programme having a *rebellious nature*. They argued that, using various linguistic tools like nominalisation, lexical choices and passivation, British media constructed a negative image for Iran and a positive image for the U.S. and its allies.

In a similar way to that of the above studies, I have examined the ways in which social actors and events that were related to Iran's nuclear programme/deal were depicted in American newspapers (see chapter five on representation). However, unlike these studies that focused on the news, I have concentrated on opinion articles and editorials, drawing specifically on van Leeuwen's (2008) categories of actor and action representation.

Moving away from media discourse, Behnam and Mahmoudy (2013) examined 38 reports on Iran's nuclear programme, which were released by the Director General of the IAEA from 2003 to 2012. They analysed these reports according to Fairclough's (1989) three-dimensional framework (textual, discursive and sociocultural practices). At the micro-level, they investigated instances of negation and repetition in the texts and reached the conclusion that the purpose of using words like *not*, *no*, *nor*, *un*, *never*, *any*, *none* and *rarely* in the reports was to depict Iran as inattentive to IAEA's demands and regulations. They also found that the result of repeating words, such as *undeclared*, *uncertainties*, *inconsistencies*, *unresolved*, *concerned*, *possible military dimension* and *contamination*, was that Iran's nuclear programme acquired a mysterious and non-peaceful image. At the meso-level, they examined the discursive strategies of persuasion and argumentation, and concluded that the reports created an atmosphere of doubt and mistrust about Iran's nuclear programme by providing uncertain information to the readers. Finally, the authors believed that, at the macro-level, the reports aimed to force Iran to stop its nuclear programme or, at least, to accept the obligations set out by the IAEA.

Representation in Western and Iranian media

In addition to above-mentioned studies, which investigated representation of the nuclear issue in Western discourse, there were also some comparative studies of Iranian and Western newspapers as well as others examining only the discourse of the Iranian press.

In this regard, the representational strategies of the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Tehran Times* were compared and contrasted in a study by Ahmadian and Farahani (2014). They collected three news reports from each newspaper between May and June 2010

and compared any two articles that were written on the same topic. Again, van Dijk's (2000) Ideological Square was the framework adopted for investigating how the same event was represented by two newspapers. Looking for instances of discursive strategies suggested by Van Dijk (disclaimer, illegality, history as a lesson, hyperbole, vagueness, etc.), they found that lexicalisation (i.e. use of negative/positive terms and labels), repetition, vagueness (i.e. the use of vague expressions like *very* or *few*), illegality (i.e. attributing illegality to 'Their' actions) and history as a lesson were the most frequently used strategies to realise the two macro-strategies of positive 'Self' and negative 'Other' representation in both papers. Sivandi Nasab and Dowlatabadi (2016) also compared the same newspapers (*Los Angeles Times* and *Tehran Times*) and implemented the same framework (van Dijk's Ideological Square) for analysing eight news reports related to Iran and Western countries' negotiations on the nuclear issue. While the results of their study confirmed Ahmadian and Farahani's (2014) claim that the newspapers – predictably – utilised the macro-strategies of positive Self and negative Other representation, the strategies they listed as those used most frequently in these papers were different from those noted in Ahmadian and Farahani's study. According to Sivandi Nasab and Dowlatabadi (2016): the *Los Angeles Times* employed mainly authoritativeness (i.e. appeal to authorities), explanation, evidentiality (i.e. providing hear/say evidence for 'Our' beliefs) and counterfactual means (i.e. negative conditional predictions); and *Tehran Times* resorted to actor description, hyperbole, lexicalisation, repetition and situation description (see van Dijk (2000), for more explanation of these categories).

In a study focusing solely on the Iranian press – though as a part of a larger project investigating the discourse of British and Iranian newspapers –Khosravinik (2014) examined the discourse of *Kayhan* (i.e. *Galaxy*), a major conservative Iranian newspaper, regarding the nuclear programme. Articles published in this newspaper in January 2006 were gathered and explored by the researcher to discover how linguistic and argumentative strategies were applied by this newspaper to realise the general macro-strategy of (de)legitimation. Consistent with van Dijk's (2000) findings, Khosravinik (2014) pointed out that the (de)legitimation strategy used in this newspaper's discourse was achieved through construction of a dual conflicting world

of Us (anti-America, anti-Imperialism, Muslims, etc.,) and Them (America, West, Imperialists). He observed that both commentary articles and news reports in the *Kayhan* contributed to anti-Americanism and political Islamism. Topics that were discussed frequently in the paper were chosen to depict the strength of Iran against the West (other countries' unity with Iran, the popularity of Iran's nuclear policies, Iran's influence on the oil market). Khosravini (2014) reported that discourse on the nuclear programme was part of a larger discourse on global anti-Americanism, the Arab world, the Middle East, Islamism, Palestine/Israel, Syria and Ahmadinejad/internal politics; however, it formed the largest discourse (in terms of content) in the newspaper.

All these studies that investigated the representational aspects of different discourses are referred to in chapter five of this thesis and their findings have been compared and contrasted with the present research. Nevertheless, in comparing my findings with previous studies, I have tried to remain sensitive to two facts: those studies were undertaken at a different time (earlier than my study) and, thus, political circumstances might not have been identical; and they focused on news articles while I have explored commentary articles.

Argumentation and dialogue in media

Apart from the above studies that investigated the representational aspects of the reporting of Iran's nuclear programme, a few researchers focused on argumentative features, dialogic stance taking or framing in media discourse, or scrutinised these aspects in addition to their studies of representational features.

For example, Khosravini (2014), at the argumentation stage of his study, examined the use of topoi⁴ in *Kayhan* (the Iranian fundamentalist newspaper). He found out that argumentation for the construction of a legitimate 'Self' and a delegitimate 'Other', regarding the nuclear programme in this paper, was rooted mainly in the conservative rhetoric of Islamic Iran. He identified two micro and macro-legitimatory strategies

⁴ Topoi are defeasible generalisations that are employed to find or produce plausible arguments in natural language discourse. They were originally introduced by Aristotle in Classical Rhetoric. Walton (2007) defines topoi or argumentation schemes as "premise-conclusion inference structures that represent common types of arguments used in everyday discourse" (p. 26).

employed by *Kayhan*. The macro-legitimatory approach was founded on the ideological frames of post-revolutionary Iran (e.g. the Islamic Republic's eternal confrontation with the West, the Islamic Republic as the model for all oppressed nations, etc.). Khosravinik identified a list of topoi that *Kayhan* used to recontextualise the issue of the nuclear programme within such frames: the topos of *strength* and *defiance* (we are right because we are strong and we are defying them); the topos of *resistance* (we are right because we are resisting); and the topos of *threat* and *invasion* (we are right because they are threatening). The aim of these macro-strategies was to delegitimise the 'Other'. The micro approach, however, as indicated by Khosravinik (2014), focused on positive self-representation instead of on the negative 'Other'. The newspaper's micro approach was based on the topos of *rights* and *laws* (we are right because the law is saying so). This strategy was obvious in news and in commentaries produced by chief negotiators and foreign ministry officials, who preferred to draw on international laws (rather than on revolutionary and ideological rhetoric) in order to prove their claims.

In another study by Rasti and Sahragard (2012), the commentary articles from a British magazine-format newspaper (*The Economist*) published between 2007 and 2010 were collected and examined in light of Wodak's discursive strategies and van Leeuwen's representational resources. In addition to investigating patterns of referential and predication strategies, they scrutinised the argumentative strategies of the articles by drawing on Reisigl and Wodak' (2001) typology of topoi. They listed a number of topoi used in *The Economist* articles in their discussion of Iran's nuclear programme. Their list included topoi of *danger*, *burden*, *responsibility*, *reality*, *history*, *authority*, etc. Rasti and Sahragard (2012) discussed these topoi as if they were working separately in the newspaper discourse for the legitimisation of the West and delegitimation of Iran without pursuing a common goal; each topos was described in terms of its function for (de)legitimising actions of a specific actor. They did not demonstrate how these topoi worked together to achieve a macro-claim/conclusion (e.g. taking a specific path of action in response to the situation being discussed).

In a study concentrating solely on the argumentative dimension of editorials, Hosseinpour and Heidari Tabrizi (2016) explored the use of five topoi in editorials

published in *The New York Times* between 2010 and 2015. They focused on topoi of *advantage, disadvantage, reality, history* and *threat* from Reisigl and Wodak' (2001) typology. Their findings showed that these five topoi were means used to justify a systemically biased portrayal of Iran as uncooperative and criminal. Hosseinpour and Heidari Tabrizi (2016) argued that the ultimate function of these topoi in *The New York Times* was to prepare the ground for the imposition of more sanctions on Iran. Contrary to the work of Rasti and Sahragard (2012), who focused only on the (de)legitimatory functions of topoi, Hosseinpour and Heidari Tabrizi's (2016) study was more coherent and comprehensive in dealing with topoi (showing how they worked together to support a macro-claim of action). This difference might be a result of the narrower scope of the study (working solely on argumentative strategies) when it is compared with Rasti and Sahragard's (2012) extensive study.

Given that these three studies, in a similar way to that of my study, examined the argumentative dimension of newspapers' commentary articles, I have referred to them in chapter seven on argumentation in order to compare my findings to theirs.

Ghane et al. (2017) compared the dialogic positioning of journalists in news as well as in opinion articles from five Iranian and five Western media (from the U.S., the U.K. and Israel). They drew on Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal model to identify stance markers in their corpus. Their findings revealed that both Iranian and Western media made use of various linguistic devices, such as *denial* (no or never), *counter-expectation* (but or although) and *concur* (naturally or of course), to strengthen their claims and, accordingly, tended towards contractive rather than expansive dialogic positioning (not giving space to opposite or alternative opinions). Western media were shown to use even more contractive devices than did their Iranian counterparts.

The study by Ghane et al. (2017) is similar to some of the analyses presented in chapter six and has been mentioned there.

2.2.2. Politically-oriented studies

The other corpus of studies that I reviewed comprised research on Iran's nuclear programme conducted by scholars in politics and international relations. This group of studies concentrated mostly on Iran and the U.S.' official discourses regarding the nuclear issue and the discursive construction of the relationship between the two

nations. Viewing international relations from a constructivist perspective, all these studies examined how ideas and emotions impacted the nuclear conflict and the relationship between the two countries in general.

Shoaib (2015) analysed the Iran–U.S. relationship and, specifically, the ‘nuclear stand-off’ between these two nations from a constructivist perspective. He associated the distrust and suspicion in the two countries’ relationship to their ‘ideology driven’ and ‘identity related’ discourses. To put it simply, he argues that the discourses of Iranian and American officials are dominated by negative-Other representations that stem from the ideologies of each and are part of their own self-understanding (identity). According to him, when these ideological and identity-oriented discourses were ‘materialised into policies and actions’, they brought about enmity and the enduring problems between the two countries. Shoaib (2015) discussed the historical factors that led to the formation of the nuclear stand-off. He viewed Iran’s foreign policy after the Islamic Revolution as entrenched in Islamic anti-West ideology. This new Iranian identity was the outcome of an attempt by the Islamic clergy to form a new identity for the nation by rejecting all Western values that the Shah had aimed to promote in the country. This attempt was reinforced by the Iranians’ historical memories about Western interferences in their country while this new Iranian identity was perceived as a threat by the West. The U.S. was especially afraid that Iran would challenge its interests and status in the Middle East. Shoaib (2015) interpreted the achievement of the nuclear deal as a mutual compromise and the result of a change in discourse and tone of the two countries’ presidents and other representatives and negotiators (e.g. their description of the deal as a win-win negotiation or their emphasis on diplomacy for resolving problems); however, he maintained that keeping the nuclear agreement required continuous joint efforts for building trust and deconstructing the existing negative perceptions and ideas.

Reinke de Buitrago (2016), in a study on ‘The role of emotions in U.S. security policy towards Iran’, explained how negative portrayal of Iran as an enemy, an aggressor, a terrorism-sponsor and a threat to U.S. security, the Middle East and, even, the whole world had determined U.S. foreign policy towards Iran. By focusing on the relationship between national identity and states’ behaviour, she showed the ‘Othering’ of Iran as

the by-product of the process of U.S. 'Self' construction and this was reinforced by historical mistrust and traumas. Reinke de Buitrago (2016) discussed the alleviation of the U.S.' negatively emotionalised perception of Iran during Obama's presidency as the result of the attempt of the presidents of the two countries to build trust and express mutual understanding: for example, by the U.S.' taking motivating measures in response to Iran's positive actions. However, she reminded the reader that this shift was not enough to overcome Americans' strong negative feelings associated with mistrust and traumatic experiences. The most notable was the Iranian hostage-taking of Americans in 1979 – especially because any such change in perceptions would lead to "unsettling of identity" (p. 160). Reinke de Buitrago also emphasised the importance of provoking emotions in legitimising leaders' actions and, therefore, explained why some American politicians are reluctant to reduce the emotional content of their discourse towards Iran.

In a similar study, Duncombe (2016) indicated the importance of representation and recognition in international relations. She discussed the Iran–U.S. nuclear conflict, specifically, as a struggle for recognition. Interviewing 45 Iranian and American officials, experts, academics, etc., and analysing policy documents, news articles and public speeches, she identified the representational patterns that Iranians and Americans used in their identity formation and recognition of the 'Self' and the 'Other'. Duncombe explained the ways in which these dual representations led to misrecognition and disrespect of the 'Other' and acted as triggers for particular reactions by each state in order to counter the misrecognition. On the one hand, the U.S.' representation of itself as 'world leader' and 'the force for good', which stemmed from myths of 'American exceptionalism', 'America as a promised land' and 'innocent people', and its representation of Iran as 'irrational and dangerous' caused misrecognition of and disrespect to Iran. On the other hand, Iran's image of itself as 'a progressive and triumphant Shia state' and its recognition of the U.S. as 'the Great Satan', 'a bully', 'an exploiter', 'a manipulator' and 'arrogant' countered the U.S.' identity and self-representation. Duncombe argued that understanding these dual representations and their resultant misrecognitions is necessary for interpreting the policies and behaviour of Iran and the U.S. since "misrecognition creates feelings of

disrespect that trigger state action leading to, or exacerbating, foreign policy crises” (Duncombe, 2016, p. 640).

These studies are noteworthy as they discuss the role of identity and emotions, and their discursive representation in international relations. In a similar way, I have explained how American social structures, including national identity, ideologies, myths, values, etc., were reflected in newspapers’ opinion discourses (discourses of political elites) and affected the relationship between Iran and the U.S. (see chapter eight).

Hurst (2016) drew on Putman’s (1988) view of ‘negotiation’ as a ‘two-level game’ to discuss the role of American and Iranian domestic politics in the ratification of the nuclear agreement. According to Putman’s framework, for any international negotiation to succeed, it needs to be accepted by both the negotiating governments and their domestic ‘constituencies’ (other political parties/figures and the public). By discussing four cases of successful and unsuccessful rounds of negotiations between Iran and the U.S. regarding the nuclear issue from 2009 to 2015, Hurst demonstrated the ways in which domestic politics played a critical role in determining the fate of those negotiations. In addition to domestic groups and the public, relying on Knopf’s (1993) argument about the role of allies in shaping negotiations, Hurst showed that Israel as an ally had an important role in influencing the attitudes of American domestic groups towards negotiations. However, he argued that, contrary to Putman’s claim that domestic politics usually have a hindering effect on the success of negotiations, Iranian public support of the deal was a facilitative factor for the achievement of the nuclear deal. Moreover, he contended that, again unlike Putman’s hypothesis that authoritarian regimes have more autonomy from their domestic constituencies and are less under the influence of their people, the effect of domestic politics was greater on Iran’s ‘decision-making’ than was the case in the U.S.

Rubaduka (2017) studied Presidents George W. Bush and Barak Obama’s discourses regarding Iran’s nuclear programme as cases of *securitisation* and *de-securitisation* respectively. Employing Buzan, Waever, and De Wilde (1998) framework of securitisation, he focused on the ways in which the two presidents perceived Iran as a threat and portrayed that in their discourse. Rubaduka (2017) characterised Bush’s

approach towards Iran as *coercive* and endeavouring to limit Iran's influence through introducing it as a threat to the U.S.' interests. Bush seemed to do so by highlighting Iran's illicit activities and raising issues like 'World War III' and 'nuclear Holocaust'. Regarding Obama, his approach was shown to be *diplomatic*; even the imposition of sanctions by Obama was intended to force Iran to accept negotiations. In other words, unlike sanctions imposed during Bush's presidency that aimed to weaken Iran, sanctions for Obama were the pre-requisite for promoting diplomacy. However, there was a shift in his discourse after 2013. While, before the start of negotiations in 2013, Obama, similar to Bush, emphasised Iran's illegal actions, after 2013, he focused on progress in negotiations and the possibility of achieving an agreement.

Austin and Beaulieu-Brossard (2018), in a study that aimed to theorise the 'simultaneous enaction' of securitisation and de-securitisation, pointed to Iran's nuclear programme as such a case. They argued that, contrary to the common understanding in Securitisation Theory that de-securitisation is a normatively positive process (de-securitisation means getting back to normal; it is the positive counterpart of securitisation) that follows securitisation, it could happen at the same time as the securitising move and is not necessarily positive and ethically sound. Austin and Beaulieu-Brossard presented some quotes from President Obama's speech on the Iran nuclear deal and explained how he represented Iran as a threat to the U.S. and its allies and simultaneously differentiated between the hardliners in Iran (the broad threatening subject) and moderate Iranians. They maintained that this splitting of the threatening subject into securitised and de-securitised elements was a typical practice and believed that such pre-conditioned de-securitisation could be as violent as the securitisation itself rather than being positive and emancipatory as claimed by securitisation scholars.

Similar to these studies, I have discussed domestic political rivalries in the American context and the impact they had on Iran–U.S. negotiations and on the process of securitising or de-securitising Iran and its nuclear programme.

2.3. Conclusion

Emphasising the importance of the issue of Iran's nuclear programme as an enduring international conflict, studies that I reviewed in the above sections examined it from various discursive angles. A variety of theories and methodologies was employed by the researchers to investigate the issue. Nevertheless, what they had in common was their discursive constructivist view. All studies, no matter whether they were from the field of language or politics, focused on discourse and how it shaped the dispute between Iran and the world powers, especially the U.S. Nevertheless, these two groups of studies can be differentiated according to their levels of analysis or their analytical focuses. While language-oriented studies had a more micro-discursive approach in their investigations of the issue, the politically oriented ones followed a macro-discursive approach. In other words, the former leaned towards the view of discourse as *texts* and carried out thorough textual analyses, while the latter group was closer to the broad understanding of discourse as world views/cultures comprising ideologies, myths, identities, etc. (see section 3.1.1). These different understandings of discourse were evident in their analyses and discussions; while the former collected specific texts to study (news reports, political speeches, etc.), the latter generally discussed the roles of the ideologies and identities of Americans and Iranians in the dispute without necessarily examining a specific discourse.

Scrutinising the same topic and sharing similar theoretical and methodological perspectives as the reviewed studies, the present research project embraces both levels of analysis indicated above to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the issue. Initially, it examines a number of newspaper articles (micro-approach) and then explicates the ways in which national identities, myths, values and ideologies shaped those newspaper articles as one manifestation of the dispute as well as the ways in which these articles endeavoured to shape politics. However, since identities, values, ideologies, etc. are usually viewed as social rather than discursive factors in CDS (they are considered as social elements with discursive dimensions), these elements are discussed at the contextual level of analysis in this study.

Chapter Three

Theoretical Foundations of the Research

This chapter deals with the three frameworks that informed different aspects of the study (Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), Classical Rhetoric and Securitisation Theory). It includes reasons for applying these frameworks as well as their origins, principles and methodologies. CDS, classical rhetoric and securitisation theory are frameworks adopted from language studies, communication studies and international relations, respectively. The three have complemented one another in what they have contributed to this study.

CDS as a programme (school) of discourse studies is the overarching framework that has established the main foundation of this research. CDS has offered me the meaning and function of a phenomenon known as Discourse and its status in a mutual, interactive relationship with the social context. In other words, it has provided me with a critical attitude towards the relationship between discourse and society as well as the mechanisms of their interaction. This means that CDS analysis gives an understanding of the social world as it is discursively and socially constructed – though there is a range of different approaches and methods that can be applied for analysing such discursive construction (Wodak & Meyer, 2016a). In fact, the flexibility available in CDS regarding method and theory, and its emphasis on interdisciplinarity, mean that I have been able to seek out further theories that suited my particular data and topic of research.

Therefore, bearing in mind the particular features of my data (opinion discourse), I searched for a framework that could aid me to examine their various textual aspects (the argumentative, representational and dialogic features of the opinion discourse). Conducting a comprehensive review of the literature, I found classical rhetoric, with its focus on persuasion and argumentation (two inseparable features of any opinion discourse) and its theoretical compatibility with CDS (as one of the many origins of

CDS), to be an appropriate foundation for conducting the textual investigation of the discourse under study (this will be discussed in the Methodology chapter). Thereby, classical rhetoric contributed to the analytical stage of this study.

Again, inspired by the topic of the study (an international nuclear issue) and the particular genre on which I was working (newspaper commentary articles), I decided to draw on international relations and security studies so that I could explicate my textual findings from a political perspective. I was keen to find out which specific, immediate political goals were served by media debates on the Iran nuclear deal, apart from the general ideological function of producing and reinforcing relations of power (discrimination and dominance) through positive 'Self' and negative 'Other' representation. I believe that political discourse is principally constructed to achieve a practical purpose (encouraging an action). Therefore, in any study of political discourse, besides offering an explanation of findings in terms of how higher-order social structures are reflected in discourse or how discourse reproduces or resists them, the researcher should identify the immediate political function of that discourse. In other words, what needs to be primarily exposed is the function of that discourse in a larger political field. Thus, I employed a framework from international relations (securitisation theory) in order to illustrate clearly the abstract claims of CDS about discourse and society. Securitisation theory is especially useful because it provides this CDS research with a model for demonstrating how media discourse could create reality in the field of politics (of course, in conjunction with contextual facilitation and audience's acceptance). To put it another way, securitisation theory is keen to demonstrate the ways in which discourses of socio-political elites can construct security threats; it focuses on showing how discourse actively – rather than merely through conveying ideologies – endeavours to constitute society. Therefore, since securitisation theory can be complementary to CDS when it is employed to study political discourses, I decided to draw on it for explaining the findings of my CDS study.

3.1. Critical Discourse Studies

CDS as a school/programme of discourse analysis follows a social critical approach towards the analysis of discourse. Scholars of this school consider language to be a

social practice and, for them, the context of language use is central in analysing discourse (N. Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Regarding the emergence of CDS, Blommaert (2005) indicates that 'the intellectual history' of CDS is much broader and deeper than it usually seems. He believes that, in order to trace the origins of CDS, one should go back to developments in the study of language after the Second World War. As he rightly argues, these developments were responses to the Chomskyan programme of linguistics of the late 1950s. The absence of social and cultural dimensions in Chomsky's grammar led to certain reactions. The emergence of sociolinguistics in the early 1960s and then Hallidayan linguistics are two of these developments.

Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) that underlies CDS and its predecessor, Critical Linguistics (CL), (unlike Chomskyan grammar) focuses on the relationship between grammar and the social and personal needs that are realised through language (Halliday, 1970).

Founded on Halliday's grammar, the basic assumptions of critical linguistics, which are also evident in its later development (i.e. CDS), include: language is a social phenomenon; institutions, similar to individuals, have values systematically expressed in their language; texts are the relevant units of language in communication; and readers/hearers are not passive recipients in their relationships with texts (Kress, 1989). Critical linguists (Fowler, Hodge, Kress, & Trew, 1979; Kress & Hodge, 1979) stressed the ideological potential of some grammatical forms, like passive structures, transitivity and nominalisation. These linguists viewed language as a 'social practice' and emphasised the relationships between language, power and ideology. They examined 'public discourse' with the aim of identifying ideological implications beneath the propositions of such discourses (Fowler, 1996). By arguing that "all representation is mediated, moulded by the value-systems that are ingrained in the medium used for representation", critical linguists put forward a critical agenda for linguistic analysis (Fowler, 1996, p. 4).

Originating from critical linguistics, CDS also draws on SFL. Many researchers working within this school – including myself – adopt the linguistic categories of SFL grammar as the basis for their textual analysis. Wodak (2001b, p. 8), for example, emphasises

that understanding the core assumptions of SFL is the prerequisite to understanding CDS properly. SFL, with its social orientation, can give an appropriate account of how nuances of social life are realised through language. However, as Wodak rightly reminds us, while these grammatical forms (and other discursive tools like certain metaphors, argumentative fallacies, rhetorical devices and presuppositions) are useful at the textual level of CDS for describing “the object of research”, interpretation and explanation of the problem under investigation requires linking those descriptions with “socio-political and historical context” (Wodak, 2011, p. 42).

Overall, CDS was established on the grounds that linguistic analysis could offer a valuable further perspective for existing approaches to social critique by bringing all these developments together (Blommaert, 2005, p. 22). Thereby, CDS scholars focus mostly on institutional, political, gender and media discourses, which are the sites for relations of struggle and conflict (Wodak, 2001b, p. 2). Considering that CDS embraces several schools of thought and different research trends, Wodak (2001b, p. 4) believes that CDS scholars are united by their research agenda and domains of investigation rather than by having a common theory or methodology. The (re)production of discrimination and inequalities through discourse, and the ways in which discourses obscure such power relations, are the common interests among CDS researchers (N. Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Two features of CDS that make it different from other approaches to discourse analysis are being *problem-oriented* and *interdisciplinary*; these characteristics are evident in this research project as it investigates an enduring international problem and crosses the boundaries of the three disciplines of linguistics, communication studies and international relations. The other distinctive features of CDS are its view of discourse as *constitutive* of and *constituted* by society (Meyer, 2001, p. 30) and its active socio-political engagement.

Since discourse and critique constitute the building blocks of CDS, I have presented short overviews of them in the next two sections.

3.1.1. Social Constructivism and approaches to discourse analysis and media studies

Most of approaches to discourse analysis including CDS, Laclau and Mouffe (1985) Discourse Theory, and Discursive Psychology share a social constructivist starting

point. Social constructivism is an overarching term covering a number of theories about culture and society that hold a critical view towards positivist and universalistic epistemologies. The concept Social Construction was introduced to social sciences by two American sociologists, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966) in their book named *The Social Construction of Reality*. Two terms of *reality* and *knowledge* play the pivotal role in Berger and Luckmann's theory. The main argument of their theory of social constructivism is that "reality is socially constructed, and that the sociology of knowledge must analyse the process in which it occurs" (1966, p. 14). Larochelle and Bednarz (1998, p. 5) state, constructivism "breaks radically with foundations of empirico-realism, which claims to encode reality in terms of substances and phenomena which are independent of the observer involved. So doing, it challenges age-old beliefs which maintain that facts speak for themselves, that knowledge is the reflection of ontological reality, and that language objectively refers to this reality".

The key epistemological assumptions that form the basis of all social constructivist approaches including discourse analytical approaches (e.g. CDS and Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory) and many approaches to cultural and media studies are as follow:

- A critical approach to taken-for-granted knowledge: knowledge of the world is not objective. We know the world through discourse and discourse is not a direct reflection of reality. Our knowledge of reality is constructed and mediated (Burr, 1995).
- Cultural and historical specificity: we as humans are cultural and historical beings and our knowledge is also contextualised in a specific time and place and is the result of our interaction with other humans. Therefore, our understanding of ourselves and the world is contingent and can change over time (Burr, 1995).
- Link between knowledge and social processes: "knowledge is created through social interaction in which we construct common truths and compete about what is true and false" (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 5).
- Link between knowledge and social action: "within a particular worldview, some forms of action become natural, others unthinkable. Different social understandings of the world lead to different social actions, and therefore the

social construction of the knowledge and truth has social consequences” (Burr, 1995, p. 5).

In addition to the above principles, discourse analytical approaches like CDS and Laclau and Mouffe’s theory are similar in their view of language as the only medium through which we access the world and share the belief that human subjects are constructed in discourse (i.e. language is not just a tool used by human to express themselves; human subjects change in the process of using language). They also pursue a critical goal that is uncovering power relations in society. However, according to Jorgensen and Phillips (2002), they differ in two points; the extent to which discourse constructs the world and their analytical focus. While CDS considered discourse or discursive practice as one element of social practice that is in a dialectical relation with other social elements, Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory is founded on post-structuralist principle that does not differentiate between discursive and non-discursive dimensions of the social practice. In other words, the former views discourse as both constitutive of and constituted by the social world, but the latter believes that discourse is fully constitutive of the world. Therefore, if we consider a continuum, approaches and theories that view discourse as only a mechanical reflection of reality (positivist/realist theories of knowledge) are on the left side of the continuum; CDS is positioned in the middle; and Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory is towards the far-right end. The other difference between the two approaches to discourse analysis is their analytical interests. While CDS focuses on analysing everyday uses of language and their consequences for changing the world, discourse theory is interested in “more abstract mapping of discourses that circulate in society at a particular point in time or within specific social domain” (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 20).

When it comes to constructivist media studies, the focus is specifically on the role of media in social construction of reality. According to Adoni and Mane (1984), there are three types of social reality: objective reality experienced as the outside objective world; symbolic reality that is the symbolic expression of the objective reality in art, literature, and media content; and subjective reality “where both the objective and the symbolic realities serve as an input for the construction of the individual’s own subjective reality” (Adoni & Mane, 1984, p. 328). Two popular trends in

communication and media studies have been investigating the portrayal of objective social reality by media that is the relationship between symbolic and objective realities (Hall, 1977; McQuail, 1983) and the influence of media on individuals' perception of objective social reality or the relationship between symbolic and subjective realities (Hawkins & Pingree, 1980). According to Adoni and Mane (1984), the extent to which media content as the symbolic reality can influence portrayal of objective reality or shape individuals' subjective reality is a function of distance of social elements from direct experience. Consistent with media dependency theory, they argue that the more distant a social element or event is from the public's experience, the more media-dependent the public are for their knowledge of those elements, and the more the influence of media on public is.

In addition to the above approaches that only focus on the interaction between two realities, there are also some holistic constructivist approaches to media and cultural studies that examine the three types of reality together that is the interaction among the social system, media, and individuals' perception and acceptance of the social reality in which they live. Critical studies by Neo-Marxist scholars like members of Frankfurt School and CDS scholars are mainly among this group (Althusser, 1971; N. Fairclough, 1995; Hall, 1977; Horkheimer & Adorno, 1972). In their critiques of the capitalist 'cultural industry', they believe that the purpose of cultural products including media products is to "perpetuate the existing social order and to provide the ideological basis for its legitimation" (Adoni & Mane, 1984, p. 332).

3.1.2. Discourse in CDS

Prominent CDS scholars, namely Fairclough, van Dijk, Reisigl and Wodak, see discourse similarly as *semiosis*. Discourse, in their views, is defined as: a "multidimensional social phenomenon" (van Dijk, 2009, p. 67); "meaning-making as an element of social processes" (N. Fairclough, 2009, p. 162); or "a cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices that are situated within specific fields of social action" (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p. 89). Their definitions of discourse embrace several features such as:

- discourse is any form of meaning-making or communication (semiotic practice), not just language communication;

- discourse is embedded in its context (both its immediate context of situation and the macro-social-historical context) and its reality cannot be grasped without taking its context of occurrence into account;
- discourse is a goal-oriented social activity serving higher-order social structures.

They see discourse as socially constituted and socially constitutive, related to a macro-topic and linked to argumentation involving several social actors who have different points of view.

Nevertheless, these scholars still believe that discourse is a term that is contested too much to be defined precisely. This contestation arises from the multifunctional nature of the term 'discourse'. This means that discourse can refer to different objects, phenomena or processes concurrently. It ranges from a unit of language above the level of a sentence to a social practice, and from an oral or a written form of language use to signs and music. As indicated by Wodak and Meyer (2009), this diversity or confusion regarding the term 'discourse' can be linked partly to three traditions: the German tradition of associating discourse with text linguistics; the American tradition of viewing discourse as both written and oral text; and the Foucauldian tradition that sees discourse as a form of knowledge. In fact, in discourse studies, there is a continuum ranging from more-concrete views of discourse to more-abstract understandings of it or from seeing discourse as a linguistic object (in pragmatics and conversation analysis) to considering it as the whole social reality (post-structuralist discourse analysis). In this regard, van Dijk (2009, p. 67) maintains that discourse is simultaneously "a linguistic (verbal, grammatical) object (meaningful sequences or words or sentences), an action (such as an assertion or a threat), a form of social interaction (like a conversation), a social practice (such as a lecture), mental representation (a meaning, a mental model, an opinion, knowledge), an interactional or communicative event or activity (a parliamentary debate), a cultural product (telenovela), or even an economic commodity that is being sold and bought (novel)".

In my opinion, all these understandings of discourse are valid in CDS as, at any stage of a piece of CDS research, researchers may focus on a different meaning of discourse (e.g. discourse as the linguistic object for the analysis; the social practices operating

under the influence of specific forms of knowledge; or the thought-systems or world views). At the textual level of analysis in this research project, discourse is considered to be the written texts of opinion articles and editorials that – as discursive practices – represent a social practice (an outside reality). At the contextual level, on the other hand, these discourses are themselves viewed as social practices/actions serving higher-order social processes. At both these levels, discourse is seen as manifesting ideologies and power relations as well. In addition, the term discourse is used in this study in conjunction with other nouns or adjectives to refer to a particular way of perceiving the world from a specific perspective (e.g. pro-deal discourse) or a particular way of using language in a specific field (e.g. political discourse). Overall, as mentioned in Chapter One, according to Weiss and Wodak (2003) and Fairclough (2003; 2009), level of *abstractness*, *topic*, and *perspective* are three factors that determine the meaning of discourse as it is used in different parts of this study.

3.1.3. Critique in CDS

The concept of critique comes mainly from Critical Theory of Frankfurt School and its emphasis on changing society for the better rather than merely describing or understanding it (as is the case with traditional theory). Critical theory, founded on Marxist views, pursues an *emancipatory mission* of raising awareness in society regarding hidden aspects of power and ideology. Critical theorists argue that ideology is the main ‘obstacle’ in the way of emancipation (Geuss, 1981). Critical discourse studies, as its name suggests, follows a similar critical view towards society.⁵ Wodak and Fairclough’s approaches to CDS draw specifically on the critical theory of the Frankfurt School. CDS, in a similar way to that of other critically founded schools in social sciences, believes in the emancipatory goal of uncovering ideologies that serve discrimination and unequal power relations in society. This critical attitude, as described by van Dijk (1986), is the most distinguishing feature of CDS:

Beyond description or superficial application, critical science in each domain asks further questions, such as those of responsibility, interests, and ideology. Instead of focusing on purely academic or theoretical problems, it starts from prevailing social problems, and thereby chooses the perspective of those who suffer most, and critically analyses those in power, those who are responsible,

⁵ It is important to note that ‘critical’ in CDS is taken to mean ‘to critique’ not necessarily ‘to criticise’.

and those who have the means and the opportunity to solve such problems.
(p. 4)

Assuming a critical stand, CDS goes beyond the linguistic analysis of the text (e.g. semantic, syntactic and phonetic) and views the text in its broader social, political, economic, religious, cultural and cognitive contexts (this feature of CDS makes it appropriate to be used in conjunction with political theories such as securitisation theory). Moreover, the text is studied against the backdrop of other texts and discourses and is situated within the social practices that constitute and are constituted by this text (Alawadh, 2014, p. 38). By uncovering the relationship between social structures (in the form of power relationships, the ideology effect, identity formation, etc.) and discourse, CDS practitioners display the critical character of their approach (Blommaert, 2005; N. Fairclough, 2001b; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). The two concepts of power and ideology are central to this critical stand of CDS. As Wodak and Meyer (2009) point out, the aim of *critique* is “exposing structures of power and unmasking ideologies” (p. 8). CDS is concerned with power as “a fundamental condition of social life and attempts to establish a theory of language with power as its premise” (p. 10). However, it does not imply that issues for investigation in CDS have to be exceptionally serious or negative social or political topics. In fact, any social phenomena can be studied in CDS in order to be challenged and not taken for granted (Wodak & Meyer, 2016b).

Most scholars working within the school of CDS are socially and politically committed to taking the side of those who are suffering and whose rights have been violated within their societies. They share a goal of helping in “empowering the powerless, giving voice to the voiceless, exposing power abuse, and mobilizing people against social wrong” (Blommaert, 2005, p. 25). As argued by van Dijk (2001b, p. 96), CDS practitioners are proud of this shared goal (*bias* as he calls it) as CDS is discourse analysis “with an attitude”. By analysing the language of those in power, CDS demystifies the ways in which language is exploited in its service of power, and the way those relations of power and dominance can take the form of *hegemony* through discourse. Critique, according to N. Fairclough (1985), is making visible the interconnections and cause–effect relationships of human matters, which may not be

transparent to the public view. Wodak (2001b, p. 2) also indicates that critical analysis is the examination of the ways in which social inequality (discrimination, power, dominance and control) is expressed, constituted and legitimised in discourse. According to Wodak (2001b, p. 3), CDS is inspired by three important insights: discourse is structured by dominance; discourse is situated in time and place (historically positioned); and dominant structures are legitimised by ideologies of elites. Inspired by the mentioned insights, CDS explicates how unequal power relations are manifested in social conventions as stable and natural (taken as given) through concealing the effects of power and ideology in meaning-production and how resistance against these conventions is regarded as a violation or breach of norms and laws. Finally, Reisigl and Wodak (2009, p. 87) suggest four qualities as constitutive of the critical stance of CDS. These qualities are context-embeddedness of data, clarification of discourse participants' political positions, continuous self-reflection of the researcher and application of results for practical purposes. I specifically applied these features in my study by: examining the newspaper articles in their immediate as well as their macro-contexts (newspaper organisations and American/international contexts); investigating authors' and readers' political and ideological partisanship; introducing myself and acknowledging my own opinion regarding the topic under study.

3.1.4. Methodological principles of CDS

The methodological roots of CDS lie in several language-oriented fields, such as classical rhetoric, text linguistics, sociolinguistics, argumentation theory, pragmatics, literary criticism, etc. (Wodak, 2001b; Wodak & Meyer, 2015). Methodological approaches adopted by CDS researchers are as diverse as are the fields mentioned above. The reason for this diversity, as emphasised by the scholars working within the field, is that CDS is not a method for undertaking discourse analysis but, as Wodak and Meyer (2015, p. 37) describes it, it is "a shared interest in social processes of power, hierarchy building, identity politics..., inclusion/exclusion and subordination" as reflected in discourse.

van Dijk (2013) also stresses that CDS is not a method for conducting discourse analysis. He continues that being critical is a quality or "state of mind", an "attitude"

or “a way of dissenting” not a method for exploring “structures and strategies of text and talk”. He even maintains that CDS is a “social or political movement”. As van Dijk indicates, CDS can be carried out through grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, interactional, rhetoric, narrative or genre analysis, as well as through ethnography, interview, focus group or participant observation. Thereby, the choice of method in CDS should be based on research questions. In making a decision regarding which methodological tools to apply in a study, the researcher should take the *aims, time, types of data* and, generally, *context* of the research into account (van Dijk, 2013).

Another methodological consideration in CDS is *operationalisation*: that is, how different approaches convert their theoretical concepts into methods and tools of analysis, and, particularly, how grand theories which are concerned with social macro-structures are linked to concrete social interaction as text (Wodak, 2016). Wodak and Meyer (2009) state that it is at this operationalisation phase that the linguistic character of CDS becomes transparent since CDS, in contrast to some other discourse studies, relies mostly on linguistic categories, such as actors, mode, time, tense and argumentation.

As explained in N. Fairclough, Mulderrig, and Wodak (2011), CDS entails a specific view of methodology. Methodology, in their opinion, “is the process during which, informed through theory, this topic is further refined so as to construct the object of research. The choice of appropriate methods (data collection and mode of analysis) depends on what one is investigating” (p. 358). Wodak (2016) also indicates that the relationship between theory and discourse analysis in CDS is *cyclic*. According to this view, conducting a critical discourse study is a circular process. Theory and method in these studies influence each other. On the one hand, theory guides the process of formulating research questions that, in turn, influence data selection and analysis; on the other hand, interpretations based on discourse analysis may lead to modification of theory. Therefore, CDS methodology can be seen as “recursive–abductive” (similar to hermeneutics) rather than “analytical–deductive” (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 28; 2016a, p. 14). However, Wodak (2016) states that, though diversity is a distinctive feature of CDS methodology, there exists a number of stable features, such as being

interdisciplinary and eclectic, being problem-oriented and requiring linguistic expertise.

From my point of view, this diversity in the theory as well as in the methodology of CDS provides a great opportunity for conducting research since the flexibility resulting from diversity makes CDS a suitable overarching framework for conducting critical studies in a variety of fields. However, there is a danger of losing sight of the issue or of moving too far from the original tenets, especially in the case of novice researchers. It happens, in particular, when studies that are labelled as CDS take neither the textual linguistic aspects of a discourse nor its social, political or cultural context into account. These studies usually make strong claims about the biased character of media or other discourses on the basis of insufficient evidence and without reflecting on their own potential biases. This is where most of the critiques of CDS are levelled. In the following section, I refer to some of these criticisms.

3.1.5. Criticisms of CDS

Since its foundation in the 1990s, critical discourse analysis (now called critical discourse studies) has come under criticism from various perspectives. Critics have frequently pointed to the theoretical eclecticism and methodological shortcomings of CDS (Tenorio, 2011). At the level of theory, CDS is criticised for adopting a variety of linguistic and social theories without scrutinising their compatibility. Critics believe that, by borrowing ideas from a variety of scholars, such as Marx, Gramsci and Habermas, as well as Bakhtin, Foucault, Bourdieu and Halliday, CDS scholars run the risk of mixing contradictory theoretical principles. Breeze (2011, p. 501) warns that “this could lead to a situation in which the arguments from philosophy, politics and sociology are not fully worked out in terms that would be satisfactory to specialists in these disciplines, nor are the bases for language analysis firmly established in a way that is recognised by linguists”.

The methodological shortcomings of CDS that are indicated by its critics concern stages of data collection and interpretation. In the case of the former, critics such as (Widdowson, 1995) claim that data collection procedures in CDS suffer from randomness and bias. Nevertheless, as rightly argued by Breeze (2011), such problems were more evident in the earlier works of CDS practitioners. Recent studies working

on larger collections of texts, especially those drawing on corpus tools, are not affected by this criticism.

Regarding CDS' flaws at the level of textual analysis, other critics such as Toolan (1997), Stubbs (1997) and Verschueren (2001) also argue that textual analysis in CDS, which is the basis for interpretation and discussion, is too narrow as CDS researchers usually focus on only one dimension of texts (e.g. experiential, relational or expressive) or on a few linguistic devices (e.g. passives or nominalisation). They contend that textual analysis in CDS needs to be more detailed and systematic in order to provide a solid ground for *interpretation* and *explanation* (stages two and three in Fairclough's approach to CDS).

The other criticism levelled at CDS concerns the relationship between discourse and context or CDS' claim of "offering an interpretation of the social world" Breeze (2011, p. 512). In this regard, CDS is accused of assuming a particular relationship between society and discourse prior to analysing the data. In other words, working top-down, CDS adopts a specific view of social relations (e.g. discrimination, power abuse, etc.) and then searches for linguistic manifestations of those relations in the data. Blommaert (2001), for example, argues that many CDS scholars embark on their studies with some presuppositions like 'media have ideological biases' or 'politicians manipulate the public'. Such fixed attitudes lead to over-simplification of the issues and ignorance of the immediate contextual factors. Other criticisms of CDS indicated by Blommaert (2001) include its focus on negative discourse, its lack of attention to social action for change, its reliance on available data, its being Eurocentric and its not being reflexive enough.

Finally, another criticism raised mostly by Billig (2003) is the danger of an 'intellectual orthodoxy'. Billig warns about CDS becoming a dominant discourse itself. Given that CDS accuses other approaches to discourse analysis as 'non-critical', he asserts, being critical can turn into a 'self-admiration' term, and there is a possibility of CDS becoming the target of what it now criticises.

Considering such comments and criticisms (as well as responses to them from CDS scholars), I attempted to avoid all the points raised by the critics in structuring this

thesis. Being vigilant to circumvent problems associated with theoretical eclecticism, I made sure that the three frameworks on which I drew at different stages of the study were fundamentally compatible. CDS, classical rhetoric and securitisation theory on which this research is grounded, are in harmony in terms of their constructivist view of *language* (referred to as *discourse* or *rhetoric* in these frameworks). They all share the constructivist view that discourse/rhetoric can shape our perceptions of reality. Regarding the methodological aspects, by conducting a detailed and thorough textual analysis that covered all three textual dimensions of the texts and by providing background information about myself as the researcher (self-reflection), I aimed to overcome typical accusations of CDS research as biased, simplistic and overgeneralised. In addition, by combining bottom-up and top-down approaches, I attempted to examine discourse in both its micro (immediate) and macro-contexts so that I could avoid ignoring the impacts of immediate contexts of situations (characteristics of authors, newspaper organisation, readers, etc.) in favour of a broader macro-contextual interpretation of the relationship between discourse and society (global power relations, ideology, national identity, etc.).

As was shown through the whole section on CDS, it is concerned mainly with answering broad questions, such as: what specific representation of reality a specific discourse offers; how this representation fits in to the network of power relations in a society or at the global level; and whose interests it serves. In order to answer these questions, it is essential to operationalise CDS theoretical principles. Again, as cited above, CDS scholars believe that operationalisation of CDS concepts and tenets should be grounded on the aims of research as well as on the types of data. Accordingly, this research required a framework that could enable me to scrutinise different dimensions of the discourse under study (opinion discourse). Reviewing the literature, I found classical rhetoric suitable for the purpose of this research. Classical rhetoric helps to find out how an opinion discourse as a persuasive-argumentative rhetoric constructs a specific picture of the world and makes it appealing to its audience. In other words, it allows a number of *how* questions regarding the mechanisms of discursive work to be answered.

3.2. Classical Rhetoric

The origins of rhetoric date back to ancient Greece where philosophers like Aristotle were interested in analysing persuasive discourses and explaining the strategies used by orators to make their discourses cogent and effective. They dealt with the issue of good and bad rhetoric and attempted to identify what features differentiate the former from the latter. Therefore, it can be said that rhetorical analysis as a discursive act intends to create “arguments about arguments” (Leach, 2000, p. 218). It is an effort to understand the whole of a message and the way the message has been constructed for the purpose of persuasion (Bazerman & Prior, 2003, p. 282). This characteristic makes classical rhetoric an appropriate analytical framework for conducting CDS, especially in the field of politics and media since political elites usually need to offer persuasive representations of particular actions through media, in order to gain approval for their decisions (legitimation) and to convince people to support them (mobilisation). In other words, persuasive representation is a prerequisite for encouraging political actions. This way, classical rhetoric can contribute to the present CDS research by providing it with the principles and mechanisms of persuasive representation. In particular, with the help of Aristotle’s ideas in classical rhetoric, I can examine the textual structures of the opinion articles.

3.2.1. Aristotle’s system of rhetoric

Aristotle, in his Book 1 *On Rhetoric*, defines rhetoric as “the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion” and introduces it as an off-shoot of *Dialectics*. Dialectics is concerned with the use of formal logic (syllogism) in philosophy, and rhetoric deals with the application of informal logic (enthymeme) in political, forensic and ceremonial discourse. Aristotle maintains that neither dialectics nor rhetoric is a scientific study of any subject matter but that they are universal “faculties of providing arguments”. He also emphasises that the function of rhetoric is not to guarantee that a rhetor succeed in persuading others but to help him/her discover those means that can aid, as much as circumstances allow, such success. Therefore, in a similar way to dialectics, which recognises the *real* and *apparent* syllogism, rhetoric aims to find out *real* and *apparent* means of persuasion. In spite of many classical and modern philosophers who have had negative views towards

rhetoric, Aristotle believed that rhetoric was useful and even necessary in society. His system of rhetoric includes several divisions, such as genres of rhetoric (deliberative, forensic and epideictic), means of persuasion (*logos*, *pathos* and *ethos*) and rhetorical topics/topoi that is discussed below.

Means of persuasion

According to classical rhetoric, giving a speech requires finding or creating possible means of persuasion for the issue at hand. These means of persuasion are either concrete evidence that already exists (e.g. witnesses/contracts that the speaker uses in his/her speech), or technical means that belong to the art of rhetoric and need to be constructed by the speaker (Kennedy, 1994). The latter type is called artistic means and includes the three categories of *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos* that are, respectively, logical arguments, credibility of the speaker's character as established in the speech, and framing the audiences' minds by stirring their emotions. As Corbett (1963, p. 162) states, these three artistic means are equally effective in the process of persuasion since "... the speaker intent upon persuading an audience had to be concerned not only about the logical proofs but also about affecting the appropriate emotional response in the audience and about inducing the audience's confidence in his good sense, good will, and virtue". These three rhetorical features are particularly worthwhile for the study of media opinion discourse as media commentary articles simultaneously put forward rational arguments, express emotional attitudes and make moral judgments. Accordingly, I believe that any opinion discourse has these three: argumentative, dialogic and representational structures. These are linked, respectively, to the concepts of *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos* and can be examined from these structural points of view. The argumentative dimension of an opinion discourse shows how *logos* or plausible arguments are used and organised in order to prove a claim. Its dialogic dimension demonstrates the ways in which authors display their *ethos*, including their relationships with readers and other opinion holders. Its representational dimension shows how different emotions can be triggered by different representations of an issue.

These three means of persuasion can be expressed in text/talk in a variety of ways because not only do different people apply different rhetorical strategies for achieving

the same goal (persuasion), they also employ different language tools to realise their rhetorical strategies. Therefore, a comprehensive set of rhetorical strategies or language tools that covers all persuasive aspects of a discourse completely does not exist. Nevertheless, Aristotle, as well as other scholars in the field of classical rhetoric, has suggested some guidelines for identifying *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos*. Drawing on such guiding principles, I employed a specific model of analysis for exploring each of three structures: van Leeuwen's (2008) socio-semantic inventory of social representation, Hyland's (2005) classification of meta-discourse markers and Walton's (1996) list of argumentation schemes.

3.2.2. Representational structure: Exploring *pathos*

Pathos, as stated above, is a means of persuasion that helps speakers or writers to make their claims convincing to their audience through emotional triggers. In modern argumentation theory, *pathos* is sometimes referred to as *appeal to emotions* and is usually considered to be a fallacy (invalid reasoning or argument). However, some scholars, like Walton (2007), believe that an appeal to emotions is not automatically fallacious and, like any other argument, needs to be examined in order to prove its validity. Although an argument that relies entirely on appeal to the emotions can be a weak argument, using this appeal as a support for logical arguments is both valid and intelligent. *Pathos* is, nevertheless, more comprehensive than what is called *argument from appeal to emotions* in informal logic. Aristotle defines *pathos* as "feelings that influence human judgments or decision-making and which are accompanied by pleasure or pain" (Brinton, 1988, p. 208). He devotes several chapters of his Book II on *Rhetoric* to different emotional pairs, including *anger/calmness*, *friendliness/enmity*, *fear/confidence*, *pity/indignation*, *shame/shamelessness*, *envy/emulation* and *kindness/unkindness*. Overall, *pathos* includes any method of stimulating or arousing emotions with the aim of persuasion, whether it refers to the supportive role of emotions for logical arguments or to the use of emotions themselves as argumentation schemes (e.g. an argument from appeal to fear). The former is studied as a part of representation in chapter five while the latter is discussed in chapter seven (argumentation). According to Aristotle, arousing an emotion depends on three factors: the state of mind of the person to be affected, the person or object towards

whom the emotion is to be felt and the sort of circumstances that give rise to it. In other words, characteristics of the audience, the object/person and the context are important in the success of an emotionalising move.

As explained previously, CDS deals with the discursive representation of social actors, events and situations. In politics, this discursive construction/representation pursues the purpose of promoting a particular political idea or action at the micro-level and a particular ideology or power relation at the higher level. This persuasion is achieved through influencing people's attitudes and affecting people's attitudes, in turn, is accomplished through rational argumentation as well as by the provocation of emotions. As mentioned by CDS scholars like van Dijk (2000), emotionally loaded rhetorical strategies like *victimisation*, *humanitarianism*, *empathy*, *dramatisation*, *metaphor* and *hyperbole* are the key means in constructing representations that serve ideological purposes. In addition, representation of an 'outgroup' through negatively charged labels or attribution of negative actions to 'Them' can arouse, in readers, negative feelings of fear, hatred or anger towards the outgroup. Reinke de Buitrago (2016), as referred to in section 2.2.2., also points to the process of emotionalisation through representation in discourse. She maintains that politicians and decision-makers emotionalise the representation of 'Self' and 'Other' in order to legitimise their policies. In my opinion, all discursive tools of representation (both rhetorical and linguistic) from more explicit ones like dehumanising metaphors or negative labelling of 'Other' to more implicit ones like hiding agency through passivation/nominalisation leave some emotional impression on addressees. In other words, influencing people's attitudes through representation, as opposed to argumentation, has an essential emotional component.

Based on this understanding, the concept of *representation* in CDS can be associated with the concept of *pathos* in rhetoric. This association includes examination of what feelings are provoked by such representations, how such feelings contribute to the argumentative point (claim) of the discourse, and which linguistic means or rhetorical strategies are employed to trigger those feelings. This means that the role of *pathos* in persuasive texts like opinion discourse can be studied by investigating the representational structure of that discourse. Such investigation helps realise how representation of social actors, events or phenomena in the discourse encourage

readers to accept authors' arguments in favour of or against an idea, an action or a group through arousing specific feelings in them. To study the mechanisms of representation in discourse, I drew on van Leeuwen's (2008) socio-semantic inventory of social actors and actions (linguistic means of representation) as well as rhetorical devices, particularly metaphor, repetition and hyperbole (rhetorical means of representation).

Van Leeuwen's socio-semantic network of social representation

Van Leeuwen's (2008) describes discourse as the 'recontextualisation of social practice'. He asserts that social practices are transformed in the process of recontextualisation in discourse. This transformation includes *substitution* of elements of social practice with semiotic elements, *deletion* of some elements of social practice, *rearrangement* of social practice (scattering elements or changing their order) and *addition* to the elements of social practice. He allocates two chapters of his book *Discourse and practice* to the study of how actor (participant) and action – two elements of social practice – are recontextualised in discourse. Regarding the former (social actor), van Leeuwen's goal in his work is to link different categories of social agency to their linguistic realisations but he correctly indicates that there is no clear link between sociological and linguistic categories because "sociological agency is not always realized by linguistic agency" (p. 23). Therefore, by focusing solely on a number of obvious linguistic categories of agency (e.g. grammatical subject/object, passive voice, etc.) for identifying social agents in discourse, we risk losing "many relevant instances of agency" (p. 24). As for the latter (social action), he abides by the same principle by starting from social categories of action rather than from linguistic categories. He presents "a descriptive framework for critically analyzing modes of representing social action, using critical, socio-semantic categories such as 'objectivation,' 'naturalization,' etc., but relating them to the specific grammatical and rhetorical realizations which can help to identify them in the text" (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 56). Because of its emphasis on the importance of social categories in linguistic analysis, I found this inventory compatible with the social orientation of this

research and thereby suitable for the investigation of the representational dimension of my corpus.

Representation of social actors

Van Leeuwen's (2008) inventory for representation of *social actors* begins with the Exclusion/Inclusion dichotomy. The first point to consider when examining how a social practice has been recontextualised in a discourse is to identify the present participants as well as the absent ones. According to this model, the exclusion of an actor from a discourse can be done in two ways: *suppression* (radical exclusion) or *backgrounding* (exclusion from certain activities/de-emphasising). Exclusion can be realised through linguistic categories such as passive agent deletions, non-finite clauses (-ing or -ed participles), nominalisation, adjectives, infinitive clauses with *to*, etc. If the exclusion of an actor is in the form of backgrounding, it is excluded from a specific proposition but it can be traced elsewhere in the text.

The other part of the process of scrutinising actor representation is considering the ways in which social actors have been referred to in the discourse (similar to what Wodak, 2016, calls *referential* strategies). van Leeuwen (2008) discusses different strategies for naming social actors, starting with the two broad categories of *personalisation/impersonalisation*. Then, each of these two categories is further divided into subcategories, like *genericisation/specification* (generic versus specific/concrete), *assimilation/individualisation* (assimilation can take two forms: aggregation and collectivisation), *association/dissociation* (groups formed or unformed by social actors), etc.

The next step is the investigation of the roles given to the social actors. Two major categories for role-allocation are *activation* (the dynamic force in an activity) and *passivation* (undergoing/receiving an activity). Activation is realised through *participation* (grammatical agent or patient), *circumstantialisation* (prepositional circumstantials like *by* or *from*) or *possessivation* (pre or post-modification of nominalisations like *our intake* or *my teacher*). Contrary to activation through participation, the other two categories reduce the actors' degree of activeness (backgrounding the agency). Passivation, on the other hand, can be of two types:

subjected (passivation through *participation* as the patient or goal in a clause, *possessivation* by the preposition *of* and *adjectival premodification* like *racial tolerance*) or *beneficialised* (passivation through *participation* as the recipient of an action).

Representation of social actions

Regarding the representation of *social actions* in discourse, van Leeuwen (2008) distinguishes two broad categories: *actions* and *reactions*. According to this distinction, social actors can be involved in actions as well as reactions. In line with Halliday's transitivity system (1985), van Leeuwen differentiates between two types of social action – *material* (doing) and *semiotic* (meaning) – as well as three types of reaction: *cognitive*, *perceptive* and *affective*. These three main categories are represented in transitivity grammar as material (and behavioural), verbal and mental processes. In a hierarchy of extremely active to extremely passive, material actions stand highest; then comes behavioural action. Semiotic actions (verbal processes) are at the intermediate level and reactions (mental processes) comprise the least active category. Again, among the three types of mental process, affective reaction conveys the weakest form of social agency and cognitive reaction conveys the strongest. van Leeuwen (2008) distinguishes further between agentialisation/de-agentialisation and activation/deactivation of actions or reactions. Deactivation is in the form of either objectivation or descriptivisation.

These linguistic categories, through which social practices comprising agencies (actors) and actions are represented in discourse, can affect readers' emotions towards social actors in addition to shaping those readers' perceptions of the social practice. The reason for this is that these categories are forms that convey propositional content. Thus, depending on whether evil or good content is conveyed by them (types of action or label distributed among social actors), they can represent social actors positively or negatively and, consequently, trigger negative or positive emotions in readers.

Nevertheless, compared to rhetorical devices like metaphors, these linguistic tools cause only *implicit* emotional impacts on readers. In other words, rhetorical devices

are more powerful in provoking emotions. Deep metaphors (metaphorical scenarios as they are called in this study), for example, are analogies that may not be overtly stated in discourse but frame or guide the whole discourse (Gozzi, 2001). Such metaphors function together as a scheme that frames discourse and, consequently, the distribution of actions and agencies in discourse becomes congruent with such metaphors. For instance, 'Argument is war', when employed in some articles as a deep metaphor, not only could make readers perceive nuclear negotiations in terms of concepts related to war, but could also affect their feelings regarding negotiators. That is, by associating the two concepts of war and argument (negotiation), authors activated unconscious emotions related to those concepts. This means that different authors, depending on whether their purpose of using this metaphor was to support the nuclear deal or to oppose it, triggered either positive or negative emotions associated with victory or failure in people (e.g. fear, anger, pride, bravery, timidity, shame, etc.).

As explained earlier in section 3.2.1., the other dimension of any opinion discourse is its dialogic structure that encompasses interactional features such as the reader–writer relationship or a writer's stance-taking strategies. The next section discusses this textual dimension.

3.2.3. Dialogical structure: Exploring *ethos*

The concept of dialogue or dialogism was employed for the first time in literary theory and philosophy by Mikhail Bakhtin. Bakhtin introduced the term *polyphony* (multiple voices) in his essay on 'problems of Dostoevsky's poetics'. In this work, he made a distinction between dialogism and monologism. In dialogism, the multiplicity of voices is accepted and all voices are given the right to express themselves. From the dialogic perspective, truth is born in the interaction between different voices and opinions (Bakhtin, 1981). However, monologism "closes down the world it represents, by pretending to be the ultimate word" (A. Robinson, 2011, Para 11).

Bakhtin views all utterances as existing "... against a backdrop of other concrete utterances on the same theme, a background made up of contradictory opinions, points of view and value judgements... pregnant with responses and objections" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 281). In other words, no matter whether an utterance is polyphonic

or monologic, it is ultimately dialogic as it is always attached to past and future utterances. Whatever we say or write is in a two-way relationship with the past and the future. On the one hand, it draws on, responds to, supports or rejects what has been said or written in the past and, on the other hand, it anticipates future reactions to itself and appropriates itself to its assumed readers or hearers.

The concept of dialogue is closely related to the concept of *ethos* in classical rhetoric (they both refer to the same phenomenon but with different purposes; in rhetoric, dialogue is studied from the perspective of persuasion). As emphasised before, an orator's character, as it is expressed in his/her rhetoric, is a crucial factor in influencing how the public responds to his/her discourse. Dialogue and *ethos* both refer to the relationship established in the text or talk between speakers/writers and their audiences, on the one hand, and between speakers/writers and the opinions of other people, on the other hand. In other words, study of *ethos* means investigation of dialogue in the rhetoric, dialogue with the audience and dialogue with previous opinions. It is through these dialogues that speakers/writers display their characters, including *wisdom*, *moral values* and *sympathy* with the audience. According to Braet (1992), to gain public approval, the speaker needs to display three features of "good will, virtue, and good sense" (p. 311). As Cherry (1998) explains:

- *good sense* means the rhetor's practical wisdom or the ability to find the best means to achieve an end;
- *virtue* displays the rhetor's moral character or goodness; and
- *good will* is the rhetor's concern for and sympathy with the audience.

All these three features are dialogic in the sense that, through them, speakers/writers negotiate the credibility of their characters in relation to the topic of discussion, audience and moral beliefs/values.

As discussed above, dialogicality is an intrinsic character or "natural orientation" of any language in use or "living discourse" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 279). Discussion of *ethos* or dialogue becomes more crucial when it comes to opinion discourse (political debates, speeches, commentary articles, etc.). Newspapers' commentary articles, as one type of opinion discourse, aim at gaining support for a particular point of view. In

addition to presenting logical arguments and triggering emotions, achieving this goal requires the writer to engage, on the one hand, with past opinions – to draw on them or refute them – and, on the other hand, with future opinions that are readers' or hearers' possible reactions. As a result, these discourses are bound/connected in two directions with what comes before them and what follows them. As asserted by (Bakhtin, 1981), traces of this interconnectedness can be found in all utterances. Since investigation of the engagement with past and future texts as expressed in a discourse seemed imperative, I applied Hyland's (2005) model that studies the concept of dialogue through meta-discourse markers. Though it was originally established in the field of academic discourse, meta-discourse analysis has been widely adopted for addressing dialogue in media and political discourses (Alavi-Nia & Jalilifar, 2013; Jalilifar & Alavi-Nia, 2012; Kuhl & Mojtahed, 2014; Le, 2004; Rabab'ah & Abu Rumman, 2015).

Hyland's meta-discourse markers and dialogue

Meta-discourse is a concept introduced by Crismore, Markkanen, and Steffensen (1993) and later employed by Hyland (2004; 2005, 2010) to refer to "the linguistic material in texts, whether spoken or written, that does not add anything to the propositional content but that is intended to help the listener or reader organize, interpret, and evaluate the information given" (Crismore et al., 1993, p. 40). In addition to guiding readers in their journey through the text, as Crismore asserts, meta-discourse markers convey writers' attitudes and feelings towards the propositional content and organise the writer–reader relationship (the same is true about oral texts). Hyland (2004; 2005, 2010) categorises meta-discourse markers into two classes: *interactive* and *interactional* devices. The interactive devices refer to "ways of organising discourse to anticipate readers' knowledge and reflect the writer's assessment of what needs to be made explicit to constrain and guide what can be recovered from the text". The interactional resources, on the other hand, show "the writer's efforts to control the level of personality in a text and establish a suitable relationship to his/her data, arguments and audience, marking the degree of intimacy, the expression of attitude, the communication of commitments, and the extent of reader involvement" (K. Hyland, 2010, p. 128). These two categories of meta-

discourse are realised in texts through various linguistic devices, such as evidentials, transition markers, directives, modals, personal pronouns, etc.

It is the second category of meta-discourse markers (interactional ones) that is more suitable for the study of dialogue in discourse. As K. Hyland (2005), by referring to Bakhtin, argues, interactional resources “have a dialogic purpose in that they refer to, anticipate, or otherwise take up the actual or anticipated voices and positions of potential readers” (p. 176). Interaction, according to K. Hyland (2005), has an evaluative character and concerns the writer’s position towards his/her readers, the issue being discussed and the people holding views about the issue. He maintains that interactional meta-discourse markers express either *stance* or *engagement*. Stance markers display the writer’s personality by showing the ways in which s/he presents his/her opinions and judgments or, as Martin and White (2005) state in their appraisal theory, the ways the writer *expands* or *contracts* the dialogical space. Engagement, on the other hand, is “where writers acknowledge and connect to others, recognizing the presence of their readers, pulling them along with their argument, focusing their attention, acknowledging their uncertainties, including them as discourse participants, and guiding them to interpretations” (K. Hyland, 2005, p. 176). The writer’s stance is expressed through four linguistic categories: *hedges*, *boosters*, *attitude markers* and *self-mention*. These language devices help the writer take a position towards other opinions as well as opinion holders and display his/her authorial voice. The writer’s engagement with readers, on the other hand, is demonstrated by the use of *reader pronouns*, *directives*, *questions*, *appeals to shared knowledge* and *personal asides* and as is shown in Figure 3.1.

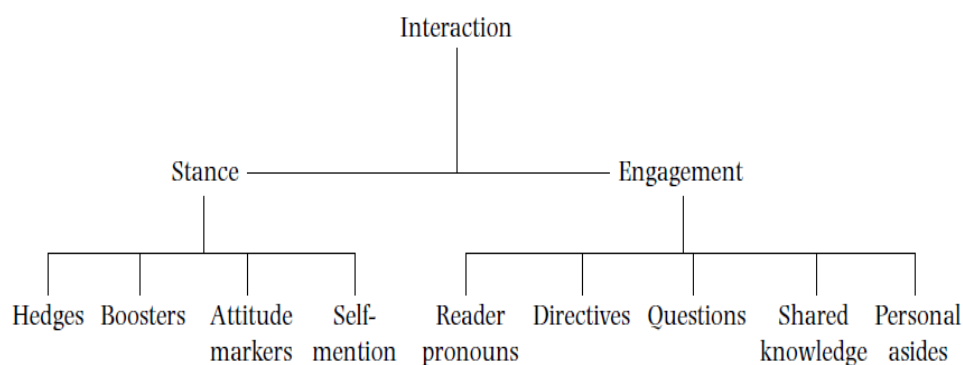


Figure 3.1 Hyland's (2005) key resources of academic interaction

K. Hyland (2010) reclassifies interactional meta-discourse markers; he combines personal pronouns, directives, questions and personal asides in one category named *engagement markers*. Moreover, he also does not mention *appeals to shared knowledge* (e.g. *of course*, *obviously*) as a separate category in his new classification of interactional markers.

The third textual dimension of an opinion discourse, which can be considered its defining feature, is its employment of argumentation or *logos*. The next section discusses this dimension.

3.2.4. Argumentative structure: Exploring *logos*

From the logical perspective, the argument is defined as “a set of statements (explicit or implicit), one of which is the conclusion (claim) while the others are the premises” (I. Fairclough & Fairclough, 2013, p. 36). However, citing van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992, 2004), I. Fairclough and Fairclough (2013) add to the above definition by asserting that argumentation is also *a complex speech act* with illocutionary (the speaker's intention in producing an utterance) and perlocutionary (the consequence of that utterance) effects. The first effect corresponds to the rational aspect of argumentation (proving a claim) and the second one is understood as the interlocutors' aims – each one aims to persuade the other to accept a claim. In this view, argumentation is seen as a social and dialogical activity with the purpose of persuasion. This is especially true for political discourses, which are known as deliberation in rhetoric. Deliberative rhetoric draws on *practical reasoning* that is

concerned with what to do or what action to take rather than with proving whether a proposition is true or false, as it is the case in *theoretical reasoning*.

Practical reasoning is sometimes categorised as the *conductive* argument, which is distinct from the two traditionally famous modes of argumentation: *deductive* and *inductive* (I. Fairclough & Fairclough, 2013). In deductive arguments, the validity of a claim derives from the validity of its premises; however, in inductive arguments, all premises or evidence are of one kind and should be linked together in order to support the claim. Otherwise, each of them would be too weak to justify the claim. However, conductive arguments are based on premises that are not necessarily valid or are of one type and each can support the claim separately. If all premises are taken together, the argument will be stronger but each one can also be enough to justify the claim by itself. Moreover, the argument is not dependent on the truth or validity of all of the premises. In fact, practical reasoning, in this view, is based on considering different or even conflicting opinions regarding the claim and making a balanced decision (conclusion). The strength of these arguments depends not only on how efficiently the goals and values will be achieved by the suggested means but also on what other goals and values may be sacrificed by choosing one action over the others. This decision-making process requires consideration of different counter-claims and weighing possible positive and negative consequences of the actions against each other. I. Fairclough and Fairclough (2013) believe that practical reasoning can be considered as conductive argument when there are a number of goals and values that the agent should choose between by assessing the positive and negative consequences. This view of argument as conductive or practical reasoning is particularly useful for studying opinion discourses in this research project as the commentary articles in my corpus were written to prove the plausibility of authors' choices of action by weighing different options against one another.

In another classification, Walton (1992, 2001, 2013) states that practical reasoning is mainly in the form of a *plausible* argument. Practical reasoning in this sense provides a claim that is presumably a means to achieve a goal unless a stronger claim is presented. In a plausible argument, it is possible that conclusions or claims can be false while the premises are true. This type of argument is for situations of uncertainty, lack

of thorough knowledge and time pressure that are often the case in politics. I. Fairclough and Fairclough (2013) also argue that plausible argument is:

based on presumption and is therefore in principle defeasible: the conclusion is inferred tentatively from the premises, it 'seems' to be true, based on all the evidence available, and is therefore reasonable to believe, but it is subject to defeat by the various particular features of a given situation. (p. 39)

The discourses under analysis in this research project (opinion articles and editorials) are all founded on what are referred to as conductive or plausible arguments. These opinion discourses are forms of practical reasoning, each aiming to promote a different alternative action regarding Iran's nuclear issue.

Walton's argumentation schemes or rhetorical topoi

Argumentation schemes represent stereotypical patterns of human reasoning. They are described as "premise-conclusion inference structures that represent common types of arguments used in everyday discourse" (Walton, 2007, p. 26). As mentioned above, the distinctive feature of abductive/conductive arguments is that they are built on the basis of 'defeasible generalisations' in contrast to 'universal generalisations' (Walton & Reed, 2005). Argumentation schemes that are employed in these everyday plausible arguments are called topoi and were originally studied by Aristotle. Aristotle, in his *Topics*, presented a list of 28 common forms of argumentation called general topics or topoi, including topoi of *opposites*, *part to whole*, *comparable actions*, *cause to effect*, *simple consequences*, *definitions*, *conflicting facts*, *previous mistakes*, *ambiguous terms*, etc. Aristotle later developed this list into more than 300 topoi. Topoi are based on abstract relationships of *identity*, *similarity*, *difference*, *contrasts*, *subsumption*, *causality*, *analogy*, etc. (Zompetti, 2006).

All in all, argumentation schemes, traditionally known as topoi/topics, are defeasible generalisations that are employed to find or produce plausible arguments in natural language discourses. Walton (1996) classifies schemes into 25 categories, including argument from *sign*, *example*, *commitment*, *pragmatic inconsistency*, *position to know*, *expert opinion*, *authority*, *analogy*, *precedent*, *gradualism*, etc. Arguments

based on these schemes have been traditionally treated as fallacious; however, as Walton argues, they can prove to be reasonable in some cases.

In chapter seven, which discusses argumentative structure, I examine the newspaper articles to identify schemes/topoi that authors employ for convincing readers of the practicality/worth of their claims of action. I apply Walton's classification as a checklist at the bottom-up level of argumentation analysis and I add to it whenever I identify a form of argument that is not in his classification.⁶

The next stage following the micro textual analysis outlined in three sections above (argumentative, representational and dialogic features) involved incorporating a framework to explicate those micro discrete practices of journalism studied here in some macro-socio-political contexts, including their connections to similar practices in society (intertextuality) and their role in ongoing political processes (contextuality). Accordingly, to study discourse on broader intertextual and contextual grounds, I drew on securitisation theory from the field of international relations as a framework that could link discursive practices to socio-political processes.

3.3. Constructivist IR and Securitisation Theory

International security studies as a sub-field of international relations (IR), primarily developed from "debates over how to protect the state against internal and external threats after the Second World War" (Buzan & Hansen, 2012, p. 8). Initially, it was based on the realist materialist understanding of international relations, which was concerned with nuclear weapons and strategic defence. However, after the Cold War, social constructivism, along with critical and feminist theories, entered the field of international relations and, thereby, the concept of security and its constituents (e.g. referent object and referent subject) started to be viewed from new perspectives.

Constructivist theories of IR focus on the role of intersubjective ideas like ideologies and normative beliefs in international relations (Kubalkova, Onuf, & Kowert, 1998; Onuf, 1997, 2001; Wendt, 1987, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1999). It emphasises "the social

⁶ It should be noted that Wodak's discourse-historical approach also includes discussion of argumentation and use of topoi in discourse. However, since I intended to make the analysis of argumentation much deeper, I decided to draw directly on argumentation theory itself.

and relational construction of what states are and what they want” and was a reaction to the materialism and instrumentalism of rationalist theories, such as neo-realism and neo-liberalism (Hurd, 2008, p. 299). Constructivist scholars of IR contend that “it is the subjective understanding of the material world that essentially influences the behaviour of states and non-state actors” (Shoaib, 2015, p. 53). Contrary to neo-realist and neo-liberal scholars, who consider political actors (whether individuals or states) to “be atomistic, self-interested, and rational” agents pursuing their “exogenous” interests in the “strategic realm” of society (e.g. international relations), constructivists believe that political actors are social in the sense that their identities and interests are socially and “endogenously” constructed in society as a “constitutive realm” (Rues-smit, 2013, p. 221 & 228).

There are two levels of constructivism in IR: systemic (or structural) and domestic (or internal). The proponents of systemic constructivism emphasise the role of the international environment in states’ behaviour. According to this view:

Constructivism considers ideas and shared knowledge as the creators of identity. Constructivist theories are concerned with how ideas define the international system, how this system defines the interests and identities of states and how states and non-state actors act within that system and reproduce it. (Adler, 1997, p. 319)

The internal view of constructivism stresses the domestic environments of states (Hopf, 2002; Katzenstein, 1996; Risse-Kappen, Ropp, & Sikkink, 1999) and argues that national interests, as the main determiners of the behaviours of states, are formed under the influence of national identity that, in turn, is expressed through the discourse of elites and decision-makers. In spite of differences in their foci of research, both views of constructivism hold three common ontological assumptions:

- as much as structures determine the behaviours of social/political actors, “normative and ideational structures are just as important as material structures”;
- “understanding how non-material structures condition actors’ identities is important” as it is through identities that the interests and, consequently, the behaviours of states are formed; and

- “agents and structures are mutually constituted” because, although ideational structures shape the identities and interests of political actors (e.g. states), practices of the actors can reinforce or transform these structures (Rues-smit, 2013, pp. 225-226).

In line with these constructivist notions, the concept of security extended in scope and depth to include non-material and non-military dimensions and to be seen as either a discursively or an intersubjectively constructed matter. Security was no longer a merely military issue but embraced political, economic, societal and environmental sectors as well (Buzan, 1991), and a threat to security not only was an outside material reality but was an intersubjective perception resulting from normative and ideational factors at domestic or international levels.

Founded on such constructivist views of security and threat, securitisation theory was offered to the field of security studies by the scholars of the Copenhagen School – Ole Waever and Barry Buzan – in the 1990s.

3.3.1. The linguistic approach to securitisation: Copenhagen School

Securitisation, as defined by scholars of the Copenhagen School (Buzan et al., 1998; Waever, 1995), is the elevation of a political issue into a security matter. From this point of view, any public issue can be placed on a continuum ranging from *non-politicised* (out of the realm of public debate and not something that the state deals with) to *politicised* (a matter of public debate and one that needs government decision-making) to *securitised* (an existential threat that needs to be dealt with using extraordinary measures). At both domestic and international levels, an issue is securitised when it is designated as an existential threat and, thereby, given priority over other issues (Buzan et al., 1998). Therefore, any articulation of security “entails the claim that something is held to pose a threat to a valued referent object that is so existential that it is legitimate to move the issue beyond the established games of ‘normal’ politics to deal with it by exceptional, i.e. security, methods” (Stritzel, 2007, p. 360). Accordingly, any attempt to securitise an issue requires references to the politics of urgency, survival, defence and threat.

In the first articulation of the concept of securitisation by Waever (1995), the focus was solely on the understanding of securitisation as a *self-referential speech act*.

Drawing on Austin's *speech act theory* and post-structuralist scholars like Derrida, Wæver believed that securitising discourse is self-sufficient in eliciting the desired action (exceptional measures) against a security threat. This internalist understanding of securitisation, which is centred on the discursive/linguistic power of a securitising move, is called the linguistic or philosophical view. Consistent with the argument of speech act theory that some utterances are *performative* (we do things by saying them) rather than merely describing the world, the Copenhagen scholars consider security as a performative or speech act. This results in the view that security discourse does not necessarily refer to some objective reality, but it can create that reality itself. The linguistic performance of the securitising actor has the power to change the context by constituting a new meaning of security and new patterns of relationship between the threat and the referent object (Wæver, 2000).

In the latter work by the Copenhagen scholars (Buzan et al., 1998), there was an indication of the importance of audience in the success of a securitisation act by maintaining that, to achieve securitisation, security claims need to be as convincing as possible to the public as well as to the decision-makers whose agreement is vital before the measures are taken. However, this endorsement of audience in securitisation was more problematic than promising for securitisation theory. Audience, in fact, was posited as a formal passive recipient of a security speech act rather than an active participant in the process of securitisation (Balzacq, 2011b). Some of the shortcomings of the linguistic/philosophical view of securitisation are presented in the next section.

3.3.2. Developments in securitisation theory

The Copenhagen School's (CS) speech act view of security has been questioned by many later scholars for its post-structuralist foundation. The second generation of securitisation scholars (e.g. Balzacq, Stritzel, McDonald and Vuori) opted for a more constructivist approach and criticised the post-structuralist view that considered the speech act to be self-sufficient in bringing about securitisation. According to Balzacq (2005), the problem with the speech act view of securitisation is that it ignores the fact that some threats are *brute* or external (i.e. their existence does not depend on the rhetorical use of language). With over-emphasising the role of language in the

construction of threats, the Copenhagen School disregards “how external contexts, including external objective developments, affect securitization” (p. 181). Such a post-structuralist view is contradictory to considering securitisation as a social process with an actor, an audience and a context. In spite of attempting to include audience in its account of securitisation, the Copenhagen School seems to lean towards the speech act idea. In fact, it is not possible for the Copenhagen School to endorse both views of securitisation: a self-referential speech act and an intersubjective process (Balzacq, Léonard, & Ruzicka, 2016).

In a similar line of reasoning, Stritzel (2007) maintains that the Copenhagen School “refuses to conceptualize speech acts and securitizing actors as embedded in broader social and linguistic structures” (p. 367). He indicates that the idea of context is too narrowly defined in the work of the members of the Copenhagen School as they “limit the concept of power to the power to persuade and the idea of contextuality or embeddedness to a context defining a sort of reputation (‘the authority of the securitizing actor’)” (Stritzel, 2007, p. 369).

McDonald (2008) argues that the philosophical view of the Copenhagen School is narrow for three reasons: its focus on the discourse of political leaders; its definition of context as “the moment of intervention only”; and its understanding of security as “inherently negative and reactionary” (p. 564). By focusing solely on a state’s political elites, securitisation theory ignores other possible voices that are active in the process of securitisation, such as artists, writers, journalists, and other social and cultural elites. Moreover, securitisation theory does not consider the role of non-linguistic forms of communication, such as images and symbols as well as the physical actions and bureaucratic practices involved in securitisation, and disregards the historical context that can facilitate the securitisation of an issue (McDonald, 2008).

3.3.3. Sociological approach to securitisation

As a result of the above criticisms, the philosophical view of securitisation was later modified by paying more attention to the role of contextual factors. The later works adopted an externalist approach (also called the sociological approach) that regarded securitisation as an intersubjective process happening between a securitising actor and the audience in a specific context. According to McDonald (2008, p. 566), there

was a shift in securitisation theory from the notion of a speech act as “*productive of security*” to one where the speech act is “one component of the inter-subjective *construction of security*”. Scholars like Balzacq et al. (2016) and Stritzel (2007) point to the contradictory tension between the internalist and externalist approaches to securitisation. While the former holds that the performative aspect of security changes the context, the latter maintains that it is the context that influences the security speech act by determining its meaning. The root of the problem lies in their different views regarding the relationship between agency and structure. The internal approach relies on a post-structuralist view and the external one advocates a *structuration* view. Drawing on Giddens’ (1984) theory of structuration, scholars following the sociological approach to securitisation (Balzacq, 2005, 2011a; Balzacq et al., 2016; Stritzel, 2007) emphasise the interdependency of structure and agency, and, thereby, the need for paying greater attention to non-discursive factors (i.e. audience and context) in the study of securitisation.

Nowadays, most scholars in the field, especially the post-Copenhagen scholars, lean towards the externalist side and include contextual non-discursive factors in their analyses of securitisation moves. In this regard, Stritzel (2012) indicates the similarity between sociological approaches and CDS (in their views of discourse) and the need for drawing on CDS in security studies:

Such a more sociological (ultimately structurationist) conceptualization of discourse is arguably most clearly articulated by scholars in the tradition of critical discourse analysis.... Unfortunately, this rather well-established and comprehensive strand of discourse theory in applied linguistics has so far been largely ignored in international relations and security studies. (p. 551)

Stritzel states that CDS is compatible with the sociological approach to security since it gives priority to the ‘social sphere’ over discourse and considers linguistic practice as one element of social practice (in contrast to post-structuralist views). This view, which is manifested in CDS methodology (as textual analysis is its starting point and needs to be complemented by socio-political analysis), is in line with the sociological approach to security which argues that “the performative power of a speech act cannot only be captured in the abstract but needs to be contextually located within broader structures of meaning and power...” (Stritzel, 2012, p. 553). Accordingly,

Stritzel contends that the sociological view of discourse in CDS can contribute to a better understanding of the process of securitisation.

Stritzel (2007) emphasises that any study of securitisation should embrace three layers of analysis: the performative power of the securitisation text, its embeddedness in existing discourses, and the power relations held between the securitising actor and the audience. Stritzel seems to borrow his three layers of securitisation from CDS' three stages of analysis: textual, intertextual and contextual levels.

One of the prominent scholars of the second generation of the Copenhagen School is Thierry Balzacq, whose ideas I draw on in conducting this thesis. In the next section, I provide an overview of his approach to securitisation.

3.3.4. Balzacq's approach to securitisation

Advocating the sociological view, Balzacq (2011b) defines securitisation as an

... articulated assemblage of practices whereby heuristic artefacts (metaphors, policy tools, image repertoires, stereotypes, emotions, etc.) are contextually mobilized by a securitizing actor, who works to prompt an audience to build a coherent network of implications (feelings, sensations, thoughts, and intuitions), about the critical vulnerability of a referent object, that concur with the securitizing actor's reasons for choices and actions, by investing the referent subject with such an aura of unprecedented threatening complexion that a customized policy must be taken immediately to block its development. (p. 17)

Based on such a definition, Balzacq (2011b) introduces three core assumptions for securitisation. The first assumption points to the *centrality of audience* by indicating that "for an issue to be pronounced an instance of securitization, an 'empowering audience' must agree with the claim made by the securitizing actor" (p. 22) Centrality of the audience in the sociological approach requires the securitising actor to "tune his/her language to the audience's experience" and that, in turn, necessitates being aware of the audience's preferences, interests, values, attitudes, etc. (Balzacq, 2011b, p. 23). The second core assumption focuses on the *co-dependency of agency and context*; this means that any successful securitisation move is a combination of a persuasive speech act and a facilitative context. In other words, the performative power of language is not capable of achieving securitisation by itself unless there is a

historical context providing cultural frames of reference through which the designation of threat to a particular referent subject could be interpreted as meaningful. Finally, the third assumption is about the *dispositif* (Foucault's term meaning both discursive and non-discursive mechanisms that enhance power in society) and *the structuring force of practices*. It maintains that securitisation "consists of practices which instantiate intersubjective understandings and which are framed by tools and the habitus inherited from different social fields" (Balzacq, 2011b, p. 29). Balzacq's opinion regarding the significance of audience and context in the process of securitisation makes his model of securitisation completely congruent with the principles of CDS and classical rhetoric.

Balzacq (2011b) proposes five key concepts for securitisation theory. They include the *securitising actor* (i.e. the agent who presents an issue as a threat through a securitising move); the *referent subject* (i.e. the entity that is threatening); the *referent object* (i.e. the entity that is threatened); the *audience* (whose agreement is necessary to confer an intersubjective status to the threat); and the *context and the adoption of distinctive policies* ('exceptional' or not). Accordingly, securitisation discourse is affected by: the context in which it occurs, including the character and the position of the securitising actor; the identities, attitudes and values of the audience; and the historical and socio-political situation of the issue. In turn, the produced discourse can bring about changes in the context through securitising a subject.

Relying on the above concepts, I see securitisation as an intersubjective process that, like any other human interaction, is carried out with the mediation of discourse (internal factors) in a social/historical context (external factors). Thereby, actor, audience and context, as the external factors, influence the representation and perception of discursive factors (referent subject and referent object). In other words, the securitising actor discursively constructs the threatening subject and the threatened object by drawing on his/her display of good character, the audience's values and interests, and the historical and socio-political context of the issue. In turn, the audience apprehends the securitising discourse, according to their evaluation of the actor's honesty and good will, the congruence of discourse with their values and

interests, and the supporting contextual evidence they find in their real-world experiences. This means that the three external factors leave a footprint on discourse.

As indicated above, this vision of securitisation is also similar to Aristotle's idea of the rhetorical means of persuasion. My views of actor, audience and context, respectively, resemble concepts of *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* in classical rhetoric. As explained earlier, Aristotle believes that, to be persuasive, any rhetoric – securitising discourse, in this case – needs to display the good character of the speaker, identify with the feelings of the audience and draw on logical arguments. A good character consists of *good will (concern for the audience)*, *virtue (moral values)* and *good sense (wisdom)*. The feelings of the audience are awakened by reference to their values and interests, and logical arguments are built on evidence and information drawn from the historical and socio-political context. Therefore, securitisation is dependent on an actor's ability to present a persuasive discourse in which a referent subject is constructed as a threat to a valued object. A securitising move can be successful to the extent it can: establish the speaker's/writer's credibility in discourse; move the feelings of the audience by identifying with their values, experiences, interests and identities; and present logical arguments by resorting to historical, social and political evidence.

On the whole, congruent with my understanding of securitisation moves as persuasive *discourses*, classical rhetoric contributes to describing their mechanisms of persuasion and CDS helps to explain the relationships between these specific discourses and their immediate contexts of situation as well as the macro-socio-political context. Since practicing CDS in the field of politics requires paying attention to issues of *persuasion* and *political goals/functions* in addition to grand concepts such as ideology, relations of power and domination, classical rhetoric and securitisation theory were needed to complement CDS (they added the two concepts of persuasion and political goals to CDS).

3.4. Conclusion

All in all, CDS, classical rhetoric and securitisation theory, which are adopted from language and communication studies and international relations, inform this research project. They guide this study at different stages of analysis, interpretation and

explanation. Believing in the constructivist notion that discourse can create political reality rather than merely reflecting it, I draw on CDS, classical rhetoric and securitisation theory to demonstrate the processes and mechanisms of such discursive work in the case of American newspapers. From among the three, CDS establishes the foundation of the research and informs the whole study. It explains the relationship between discourse and society, and their mutual effects and consequences. Classical rhetoric contributes to the study at the level of analysis. It structures the analytical framework of the study and has guided me in conducting the textual analysis. In line with the guidelines from classical rhetoric, I chose three analytical models to investigate three textual dimensions of the opinion discourse: van Leeuwen's (2008) actor/action representation, Hyland's (2005) meta-discourse markers and Walton's (1996) argumentation theory. They respectively examine representational, dialogic and argumentative features of the opinion discourses under study. Finally, securitisation theory contributes to this study by aiding me in demonstrating the relationship between discourse and society in its most concrete form. By looking at newspapers' opinion discourses from the security perspective, this research project explicates the discursive process through which Iran and its nuclear programme were securitised or de-securitised in commentary articles from four American newspapers.

The next chapter deals with methodological aspects of this study. It provides an overview of types and sources of data, process of data collection, and methods and procedure of analysis.

Chapter Four

Design and Methodology

The present research project was launched to investigate the opinion discourse of a few prominent English-language newspapers in relation to a seriously disputed international issue (Iran's nuclear programme). As an interdisciplinary research, it pursues a qualitative methodology and draws on a number of different but philosophically congruent fields. This chapter on methodology explains the research objectives, the design of the study, the analytical and interpretive frameworks and the process of conducting the research.

4.1. Objectives of the Study

The main impetus for conducting this research project was an interest in the role and practice of media discourse in society, especially in the field of politics. I have always been curious about the ways that different media discourses construct different or even contradictory representations of a specific political event and, consequently, provide their audiences with completely different perceptions of the world. In other words, I was eager to investigate the ways in which media view and evaluate a particular event from different perspectives by focusing on some aspects of reality and neglecting others. More importantly, I intended to investigate the reasons that motivate each media entity to adhere to a particular standpoint. Thus, I embarked on this study with two broad objectives. One was to identify various representations of a political issue (the Iran nuclear deal/negotiations) offered by different newspapers (as the oldest type of mass media) and a number of discursive mechanisms for constructing those representations. The other objective was to learn why this might be the case through exploring the links between newspapers discourses and the American society.

The focus of the first objective was on the textual properties of the newspapers' discourses. It included questions about what image of the issue, what image of the

self and what claims about the issue each newspaper author sought to offer as well as how s/he realised them in discourse. The second objective, on the other hand, pertained to contextual matters at both micro and macro levels. It was concerned with the socio-political and ideological motives behind each discourse and embraced both how those motives shaped the discourse (what political/ideological perspectives influenced the authors' perceptions and constructions of reality) and how discourse sought to shape the context (what role the newspaper discourse played in achieving broader political goals). Keeping these two broad objectives in mind, I embarked on Iran's nuclear issue as the topic of investigation. I was specifically interested in newspapers' reactions to the nuclear agreement deal signed by Iran and world powers. To study the newspapers' reactions, I concentrated on their opinion sections since these are where attitudes and positions regarding different issues are expressed and defended. As indicated in Chapter One, my decision to focus on Iran and its situation was, first and foremost, motivated by my nationality as an Iranian. Apart from that, since Iran's nuclear dispute is one of the longest-standing international conflicts that has been attempted to be diplomatically resolved, it is worthy of investigation. The other point that added to the importance of this topic was that, even after its official settlement on 14 July 2015, it was still vehemently disputed in political and media discourses (and was eventually abandoned). Overall, as a highly disputed issue, the Iran nuclear deal triggered many opposite and contradictory reactions that made its investigation worthwhile.

4.2. Sample Design

This section covers the media genre chosen for examination, the criteria for and process of selecting data sources, and the data collection procedures.

4.2.1. Type of data

The type of media genre that was chosen for investigation in this study is *newspaper opinion discourse*. In news media (newspapers, in this case), opinion discourse covers several sub-genres, including *editorials* and *opinion articles* (op-eds). Editorials and opinion articles are "public mass communicated" and "probably the widest circulated" types of opinion discourse (van Dijk, 1996, p. 15). Pointing to the importance of these two newspaper genres, Franklin (2008) argues that the character of a newspaper is

displayed by its editorials and opinion articles (op-eds). Le (2009) also emphasises the role of editorials in demonstrating newspapers' characters by maintaining that "With their (unsigned) editorials, however, news media go further than (just) presenting others' positions; they openly represent themselves by stating their own positions on issues they deem of special importance" (p. 1727). These opinion pieces are in sharp contrast to news articles. Unlike news items that are (falsely) believed to be neutral stories reporting the outside world, opinion pieces are written to discuss an issue from an author's perspective. Therefore, it is quite expectable and acceptable for a newspaper to include a variety of opinion pieces with different, opposite or even contradictory attitudes regarding a single issue or event. In fact, being two completely different types of discourse, news and commentaries (opinion pieces) have totally different features and serve different functions in newspapers. The former is a descriptive discourse that is expected to present an objective (impartial) narrative of an event and have an impersonal voice that avoids the author's attitudes, values and feelings interfering with his/her discourse. However, the latter is an argumentative discourse, which is known to be a subjective evaluation of an event and which voices the author's personal perspectives, attitudes and norms.

In spite of their similar discourse types (*opinion discourse*) and schematic structures (*argumentative*), editorials and opinion articles serve slightly different functions in newspapers. While editorials are the institutional voice of the newspaper and are responsible for expressing the paper's stands on national and global issues, opinion articles express personal views of the writers (typically, experts in the field being discussed) on such issues. Generally, editorials are written on behalf of the whole organisation and that is why editorials, in contrast to opinion articles, usually have an impersonal and formal voice. Farrokhi and Nazemi (2015) mention that editorials are produced to "deliberately influence the social cognition of their readers by making use of different persuasion and argumentation strategies and devices" (p. 155). The same can be said about opinion articles as both of these genres are of a "persuasive nature aiming to persuade readers to undertake a certain type of action, or to change their attitudes toward the topic being discussed" (Farrokhi & Nazemi, 2015, p. 157).

Van Dijk (1992, pp. 244–245) suggests a number of interactional, cognitive, sociocultural and political functions for editorials. According to him, editorials

function: interactionally, by persuading the readers through argumentation; socioculturally, by “reproducing” in-group ideologies and values in the public space; and politically, by influencing the elites through commenting on their actions or “recommending alternative courses of action”. One critical characteristic of editorials stated by van Dijk (1992) is that their primary addressee is not ordinary newspaper readers but political and social elites and decision-makers. This means that newspapers act as influential power institutions, which participate in the construction or reproduction of power relations in society and in setting the social agenda.

Although opinion articles – probably as a result of their diversity of styles and voices – have not been studied as much as have editorials, they do share some of the above-mentioned functions and characteristics, especially when they are in line with the editorial policy of a newspaper. Op-eds appeared for the first time in *The New York Times* in the 1970s in a page ‘Opposite to Editorials’ with the purpose of increasing the diversity of views incorporated into the newspaper. Day and Golan (2005, p. 62) state that “the Op-Ed was designed as a forum for the articulation of multiple ideas in an attempt to promote public debate on salient issues”. Obviously, the original mission of op-eds was to provide a space for those alternative opinions that were not covered in the newspaper by giving the chance to experts and policy-makers to discuss issues from different perspectives (Salisbury, 1988; Stonecipher, 1979). However, the common practices of newspapers have not always observed this principle.

There are two groups of op-ed contributors in newspapers: *columnists*, who usually write for the paper and are paid; and experts, academics or politicians, who are called *guest contributors* as they are not affiliated with the paper (Golan & Wanta, 2004). Mostly, the first group and sometimes even the second follow the paper’s editorial policy in their stance-taking and, consequently, their articles serve similar functions as those for editorials, which are mentioned above. Accordingly, instead of being sites for the dissemination of diverse opinions, op-eds sometimes turn into alternative channels for promoting the paper’s positions on different issues (Song, 2004). Opinion articles can serve an even more partisan function than can editorials as they “do not have to conform to the editorial standards” or news impartiality standards and, thereby, enjoy more freedom to express and defend their opinions (Golan, 2013, p.

361). This freedom gives them a greater opportunity to assert their opinions strongly and persuasively. Song (2004), in a similar way to that of van Dijk (1992), contends that columnists in newspapers that are prominent worldwide play “instrumental” roles – akin to those of the editorial writers – “in not only drawing attention to international issues but also in influencing government elites into taking action” (Song, 2004, p. 41).

Overall, the function of both genres is to convey authors’ opinions about salient socio-political issues. Thus, since editorials and op-eds are places for the expression of opinions and since people’s opinions draw on their underlying beliefs or ideologies (van Dijk, 2001a, 2006), these two newspaper genres are fertile sites for the investigation of ideology. Again, since CDS is one of the fields that has an interest in ideology, its discursive manifestation and its socio-political functions, these genres have been very inspiring and attractive to CDS scholars. In addition, these two genres have specific features (e.g. being argumentative and persuasive) that make them even more attractive for investigation in CDS.

Initially, I pursued two purposes for including both editorial and op-ed genres in this study. Looking from a textual perspective, the minor goal was to compare and contrast the structural features (representational, argumentative and dialogic) of these two similar-but-distinct genres. However, in the course of study, I had to put aside this goal as I could not include enough editorial samples for analysis (see section 4.2.2.). The major goal, on the other hand, was to examine the possible congruencies in the positions taken by a newspaper’s editorials and its opinion articles. To put it another way, including both genres would help to determine whether or not opinion articles published in a paper followed the same policy – towards Iran’s nuclear deal/programme, in this case – as the editorials did. This would, in turn, help to find out whether the opinion articles under study served the function for which they were invented – to offer an opportunity to opposite voices not covered in the newspaper (Day & Golan, 2005) – or whether they had turned into merely another channel for promoting the newspaper’s attitudes and ideologies (Song, 2004). This comparison was important as a harmony of attitudes between the editorials and the op-eds of a paper could be a sign of bias at the level of decision-making in the newspaper

organisation as it would show that only opinion articles that supported a newspaper's positions would gain the chance of publication.

4.2.2. Sources of samples

After deciding about the type of data, a web search of newspapers was conducted to select the sources from among hundreds of English-language newspapers published worldwide. Initially, after taking into account the three criteria of high levels of readership (both print and online), international standing and political ideology, I arrived at more than 10 leading international newspapers (mostly Western). They included *The New York Times* (USA), *The Wall Street Journal* (USA), *The Washington Post* (USA), *USA Today* (USA), *Los Angeles Times* (USA), *New York Post* (USA), *The Times* (UK), *The Guardian* (UK), *Financial Times* (UK), *The Daily Telegraph* (UK), *Le Figaro* (France) and *Die Welt* (Germany). While some of these newspapers are characterised as having both large numbers of readers and high standings as broadsheet international newspapers (e.g. *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*), some others have high standings as elite newspapers but do not have high levels of readership (e.g. *The Guardian* and *Financial Times*). In addition to the above newspapers, which were chosen on the basis of their high standings and readerships, some Arabic and Israeli newspapers were also considered on political grounds (Arab countries and Israel were actively involved – although indirectly – in Iran's nuclear debates). These newspapers included *Haaretz* and *Israel Hayom*, the two well-known and politically opposite papers in Israel, as well as *Al-Ahram*, *Asharq-Al-Awsat* and *Arab News*, the prominent English newspapers in the Arab world.

Disputes and negotiations regarding Iran's nuclear programme have a long history of about 12 years – starting in 2003 and appearing to be officially settled in 2015. However, it was impractical to carry out an in-depth investigation of the discourse of the source newspapers in such a broad time span. Thus, this study was launched to look into a specific juncture: the period after the announcement of the nuclear agreement deal on 14 July 2015. Accordingly, each of the newspapers was investigated for the opinion articles and editorials that it published about the nuclear issue after the announcement of the deal over a period of 17 days (from 14 to 31 July). This chosen time span was significant on several grounds: it covered the historical

moment of resolving a long-standing international conflict, it signified a turning point in the U.S.-Iran relations, it covered the period when the hottest debates and the most intensive efforts to protect or fight against the nuclear deal were happening, and it was the period of highest coverage of the deal by media. Given all these and also considering the fact that, after July 31, the number and frequency of articles published in newspapers on the topic of the nuclear deal declined significantly (that is by no means surprising as *timeliness* is a typical practice in media), I decided to focus on this specific period of 17 days.

After the initial examination, *The Daily Telegraph*, *Le Figaro* and *Die Welt* were excluded from the study as they had no editorial or opinion article on the topic of the nuclear deal during the specified time span (they published news stories related to the Iran's nuclear issue but no opinion pieces).

Table 4.1. The preliminary list of newspapers

Place of Publication	Newspapers
U.S.	<i>The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, USA Today, Los Angeles Times, New York Post</i>
U.K.	<i>The Times, The Guardian, Financial Times</i>
Israel	<i>Haaretz, Israel Hayom</i>
Arab region	<i>Al-Ahram, Asharq-Al-Awsat, Arab News</i>

After developing the preliminary list of newspapers (Table 4.1), a pilot sample collection was conducted to see whether or not a balanced and sufficient number of articles could be collected from those newspapers. The outcome of the inquiry indicated that, while some of the newspapers had published numerous opinion articles and editorials about Iran's nuclear issue during the specified time span (e.g. *Arab News, Israel Hayom* and *The Wall Street Journal*), others had very few (e.g. *The Times, Financial Times* and *Los Angeles Times*). Therefore, it was not possible to gather a reasonable number of samples from all the newspapers: that is a minimum number of sample articles needed for reaching a conclusion based on the content of those texts and for comparing the findings across newspapers. Besides, there was another practical concern about the possibility of carrying out a qualitative analysis on a large amount of data. If I were to collect and analyse a reasonable number of samples from

each of the 14 newspapers (say five articles) so that the findings from each paper could be meaningful, given that, typically, each article comprised between 500 and 1000 words, the result would be a huge amount of data to analyse – more than 50,000 words. That would not be manageable for a qualitative study requiring a close reading of texts.

Given those practical difficulties, I decided to limit the number of source newspapers and, as a result, the amount of data. By limiting the number of newspapers, I could increase the number of samples collected from each and, thereby, improve the generalisability of findings for each paper. Hence, I set a minimum number of five or six samples from each newspaper: four or five opinion articles and one or two editorials. This minimum number was determined based on the fact that most papers had published an average of four op-eds and two editorials during the specified time span. The reason for collecting only one or two editorials from each newspaper (compared to four or five op-eds) was: firstly, papers published fewer editorials than opinion articles (many of them published just one editorial during the specified time span); and, secondly, newspapers' editorial positions on a specific issue tend to be rather stable, especially over short periods of time. Nevertheless, the small number of editorials in the study would limit the investigation of this newspaper genre's specific features and, thereby, the possibility of comparing generic features of editorials and op-eds (one of the two initial purposes for including both genres in the study).

As explained above, given the typical average word count of articles (between 500 and 1000), I had to reduce the number of source papers to only four in order to keep the total amount of data to a maximum of 20,000 words; five or six articles, multiplied by four newspapers, equalled 20 or 24 articles and 20 or 24 articles, multiplied by an average of 800 words, equalled roughly 16,000 to 19,000 words. Without this reduction, I would not have been able to conduct a thorough qualitative analysis and interpretation of all the newspaper articles (with no software help). Although I had an option to use software for data analysis (corpus linguistics) so that I could manage a larger amount of data, I decided to carry out all the analysis manually because I believe that software cannot assist appropriately in discourse analysis. One reason is that discourse analysis is context-dependent (both the context within the text and the context above the text) and, therefore, discursive strategies cannot be identified from

the context. The other reason, as indicated by van Leeuwen (2008), is that social categories, such as agency, are not always synchronised with specific linguistic categories. Thus, searching specific linguistic categories as representatives of social categories would be inadequate.

Therefore, the next step was

to make the ultimate choice of four newspapers from among the above 14 papers. The first requirement was to narrow down the geographical scope of the study as the 14 newspapers came from four different political contexts. In spite of my initial decision to choose one newspaper from each context, which would have meant having one Arab, one Israeli, one British and one American newspaper, or to choose two newspapers from two contexts, I decided to focus on only one context. The reason was that selecting one or even two newspapers as the best representative/s of a country or a region was very difficult, if not impossible. In each of the above political contexts, there are at least two opposing political wings or ideologies – each having several media outlets – which take different positions on any national or international issue. Hence, no paper could be chosen as the one that expressed the attitudes of a whole society or political system. Consequently, it seemed wiser to keep the scope of the study within the bounds of one political context so that the findings could be more meaningful and interpretable. This way, I was left with one option: to focus on the American context since I needed four papers and the number of selected papers from other contexts was less than four (three from UK, three from the Arab world and two from Israel). More importantly, the U.S. played the pivotal role in the nuclear negotiations with Iran. Considering its international leadership and also its enduring enmity with Iran, it seemed imperative to observe the ways in which its media (newspapers, in this case) responded to and evaluated the negotiations, the U.S.' role and the resultant deal. Thus, if I had to choose only one context for data collection, the U.S. seemed to be the most relevant one. Among the six American newspapers, *Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post* had published fewer than four opinion articles related to the issue of the Iran nuclear deal during the time span set for the study; therefore, *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *New York Post* were chosen as the ultimate sources for collecting sample opinion pieces.

4.2.5. Selected newspapers

The four chosen newspapers are prominent on several grounds. They have been the most-read newspapers in the U.S. According to reports from various research institutes in the last four years⁷, *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *New York Post* have the highest readerships in the country. *USA Today* is the most circulated US newspaper, with a daily circulation of 1,621,091 in 2019, followed by *The Wall Street Journal* (1,011,200), *The New York Times* (483,701), and *New York Post* (426,129)⁸. These numbers include both print and digital circulations. In addition to having the highest readerships in the U.S., they – except *New York Post* – are also renowned as international elite newspapers with worldwide readership; this is especially the case with *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

Another point of importance is that these newspapers belong to different political traditions – Liberal and Conservative ideologies. The only exception among them is *USA Today*. This paper is different from the other three on two grounds: *age* and *political advocacy*. While *USA Today* is a very young newspaper, the other three papers have been published since the 19th century. The *New York Post* was founded in 1801 by Alexander Hamilton as the New-York Evening Post and claims to be the longest-running paper in the U.S. Since 1976, the paper has been owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp, the giant media corporation. Under Murdoch ownership, the style and stance of the paper became similar to UK tabloid newspaper, *The Sun*, which is also owned by him. *The New York Times* was founded in 1851 by Henry Jarvis Raymond and George Jones as The New-York Daily Times. Since 1896, the paper is run by Sulzberger family's The New York Times Company, one of the newspaper dynasties in the U.S. It has the nickname "The Gray Lady" and is considered as the most respected newspaper in the country. Usher (2014, p. 6) states that "The New York Times is a pivotal institution in American democracy. Since 1851, it has shaped the contours of elite political discussion and provided substantive reporting from across the world and the nation". It has won the Pulitzer Prizes for excellent news coverage

⁷ <https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2014/usa-today-wsj-nyt-top-u-s-newspapers-by-circulation/>
<https://www.cision.com/us/2019/01/top-ten-us-daily-newspapers/>

⁸ <https://www.cision.com/us/2019/01/top-ten-us-daily-newspapers/>

more than any other paper in the U.S. (127 times). *The Wall Street Journal* has been continuously published as a business-focused newspaper since its foundation in 1889 by Charles Dow, Edward Jones, and Charles Bergstresser. Since 2007, it has been owned by Dow Jones & company that is part of Murdoch's media giant 'News Corp'. The paper has also won 37 Pulitzer Prizes. Finally, USA Today, as the youngest of the four papers, was founded 37 years ago (1982) by Al Neuharth's Gannett Company, and is still run by the same company. Its special design and features including its colourful images, information graphics, concise and easy-to-read reports, etc., have influenced many other newspapers in the U.S. and the world.

The USA Today's other point of difference is that, contrary to the other three newspapers that advocate one of the two political wings in the U.S.– Democratic/Left or Republican/Right –, *USA Today* has attempted to stay in the centre in the political spectrum. This tendency can be observed in its editorial policies, such as forbidding endorsement of any presidential candidate or opting to publish op-eds that convey opinions that are opposite to its editorial view. Among the other three papers, *The Wall Street Journal* and *New York Post* are right-wing, conservative papers. As just mentioned, both papers are owned by Murdoch's company 'News Corp'. The New York Post clearly reflects Murdoch's business and political interests and has been criticised for being sensational and biased in its news coverage and stances. It is also Donald Trump's favourite newspaper. Regarding *The Wall Street Journal*, it was presumed to have maintained its impartiality under Murdoch's ownership; however, some allegations of conservative bias have been made against this paper as well. Among the four papers, only *The New York Times* leans towards the left, liberal side. In spite of its national and international reputation for thoroughness and quality, *The New York Times* has also been challenged by critiques, including by Donald Trump, for having a liberal bias.

Overall, these various political tendencies among the selected newspapers make them appropriate sources to study and allow me to compare and contrast findings across different ideological positions.

4.2.6. Data collection

In the process of selecting the source newspapers, their websites were surveyed, and samples published within the time span were recognised. All articles published on the

topic of Iran's nuclear programme between 14 and 31 July 2015 were collected" from the opinion/commentary sections of the papers. The chosen time span covered the period starting immediately after the announcement of the deal until two weeks later. This period was momentous in the history of Iran's nuclear negotiations because, during this period, an official settlement of a dispute (the nuclear deal) was itself under dispute. In other words, while the nuclear deal was officially endorsed by most countries of the world, it was hotly opposed and doubted by many politicians and media, especially in the U.S., Iran, Israel and the Arab states.

The numbers of editorials and opinion articles published in each newspaper during the specified time span are presented in Table 4.2:

Table 4.2. Numbers of editorials and opinion articles published in the four papers from 14 to 31 July 2015

Newspaper	No. of editorials	No. of opinion articles	Total no. of articles
<i>USA Today</i>	1	4	5
<i>The New York Times</i>	2	6	8
<i>The Wall Street Journal</i>	6	12	18
<i>New York Post</i>	3	6	9

As Table 4.2 shows, the number of articles published in *The Wall Street Journal* was noticeably high (12 opinion articles and six editorials) while the other three newspapers included more similar numbers of articles. Given that *USA Today* had published only one editorial and four op-eds from 14 to 31 July, in order to balance the amount of data across all papers, I decided to gather the first editorial and the first four opinion articles published after the announcement of the deal in each paper as the ultimate samples of the study. Table 4.3 shows the newspaper, the headline of its first editorial published, the date of publication and the word count of the editorial:

Table 4.3. Editorials published in the four newspapers on 14 July 2015

Newspaper	Headlines of Editorials	Dates	Wordage
USA Today	Is Iran nuclear deal better than no deal? Yes: Our view	14 July 2015	595
The New York Times	An Iran Nuclear Deal That Reduces the Chance of War	14 July 2015	703
The Wall Street Journal	Tehran's Nuclear Triumph What Will the Arabs Do Now?	14 July 2015	863
New York Post	Obama's Iran-nuke deal far, far worse than no deal at all	14 July 2015	522

Table 4.4, below, presents the first four opinion articles published in each paper with their headlines, date of publication, and word count (As shown in Table 4.1, the number of opinion articles published in some papers during the time span was more than four.)

Table 4.4. First four opinion articles published in the four newspapers from 14 to 31 July 2015

Newspaper	Opinion Articles	Dates	Wordage	Authors
USA Today	Iran Deal Fails on All Fronts	14 July	416	Lindsey Graham (candidate for the Republican presidential nomination)
	Nuclear Deal Worse than Imagined	16 July	769	Charles Krauthammer (a political columnist and pundit)
	Not Nuclear, but No Matter	21 July	815	David A. Andelman (an author and a commentator)
	No Apologies for Iran Truth	31 July	521	Mike Huckabee (a candidate for the Republican presidential nomination)
The New York Times	Republicans Race to Condemn the Iran Deal	14 July	710	Andrew Rosenthal (a journalist and commentator)
	How Obama Should Sell the Iran Deal	15 July	926	James P. Rubin (a former diplomat and journalist)
	The Door to Iran Opens	16 July	828	Roger Cohen (an author and a journalist)
	A Good Deal for Israel	19 July	846	Chuck Freilich (a former Israeli deputy national security advisor; a

				senior fellow at Belfer Center and an author)
The Wall Street Journal	The Best Arguments for an Iran Deal	14 July	895	Stephens Bret (a journalist and commentator)
	Why They're Cheering in Tehran	15 July	1248	Frederick Kagan (a scholar and an academic in military history)
	The Iranian Nuclear-Inspection Charade	16 July	951	William Tobey (a former deputy administrator for defence nuclear non-proliferation at the National Nuclear Security Administration and a senior fellow at Belfer Center)
	Obama Pours Gas on the Mideast Fire	17 July	945	Karen Elliott House (a journalist and managing editor)
New York Post	Obama and Kerry crossed every one of their own red lines	14 July	770	Michael Rubin (an academic at the American Enterprise Institute and a former official at Pentagon)
	How Obama Kneecapped the US Congress on Iran — Again	20 July	652	Rich Lowry (an editor of <i>National Review</i> , a columnist and an author)
	Why the Iran Deal is in Danger	22 July	714	John Podhoretz (an editor of <i>Commentary</i> magazine, a columnist and an author)
	Why the Iran Deal's Public Support is Plummeting	28 July	728	John Podhoretz (an editor of <i>Commentary</i> magazine, a columnist and an author)

The total amount of collected data (op-eds and editorials) equalled 15,259 words. Completing the data collection phase, I read the collected articles, newspaper by newspaper, to gain an overall understanding of them and then embarked on designing analytical and interpretive models for the study.

4.2.6. Sample limitation

In spite of all the explanation given above regarding reasons for choosing a specific timeframe and selected newspapers as well as difficulties of data collection, the small number of samples (20 articles) gathered for the analysis still affects both outcomes of the research and the scope of claims. This means that, given the limited number of the samples, findings of the research can be held to count only for the data set (20 opinion pieces from the four newspapers), topic (Iran nuclear deal), and the period (14 to 31 of July 2015) under study. They cannot necessarily be generalised to these

newspapers as their typical characteristics or be extended to any other articles published in these papers on the same topic but outside this timeframe.

4.3. Elites and Media in the U.S.

The relationship between media and elites is a bilateral one. Generally, political elites, including state and non-state elites, are known to be dependent on media as a platform for self-display, and media are considered to need elites as sources of information. As a result of this co-dependency, media and political elites are capable of exerting influence on each other. The power of media, as examined in the literature, arises from its *mediatisation* and *agenda-setting* functions. The former, according to Van Aelst and Walgrave (2016, p. 2), refers to “how politics has adapted to the rules of media logic”, and the latter is about how media coverage affects political priorities (Van Aelst and Walgrave, 2016). The *CNN effect* is one of the theories that assume an enormous power for media over elites and claims that media are capable of influencing governments and changing political agendas through their coverage of humanitarian issues (Gowing, 1994; Strobel, 1997). Many policy makers and political leaders agree with this view and claim that “the media wield independent influence on public opinion and policy” (Baum & Potter, 2008, p. 40).

The contrary case to CNN effect is that there is a widespread understanding in communication and media studies that media have no independent power from the state, and they only convey elites’ preferences to the public. *Manufacturing consent* is one of the theories in this regard (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Herman and Chomsky contend that U.S. media “are effective and powerful ideological institutions that carry out a system-supportive propaganda function, by reliance on market forces, internalized assumptions, and self-censorship, and without overt coercion” (P. Robinson, 2001, p. 525). In other words, the political and economic positioning of large news media (e.g. their ownership, their need for getting advertisements, their dependence on the government as the source of news) make them support the dominant elite’s perspectives. Robinson (2001) argues that there are two implicit versions of manufacturing consent, namely an *executive* version and an *elite* version. The former holds that media content conforms with the frames and agendas of the government officials who are referred to as executive members. This means that news

media coverage is in line with administrative interests and policies, and thereby, media are incapable of criticising the government (Entman, 1991; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Philo, Henderson, & McLaughlin, 1993). The elite version of manufacturing consent maintains that media reflect the interests of the elite in general. These elites can be in either the administrative or legislative arms of the government or any other powerful position (Bennett, 1990; Hallin, 1986). In the literature on the media-state nexus, this former version is called the *hegemony* approach, and the latter is the *indexing* approach. The hegemony approach to the media-state relation is founded on the idea that government officials have an agreement to keep the flow of information limited so that they could “produce progovernment propaganda- and public consent or acquiescence to the White House decisions” (Entman, 2004, p. 4). Although the indexing approach takes elite dissent rather than elite agreement as its point of departure, it is similar to the hegemony approach in contending that media are submissive to elites. Based on this view, “when elites disagree about foreign policy, media reflect the discord in ways that may affect foreign policy, and that means their role, though still limited, transcends mere transmission of propaganda” (Entman, 2004, p. 4).

Entman (2004) proposed a *cascading* model as another way of theorising state-media relations that could compensate for the deficiencies of hegemony and indexing models. Entman’s model is based on the concept of *frame*, that is “selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation and/or solution” (Entman, 2004, p. 5). According to this model, official frames from the White House cascade downward to non-administration elites, then to media elites, and finally to the public. However, not all official frames are accepted and disseminated to the public by political and media elites. The success of a frame in spreading down depends on the availability of four variables of *motivation*, *cultural congruence*, *power* and *strategy*. Otherwise, the frame activated by the White House can be challenged by non-administration and media elites at lower levels of stratification and, thereby, the public. In this case media deviate from their government-supportive function and focus on political disagreements.

In a similar vein, Van Aelst and Walgrave (2016) believe that, from an actor-perspective, political actors can take advantage of media rather than being subservient to media. In other words, politicians use media for their own interests. From this perspective, media serve political elites in two ways; by providing them with information and by providing them with an arena for communication.

Given the rapid spread of information in the world and the limited capacity of human cognition, the information-providing function of media can greatly help politicians by working as a filter that delivers the most important data including what issues are the centre of public attention in society. Based on such information, they get raw material for their own actions and statements and for promoting their goals and plans. Media as a political arena is used by politicians for self-promotion and issue-promotion. According to Van Aelst and Walgrave (2016), politicians use media to promote themselves. The more they are covered in media, the more they are in the public eye and, thereby, can get public attention. In addition, through media, politicians can tell their own stories or their own versions of stories. In this way, they can “‘spin’ an issue to their own advantage, define it in a way that benefits them and the policies they favour” (Van Aelst and Walgrave, 2016, p. 9).

Overall, there is no agreed-upon understanding regarding media-elites or media-state relations. Literature includes a variety of models and theories ranging from those that consider media as powerful mediating institutes influencing states and elites’ policies and agendas to those that see media as ideological apparatus serving elites and the state. These two understandings of media-elite relation are highly affected by notions of political power and economic forces (i.e. political economy). In other words, the former view pays special attention to the position of media as powerful economic institutes (e.g. Murdoch’ media giant) that are capable of influencing political processes through their privileged access to the public. The latter, however, gives priority to the power of the state as the omnipotent ruling institute and dependency of media on it for both financial and political support. Between the two extreme ends of the spectrum, there are some ideas like cascading model that do not necessarily see the media-elite nexus as a simple one-way power relation but a complex two-way relation determined by a bundle of variables.

4.4. Journalism Ethics and Norms of Public Discourse

Ethics as a branch of philosophy concerns moral rules and norms of human conduct and interaction. Journalism ethics is a part of applied ethics and concerns “analysis of the practice of journalism, and the application of its principles to situations and issues” (Ward, 2008, p. 139). According to Ward (2008), at the micro level, the problem of journalism ethics is “what individual journalists should do in particular situations”, and at the macro level, the question is “what media should do” in general, given their role in society (p. 139). Journalism ethics typically deals with issues such as freedom of speech, objectivity, fairness, bias, representing minorities, accuracy, independence, transparency, etc.

According to Ward (2008), since the emergence of journalism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there have been several stages of journalism ethics. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, truth-seeking and impartial journalism were considered as the ethical norms of journalistic practice. In other words, objective journalism was the popular brand. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, protecting the public’s liberty against the government and educating the public were the journalistic values. Mission of journalism was to serve the public and the idea of the press as the Fourth State (the term refers to the idea that although the press are not formally recognised as part of the political system, they enjoy a significant social influence) was popular in this era (Ward, 2008). During the twentieth century, the ideal of the free press as the protector of liberal democracy was modified by different groups. On the one hand, there were objectivists who were concerned about the power of the press and believed that objectivity and impartiality should be applied to protect the free press from sensationalism and domination of business interests (return to 16th and 17th centuries ideals). On the other, some journalists rejected objective reporting and asked for more interpretive and activist forms of journalism. Moreover, critical theories such as feminist, post-colonial, and post-modern theories have questioned liberal ethics of journalism on the basis of being male dominated, Euro-centric, individualistic, and universal.

Apart from the above general trends of journalism ethics, there are more subtle values and norms suggested for journalistic practices. For example, in the journalistic creed

written by Walter Williams in 1914 that is also hanged at the National Press Club in Washington, a set of principles and values have been proposed for good journalism, including clear thinking, clear statement, accuracy, and fairness. According to Williams as stated in Farrar (2013), a journalist should write what he holds in his heart to be true and should not write what he does not say as a gentleman. He also states that the main criterion of good journalism is public service. Other values he mentions for a successful journalism is fearing God, honouring man, and being constructive, tolerant, self-controlled, and respectful. Overall, Williams believes that a good journalism is the journalism of humanity.

Williams' principles are very similar to the norms of public discourse that are universal moral values that should be considered in all human public interactions. Public discourse is "speeches, publications, and any other statements made in the pursuit of the public good" (Sellers, 2003, p.2). Based on this definition, Journalism is also a part of public discourse and should follow general norms of public discourse. Norms of public discourse similar to Williams' principles of journalism constitute *civility*. The word civility means civilised conduct especially politeness or courtesy. Nevertheless, civil behaviour is more than just being polite. It includes a range of principles for public deliberation such as seeking common grounds, disagreeing without disrespect, listening past one's preconceptions. Incivility, on the other hand, refers to rudeness, self-righteousness, and chauvinism that violate the standards of public discourse (Sellers, 2003).

4.5. Analytical and Interpretive Frameworks

As stated above in section 4.1., the two broad objectives of the research were to find out how the four selected newspapers represented, evaluated and took positions towards the Iran nuclear deal, and to find out how the newspapers' representations were influenced by and sought to influence the existing socio-political processes/structures. Referring to research objectives is important because, according to van Dijk (2013), a good method should be appropriate for research aims, goals and the type of data. That is why CDS neither emphasises a specific method of analysis nor believes in the necessity of such a unified method (van Dijk, 2013). This

methodological flexibility has both merits and demerits. While it gives researchers freedom to design their studies according to their specific objectives and types of data, lack of methodological orthodoxy may leave researchers, especially novices, confused about how to frame their studies or how to conduct data analysis. Consequently, this research project, like other CDS research, had to choose either one or a combination of several established analytical models or had to create its own, based on its research questions. To make a decision in this regard, I went through several stages of inquiry. The first step was to consider my research objectives and the type of data involved so that I could decide whether or not any existing CDS method suited my research. In addition to the above objectives, the media genre that I had chosen to study (opinion discourse) had specific features that required attention. Two important characteristics of opinion discourse are being *argumentative* and being *evaluative* (van Dijk, 2013). Each of these features was suggestive of other qualities of opinion discourse. For example, argumentativeness entails **persuasion** and persuasion needs **engagement** with other people and opinions since the ultimate aim of argumentation is persuading others to accept your opinion. Being evaluative, as the other characteristic of an opinion discourse, means drawing on **beliefs**, **norms** and **values**. Our beliefs, norms and values are, in turn, based on our **ideologies** and **interests**. Accordingly, I needed an analytical framework that could cover all these aspects of the opinion discourse and achieve my research objectives as well.

With these aims in mind, I conducted an extensive review of the literature in the field of CDS (see the section on CDS in Chapter Three). Prominent approaches to CDS, including the Discourse-Historical approach – DHA – (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, 2016; Wodak, 2001a), the Dialectal-Relational approach –DRA – (N. Fairclough, 2001a, 2003, 2009, 2016) and the Socio-Cognitive approach – SCA – (van Dijk, 2001b, 2009, 2016), were studied closely. Working within the school of CDS, all these approaches emphasise the necessity of investigating both textual and contextual as well as intertextual properties of discourses under study; they also recommend a two or three-stepped process of analysis, interpretation and explanation. I followed the same procedure by defining two levels for my study: textual and contextual. Intertextual analysis was incorporated into the textual level here. Since one dimension of

discourse, especially persuasive discourse, is its dialogue with other opinions/opinion-holders (intertextuality), intertextuality was examined as part of dialogic structure. In addition, while investigating the argumentative and representational dimensions of articles, I also examined how they drew on or refuted texts produced by other people. For the process of textual analysis, however, each of the three approaches scrutinises the texts differently. This is partly, as mentioned above, caused by the diversity of the field and the variety of data chosen for study, with each requiring a unique set of tools for investigation. While all three approaches offer interesting models of textual analysis, none embraces all the features and dimensions I intended to investigate.

The closest option for my study was the discourse-historical approach. DHA recommends analysis of five categories: *referential* (actor description), *predicational* (action description), *argumentation*, *perspectivisation* and *intensification* or *mitigation* strategies. Though these categories were part of what I intended to examine in my data, they were not comprehensive enough to cover all I was looking for. Being more like a collection of possible tools for examining a text rather than an all-embracing configuration of different textual aspects of a discourse, they seemed to lack an overarching structure. This was particularly problematic for studying the specific type of data I had chosen to investigate (newspaper opinion pieces). Consequently, I decided to expand on the existing approaches by developing an analytical approach that could respond to the needs of this study, including its objectives and the specific features of the genre under study (newspaper opinion discourses).

Therefore, the next step was to convert the objectives into research questions that could cover features of opinion discourse as well. This way, I could construct a model that gave structure and order to my analysis. Thus, the following five questions were developed for the research:

RQ 1: In what ways was social reality regarding the Iran nuclear dispute (social actors, actions, and phenomena) constructed differently in the discourse of the four newspapers?

RQ 2: In what ways did the different authors employ different strategies to engage with readers as well as opinion-holders and did they express different values and norms?

RQ 3: What positions did the authors take on the Iran nuclear dispute and how did they support their positions?

RQ 4: How did social structures appear to influence opinion discourses?

RQ 5: How did opinion discourses seek to influence social structures?

4.5.1. Textual level

The first three research questions that the study was expected to answer related to the textual aspect of discourse but each to a different dimension. This first question aimed at investigating the ways in which the situation related to the Iran nuclear deal was discursively constructed or pictured in each sample article and, consequently, in each newspaper. In other words, it intended to show how the authors represented the situation to their readers. The second question enquired about how the authors positioned themselves towards the situation that they pictured as either normal or problematic. It also examined the ways in which the authors argued for their positions. The third question dealt with interactional aspects of the texts as, on the one hand, it asked how the authors built relationships with their readers while, on the other hand, it investigated how the authors engaged with alternative or opposing points of view (intertextuality). Overall, these three questions respectively focused on *representational*, *argumentative* and *dialogic* structures of the article texts. Examination of these three structures seems to offer a comprehensive view of textual properties of the opinion discourse and, thereby, organise the process of textual analysis.

Specifying the overall structure of the model at the textual level, I needed to *operationalise* (Wodak, 2016) the abstract concepts of representational, argumentative and dialogic structures. Operationalisation of these concepts required identifying what linguistic or rhetorical devices could stand for and realising them. To find appropriate analytical devices, I pursued two strategies: conducting an in-depth, bottom-up analysis of several sample articles so that I could identify the most

noticeable discursive features of the texts; and exploring other discourse-orientated fields to find out how they approach the task of text analysis and how those approaches might be applied to my own research. These fields included *Classical Rhetoric* (Braet, 1992; Corbett, 1963; Kennedy, 1994; Leach, 2000), *Argumentation Theory* (I. Fairclough & Fairclough, 2013; Walton, 1989, 1996, 2007; Walton, Reed, & Macagno, 2008), *Systemic Functional Linguistics* (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2008; Martin & White, 2005; van Leeuwen, 2008), *Academic Discourse* (K. Hyland, 2005, 2010) and *Political Metaphor Analysis* (Charteris-Black, 2005, 2012, 2013; Edelman, 2013). Studying Classical Rhetoric, I detected the similarity between the three textual structures I defined for the opinion discourse and Aristotle's three modes of persuasion. As explained in chapter three (3.2.), according to Aristotle's ideas in classical rhetoric, each text should draw on three modes of persuasion in order to be appealing to its audience: *pathos* (audience's emotions), *ethos* (speaker's character), *logos* (reason). The first mode of persuasion (*pathos*), as defined in rhetoric, is linked, in a cause–effect relationship, to the representational structure as the former is triggered through the latter. In other words, the use of discursive and rhetorical strategies for representing people or events can arouse readers' feelings (see chapter five). *Ethos* from rhetoric specifies similar interactional aspects of discourse as does the dialogic structure. *Ethos* itself comprises the three elements of *good will*, *good sense* and *virtue*; respectively, these correspond to the three dialogical dimensions in my analytical framework, namely *engaging*, *stancing* and *commenting* (see chapter six). Finally, *logos* corresponds to the argumentative structure in my approach. They both refer to the use of rational arguments for convincing others to accept a point or take an action. This similarity both made me more confident about the practicality/appropriateness of the designed model and gave me an opportunity to enrich and modify it by drawing on ideas from classical rhetoric.

In addition to classical rhetoric, other theories and fields offered me crucial insights as to what might be incorporated into my analytical framework. Argumentation theory provided me with structures and models of argument as well as a list of argumentation schemes (topoi). The appraisal model of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and meta-discourse markers in academic discourse provided me with ideas about how to study

dialogue in discourse. Van Leeuwen's socio-semantic network of social representation familiarised me with different types of social agency and their linguistic realisations in discourse. Political Metaphor Analysis offered me an understanding of the role of metaphor in representing a biased and emotionalised picture of political reality. Overall, the outcomes of this extensive inquiry helped me choose discursive devices that seemed most demonstrative of each textual structure (*representational*, *argumentative* and *dialogical*). These devices were personalisation/impersonalisation of social agents, activation/passivation of social agents, verb processes, argumentation schemes, meta-discourse markers, presupposition and conceptual metaphor, etc. Each of these devices pertained to a particular structure. For example, different categories of social agency and verb processes could demonstrate how social actors were represented (representational structure). Meta-discourse markers could help identify which self-images the authors aimed to display and how they engaged with their readers as well as with other opinions (dialogic structure). Finally, argumentation schemes could indicate which claims the authors made about the issue and how they supported their claims (argumentative structure).

4.5.2. Contextual level

The last two research questions designed for this study related to its second objective as they were concerned with the contextual level of the research. Society or the social structure referred to in these questions included all the contextual factors that influenced the texts and were influenced by it. Generally, context can be defined at two levels: the immediate context of the situation and the macro-political, cultural and social structures of society. The first contextual level refers to the characteristics of the communicative event, such as the setting, the type of the activity, its purpose, and the participants' relationships and social positions. The macro-contextual level is where the influence of higher-order social factors on discourse and the role of discourse in maintaining or transforming those social structures are identified and explicated. These two senses of the concept of context also needed to be operationalised so that they could be examined properly. The immediate context of the situation seemed to be best realised through information about the authors, the genre of the article, the newspaper organisations and their putative readers.

Therefore, collecting background information about the authors and newspaper organisations and their respective readerships constituted an essential part of the study. The macro-contextual level, on the other hand, seemed to operate through concepts of national identity, power relations at national and global levels, security, ideology, myth and hegemony. Therefore, I needed to review the relevant literature in the fields of politics and international relations to gain information about the system of national and international power relations, American ideologies and political myths, and, especially, perceptions about security and construction of security threats in international relations (Anderson, 1991; Beasley, 2010; Huntington, 1997, 1999; Hutcheson, Domke, Billeaudeau, & Garland, 2004; Marsden, 2011; Midgley, 2007; Svein Stugu, 2003). One of the areas that came across as a result of this investigation was the relatively new field of securitisation studies (from latter 1980s and 1990s) that had involved discourse analysis in its study of national and international security. As a result of familiarity with securitisation theory, I realised that opinion discourses I was working on could be seen as a part of a larger and longer process in politics that was called de/securitisation. Through this framework, I explained how newspaper discourses endeavoured to constitute American society especially the U.S.' foreign policy by either securitising or desecuritising Iran. In fact, securitisation or de-securitisation are considered two forms of political actions that are primarily discursive; they are examples of how discourse does a political job or, in CDS' terms, how discourse constitutes society.

Endorsing van Dijk's (2009) assertion that cognition is the interface between society and discourse, I attempted to demonstrate the process through which the above social factors seemed to influence authors' perceptions of Iran and subsequently, their discourses and the ways in which the produced discourse could reinforce or resist those social structures in addition to conducting some political actions. In order to clarify the latter part of the process, I drew on securitisation theory (Balzacq, 2009, 2011b; Balzacq et al., 2016). Overall, the analysis at this stage was concerned with the social, ideological and hegemonic practices prevalent in society and how they shaped and were shaped by discursive practices.

4.6. Interpretive Arc

This research was conducted in two phases: the first was analysis and interpretation (Analysis and Understanding in Interpretive Arc); and the second was critique and explanation (Ownership in Interpretive Arc). In conducting this research project, I followed the steps specified in Bell's (2011) *Interpretive Arc* as I found it very practical and enlightening. In his volume-length article published in the journal *Discourse & Society*, Bell suggests that the label 'discourse *analysis*' be replaced by the concept 'discourse *interpretation*' for referring to 'our field'. He introduces interpretation as "the heart of discourse work" (p. 519), adopts the term interpretive arc from philosophical hermeneutics (Ricoeur, 1981) and adapts it for use in discourse studies. He argues that employing the interpretive arc helps in dealing with a persistent issue faced by all discourse analysts (and one of the thorny critiques against CDS) that is justification or validation of the interpretation (how can we be sure that our interpretation of a text is adequate and valid?). According to him, working through the steps of the interpretive arc, we arrive at an informed understanding of the text and eventually "a new self formed by the matter of the text" (Bell, 2011, p. 519).

The interpretive arc consists of six phases; the first three phases are pre-analytical and the last three are post-analytical. Phase 1 is Estrangement and refers to the distance between the text and the reader – discourse analyst, in this case – which results from the written or technological form of communication as opposed to the closeness of the speech. Phase 2 is Pre-view or the knowledge and opinions that the analyst already possesses, comprising world views, ideologies, information, etc. Pre-view is similar to the concept of reflexivity in qualitative research that stresses the importance of the researcher's reflection on his/her own attitudes or biases brought about by his/her *situatedness* in a specific geographical, cultural, religious and even economic context. In my case as a researcher (a discourse analyst), all my chosen and unchosen personal and social characteristics, including being an Iranian and a Muslim, a woman and an academic, a pacifist and a social activist, and born in an unreligious and economically middle-class family, have possibly influenced my research by placing me in "a position of prejudice towards the matter of the text" (Bell, 2011, p. 530). Following the steps

of the interpretive arc, however, I attempted to reduce the effect of these unwanted variables.

Phase 3 refers to the analyst's Proto-understanding or his/her 'initial guess', after the first reading of the text, brought about by his/her 'prior knowledge or positioning'. I went through this phase during the first year of my study when I was reading my sample articles for the first time and was forming an overview of them based on my knowledge of the issue (Iran's nuclear programme) as well as my familiarity with the American political context and Iran-U.S. relationship. The proto or initial understanding is then tested and compared to alternative readings of the text through the next step that is Analysis (phase 4). Here, different interpretations of the text are assessed for validity so that the number of possible plausible interpretations can be limited. Phase 5 refers to the Understanding which results from Analysis. Phases 4 and 5 are, indeed, in a cyclic rather than a linear relationship. In other words, these two phases cannot be separated as they inform each other reciprocally.

The two latter phases were enacted in my three analytical chapters where the representational, argumentative and dialogic features of the sample texts were examined through the selected discursive devices (social agency and action, presuppositions, argumentation schemes, meta-discourse markers, etc.). This means that all instances of social actors, and their attributed processes, presuppositions, argumentation schemes and meta-discourse markers, were identified and interpreted in terms of their contribution to the texts' ultimate goals. In other words, I examined how they helped the authors to create specific pictures of the situation related to the Iran nuclear issue, how they supported the positions taken by the authors towards the nuclear deal, and how they shaped the authors' interactions with readers and other opinions. All these textual properties of sample articles were interpreted in light of the immediate context of situation. In other words, the possible impacts of several factors of the communicative event, such as the authors' backgrounds and positions, the newspapers' political stands, and the socio-economic classes and ideological tendencies of their readerships on the discourse of the articles were discussed. These findings were presented, feature by feature, in three *representational*, *argumentative* and *dialogic* chapters. At the end of each chapter, a cross-newspaper comparison was

conducted. Here, I compared and contrasted discourses of the four newspapers with the aim of finding out whether or not there were any similarities or differences across the papers regarding their representations of the issue, their interactions with readers as well as alternative opinions, their positions towards the issue and the discursive strategies they employed.

Finally, the process of interpretation is completed at phase 6 of the interpretive arc – Ownership. Here, according to Bell (2011, p. 519), “through processes of critique of their own and the text’s ideologies and of fresh listening, readers are led to a new self formed by the matter of the text”. This last step was reported in chapters eight and nine of this research project (De/securitising Iran in American newspapers and conclusion). Carrying out the analysis and interpretation of the 20 sample articles (16 opinion articles and four editorials), findings were put in the broader socio-political context and were discussed in terms of the mutual relationship between discourse and social structures. The critical dimension of this research became evident in this phase that revealed how social relations were manifested in discourse and how discourse contributed to or fought against reproduction of those relations. On the one hand, I showed which political and cultural myths and ideologies were incorporated in the discourse of the opinion articles and editorials under study and, on the other hand, I explained the roles that these newspaper discourses had in the broader political field. Drawing on a constructivist theory of International Relations (securitisation theory), I explained: whether the discourses of these newspapers worked to *securitise* or to *de-securitise* Iran’s nuclear programme/deal; how they attempted to achieve their goals of securitisation or de-securitisation; and, finally, why they intended to do so.

4.7. Analytical Procedure

Adopting the interpretive arc as a procedural plan/road map, I embarked on the analysis of the sample articles (phases 4 and 5 of the interpretive arc). Firstly, I read articles from each newspaper one by one to grasp an overall understanding of their opinions and positions regarding the nuclear deal. Upon this initial reading, I realised that all newspapers – with the exception of *USA Today* – were on either the pro-deal

or the anti-deal side of the dispute. Therefore, I classified them into two broad categories of pro and anti-deal corpuses. After this preliminary stage, I started a pilot analysis of a few samples according to the designed analytical models. Generally, I pursued two approaches towards textual analysis of data. On the one hand, I carried out a detailed investigation to identify instances of specific linguistic categories, such as meta-discourse markers, verb processes, activation/passivation, etc. This bottom-up analysis was employed mainly for examination of the representational and dialogic features of the articles. On the other hand, I followed a holistic top-down approach in examining the augmentative structures of articles. This means that I read each article as a whole in order to discover its argumentative points comprising main, meso and micro-topics and, then, proceeded to identify constituents that made up the argumentation structures of the articles (premises, argumentation scheme and conclusion). When the practicality of the analytical framework was approved by my supervisors, I continued to employ it for analysing the rest of the samples. Examining each textual dimension (argumentation, representation, and dialogue) in all the sample articles, I summarised and presented the findings for each newspaper separately and, finally, compared and contrasted the findings across the four papers.

In the next three chapters (chapters five, six and seven), analyses and findings related to each textual structure are presented. Each of these analytical chapters focuses on one dimension of the opinion discourse.

Chapter Five

Analysis of Representational Features

As discussed in relation to Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) in chapter three (3.1. and 3.2.2), discourse analysis is mainly about *representation* (how social reality is constructed discursively through representation). To put it another way, discourse analysts working within the school of CDS are keen to explore the ways in which holding different values, norms, interests and ideologies results in different narrations (constructions) of a single event or phenomenon. Representation is also very important from the perspective of securitisation theory. As explained in chapter three (3.3), securitisation is about how existential threats to valued objects are constructed through discourse. Thus, one major step in the process of securitisation is representing the *referent subject* and *referent object*. Therefore, scrutinising the representational dimension of the newspapers' discourses constitutes a central part of this research. In doing so, my aim is to discover the ways in which each newspaper represented the issue of the Iran nuclear deal, including the deal itself, the negotiations leading to the deal, the negotiating countries and the deal-makers—all together constructing the desired images of referent subjects and referent objects.

Countries or institutions that were directly or indirectly involved in Iran's nuclear negotiations and in the achievement of the deal (the social practice under study) were Iran, members of the United Nations Security Council (U.S., U.K., France, Russia and China), Germany, the European Union, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Saudi Arabia (the Arab states) and Israel. The last two countries were not part of the negotiating teams but were extremely concerned about Iran's nuclear programme and actively involved in the debate regarding the result of negotiations. Iran sat on one side of the negotiation table and on the other side sat the five members of the UN Security Council and Germany (known as the 'P5+1 countries'), along with the European Union and IAEA. Accordingly, any discursive account of this social practice is expected to include all or some of the above social actors (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1. List of countries and organisations involved in Iran's nuclear negotiations

Directly involved countries	Iran, U.S., U.K., France, Russia, China, Germany
International organisations	European Union, International Atomic Energy Agency
Indirectly involved countries	Saudi Arabia, Israel

In addition to the political entities (nation-states and international organisations) that were treated as social actors in the newspapers' discourses, the agreement deal itself was sometimes given the role of a social actor, capable of carrying out different actions. However, it should be noted that most of the actions apparently attributed to the deal (specifically, active material or verbal processes) were, in fact, ascribed to the deal-makers, especially to one of the groups on the American side of the deal (President Obama's administration). To put it another way, the newspapers' authors adopted two approaches in their discussions of the deal. While some authors openly introduced President Obama and his administration as the ones responsible for any merits or demerits of the deal in their discussions (explicit approach), some others assessed the deal, its terms, conditions and outcomes without much reference to the deal-makers (implicit approach). The former group directed their blame or praise on the cause (deal-makers) but the latter group focused on admiring or criticising the effect (the deal). Therefore, there were two senses of the deal in the corpus of articles: a substitute for American negotiators (a social actor) and a political document (an object). In cases where the deal was activated in material or verbal processes, the real agent of actions was the group of American deal-makers (or the West in general) and, where it was passivated (object/patient of a process) or descriptivised (van Leeuwen (2008) calls activation through relational process *descriptivisation*), it was treated as an object (a political document). As a result of the above complexities in representation of the nuclear deal and since the deal was the product of negotiations (an object) not a social actor like nation-states or organisations, I will discuss it separately in section 5.6.

Another point to be made is that some of the nation-states represented as social actors in the newspapers embraced two or more groups as their representatives. In other words, some of the newspapers distinguished and described different groups of

social actors within some of the countries named above. Particularly in case of the U.S., newspapers differentiated President Obama and his administration from other American groups such as the Congress or the people (this will be illustrated in each section).

In light of the above discussion, this chapter examines the representation of different social actors in each of the four newspapers with the purpose of discerning the bigger picture of the event (the Iran nuclear issue) presented by each newspaper. I will demonstrate each newspaper's specific construction of the event founded on the representation of some social actors as the referent subjects, and others as referent objects. I will show how each newspaper offered a different portrayal of the event with a different network of relationships held within it, leading to either complete securitisation or semi-securitisation (desecuritisation) of the nuclear issue. To uncover these constructions, I conducted a detailed, bottom-up analysis of actor and action representations by drawing on van Leeuwen (2008); then, I combined the findings from each paper to identify which specific map of the world it presented.

The first phase of analysis begins with the dichotomy of inclusion/exclusion. Here, I identify those social actors who were included in and those who were excluded from the discourse of each newspaper. According to van Leeuwen (2008), exclusion can be in the form of either suppression (complete absence) or backgrounding (absence in relation to specific activities). After identification of social actors included in a discourse and discussion of the reasons for exclusion of other social actors, the next step was an examination of the ways in which social actors were introduced and the roles attributed to them across the four newspapers. This is called *actor* and *action* representation by van Leeuwen (2008) or *nomination* and *predication* strategies by Reisigl and Wodak (2016). In addition to social actors, the representation of the nuclear deal itself will be examined across newspapers. Finally, I bring these separate findings together to demonstrate the ways in which different actors worked together in networks of relationships to construct specific accounts of the event; here, those networks are called *world maps*.

In the second phase, I examine the headlines of pro and anti-deal articles to find out how they, as the eye-catching parts of the articles, draw on emotionalised elements

as well as ideological perspectives to look appealing to the readers. Here, I will consider the authors' application of rhetorical devices, such as metaphors, hyperbole, presuppositions and word choices, and their role in constructing emotionalised discourses (emotionalisation of discourse will be discussed more fully in chapter eight).

5.1. Inclusion/Exclusion of Social Actors across Newspapers

In this section, I present a brief summary of each paper's *included* and *excluded* social actors. This enables an understanding of which parties were considered responsible or effective in the social practice (the nuclear negotiations) from the perspectives of the newspapers.

Most of the 11 countries and organisations (called social actors in this study) named above were almost excluded in *The Wall Street Journal's* opinion discourse. U.K., France and Germany were totally suppressed. They were implied only three times in the phrase *European Union* (EU) and once in *the West*. Russia and China, which were positioned on Iran's side by *The Wall Street Journal* authors, were mentioned only a few times (six and two times respectively). While being members of the 'P5+1 countries', Russia and China were *associated* with Iran and, as a result, *dissociated* from the group comprising the U.S. and the three European countries. Israel and Saudi Arabia were mentioned only once in four of the articles in *The Wall Street Journal*. However, in one article written specifically about the consequences of the deal for Saudi Arabia, that country was referred to 29 times and, also, Israel was mentioned seven times. These two countries formed another association that cooperated against Iran. They were *associated* with the U.S. as well. Finally, IAEA was mentioned 14 times in two articles dealing with the nuclear inspection procedures and excluded from the rest. On the whole, Iran, the U.S. (Obama/his administration and America as a nation-state) and, to some extent, Saudi Arabia were the main and most frequently mentioned social actors in *The Wall Street Journal* (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2. Presence of social actors in *The Wall Street Journal*

Social actors	Iran	U.S.	Saudi	IAEA	Israel	Russia	China	Europe
No. of occurrences	136	54	30	14	7	6	2	4

In *The New York Times'* articles, the European negotiators, including the EU and the three countries (U.K., France and Germany), were, again, completely suppressed. The only implicit reference to those countries was in two general phrases – *major world powers* and *world leaders* – that embraced those European countries as well as the U.S., Russia and China. Reference to Russia, China, Saudi Arabia and IAEA was also almost suppressed. It seems that these eight social actors were excluded from *The New York Times'* discourse. Major social actors in this paper were Iran (including moderate officials, Iranian youths and the revolutionary guard/the Supreme leader), Israel and the U.S. (consisting of Obama and his administration, America as a nation-state and American critics). The numbers of occurrences of the social actors in the paper are shown in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3. Presence of social actors in *The New York Times*

Social actors	Iran	U.S.	Israel	Saudi	IAEA	Russia	China	Europe
No. of occurrences	101	55	44	3	5	2	1	0

The discourse of the *New York Post* on the Iran nuclear issue embraced only two social actors: Iran and the U.S. (Obama/his administration, the American public and the Congress). Other social actors who had a role in the social practice (the nuclear negotiation) were completely absent/suppressed in the discursive practice (discourse about the deal) presented by this paper. The excluded social actors were European countries, Russia, China, Israel, IAEA and Saudi Arabia (some were mentioned once in the newspaper's corpus). From among the included actors, the U.S. had the most salient presence (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4. Presence of social actors in the New York Post

Social actors	Iran	U.S.	IAEA	Saudi	Israel	Russia	China	Europe
No. of occurrences	70	147	2	1	1	1	1	2

In *USA Today*, Europe and China were almost entirely excluded (this was similar to their exclusion from the other three newspapers). They were mentioned in only one of the five *USA Today* articles. However, contrary to what was noted in *The New York Times* and the *New York Post*, Saudi Arabia and Russia were, to some extent, present in this paper (see Table 5 below). Moreover, unlike the other three papers that focused mostly on Saudi Arabia, *USA Today* mentioned this country along with other Arab states, like the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, in three articles. Russia was also present in two articles. The remaining three social actors, including Iran, the U.S. (Obama/his administration, America as a nation-state and the U.S. Congress) and Israel (Netanyahu/his government and Israel as a nation-state) were noticeably present in *USA Today* (Table 5.5).

Table 5.5. Presence of social actors in USA Today

Social actors	Iran	U.S.	Israel	Saudi	IAEA	Russia	China	Europe
No. of occurrences	106	85	39	14	5	8	3	1

Regarding the representation of social actors, *USA Today* was different from the other three newspapers because its articles were not ideologically homogenous. *USA Today's* articles covered both pro and anti-deal perspectives (see section 4.2.3 above). While its editorial was advocative to the deal, three out of its four opinion articles were against the deal. These differences of attitude led to different representations for each social actor.

5.1.1. Why are social actors excluded from discourse?

The decision to exclude some social actors through *suppressing* or *backgrounding* can be made in response to a variety of factors. As mentioned before in chapter three (section 3.2.2), the terms suppression and backgrounding describe different degrees

of exclusion. While in suppression there is no trace of a social actor in the text, backgrounding conceals the social actor's role in relation to specific actions or events. In the latter case, the author aims to de-emphasise the presence or the influence of the social actor in the social event. In these cases, actions of the social actor are mostly presented through *possessivation* (e.g. our control on...) or *nominalisations* (e.g. U.S. protection of...).

Regarding suppression, the authors' decisions may be driven by completely divergent intentions. An author may suppress some social actors because of the perception that those social actors did not play any significant roles in the social practice or, on the contrary, with the intention of obscuring their roles in the given social practice. While suppression of the European side of the negotiations (including U.K., France, Germany and the EU) can be associated with the former view, suppression of Israel in some of the articles, especially those from the *New York Post* and *The Wall Street Journal* (anti-deal newspapers), can be interpreted in the latter way. All the newspapers, whether they were pro or anti-deal, excluded the European negotiators from their discussions of the issue (there were only seven references to Europe in 20 articles). This means that, from the perspectives of the American newspapers, Europe did not have a decisive role in the negotiations. In other words, they viewed the whole situation as a confrontation between Iran and the U.S. with other countries, such as the European nations, Russia, China, Israel and the Arab states, either benefiting from the situation or being negatively affected by it. While the anti-deal articles described the situation as favouring the first three (Europe, Russia and China) and affecting Israel and the Arab Nations, pro-deal articles usually represented it as favouring Israel and the Arab Nations and were silent about the roles or situations of Europe, Russia and China.

Regarding the suppression of Israel in anti-deal newspapers, from among 10 articles collected from these two newspapers, seven did not mention it at all (four from the *New York Post* and three from *The Wall Street Journal*). From the remaining three articles, one (from the *New York Post*) referred to Israel only once and the other two (from *The Wall Street Journal*) mentioned it seven times in total. Anti-deal newspapers probably preferred to be silent about Israel and its role in the negotiations and its position on the deal so that they could argue that their disagreement with the deal

was because of its danger for the whole world rather than because of their worries about their Israeli friends. In other words, suppressing Israel seemed to be their strategy for avoiding accusations such as that they were under pressure from Israeli lobbies or that they were trying to appease them. They meant to show that their opposition to the deal had nothing to do with their close relationships with Israeli officials or groups. These papers endeavoured to represent 'opposition to the deal' solely as 'an American matter' and related to American national interests.

Having identified who the present social actors were in each newspaper discourse and which were excluded, I embark on a comprehensive linguistic analysis of the social agency in each newspaper. This detailed scrutiny of the mechanisms of the presence of social actors helps me to identify the degree and the type of their social agency as constructed by each newspaper. In other words, this bottom-up examination contributes to understanding the nuances of newspapers' discursive constructions of reality.

5.2. Representation of Iran across Newspapers

Predictably, Iran was the most recurrent social actor in the corpus of newspapers with more than 400 references. Its most salient presence was in *The Wall Street Journal* (136 times) and its least-noticeable presence was in the *New York Post* (70 times).

5.2.1. *The Wall Street Journal*

Iran was typically *collectivised* in *The Wall Street Journal* through the collective nouns *Iran* or *Iranians* (more than 100 times) or, sometimes, through metonymy *Tehran* (17 times). Only in five out of 136 cases, was it referred to by the negative label *regime*. There were also a few references to Iranian leaders like the *Supreme Leader*, *President* or *military figures*. In general, Iranians were *assimilated* and treated as a unified collective entity in this newspaper. No differentiation was made between the various political groups in Iran: between the government and the people, or between the administration (led by the President) and the State (led by the Supreme Leader).

Iran, as the key social actor in *The Wall Street Journal*, was mentioned more than was any other actor in the articles. Starting by examining *activation* or *passivation* of this social actor, I noticed that, in more than two-thirds of cases (73%), Iran was appointed

an active role. As explained in chapter three (3.2.2), according to van Leeuwen (2008), activation of a social actor can be realised in different ways. An active social actor can be the agent of a proposition or the agent of an infinitive or a gerund (*participation*), such as in the first excerpt below. Activation can also be realised by prepositions like **by** in ‘by Iran’ and **from** in ‘from Iran’ (*circumstantialisation*) or by premodification and postmodification of nominals or process nouns, such as in the phrases **Iran’s ultimate hostage** and **Iran’s biggest win** (possessivation) as shown in excerpts 2 and 3:

1. A cocky, conventionally armed **Iran increasing regional mischief-making puts** Saudi Arabia in the cross hairs -- of Iran... (*The Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed, 17 July 2015)
2. Also, how does a nuclear deal not wind up **being Iran’s ultimate hostage** in dictating terms for America’s broader Mideast policy? (*The Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)
3. Even that, though, is not **Tehran’s biggest win**. (*The Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed, 15 July 2015)

As the above excerpts display, Iran’s actions were mostly of a material type (material process in the transitivity system). It was the agent of actions such as *increasing mischief, taking hostage, enriching uranium, winning negotiations, blocking inspections, controlling its neighbours*, etc. Indeed, material processes formed about 65 per cent of instances when Iran was presented as an active social actor in the discourse. Overall, Iran was pictured frequently as the perpetrator of misconduct, either independently (as indicated in the above excerpts) or because others helped the country by providing opportunities (excerpts 4 and 5). To put it another way, in addition to its active roles where it made mischief, in half of the cases where Iran was passive (33 instances), it was the object/patient of actions providing it with opportunities (*allow, permit, give, provide*, etc.). The agents of those actions favouring Iran were the *deal, Obama, the U.S, Europe* or *the West*. They were sometimes explicitly mentioned as agents and sometimes were backgrounded. In the two excerpts below, it is the deal contributing to Iran’s negative actions:

4. **The deal permits Iran to build** and test advanced centrifuges. (*The Wall Street Journal* Editorial, 14 July 2015)
5. ... the real and present threat that **a deal would further enhance Iran’s regional stature and its capability to ratchet up** the regime’s exploitation of regional sectarian divisions. (*The Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed, 17 July 2015)

Overall, Iran was represented as the *referent subject* winning negotiations and gaining all the benefits from the nuclear deal in spite of its criminal actions like *cheating, hiding, supporting terrorism, making illegal purchases, etc.*

5.2.2. *The New York Times*

As was the case with *The Wall Street Journal*, in the corpus from *The New York Times*, Iran was the most recurrent social actor (101 times) and was typically referred to with the neutral collective noun *Iran*. Nevertheless, there seemed to be some intentional distinctions made between three or four groups of social actors within Iran. In this regard, there were a few cases of apparently positive nominations, such as *Iranian reformists, moderates in Iran, moderate foreign minister, highly educated society* or *aspirational westward-looking youth*, on the one hand, and some negative labels, such as *regime* (only two times), *pariah, revolutionary guard* and *old guard*, on the other hand. This means that Iranians were not considered to be a homogenous group of people by *The New York Times* authors. On the contrary, *The New York Times* authors displayed an awareness of the diversity of attitudes in Iran's political system; they differentiated between Iranian people and the Iranian government, and they considered these differences in their interpretation and discussion of the issues related to Iran. This recognition of a multifaceted Iran by *The New York Times* authors and the positive views of those writers towards the Iranian people and moderates in Iran (although expressed only a few times) led me to assume that, when they used the collective noun *Iran* in their discussions (mostly for expressing negative attitudes), either they meant the Iranian ruling sect, led by the Supreme leader (rather than moderate officials or the Iranian nation), or they saw these other groups as necessarily dominated by, or incorporated into, the powerful ruling group.

Though Iran was the most frequently stated social actor in *The New York Times*, it was not the most activated social actor (as it was in *The Wall Street Journal*). Iran was finely poised in the middle of the active-passive continuum. The proportion for Iran was 52 per cent active and 48 per cent passive. It becomes more interesting when we realise that, in 25 per cent of the cases, Iran's active role was enforced or allowed by another

actor (mostly by the deal). In other words, in those cases, Iran was both passive and active:

6. While the **agreement will not prevent a determined Iran from building** a nuclear weapon, it will make doing so much harder... (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 15 July 2015)
7. The **deal**... is potentially one of the most consequential accords in recent diplomatic history, with the ability not just **to keep Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon** but also to reshape Middle East politics. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)

In such cases, Iran is initially passive as it is the patient/object that is mainly undergoing restraining actions (material processes) by the deal or by anonymous actors in passive-voice sentences (*being limited, is kept, is prevented, is allowed, etc.*). Those actions were mainly preventing Iran's potential activities (*enriching uranium, building nuclear weapons, destroying the region, etc.*). Consequently, in a quarter of instances, Iran was both passivated and activated (primarily passive and only secondarily active). If we deduct those cases (24 times) from the total cases where Iran was activated in the discourse (56 times), the proportion becomes 35 per cent entirely active to 65 per cent completely passive. This means that Iran was largely represented as submissive in *The New York Times* articles. Even more interestingly, almost all the actions that were conducted with Iran as a passive social actor (except in four cases) had a restrictive and controlling nature, like *preventing, reining in, dealing with, stopping or requiring*. This is contrary to the portrayal in *The Wall Street Journal* where actions imposed on Iran mostly had a liberating nature like *permitting, allowing or providing* – but also, some of the negative actions attributed to Iran (active role) were in the form of unreal conditionals. To put it another way, activation of Iran was sometimes hypothetical (*if Iran cheats, if Iran decides to build nuclear weapon, etc.*) and, apart from those conditionals, the rest of the actions attributed to Iran as an active social actor were asserted as facts:

8. ... many American sanctions will remain in place even after the deal is implemented, including those relating to **Iran's support** for terrorism and its human rights violations. (*The New York Times* Editorial, 14 July 2015)
9. It must be judged on what it set out to do — stop Iran going nuclear — not on whether **Iran has a likeable regime (it does not) or does bad things (it does)**. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)

10. For at least the next decade, Israel will not have to live under **the threat of a nuclear Iran** and will not face the danger of **annihilation**. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 19 July 2015)

As can be seen, Iran was activated either through participation (agent of the proposition in excerpt 9) or through possessivation (nominalisation of the actions in excerpts 8 and 10). Although these actions conducted by Iran were negative, as mentioned above, activation through possessivation does not have the same effect as does activation through participation. According to van Leeuwen (2008), the former de-emphasises or backgrounds the social actor. As such, Iran's active role is not the focus of the propositions in excerpts 8 and 10. To put it briefly, not only was Iran mainly rendered passive as a social actor in *The New York Times* (65%), but some of its active roles were also backgrounded through possessivation. Iran was indeed represented as a past *pariah* that was *reined in* by the deal. *The New York Times* authors acknowledged Iran's *malignant actions*, like its *anti-Israel outbursts*, its *condemnation of America* and its *support of terrorism*; however, they believed that the deal could *put limits on Iran* and prevent it from obtaining a nuclear weapon. In their opinion, without the deal, Iran would be *freed to install more centrifuges* and *do its worst as a pariah*, and *a nuclear Islamic Republic would draw closer*. Based on the above findings, I can argue that *The New York Times*, unlike *The Wall Street Journal*, did not construct the image of Iran as the winner of the negotiations but as a former pariah and a present member of the international community (in an attempt to desecuritise Iran's nuclear programme).

5.2.3. *New York Post*

In the *New York Post*, contrary to the other three newspapers, Iran was not the most frequently mentioned social actor. It was mentioned only 70 times in this paper compared to 147 references to American social actors. However, in a similar way to that of *The Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today*, the *New York Post* treated Iran as an assimilated entity and referred to it by collective nouns like *Iran*, *Iranians* or the metonymy *Tehran*, or by the negative title *Mullahs* (clerics); there was no reference to any specific Iranian official or leader.

Iran's proportion of activeness to passiveness in the *New York Post*, which was similar to that of *The New York Times*, was quite comparable: 53 per cent active to 47 per

cent passive. Again, similar to *The New York Times*, in about one-third of cases, Iran's actions were consequences of actions by Obama or the deal; however, actions by Obama or the deal had a liberating nature here, unlike in *The New York Times*:

11. That's an immediate \$150 billion windfall, **leaving Tehran free to funnel cash** and conventional weapons to its clients. (*New York Post* Editorial, 14 July 2015)
12. Finally, **he allowed Iran essentially to pre-approve** any inspection. (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)

As can be seen in the above excerpts, Iran's actions such as *funnelling cash, pre-approving sanctions, halting enrichment, dismantling the nuclear programme* and *keeping everything in place* were made possible by what Obama, Kerry or the deal either did or failed to do regarding Iran (*not forcing, leaving, letting, allowing*). If we eliminated these cases, Iran's passiveness would rise to about 54 per cent in the *New York Post*. On the whole, in its passive role, Iran typically underwent material actions initiated by the deal or Obama and his administration. These actions, however, did not exert any power over Iran. As stated above, they had either failed to control Iran (*does not force, does not limit, etc.*) or, ironically, freed Iran from control and pressure (*favours Iran, reimbursed Iran, ceded to Iran, allows Iran, etc.*). In its active role, Iran was again involved in material actions. Activation of Iran was primarily through participation (ex. 13). Only in a few cases is Iran activated through possessivation (ex. 14):

13. Plus, **Iran isn't going to give back** its windfall of tens of billions of dollars handed to it under the agreement. (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 29 July 2015)
14. Kerry has ceded **Iran's right to experiment** with new-generation centrifuges exponentially more powerful than Iran has now. (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)

The way in which Iran was represented shows that it was not the focus of the debate in the *New York Post*. Iran was referred to only secondarily when authors discussed Obama's approach towards the issue of the nuclear negotiations.

5.2.4. *USA Today*

As it was in *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*, Iran was the most frequently mentioned social actor in *USA Today* (106 times). Again, as it was in *The Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Post*, the country was viewed as a unified and

assimilated entity and referred to with collective labels such as *Iran*, *Iranians*, *Iranian officials* or the metonymy *Tehran*. In addition to those neutral titles, in some cases, *USA Today* authors used ideologically loaded labels (*Shiite clerics of Iran* and *Ayatollahs in Iran*) or negative labels (*a nasty regime*, *a global outlaw*, *biggest sponsor of terrorism* and *Iran's tyrants*) when referring to Iran.

Investigating the presence of Iran in *USA Today* revealed that it was represented more as active (61%) than it was as passive (39%). In almost all the cases, Iran was activated through participation as the agent of propositions (57 times); in only eight instances, its activation was through possessivation (nominalisation). In its active role, Iran was involved in material (45 times), relational (eight times) and verbal (eight times) processes:

15. **Iran already controls** four Arab capitals. With more money, **Iran's destabilizing influence** will only grow. (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)
16. Instead, we have ensured that with the mere passage of time, **Iran will become** a nuclear nation. (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)
17. **Iran's leaders and politicians** have directly **called Israel a "barbaric**, wolflike and infanticidal regime..." (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 31 July 2015)

In excerpt 15, the type of process attributed to Iran is material; in excerpt 16, it is relational and, in excerpt 17, it is verbal. As mentioned earlier, according to van Leeuwen's classification, the relational process that is called descriptivisation reduces the agency of a social actor (ex. 16). Moreover, in a similar way to that of other newspapers, in some of the instances here, Iran was portrayed as potentially active (simultaneously active and passive). In other words, its activeness was dependent on the actions of other social actors:

18. ... and I am skeptical that **Iran will be required to fully disclose** all its past nuclear work. (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)
19. **Iran is prevented** for at least 10 years **from developing the capability** to build a nuclear weapon... (*USA Today* Editorial, 14 July 2015)

Here, Iran's actions of disclosing its past nuclear work or developing the capability to build weapons are enacted/unacted by the agentless actions of *requiring* and *preventing*.

In addition to participation, Iran was activated through possessivation in a few cases. In these cases, an adjective like *Iranian* or a possessive adjective like *its* was added to a nominal: *Iran's destabilising influence*, *Iranian export*, *Iranian import*, *Iran's threat* and *its arms purchases*.

Regarding its passive role, Iran was passivated mainly through participation (object/patient of a verb) in 25 instances (ex. 20) and through circumstantialisation (as the object of a preposition) in 15 instances (ex. 21):

20. We **should** be **prosecuting Iranian officials** for genocide and crimes against humanity, **not allowing them** to enrich uranium to be used to build a bomb. (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 31 July 2015)

21. But it's unlikely the Russians will want to turn over their most advanced weapons systems **to Iran...** (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 21 July 2015)

The types of action of which Iran was the object were, again, mainly material. The agents of these actions were chiefly the U.S. (We), the deal or sanctions. Nevertheless, as mentioned in case of *The New York Times*, in many cases, these actions were not factual. They were indeed prescriptions for future actions. These processes were accompanied by deontic or epistemic modalities like *should* or *will*.

I should make a distinction between the two groups of articles in *USA Today* as they treated Iran slightly differently. In both groups, Iran was activated although its degree of activation in anti-deal articles was higher than it was in pro-deal articles (respectively, 75% and 60%). Moreover, in pro-deal articles, sometimes Iran's actions were conditional/hypothetical while, in others, they were embedded in questions (raised by opponents) that authors attempted to answer:

22. **Let's assume Iran will spend** this windfall on arms rather than... (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 21 July 2015)

23. **How**, for example, **can it be guaranteed** that ... **Iran won't quietly build** a nuclear capability... (*USA Today* Editorial, 14 July 2015)

As the above excerpts show, in these cases, Iran's active agency is hypothetical and, thereby, de-emphasised. Overall, in pro-deal articles, it was claimed that Iran's activeness had been exaggerated by the opponents of the deal. In anti-deal articles, however, Iran's active involvement in evil actions was emphasised.

On the whole, there were both similarities and differences in the newspapers' approaches towards Iran. What papers had in common was their shared condemnation of Iran or their expression of negative attitudes towards it. All four papers essentially insisted on the denunciation of Iran's 'terrorist actions' and 'aggressive behaviour', no matter whether they supported the deal or not. However, what differentiated these newspapers was their perception of Iran's status in relation to the deal. While *The New York Times* represented Iran as being constrained by the deal and forced to reduce its nuclear activities (desecuritisation), *The Wall Street Journal* pictured Iran as actively taking advantage of the negotiations by cheating and deceiving the U.S. or the West in general (*referent subject* in securitisation moves). In the *New York Post*, Iran was shown to be either enjoying the opportunities and benefits that the deal and the U.S. provided or making mischief (*referent subject* in securitisation moves). Finally, *USA Today* described Iran as carrying out evil actions on other countries or as experiencing ineffective attempts by the U.S. to control it (*referent subject* in securitisation moves). However, it should be noted that, in the pro-deal articles of *USA Today*, Iran's actions were sometimes presented as hypothetical rather than as factual.

5.3. Representation of the U.S. across Newspapers

The United States was the second social actor in the corpus in terms of saliency of its presence (more than 330 instances of reference). It was the most recurrent social actor in the *New York Post* (147 times) where Iran had its least saliency (71 times). In the other three newspapers, the U.S. was referred to between 55 and 85 times.

5.3.1. *The Wall Street Journal*

The United States was the second main social actor in *The Wall Street Journal*'s articles in terms of its number of mentions. Contrary to the way in which *The Wall Street Journal* authors represented Iran as a collective identity – as *Iran* or *Iranians* – on the U.S. side, they identified and distinguished two major groups. One was specific and definite or *individualised*, as named by van Leeuwen (President *Obama* and his *administration*), and the other was *assimilated* and *collectivised* (the *U.S.*, *Americans* and *we*). Obama and his administration was referred to 25 times and the U.S. as a nation-state was referred to 27 times. The Obama group was activated in nearly all

the propositions, and the actions attributed to it were mostly *verbal* (15 out of 25). In some instances, Obama was the sayer/writer (*participation*) in the verbal processes: *hailing, promising, saying, swearing* and *issuing*. In some other cases, his active verbal role was represented by possessive pronouns or by the possessive *s* added to noun phrases (*possessivation*): *his assertion, his claim, Obama's answer, President's broad and happy description* and *his assurances*. Obama's involvement in other types of action, such as material or relational processes, occurred only a few times (three times for each process).

The U.S. as a nation-state included all Americans, from individual people to President Obama. This way of referring to the U.S. involved both merits and demerits for Obama. On the one hand, it gave legitimacy to Obama by including him in the 'national we' but, on the other hand, it could cause condemnation of Obama; by pointing out that Americans formed a unified body and that whatever their decision-makers did affected the whole nation, authors sometimes intended to criticise Obama. This group was also activated in *The Wall Street Journal* articles but mainly through material processes. The U.S. was the agent in material processes (*participation*) like *caving in, making concessions* and *imposing sanctions* while, sometimes, its agency was implied in adjectival phrases (*possessivation*) like *U.S. support* and *U.S. protection*. In some of the apparent cases of the U.S.' agency, especially those with the negative content, the real agent of the actions was Obama or his administration (*caving in, making concessions, bizarre decision*); nevertheless, the authors preferred either to avoid referring to President Obama directly or to represent those actions as if all Americans were involved in them:

24. Experts will debate the value of the concessions Iran has made on the nuclear front, but the value to Iran of **the concessions the U.S. has made** on nonnuclear issues is immeasurable. (*The Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed, 15 July 2015)
25. **The U.S. appears to have caved** on this point at the last minute after ultimatums from Tehran. (*The Wall Street Journal* Editorial, 14 July 2015)
26. ... that Saudi Arabia still can count on **the U.S. for protection...** (*The Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed, 17 July 2015)

In the first two excerpts above, the actual actors are Obama and his administration, who were involved in negotiations and made the deal with Iran, while, in the last one, the reference to the U.S. is to America as a nation-state not just its administration. In addition to the term *the U.S.*, the inclusive first-person pronoun *we* was the other term used for referring to Americans. This pronoun was used six times in one of the opinion articles (*The Wall Street Journal*, 14 July 2015):

27. Since **we can't trust** Iran **we need** an airtight system of monitoring and verification.

28. That's what **we know**. What do **we not know**?

29. Or maybe **we won't be lucky**.

In these excerpts, the pronoun *we* refers to the American nation, consisting of the administration, officials and people (the dialogical function of this *we* and the rhetorical work it does for newspapers have been discussed thoroughly in the chapter on dialogic structure). Another interesting point is that, when *we* was the agent of propositions or when *the U.S.* referred to America as a nation-state, the type of attributed action or the saliency of the agency differed from what it was in the cases where *the U.S.* referred to the American president/administration. In excerpts 27 to 29 above, where *we* (America as a nation-state) is the agent, actions attributed to it are either mental or relational (less active) and, in excerpts 26, where *the U.S.* refers to America as a nation-state (not Obama), the U.S.' agency is backgrounded – the activation of the U.S. is realised through possessivation of nominalised actions (U.S. support, U.S. protection and U.S. sanction). In these instances, the authors apparently attempted to decrease the strength and the degree of the U.S.' presence (backgrounding the U.S.). According to van Leeuwen (2008), when a social actor is activated through participation (being the agent of a proposition), it becomes foregrounded; however, its activation through possessivation (nominalisation with pre or post modification) backgrounds the active role of the social actor. Overall, regarding the U.S. as one of the four main social actors in *The Wall Street Journal*, three approaches were discernible. When Obama and his administration were the representatives of the U.S. side (whether explicitly mentioned or implied in the term *the U.S.*), they were presented as *active* social actors involved in *verbal* as well as *material* or *relational* actions indicating weakness or wrong-doing. When America as

a nation-state, through the collective noun *the U.S.* or pronoun *we*, was the representative, it was activated either as the *foregrounded* agent of *mental* processes – ‘reactions’ by van Leeuwen (2008) – or as the *backgrounded* agent of *material* processes (possessivation). Therefore, it can be argued that the active role of the U.S. as a nation-state in negotiations was de-emphasised in *The Wall Street Journal*. The U.S. was shown primarily as **reacting** to what others did through *cognitive mental* processes or as taking protective/positive **actions**, such as supporting other nations (*referent object*).

5.3.2. *The New York Times*

The United States was the second major social actor in *The New York Times*’ discourse following Iran (55 times). There were three distinct groups on the American side as represented in *The New York Times*: Obama and his administration (referred to 20 times), America as a nation-state, inclusive of the administration, (25 times) and American critics of the deal (nine times). The first group was *individualised* and referred to as *President Obama*, *Mr. Obama*, *President*, *President Obama and his advisors*, *Obama administration* or *the White House*. The second group was *collectivised* and referred to as the *United States* or *we* (only two times), or was referred to by the use of adjectival phrases like *American approach*. The third group of social actors was mainly specific to *The New York Times*. Authors of this paper referred to those who opposed the nuclear deal with Iran generally as *critics* or sometimes specifically as *Republican presidential hopefuls*, *Republicans in Congress*, *Republican candidates*, *Republican presidential nomination* or *the Israeli Prime minister*. From *The New York Times*’ perspective, there were two groups of critics: one American (Republicans) and one non-American (Israeli government).

In 12 out of 20 instances of reference to Obama, he was mentioned alone and, in the rest, with his *administration* or *advisors*, or as the *White House*. In all these instances, they were represented as the active participators (agents) of the propositions:

30. In the long run-up to Tuesday’s nuclear agreement with Iran, **the Obama administration repeatedly suggested** that the accord was part of a larger strategic shift in Washington’s approach to Iran. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 15 July 2015)
31. **President Obama did not set out to change Iran** but he has created a framework that, over a decade, might. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)

32. **The White House can hope** that will happen but **should** not expect it. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 15 July 2015)

From among the 20 processes in which Obama was involved as the agent, seven were verbal (ex. 30), while seven were material (ex. 31) and were accompanied by deontic modals (ex. 32). This means that, unlike *The Wall Street Journal*, which focused solely on Obama's words (promises and claims), *The New York Times* discussed what Obama did regarding Iran (both positive and negative) and what he should do in addition to what he said. Providing advice to Obama through deontic propositions was specific to *The New York Times'* discourse.

The other group on the U.S. side was America as a nation-state, represented through participation or through possessivation by adjectival phrases like *American officials*, *American diplomatic achievement*, *American opposition* or *American sanctions*. In more than half of the 25 instances of reference to America as a nation-state, the U.S. was passivated (object/patient) and, in the rest, it was activated in material, relational or verbal processes (participation and possessivation):

33. Both Israel and **the United States wanted a knockout blow**; what we got was a punt. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 19 July 2015)
34. The final deal with Iran **announced by the United States** and other major world powers does what no amount of political posturing... (*The New York Times* Editorial, 14 July 2015)
35. More important, **many American sanctions will remain in place** even after the deal is implemented... (*The New York Times* Editorial, 14 July 2015)
36. But Congress should think twice before the feel-good, reckless adoption of a resolution condemning **a deal that advances American interests**. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)

Excerpts 33, 34 and 35 are examples of activation of the U.S., and excerpt 36 is an example of passivation of the U.S. As it was in *The Wall Street Journal*, this sense of the U.S. as a nation-state was generally backgrounded in *The New York Times'* discourse. The U.S. was either completely passive (15 out of 25 instances) or slightly activated through possessivation.

Finally, the third group on the U.S. side comprised those Americans who were against the deal. They were introduced most often as Republicans (and sometimes as Israeli

officials) by *The New York Times* authors. This group of social actors was activated mainly by those actors being agents of verbal and mental processes like *wanting*, *condemning* and *opposing*:

37. The **Republican presidential candidates fell all over themselves** today **trying to see** who could **condemn the nuclear deal** with Iran the most quickly and in the most cataclysmic terms. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)
38. So what do **the critics, from Republican presidential hopefuls** to the Israeli government, **seek** in place of the deal with Iran that verifiably blocks Tehran's path to a nuclear weapon... Presumably, **they want** what would have happened if negotiations had collapsed. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)
39. **The Republican presidential hopefuls repeated that formula** today — **condemnation of the deal** with no credible alternative to offer. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)

Expectedly, critics were pictured as being verbally and mentally *reactive*, rather than active, towards the deal. This group was portrayed negatively in *The New York Times*. Authors usually mocked and condemned them as lacking knowledge and expertise, being foolish, making reckless decisions, etc. (see chapter seven for more discussion on refuting critics.)

5.3.3. *New York Post*

In the *New York Post's* discourse, the United States encompassed diverse groups of social actors with different roles in and stances on the issue of the nuclear deal. One of these groups was *individualised* and specific (*President Obama*, his *Secretary of State*, and his *administration*) and others were more *collectivised* and general (*American people*, the U.S. *Congress* and America as a *nation-state*). The first group was the most recurrent social actor in the whole newspaper (86 mentions). The second group, which was referred to as *American public*, *Americans* or *American Jews*, was mentioned 26 times, the U.S. *Congress* 25 times and, finally, the fourth group, called *the U.S.*, 10 times.

Each of the four groups of social actors that formed the U.S. side was active to a different degree and was involved in a different type of action. Obama and his government were the most active social actors in the whole paper with 88 per cent of activation. The types of action attributed to this group were mostly verbal and, to some extent, mental and material:

40. Shortly after the UN vote, **President Obama urged Congress** to get with the program: “There is broad international consensus around this issue,” **he said**, adding that his “assumption is that Congress will pay attention to that broad-based consensus.” (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 20 July 2015)
41. ... but the overall sense remains that **Obama has done** a bad job of it when it comes to Iran. (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 22 July 2015)
42. President **Obama announced** a “historic” agreement with Iran on Tuesday to end decades of conflict over its nuclear ambitions. (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)

Obama was represented as making vows but not being committed to them. By frequently exposing contradictions between his promises and his deeds, the *New York Post* authors pictured him as not being a man of his words.

The second group of actors on the U.S. side was the American people, comprising two groups – *American Jews* and the *American public* – inclusive of the Jews (American Jews were referred to seven times in one article). This group was mainly activated (80%); however, it was entirely involved in mental and relational processes (reactions):

43. ... and **the American public’s discomfort with** its terms is deepening. **American Jews don’t like** it, despite efforts by Obama’s court Jews to make it seem as though **they’re far more supportive** of it than **Americans in general**. (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 28 July 2015)
44. **The public has no such confidence**. (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 22 July 2015)

In the above excerpts, American people – Jewish or in general – have been either descriptivised or represented as reacting to the deal with their thoughts or feelings. In other words, they were not reported as being involved in any actions; instead, they were portrayed as cognitively or affectively reacting to what Obama did (the nuclear deal). There were also a few instances of this group being passivated as the object/patient of a verb (participation): *a week of intense lobbying has not changed the **public’s** lack of trust in the Iranians*.

One important point to be made is that there were two groups of American Jews in this article; one was introduced as a part of the American public and the other was called ‘court Jews’ or ‘Liberal Jews’ (‘court Jews’ is a contemptuous label that the nationalist or Zionist Jews give to those Jews who reject Zionism and believe that Judaism is a universal religion and not a nationality). This latter group was

distinguished and excluded from the group named the American public or American Jews and referred to as *Obama's court Jews* (implying that they were pro-Obama and pro-deal). This group was also mentioned seven times in the same article. It was pictured as attempting to deceive American Jews to gain their support for the deal. This accusation was related to a poll on the Iran deal by The Israel Project (a group of court Jews from the author's view). The *New York Post* author accused The Israel Project of presenting a *basically pure administration spin with no counter-argument* in the questions they asked of Jews in their poll.

The Congress, as the third group of American social actors, was more active (68%) than passive (32%) in the *New York Post*. Similar to the American public, the Congress was involved in mental processes as well as in some verbal actions:

45. Amazingly enough, the agreement with Iran **doesn't mention the US Congress or its review** of the deal... (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 20 July 2015)
46. **Congress will likely ask** what changed, since this deal allows Iran to keep Fordo. (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)
47. The irony is that **congressional critics might base their opposition** on the red lines once drawn by Secretary of State John Kerry and President Obama themselves. (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)

As the excerpts show, both in its active and passive roles, the Congress was involved in only mental and verbal actions.

The other way of referring to the U.S. was as America as a nation-state. This sense of the U.S. was inclusive of all Americans, even the administration. It was generally given a passive role through possessivation and was mostly the object of prepositions (circumstantialisation): for *American security*, to *the interest of the U.S.* and *American allies*. This means that it did not have any focal position in the propositions; it was the most backgrounded among the four groups on the U.S. side.

To put it briefly, of the four American actors, Obama's group was mentioned and activated most often (primarily verbally and, to some extent, mentally and materially). The Obama side was pictured as making either statements or promises that they could not be committed to or as carrying out unsuccessful actions. The American public, on the other hand, was mostly active in mental and relational processes (they were

reactive and descriptivised rather than active). The American public, including American Jews, was represented as reacting to the deal and Obama by expressing their feelings or thoughts (*lack of trust in Obama, not liking the deal, being non-supportive or unconfident*). America as a nation-state was not involved in any event and was referred to only peripherally in prepositional phrases. Finally, the Congress was also pictured as reactive rather than active; the Congress was responding to Obama's action (making the deal) by *reviewing, opposing or rejecting it*.

5.3.4. *USA Today*

The United States was a major social actor in *USA Today*, after Iran, and was referred to 85 times. Three groups were portrayed as representatives of the U.S. in this paper: one *individualised* (Obama and his administration, referred to 20 times) and two *collectivised* (America as a nation-state, referred to as *we, the United States* or *Americans* 52 times, and the Congress, mentioned 13 times). From the three groups comprising the U.S., America as a nation-state was mentioned most frequently. In pro-deal articles, it was referred to 20 times (five times as *we*) while, in the anti-deal articles, it was mentioned 32 times (16 times as *we*).

USA Today was the only newspaper in which the number of references to Obama was remarkably fewer than was the number of references to America as a nation-state (in the other three newspapers, these two groups had very similar rates of occurrence). Even more noticeably, Obama was almost absent in three out of the five articles from this newspaper. In the two *USA Today* articles that were supportive of the deal, Obama was either completely suppressed or referred to only once. Even in one of the anti-deal articles, Obama was mentioned only once.

In 18 out of 20 instances (90%), Obama was activated as the agent of verbal (ex. 49) and material processes (ex. 48):

48. But **Obama is taking the agreement** to the U.N. Security Council for approval within days. (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)
49. **Obama claimed** in his Wednesday news conference that it really doesn't matter because we can always intercept Iranian arms shipments to, say, Hezbollah. (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)

As mentioned above, America as a nation-state was referred to mainly with the inclusive first-person plural pronoun *we*. It was a very broad group that encompassed all Americans, including the authors and Obama's administration. This group, in both its active and passive roles, was involved in material processes:

50. **We should be tightening the noose** on Iran with suffocating sanctions, **not softening** our grip. (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 31 July 2015)

51. First, an option other than war to thwart Iran's nuclear ambitions, one that **positions the U.S. as a leader** in making the world a safer place with a stroke of a pen rather than at the tip of a sword. (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)

Excerpt 50 is a case of activation and excerpt 51 is an instance of the passivation of 'Us' or Americans. Activation of the U.S. was realised through participation (agent of propositions) rather than possessivation/nominalisation. However, about a quarter of the passive cases were in the form of possessivation (*our close allies, anti-American operations, our Middle East allies, our partner, etc.*).

The U.S. Congress was the third representative of the United States. It was referred to 11 times in the paper and these instances were primarily active. The types of process attributed to the Congress were either verbal or material.

52. While **Congress can stop this deal**, sadly, **they are heading home** for an August recess. (*USA Today*, 31 July 2015)

53. **Congress won't get to vote on** the deal until September. (*USA Today*, 16 July 2015)

To sum up, while, in the pro-deal articles of *USA Today*, Obama was suppressed, in the anti-deal articles, he was included and activated in verbal and material processes. America as a nation-state was included in both groups of articles but represented differently. In pro-deal articles, it was both activated and passivated (through material processes). In some cases, it was also descriptivised. In the anti-deal articles, however, the U.S. as a nation-state was more activated (through material processes) than passivated. The important point to be noted here is that, similar to the situation explained above regarding the U.S. group in *The Wall Street Journal*, in both pro and anti-deal articles, when the U.S. or *we* was activated through material processes that indicated failure or wrongdoing, the real agent of the actions was Obama or his negotiating team.

On the whole, we see that the U.S. as a nation-state was either passivated or backgrounded in all four newspapers. In *The New York Times* and the *New York Post*, the U.S. was mostly passivated or peripherally referred to in prepositional phrases (circumstantialised). In *The Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today*, it was either passivated or activated in mental (reactions) or heroic material processes. Only when the real reference of the U.S. or we was Obama/his administration (strategy of sharing the blame), was it involved in unsuccessful material actions. In fact, when it was about Obama only, the newspapers' approaches differed from when it was about the U.S. in general. All the newspapers represented Obama as a totally active social actor, mainly involved in verbal processes. In *The New York Times* as well as in the anti-deal articles of *USA Today*, Obama was also involved in material processes although the actions attributed to him by these two papers were not similar. While the former pictured him in the context of both positive and negative actions, the latter described him as involved only in negative actions. The *New York Post* represented Obama as being involved in a few mental and material processes as well. Finally, in *The Wall Street Journal*, he was involved exclusively in verbal processes. Regarding the Congress, it was present in only two newspapers (*New York Post* and *USA Today*). In both these papers, the Congress was represented as being mainly verbally or mentally reactive to the nuclear deal or to Obama. It was shown to be in an unfortunately weak position in relation to Obama and unable to make any change in the fate of the nuclear deal (preventing the deal).

5.4. Representation of Israel across Newspapers

Israel as a social actor was only indirectly involved in the social practice (Iran's nuclear negotiations) as it was not part of the negotiation teams; however, for many historical, geopolitical and cultural reasons, it played a very active role outside the negotiation rooms (lobbying against the deal). Still, in only two of the papers, did it have a noticeable presence: *The New York Times* (44 times) and *USA Today* (39 times). As discussed earlier in the chapter, the two anti-deal newspapers (*The Wall Street Journal* and *New York Post*) were not inclined to include Israel in their accounts of the social practice.

5.4.1. *The New York Times*

Israel was the third social actor referred to in *The New York Times* (44 times). From among the five articles in *The New York Times*, one was devoted entirely to Israel (27 references to Israel) and one did not mention it at all. The other three articles referred to Israel between one and eight times. In a similar way to that of the U.S. and Iran, there were two distinguishable groups when authors referred to Israel in *The New York Times*. The main one was the Israeli Prime Minister or his government, and the other one was Israel as a nation-state. Most references were made to the actions of the first group as critics of the deal: *Israeli Prime Minister, Netanyahu, a minister in his government*, etc.

The first group (Israeli government) was represented as an active social actor through participation. However, the second group (Israel as a nation-state) was both activated and passivated. The types of action attributed to Israel in its active role were mostly verbal (12 times) and, in eight of them, the sayer or agent of the verbal actions was the Israeli government. The other type of action in which Israel was involved as an active social actor was material process and was attributed mostly to Israel as the nation-state, not to its government.

54. **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel calls it** a “historic mistake” that permits Iran “a sure path to nuclear weapons.” **A minister in his government**, unable to resist outrageous hyperbole, **calls it** “one of the darkest days in world history.” (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)
55. But only those who never see merit in any proposal and never initiate their own **could respond as the Israeli leader has**. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 19 July 2015)
56. Over decades, **Israel has built a unique alliance** with the United States. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 19 July 2015)

Overall, Israel was more active than passive in *The New York Times*’ discourse. The Israeli Prime Minister was involved only in active verbal processes through participation (ex. 54 and ex. 55); however, Israel as a nation was mostly involved in material processes either by activation (ex. 56) or passivation.

5.4.2. *USA Today*

Israel was the third main social actor in *USA Today* as well (39 times). There were two groups on Israel’s side in this paper: 1) the Israeli government/Prime Minister, and 2)

Israel as a nation-state (referred to as *Israelis* or *Jews*). Israel was present in all the articles from this paper but one.

Activation and passivation of Israel in this paper were approximately equal (54% active and 46% passive). However, it was not represented similarly in the pro-deal and anti-deal articles of the paper. In the pro-deal group of articles, Israel was more activated while, in the anti-deal group, it was mostly passivated. In its active role, it was involved in mental, material and verbal processes. In its passive role, on the other hand, it underwent mostly material and some verbal processes:

57. And **Israel wants no break** in the uneasy but enduring stability **it has managed to maintain** in the wake of three major **wars and innumerable skirmishes it has won over** its Arab neighbors. (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)
58. **Israelis understand** we are giving **their chief antagonist** — the very people who hate Israel the most — the capability to develop a nuclear weapon. (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)
59. My words might be too brash for President Obama, but they **echo the words of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu...** (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 31 July 2015)
60. This deal **puts our close ally Israel in a box.** (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 31 July 2015)
61. Obama and Clinton are more upset about my comments than **Iran's threat to kill millions of Jews...** (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 31 July 2015)

This distribution of processes for Israel's active and passive roles in anti-deal articles means that Israel as an active social actor was reacting solely to the events by the expression of feelings (Israel as a nation-state) and by words (Israeli government), not by taking actions. However, as a passive social actor, it underwent adverse material actions or threats of material actions by Iran. In both cases, Israel was constructed as a *referent object* under threat from Iran. In pro-deal articles, on the other hand, Israel was also shown to be more active by involving itself in material processes (sometimes as a *referent subject* threatening the peace in the Middle East) in addition to the verbal and mental processes.

5.5. Representation of Saudi Arabia across Newspapers

Saudi Arabia, as another indirectly related social actor, had a noticeable presence in two of the newspapers (*The Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today*). Nonetheless, this presence was perceptible in only one of *The Wall Street Journal* and two of *USA Today*

articles. In the *New York Post*, it was mentioned only once and, in *The New York Times*, authors referred to it three times overall.

5.5.1. *The Wall Street Journal*

Saudi Arabia was the third recurring social actor in *The Wall Street Journal* (30 mentions) following Iran, the U.S. and the deal. It was mainly referred to as *Saudi Arabia*, *Saudis*, *Riyadh* and *the Kingdom*. In some cases, the author also mentioned *young Saudis* or specific Saudi officials.

Saudis were more activated than passivated in *The Wall Street Journal* (70% active to 30% passive); however, in half of the cases, their activation was realised in the form of relational, mental and verbal processes as descriptions or reactions:

- 62. A cocky, conventionally armed Iran increasing regional mischief-making **puts Saudi Arabia** in the cross hairs -- of Iran...
- 63. The immediate **threat to Saudi Arabia** far exceeds that to Israel.
- 64. **Prince Turki al Faisal**, the kingdom's former head of intelligence, **vowed** in the spring that "whatever the Iranians have, we will have."
- 65. The deal obviously comes as no surprise **to the Saudis**, who **have watched** the Obama administration fervently court Iran **at Saudi expense**.
- 66. **Saudi efforts to confront** Syria's Assad **have been mostly unsuccessful**. (*The Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed, 17 July 2015)

In the above excerpts, Saudi Arabia is either passivated (ex. 62 and ex. 63) or activated through reactions (ex. 64 and ex. 65) and descriptions (ex. 66). In excerpt 65, Saudi Arabia is also passivated through circumstantialisation (*to the Saudis* and *at Saudi expense*). In other cases, Saudi Arabia was activated also in material processes; *Saudi effort to confront* in ex. 66 is an activation through nominalisation. The following excerpts are also examples of activation of Saudi Arabia:

- 67. ... in recent years some **2,200 young Saudis have gone to Syria to fight**.
- 68. Given that **the kingdom already has taken any number of actions** to try to **protect itself**, few remain.
- 69. This month **the Saudis have been pumping 10.6 million barrels** of oil a day, a historic high. (*The Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed, 17 July 2015)

All the Saudi's undesirable activities (ex. 67) were justified in *The Wall Street Journal* as consequences of Iran's aggressions or the West's lack of concern for Saudi Arabia. For example, the young Saudis' interest in joining ISIS was projected as a threat to

Saudi Arabia itself caused by Iran's killing of Sunnis (instead of blaming Saudi Arabia for its people's negative action, it was pictured as a victim). Saudi's bombarding of Yemen was again shown to be the result of Iran's trouble-making in Yemen. Overall, Saudis were pictured as *being left* defenceless by the West while having no option but to confront Iran's threats (referent object under threat from Iran).

5.5.2. *USA Today*

The Arab states were the fourth-most-frequent social actors as portrayed in *USA Today* (14 times) after Iran, the U.S., the deal and Israel. Saudi Arabia was not the only Arab state mentioned in this paper (see section 6.1). *USA Today* referred to Saudi Arabia along with other Arab states like Qatar and the *oil-rich* Persian Gulf Emirates or discussed them as *Sunni Arab nations* and *Arab capitals*.

Pro-deal articles in *USA Today* mentioned the Arab states more than did its anti-deal articles (nine and five times respectively). Although, in both groups of articles, the Arab states were mostly activated, in the anti-deal articles, their active roles were represented as defensive (reactions to Iran's threats):

- 70. Finally, **Sunni Arab nations are going to feel threatened** by this deal and **are going to try to get** a nuke of their own.
- 71. Iran already **controls four Arab capitals**.
- 72. This alone guarantees a nuclear arms race in the region as **Iran's rivals seek the means to protect themselves**. (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)

In excerpt 70, Arab nations were activated in mental and material processes. Their material action (acquiring a *nuke*), nevertheless, is caused by their mental status of insecurity (*feel threatened*). In excerpt 71, they are subjected in a material process (passivated) and, in excerpt 72, again, their active material action is represented as self-protective.

In the pro-deal articles, the Arab states were pictured more aggressively than submissively. In the excerpts below, their active material actions (*buying weapons* and *arming themselves*) were again shown to be the result of their mental status (don't *want to see Iran as a challenge*); however, their mentality here was portrayed as aggressive not defensive:

73. Even **Qatar** in May **bought** 24 Rafale fighters from France for \$7.1 billion.
74. The reality is that **Saudi Arabia** and Israel, as well as the **oil-rich Persian Gulf emirates, aren't arming themselves** against the possibility of a sudden breakout dash to a nuclear weapon by Iran...
75. **Saudi Arabia** simply does not want to see Iran as any immediate challenge to **its role as regional leader**. (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 21 July 2015)

The Arab states were represented in completely opposite ways in the pro and anti-deal articles. While, in the former, they were opportunist and aggressive (referent subject threatening peace in Middle East), in the latter, they were defenceless and struggling to protect themselves (referent object under threat from Iran).

5.6. Representation of the Deal across Newspapers: Agent versus Object

As I indicated at the beginning of this chapter, the nuclear deal had a special status in terms of social agency. Being a political document that resulted from the actions of social actors, it was sometimes attributed agency itself. In other words, some newspapers treated it as a social actor (rather than an object) that was carrying out various positive/negative actions and, consequently, praised or blamed it for those actions. Either way, the nuclear agreement deal had an undoubtedly salient presence in all the newspapers. It was referred to even more often than was Iran in the *New York Post* (74 times) and more often than the U.S. in *The New York Times* (87 times). In the other two papers, nevertheless, the deal came after Iran and the U.S. (see Table 5.6).

Table 5.6 Presence of the deal in the newspapers

Newspapers	<i>The Wall Street Journal</i>	<i>The New York Times</i>	<i>New York Post</i>	<i>USA Today</i>
No of occurrences	48	87	74	42

5.6.1. *The Wall Street Journal*

The nuclear deal was discussed in *The Wall Street Journal* 48 times and was referred to as *the deal*, *the agreement* or *the accord*. It was also once called a *historic diplomatic*

debacle. In more than two-thirds of its mentions in *The Wall Street Journal* (35 out of 48), it was activated and the types of action attributed to it were mostly material (the nuclear deal was the agent of actions). This means that the deal was personified in this paper and treated as a social actor alongside other nation-states (Iran, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia). In only three cases, was it descriptivised through relational processes ('maybe the deal *was* the best we could do' or 'the deal *consists of* 159 pages of opaque prose'). In addition, the actions attributed to the deal were directly or indirectly concerned with Iran. Typically, Iran was either the direct object/patient of those actions or the indirect beneficiary of them:

- 76. And **a deal that does nothing to stop Iran's development** of ballistic missiles **would allow them** to put one of those bombs atop one of those missiles. (*The Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)
- 77. **The deal permits Iran to build** and test advanced centrifuges. (*The Wall Street Journal* Editorial, 14 July 2015)
- 78. Thus, **the agreement ensures that, after a short delay, Iran will be able** to lay the groundwork for a large nuclear arsenal... (*The Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed, 15 July 2015)
- 79. The real and present threat that **a deal would further enhance Iran's regional stature and its capability to ratchet up** the regime's exploitation of regional sectarian divisions. (*The Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed, 17 July 2015)

In all the above excerpts, the actions assigned to the deal favoured Iran in one way or another. In only two out of 35 instances, were these actions not in the interest of Iran:

- 80. Now **the new agreement calls again on Iran to cooperate, but it offers no reason to believe** that the Iranian regime will end its recalcitrance. (*The Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)
- 81. **The deal places sharp limits on Iran's current use** of first-generation IR-1 centrifuges. **But it allows hundreds** of those centrifuges to remain in the heavily defended Fordo facility... (*The Wall Street Journal* Editorial, 14 July 2015)

However, in both of these cases (ex. 80 and ex. 81), the actions of *calling for cooperation* (verbal process) and *placing limits* (material process) were shown to be ineffective by the counterclaims (*But*) that followed them. Overall, when activated, the nuclear deal was represented as being in the interest of Iran, either by removing international pressures and sanctions from it (*allow, permit, lift, end*) or by assisting it in carrying out its plans (*lead, provide, ensure, guarantee, enhance*). Regarding

representation of the deal in passive form (13 times), it was mostly the object/patient of verbal actions like ‘the deal was *negotiated*’, ‘the deal was *announced*’ and ‘it was *hailed*’ or the object of prepositions such as *about the deal*, *under the deal*, *against the deal* (circumstantialised). In fact, the salient role of the deal in *The Wall Street Journal* was as the *foregrounded* agent of *material* and *verbal* actions (highly active). However, as explained at the beginning of the chapter, when the deal was given the role of an active social actor as the agent of material and verbal processes, its real reference was the U.S. administration, which was part of the negotiations with Iran and made the deal with it. Therefore, personification of the deal can be seen as a strategy of ‘condemning the effect instead of the cause’ by *The Wall Street Journal* authors in order to avoid direct confrontation with Obama.

5.6.2. *The New York Times*

The nuclear deal was mentioned very frequently in *The New York Times* (87 times) – even more often than the U.S. was mentioned. It was typically referred to as *the deal*, *the agreement* or *the accord*. In slightly more than half of the cases (55%), it was activated as the agent of material (27 times), relational (12 times) or verbal (five times) processes. In about 45 per cent of the instances, however, the nuclear deal was passivated. In its passive role, it underwent 13 verbal, 13 material and 7 mental actions. If we deduct the 12 cases of relational process from the total cases of activation of the deal – as the use of relational process is considered as descriptivisation and, thereby, a form of passivation by van Leeuwen – the proportions of activation and passivation of the deal will be similar. In other words, in half of the instances of reference to the deal in *The New York Times*, it was personified as an active social actor, mostly carrying out material actions like *blocking*, *changing*, *empowering* or *preventing*, while, in the other half, it was represented as the grammatical object/patient of verbal as well as material processes (the deal as an object):

82. So, yes, **we could have gotten a better deal**. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 19 July 2015)

83. **It puts strong, verifiable limits** on Iran’s ability to develop a nuclear weapon for at least the next 10 to 15 years and **is potentially one of the most** consequential accords in recent diplomatic history, with the ability **not just to keep Iran** from

obtaining a nuclear weapon but also **to reshape Middle East politics**. (*The New York Times* Editorial, 14 July 2015)

84. Congress gets to **review and vote on it**. Powerful forces, like Mr. Netanyahu, **have vowed to defeat it...** (*The New York Times* Editorial, 14 July 2015)

Extracts 82 and 84 above demonstrate the deal in its passive role undergoing material or verbal processes, and excerpt 83 is an instance of activation of the deal as a social actor attributed material processes (*putting limits, keeping Iran*) as well as descriptivisation of it through relational processes (*being potentially one of the most consequential accords*).

All in all, *The New York Times* authors were supportive of the deal and followed three approaches to it. First, was a *descriptive/evaluative* approach where the authors reported the critics' reactions to the deal through verbal processes (what Republicans and Israelis said about it) or described the deal through relational processes (how it was viewed from *The New York Times*' perspective). Secondly, there was an *action-oriented* approach where the authors personified the deal and provided a list of benefits it would bring about through material processes (what it could/would do for the U.S. and its allies). Finally, there was a *prescriptive* approach where the authors recommended the best way to look at and respond to the deal through mental processes (how it should be judged and treated by the critics, especially the Congress). In the second approach, where the deal was pictured as bringing about positive outcomes, its real reference was to Obama and his team; this is similar to comments made above regarding the deal in *The Wall Street Journal*.

5.6.3. *New York Post*

The *New York Post* also discussed the nuclear deal repeatedly (roughly as often as it did Iran) and called it *the pact, the agreement, the deal* or *a slice of history*. The deal was mentioned 74 times in total and, in 76 per cent of the cases, it was passivated. In fact, unlike *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*, where the deal was represented as a human being mainly carrying out actions in the interests of Iran or the U.S., the *New York Post* largely pictured the deal as an object of mental and verbal reactions (passivated):

85. Congress **has 60 days to review the Iran agreement** and issue a resolution of disapproval... collapsing the deal. (*New York Post* Editorial, 14 July 2015)

86. It's been two weeks since **the Iran deal was announced**, and the American public's discomfort with its terms is deepening. (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 28 July 2015)

87. They have to convince 13 Democratic Senators and 43 Democratic House members **to vote against the deal...** (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 22 July 2015)

The agents of these semiotic and reactive processes affecting the deal were Obama, the American public and the Congress. In other words, contrary to what we saw in *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*, the deal was represented as a political document in the *New York Post*. In the few cases where the deal was active (personified as a social actor), it was pictured as being unsuccessful in exercising limits on Iran (*doesn't force, doesn't end, doesn't mention*, etc.).

5.6.4. *USA Today*

The presence of the nuclear deal in *USA Today* was not as recurrent as it was in the other newspaper (42 times). Similar to the other papers, the *New York Post* referred to it as *the deal* or *the accord*. In a similar way to that of the *New York Post*, the deal was mostly passivated (65%) in *USA Today*. The deal was typically subjected in mental and, to some extent, material and verbal processes:

88. Congress won't get to **vote on the deal** until September. (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 21 July 2015)

89. Three perspectives must be taken into account to **judge this deal...** (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)

90. Obama dare not **call it** a treaty — **it would be instantly rejected** by the Senate. (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)

As a political document (object), the nuclear deal underwent mental reactions like *reviewing* and *judging* from American social actors (the Congress or the American public) and their consequent material actions (*stopping, fighting or opposing*). Moreover, it was passivated through prepositional phrases like *under* the deal or *in* the final deal (circumstantialised).

When it was activated (35%), the nuclear deal was primarily the agent of relational processes and then material and verbal ones:

91. But the question facing Congress... isn't whether **this is a perfect document**. It's whether **this is better than no deal**. (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)

92. **This deal puts** our close ally Israel in a box. (*USA Today* Editorial, 14 July 2015)

93. Finally, Sunni Arab nations are going to **feel threatened by this deal...** (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)

In other words, in its active form, the deal was carrying mainly positive or negative attributes (descriptivised) rather than carrying out actions. The interesting point is that relational processes (descriptivation) occurred mainly in the pro-deal articles and material processes in the anti-deal ones. It means that pro-deal authors preferred a general, descriptive approach towards the deal (*it is the first accord with an outlaw nation, it is better than no deal*, etc.) but the anti-deal authors followed an action-oriented approach, focusing on the actual undesirable consequences of the deal (*affecting allies, failing in achieving goals, injecting money to Iran*, etc.).

To sum up, the nuclear deal was represented differently in the four newspapers. *The Wall Street Journal* largely personified the deal because blaming the deal was easier and less costly than blaming Obama. *The New York Times* had the most varied approach in its representation of the deal. It both personified the deal to highlight its positive consequences and treated it as an object to praise/endorse it or to advise others on how to deal with it. *The New York Post* and *USA Today* focused mostly on the object side of the deal by describing, evaluating and criticising or, sometimes, praising it.

5.7. Newspapers' 'World Maps'

The detailed analyses presented above contribute to understanding the discursive practice of each of the newspapers resulting in construction of referent subjects and objects of securitisation. The inclusion of some social actors and the exclusion of others, different ways of naming the included social actors, their degrees of activeness and the types of action attributed to them comprised the four mechanisms of representation in the newspapers. Different combinations of the above mechanisms led to different accounts of who posed a threat and who were under the threat.

Therefore, to appreciate the significance of this chapter's findings, the result of arduous analysis, it is necessary to realise how the above mechanisms contributed to

the newspapers' framing of the issue of the nuclear deal. In this section, I bring all the findings together to demonstrate, from each newspaper's perspective, *who did what to whom* (who threatened whom) in the described social practice leading to the agreement deal (the Iran nuclear negotiations). Scrutinising the actor and action representations in the newspapers, I arrived at the following pictures of the event.

The Wall Street Journal's account involved four characters: Iran, President Obama, America as a nation-state and Saudi Arabia. The discourse of *The Wall Street Journal* can be summarised as follows: Iran was actively involved in trouble-making, threatening its neighbours and destabilising the region as the *referent subject* (active material processes). In response to its aggressive behaviour, America as a nation-state and 'the world authority' attempted to rein it in (active material process). However, its efforts failed as it made a deal with Iran that, instead of constraining it, freed it from the pressures of sanctions and resolutions and provided it with a number of benefits (active material processes). This happened in spite of President Obama's promises that the deal could halt Iran's access to nuclear weapons (active verbal process). Saudi Arabia as the *referent object* was affected by Iran and the adverse actions (passive material processes) of the world powers. It only watched what other social actors were doing (active mental process) or struggled to defend itself (active material process).

It should be remembered that, in this newspaper, some of the actions that were conducted by Obama or his administration (mostly active material processes) were attributed to the deal or to America as a nation-state. Attribution of unsuccessful or incorrect actions to these two actors was a strategy that was employed by this paper's authors to avoid direct confrontation with Obama. Introducing the deal as the agent was based on the strategy of blaming the *effect* instead of the *cause*, and representing *we* or the U.S. as the agent was a strategy of *sharing* the blame. These strategies intended to save Obama's face or to allow the authors to be harsh without looking impolite.

The New York Times' picture included six characters: Obama, Republican members of the Congress, the Israeli government, Israel as a nation-state, America as a nation-state and Iran. The first three had active roles, the fourth (Israel as a nation-state) was

equally active and passive, and the last one (Iran) was more passive. The nuclear deal also had a very salient presence in this paper. It was given social agency (personified) and pictured as successfully constraining Iran's nuclear abilities, advancing American interests, stabilising the region and protecting Israel from Iran's threats of annihilation (active material processes). The deal was also described and praised in the *New York Post* (passive verbal/relational process). Obama was involved in discussing the deal's terms and conditions (active verbal process) as well as in successful/unsuccessful actions regarding Iran (active material process). *The New York Times* authors admitted shortcomings of the deal that were caused by Obama's mistakes; therefore, Obama was shown to be conducting both positive and negative actions. Republicans and the Israeli government were against the deal and reacted to it negatively by describing it as a *historic mistake* or by threatening to reject it in the Congress (active verbal process). Israel as a nation-state (*referent object*) underwent threatening actions by Iran; was provided for by the deal's benefits; built a unique alliance with the U.S. and still had the option to attack Iran (passive and active material process). America as a nation-state was referred to marginally as benefitting from the deal or in prepositional phrases (passive material processes/circumstantialised). It was also shown to be involved in actions like *achieving*, *approaching* or *imposing* through nominalisation (backgrounded active material processes).

In the *New York Post* narrative, there were four characters: President Obama, the American public, the Congress and Iran. Obama, the Congress and the American people, who assumed active roles, were in a network of relationships among themselves and with Iran and the deal. Obama, as the main social actor in this paper, had made promises (active verbal process) regarding preventing Iran from going nuclear but failed in his confrontation with Iran (active material process). Moreover, he urged the Congress to follow him (active verbal process); however, the Congress did not agree with Obama and criticised the deal (active mental and verbal processes). The American people also responded to Obama and the deal negatively (active mental and relational processes). The interesting point about the *New York Post* is that, unlike in the other papers, Iran and, especially, the deal were portrayed as more passive than active. Iran was shown to be enjoying the benefits it received as a result of Obama's

cowardice (passive and, to some extent, active material processes). The nuclear deal was treated literally as an object (a document) rather than metaphorically as a social actor capable of carrying out actions on others. This point can explain why Obama was so ubiquitous in this paper's discourse. Instead of attributing some of his actions to the deal, as we saw in *The Wall Street Journal* or *The New York Times*, Obama was directly and explicitly blamed for what the *New York Post* authors considered to be the shortcomings of the deal. Since Obama was the centre of attention and the target of criticisms in this paper, Iran was, to some extent, sent to the margin. The paper was focused more on illustrating the way in which Obama ceded to Iran than on the evil actions of Iran.

Regarding *USA Today*, there were two different pictures presented by the two groups of articles (two pro-deal and three anti-deal articles). The characters in the narrative of the two pro-deal articles, including the paper's editorial, were the U.S as a nation-state, Iran, Israel and the Arabs. Iran as the most recurrent social actor in these articles was under the shadow of other actors. Its actions, such as importing/exporting weapons or building nuclear capability, were mostly hypothetical or presented in the form of adjectives plus nominals (backgrounded active material process). In other cases, Iran was affected by other actors (passive material process). However, Israel and the Arab states were trying to maintain their power in the region and actively took advantage of the situation (*referent subjects*), which offered opportunities for making new arms agreements with the West (active material process). The U.S., which was represented as a nation-state (Obama was suppressed in the pro-deal articles), was either descriptivised and passivated or shown as not fulfilling its responsibilities as a "world moral authority" (passivated, descriptivised or active material process). The nuclear deal was a good accord (an object) in that, under its terms and conditions, Iran was prevented from developing nuclear capabilities (descriptivised and passivated). Overall, there were two ways of representing the event by this group: a *deagentalised* version (van Leeuwen's term) where the events relating to the nuclear issue occurred as natural happenings with no apparent agents (e.g. 'Iran *is prevented*...' or 'the *biggest concern* about the deal is...') or were described as attributes of the actors (e.g. 'the U.S. *has* a deal' or 'IAEA *has* access to Iran'); and a *dynamic* version where the

Arab states and Israel were active in trouble-making (e.g. Iran's neighbours *will use* the spectre of a newly resurgent Iran *to pry more weapons* sales), the U.S. was incapable of dealing with them (e.g. we *risk abrogating* our responsibilities) and Iran's threat was backgrounded as a way to desecuritize it (e.g. Iran *can't even begin* buying arms).

Anti-deal articles also included four characters in their narratives: Iran, Obama, the U.S. and Israel. Iran, Obama and the U.S. were largely activated while Israel was mostly passivated. Iran (*the referent subject*), as the most frequent social actor, was busy destabilising the region, threatening its neighbours, funding terrorists, and killing Americans and Jews (active material and verbal processes) or enjoying benefits from the deal (beneficiary in passive material processes). Obama had made terrible mistakes regarding Iran's nuclear issue and was making contradictory or irrational claims about the deal (active material and verbal processes). The U.S. as a nation-state (mostly referred to by the pronoun *we*) made decisions and carried out actions regarding Iran's nuclear issue that had negative consequences for its own and its allies' security (active material processes). In some cases, the U.S. was the subject of Iran's terrorist actions (*referent object*), such as murdering its soldiers or taking its people as hostages (passive material processes). Israel, or Jews in general, were the main target of Iran's hatred and evil doings (*referent object*). Israel was under an *existing threat* of annihilation by Iran (passive material and verbal process). Finally, the nuclear deal was a bad agreement with *pathetically little backing* that should be rejected and *robbed of legitimacy* (passive material, verbal and mental processes).

Again, I should emphasise that, in cases where America as a nation-state (the U.S. or *we*) was involved in negative actions, its real reference was to Obama/his administration. However, when *we* or the U.S. essentially referred to America as a nation-state, it was mostly passivated.

5.8. Representation in Newspapers' Headlines

As has been demonstrated above, in the accounts offered by the pro-deal articles (in *The New York Times* and, partially, in *USA Today*), the nuclear deal was perceived as the outcome of a win-win transaction between the U.S. and Iran. This view helped

proponents justify the U.S.' concessions. However, the anti-deal newspapers (*The Wall Street Journal*, *New York Post* and, partially, *USA Today*) saw the deal not only as a completely failed attempt by the U.S. to rein in a criminal but also as counterproductive. To put it in a nutshell, while anti-deal articles stood on the far negative edge of the continuum and followed an idealistic and emotionalised approach in their representation of the issue, pro-deal articles attempted to seem pragmatic and were slightly closer to the centre. The former leaned towards presenting a narrative that provoked negative feelings of despair, guilt, fear and shame in readers but the latter intended to offer a soothing narrative that motivated positive emotions of relief, hope and success. This difference in the approach of the two groups of articles is absolutely noticeable in their headlines. In addition to the nuances of social actor nomination and predication in each newspaper, the papers' different rhetorical tendencies can be detected in the picture frames of their headlines (Tables 5.7 and 5.8).

Table 5.7 Headlines in the *anti-deal* articles

Newspapers	Headlines
<i>WS Journal</i> (14 July 2015) <i>WS Journal</i> (14 July 2015) <i>WS Journal</i> (15 July 2015) <i>WS Journal</i> (16 July 2015) <i>WS Journal</i> (17 July 2015)	1. The Best Arguments for an Iran Deal 2. <u>Tehran's</u> Nuclear Triumph 3. Why They're Cheering in Tehran 4. The <u>Iranian</u> Nuclear-Inspection Charade 5. <u>Obama</u> Pours Gas on the <u>Mideast Fire</u>
<i>NY Post</i> (14 July 2015) <i>NY Post</i> (14 July 2015) <i>NY Post</i> (20 July 2015)	6. <u>Obama</u> and <u>Kerry</u> crossed every one of their own red lines 7. <u>Obama's</u> Iran-nuke deal far, far worse than no deal at all 8. How Obama kneecapped the US <u>Congress</u> on Iran — again (criminality)
<i>NY Post</i> (22 July 2015) <i>NY Post</i> (28 July 2015)	9. Why the Iran deal is in danger 10. Why the Iran deal's <u>public support</u> is plummeting
<i>USA Today</i> (14 July 2015) <i>USA Today</i> (16 July 2015) <i>USA Today</i> (31 July 2015)	11. Iran deal fails on all fronts 12. Nuclear deal worse than imagined 13. No apologies for Iran truth

Examining the anti-deal papers' headlines, the first thing I noticed was their *hyperbolic* and *metaphorical* rhetoric – two features of any emotionalised discourse. Two simultaneous pictures were constructed regarding the outcome of the deal by these headlines: the deal is Good for Them; and the deal is Bad for Us. The deal is a victory for Iranians and it has made them happy (2 and 3). However, it is a failure for Americans – *far worse than imagined* (7, 11 and 12). In these headlines, the *war* or *competition* metaphor is central. The nuclear negotiations are considered as a war or competition that can have only one winner; thereby, 'Their' happiness means 'Our' failure. The other noticeable point in the headlines is the explicit attempt to introduce President Obama as guilty for this failure and to condemn him overtly. In four headlines, authors have pointed directly to Obama. In three of these cases, immoral/criminal actions have been attributed to him in metaphoric ways (5, 6 and 8). Obama has been accused of *pouring gas on fire*, *crossing red lines* and *kneecapping*. Apart from these obvious accusations, he has also been accused of deception (although implicitly). In headline 4, the author claims that the inspection under the deal is a charade and, in headline 13, another author firmly indicates that he won't apologise for telling the truth about the deal. They imply that the accounts of the deal put forward by Obama's administration are false and, therefore, he has deceived people.

In addition to metaphors, the other rhetorical device that emotionalises the papers' discourses here was *hyperbole*. The hyperbolic nature of the anti-deal papers' rhetoric is the result of two strategies. One is their exaggerated lexical choices and the other is their use of intensifying meta-discourse markers. While words like *Charade*, *plummeting* and *Triumph* are semantically heavy, phrases like *every one*, *at all*, *again* and *all fronts*, and the repetition of the adjective *far*, also added to their intensity and made their pictures more disastrous. *Presuppositions* are also interesting in terms of their projecting of ideas, their ideological biases and their role in giving a sarcastic tone to the rhetoric (all with their emotional overtones). Nine out of the 13 headlines contain presuppositions; some realised through *possessives* (2, 4, 5, 6 and 7) and some through *wh* questions (3, 8, 9 and 10). Describing the deal as *Tehran's Triumph*, in addition to emphasising that Iran has won the negotiations, aims to respond

sarcastically to the proponents of the deal who called it a triumph for America or the world (headline 2). The presupposition implied in the phrase *Mideast Fire* projects the idea that the Middle East region is dangerous (headline 5). By asserting that the deal belongs to Obama through possessive *s* in *Obama's Iran-uke deal*, the responsibility for a terrible deal (*far, far worse than no deal*) is put on him (headline 7). The presuppositions presented in the form of *wh* questions also function to project authors' opinions to the readers. By asking how and why questions in headlines 3, 8, 9 and 10, claims such as *Obama kneecapped the Congress, the deal is in danger* or *support for the deal is rapidly falling down* are shown as being facts that are taken for granted.

On the other hand, examining the headlines of the pro-deal articles demonstrated their less-exaggerated and more-pragmatic approach (Table 5.8).

Table 5.8 Headlines in the *pro-deal* articles

Newspapers	Headlines
<i>NY Times</i> (14 July 2015) <i>NY Times</i> (14 July 2015) <i>NY Times</i> (15 July 2015) <i>NY Times</i> (16 July 2015) <i>NY Times</i> (19 July 2015) <i>USA Today</i> (14 July 2015) <i>USA Today</i> (21 July 2015)	1. <u>Republicans</u> Race to Condemn the Iran Deal 2. An Iran Nuclear Deal That Reduces the Chance of War 3. How <u>Obama</u> Should Sell the Iran Deal 4. The Door to <u>Iran</u> Opens 5. A Good Deal for <u>Israel</u> 6. Is Iran nuclear deal better than no deal? Yes : our view 7. Not nuclear, but no matter: Column

Except the first headline that has a confronting tone and metaphorically accuses Republicans of competing to discredit the deal, the rest are partisan but not reproachful. There are presuppositions embedded in headlines 2, 3 and 4. These presuppositions aim to project ideas such as: there is a possibility of war between the U.S. and Iran (and thereby to introduce the deal as a strategy to prevent it); Obama needs to sell the deal (by justifying it); and the door to Iran has been closed (implying that access to Iran is made possible by the deal and thereby, it is beneficial to Us). Although the rhetoric of this group of headlines is not as emotionalised as are those

of the previous group, the headlines convey a feeling of hope and relief. This is achieved especially through the metaphors of *door* and *transaction* (3, 4 and 5). A previously closed door being opened is a symbol of overcoming obstacles and gaining new opportunities. A transactional view of the deal also conveys a sense of a two-way benefit. This sense is discernible in the phrase *A Good Deal for Israel*, which points to Israel's benefit from the deal.

5.9. Conclusion

As demonstrated through this chapter, the social practice under study (the Iran nuclear negotiations) was represented or discursively constructed in different ways. Each newspaper or even each article had its own specific narration of the reality. These various accounts were constructed mainly through different distributions of social agency. Firstly, some social actors who were part of the social practice were completely excluded from the newspapers' narratives (for example, the European countries and China). Secondly, some social actors (Israel and Saudi Arabia), while not being directly involved in the social practice, had a salient presence in some newspapers (*The New York Times* and *USA Today*). Thirdly, the two main social actors (Iran and the U.S.), while being present in narratives from all the newspapers, were assigned different degrees and types of agency by each newspaper. As shown in section 5.7, when these social actors with their differing degrees and types of agency are put together, each newspaper's unique 'world map' emerges.

Analysis of the representational features of the opinion discourses in this study largely revealed similar findings as those reported by previous literature reviewed in chapter two (2.2.1). Regarding inclusion and exclusion of social actors, both Rashidi and Rasti (2012) and Rasti and Sahragard (2012) argued that Israel was almost excluded in media texts they investigated. This was similar to my finding regarding presence of Israel in *The Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Post*. Given that all the articles analysed in those two studies as well as articles from *The Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Post* in my study had critical views towards Iran's nuclear programme, I can conclude that articles that are against Iran's nuclear programme, tend not to involve Israel in their discussions.

In case of representation of present social actors, Rashidi and Rasti (2012) reported that Iran was mainly passive in British and American papers they examined. It was, according to them, only active in relation to negative actions. This was also true regarding representation of Iran in my corpus of the American newspapers. Here again, Iran was either passive or active in trouble-making and terrorism. Similarly, Atai and Mozaheb (2013) argued that Iran was depicted as a threat and rebellious in 60 per cent of cases it was present in British media. In fact, threat and its connotations such as fear, dangerous, warning, etc., were the most salient terms in all the articles.

However, my findings did not confirm Kheirabadi and Alavi Moghaddam (2012) claim that, in many cases, Iran was extremely excluded from *The New York Times* discourse. Nevertheless, these differences can be related to many factors such as time of publication and international situation at that time, topic of discussion, etc.

In regards to other peripheral social actors, my study confirmed Rasti and Sahragard (2012) findings that Russia was depicted “mostly negatively either as a meddler in Iran’s affairs or as an opportunist”, and China was “mostly associated with Russia in its deeds or policies and therefore given the image of an opportunist and an economic parasite” (p. 734).

Finally, I acknowledge that representation is more than merely construction of social agency and contains many other discursive and rhetorical strategies (some of them were investigated in studies I reviewed in chapter two); however, because of the length and depth of the actor/action analysis presented in this chapter, I could not discuss other representational mechanisms. Nevertheless, I have offered a brief analysis of the newspapers’ headlines to demonstrate some of these other mechanisms of representation (e.g. hyperbole and metaphors). Moreover, I have pointed to some of these mechanisms, such as *presupposition* or *word choice*, in chapters six and seven, and I will discuss more of them in chapter eight under the heading ‘Emotionalisation of discourse’.

Chapter Six

Analysis of Dialogical Features

As discussed in chapter three (3.2.3), an important aspect of any text, especially an opinion one, is its dialogic dimension. On the one hand, the ways in which authors take positions towards different opinions/issues are indicative of authors' authority and determine the dialogical space of the text (dialogical space demonstrates how much the authors open up or close down the space given to alternative or opposite views). On the other hand, the methods that the authors use to engage with their readers influence the readers' response to them and their opinions. These two factors (the authors' display of authority and the ways in which they involve the readers) are also very influential in securitisation moves as examples of persuasive discourses. As mentioned in chapter three (3.3), securitisation is an intersubjective process between a securitising actor and his/her audience, and its success depends on the actor's ability to convince the audience about the threatening nature of an issue. The key to success in that is the actors' (here authors) strategies for self-display and building solidarity with the audience.

Again, as explained in chapter three, K. Hyland (2005) calls the first type of dialogue *stance* (interaction with alternative or opposite ideas and opinions) and the second type *engagement* (interaction with readers). These two types of Dialogue can be linked to three components of *Ethos* introduced in Classical Rhetoric. This means that dialogic structure can be partially revealing of the way in which authors display their *Ethos* consisting of *good sense*, *good will* and *virtue*. The engagement markers that authors use to address and involve readers in the discussion can be indicative of their *good will* towards the readers. The stance markers that demonstrate the authors' presence in the text and the strength of their positions can be suggestive of their formulation of *good sense*. Finally, *parenthetical expressions* comprising two meta-discourse markers in Hyland's (2005) classification – attitude markers from stance and

personal asides from engagement markers – can be revealing of authors' *virtue*/moral values (see Figure 6.1)

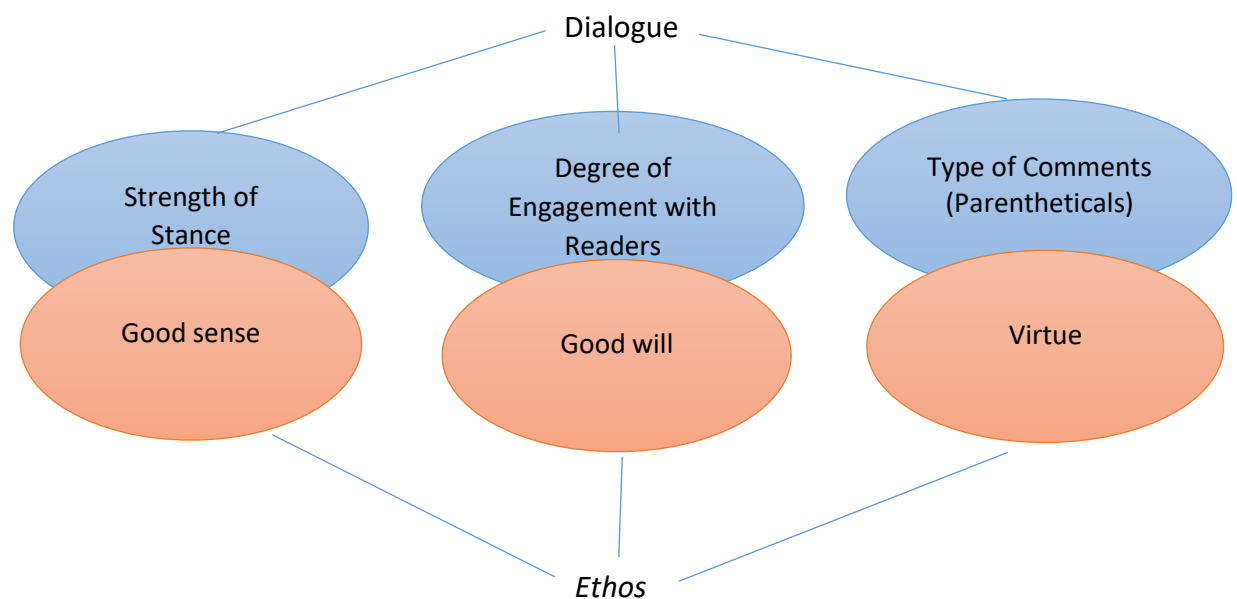


Figure 6.1 Interrelationship between Dialogue and Ethos

The authors' engagement with the readers that can be expressive of their *good will* is realised in their use of meta-discourse markers like *second-person* or *inclusive first-person pronouns*, *questions* and *directives*. These groups of meta-discourse markers help appreciate how much the writers engage with the readers and what relationship they assume between themselves and their readers. The second type of meta-discourse marker that embraces *hedges*, *boosters* and *self-mentions* can reveal other aspects of the authors' characters: namely, their self-confidence and authority (known as *good sense* in rhetoric). Parenthetical expressions, including *attitude markers* and *asides*, convey authors' comments and judgements on different issues and, thereby, display their moral values and personalities (*virtue* in rhetoric). All these three features are influential in the success of de/securitisation when it is considered an intersubjective process occurring between a de/securitising actor and his/her audiences.

In light of the above classification, articles collected from the four American newspapers were examined and instances of interactional meta-discourse markers were identified and categorised in the appropriate groups as *engagement* markers,

stance markers or *parenthetical* expressions. Accordingly, this chapter is presented in three sections, each dealing with a specific dialogic feature of the texts.

6.1. Dialogue with Readers: Engagement Markers

Engagement markers are devices through which authors (here as de/securitising actors) build relationships with their readers (audience). In other words, they are ways of bringing readers into the discourse. Engagement markers help writers grab the attention of the readers and involve them in the discussion through indicating solidarity with them, addressing them, asking questions or directing/guiding them. Thereby, when writers employ engagement markers, the readers are assigned an active role in the discourse, similar to that of an interlocutor in a conversation. This means that engagement devices make written discourse more like conversation (informal). Overall, through engagement markers, writers show awareness of the readers' presence and acknowledge their role in the discussion. However, as mentioned above, the other outcome of using engagement markers is the informality achieved in the discourse (the more engaging a discourse, the more informal it can sound). Therefore, the engagement markers appear to work like a double-edged sword and, thus, deciding to employ them in a discourse is not an easy choice to make. Any choice in this regard should be made while considering the balance between 'engaging readers' and 'maintaining professionalism' (formality of discourse).

Drawing on Hyland's (2005) classification, I identified the following engagement markers in the four newspapers with their frequencies and types:

Table 6.1 Engagement markers across newspapers

	Engagement markers				
Newspapers	We inclusive	You	Question	Directive	Total no.
<i>USA Today</i>	32	4	10	2	48
<i>New York Post</i>	6	7	6	2	19
<i>The Wall Street Journal</i>	11	-	6	4	19
<i>The New York Times</i>	3	-	6	-	8

6.1.1. Inclusive pronoun *we*

The most frequent engagement marker in the corpus was the pronoun *we*. This pronoun is also the most persuasive engagement marker as, according to K. Hyland (2005), the pronoun *we* “sends a clear signal of membership by textually constructing both the writer and the reader as participants with similar understanding and goal”. Generally, there are two types of *we*: inclusive and exclusive. The former embraces both writer and readers and, thereby, has been examined as an engagement marker in the study. The latter, however, is exclusive and refers to only the writer’s own social or political group – newspaper organisation or fellow writers in this study – and, therefore, has been categorised as a stance marker (self-mention) along with the singular first-person pronoun *I* and will be discussed in section 6.2.

Given that the articles in my corpus were written by American journalists or politicians and were published in American newspapers, nearly all the instances of inclusive *we* in the corpus referred to either American people or America as a nation-state. Downing and Perucha (2014) call these two types of *we* ‘social *we*’ and ‘national *we*’ respectively. The only exception, where the reference of pronoun *we* was not solely Americans, was *The New York Times* op-ed published on 19 July 2015. It was also the only article from *The New York Times* with the occurrence of pronoun *we*:

1. So, yes, **we** could have gotten a better deal. Israel wanted something different (as did the United States)...
2. It was Israel that decided years ago to give priority to the nuclear issue, as an existential threat, over all other Iranian transgressions, and concluded that if **we** can just resolve the nuclear threat, that would be good enough.
3. Both Israel and the United States wanted a knockout blow; what **we** got was a punt.

The three instances of *we* in this article included Americans as well as Israelis. This means that the assumed readers of the article were both American and Israeli people. The author of the article called Israel a *junior ally* for the U.S.; he considered Israel and America to be a unified group with common interests. There were three other instances of *we* in this article that were excluded from the analysis because they were in direct reports of Netanyahu’s statements and their references were to Israelis only.

It was also noticeable that none of the instances of *we* in the corpus seemed to include the U.S.' negotiating partners (5+1 nations). The only way of referring to them was through possessive adjective *our* (The United States and *our allies could halt...*; we can hardly count on all *our partners*) that occurred twice in a *USA Today* articles (21 July 2015). Here, *allies* and *partners* mean the other five countries that accompanied the U.S. in negotiations with Iran. On the contrary, there were several instances of using the phrase *our allies* for referring to Israel and Arab states.

Among the four newspapers, *USA Today* articles included the highest number of pronominal *we* (including *us* and *our*) in the corpus. There were 32 instances of *we* in the *USA Today* articles in total. Except for its editorial that included no instances of this engagement marker, each of the other four articles employed this pronominal between six and 11 times. However, in the other three newspapers, only one or two articles (out of the five) employed this engagement marker:

4. As Americans, **we** did not achieve our initial goal,.. (*USA Today*, 14 July 2015)
5. Israelis understand **we** are giving their chief antagonist — the very people who hate Israel the most — the capability to develop a nuclear weapon. (*USA Today*, 14 July 2015)
6. But for reasons of guilt, political expediency or simply wanting to win friends, **we** risk abrogating **our** responsibilities and touching off a new spiral of lethal firepower. (*USA Today*, 21 July 2015)
7. Since **we** can't trust Iran **we** need an airtight system of monitoring and verification. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 14 July 2015)
8. If only President Obama were as hard-nosed and clever in undermining **our** adversaries as he is in kneecapping the US Congress, the country's strategic position might be transformed. (*New York Post*, 20 July 2015)

In all the above examples, the reference of the pronoun *we* was Americans of any political ideology or social class (national *we*), whether for or against the nuclear deal. It embraced all Americans, including Obama and his negotiating team. Although, except in excerpt 6, all of the examples are from articles with critical views towards the deal with Iran, the authors did not exclude Obama and his administration from the national *we*. This was a common feature of all the articles; in all the instances of *we*, even the ones collected from the most critical articles, authors did not seem to exclude

Obama. In fact, while he was considered to be a member of the national *we* in all the articles, he was accused of naïveté and cowardice and blamed for brokering a bad deal for ‘Us’. As I discussed in chapter five regarding representation of the U.S. in the newspapers, use of the pronoun *we* as the agent in propositions describing Obama’s actions was a strategy to induce a feeling of national disgrace in the readers: suggesting that Obama’s failure as the U.S. representative meant failure for all Americans.

Overall, this engagement marker was more frequent in the anti-deal articles (i.e. securitising moves) than it was in the pro-deal ones (desecuritising moves). While about half of the anti-deal articles from the *New York Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today* referred to Americans with the pronoun *we* (seven out of 13), only two out of the seven pro-deal articles from *The New York Times* and *USA Today* employed this engagement marker (less than one-third).

6.1.2. Personal pronoun *you*

The other personal pronoun with important interpersonal functions is second-person pronoun *you*. As it is with the pronoun *we*, there are two senses of *you*: inclusive and exclusive. Inclusive *you* is used to indicate a shared experience and includes both writer and readers (the generic *you*). Exclusive *you*, on the other hand, is used to address the readers and excludes the writer. Among the four newspapers in the study, the *New York Post* had the highest number of occurrences of the pronoun *you* (seven instances of *you* in three out of five articles). After that was *USA Today* with four instances of *you*, all of which occurred in one article. In *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, however, there was no instance of *you*. Use of the pronoun *you* in the *New York Post* was as follows:

9. In the end, the Iran deal is a leap of faith – faith in the mullahs, if **you** can imagine that... (*New York Post*, 22 July 2015)
10. It is only remotely sensible, as a matter of policy, if **you** believe that Iran won’t cheat... (*New York Post*, 22 July 2015)
11. But if the lessons of recent history teach **you** that Iran will cheat and there won’t be any real will outside the US Congress (and perhaps the next president) to impose sanctions on it for doing so, then it’s a mistake. (*New York Post*, 22 July 2015)

12. So it all comes down to what **you** believe, and a week of intense lobbying has not changed the public's lack of trust in the Iranians... (*New York Post*, 22 July 2015)
13. In 1979, an NBC News/Associated Press poll showed an astonishing level of support – 81 percent, if **you** can believe it – for the proposed SALT 2 treaty in the wake of the negotiations... (*New York Post*, 28 July 2015)
14. Indeed, had **you** told Obama and Kerry two years ago that an Iran accord would contain the conditions outlined Tuesday, they would've laughed **you** out of the room. (*New York Post*, 14 July 2015)

All of the excerpts above, apart from 9 and 13, include the pronoun *you* in its inclusive sense. They are examples of generic or indefinite *you* (meaning anyone) and refer to people in general, including readers and the writer. In excerpts 9 and 13, the references to *you* are exclusively to readers. The phrases *if you can imagine that* or *if you can believe it* in excerpts 9 and 13 are idiomatic and mean to indicate something that the authors know seems unbelievable. Similarly, in *USA Today*, two of the four instances of *you* (ex. 15) are generic, and the other two occurrences are addressed solely to the readers (ex. 16 and 17):

15. When **you** write a column, as did I two weeks ago, headlined “The worst agreement in U.S. diplomatic history,” **you** don't expect to revisit the issue. (*USA Today*, 16 July 2015)
16. And what do **you** think will be left to be found, left unscrubbed, after 24 days? The whole process is farcical. (*USA Today*, 16 July 2015)
17. Even if Congress rejects the agreement, do **you** think the Europeans, the Chinese or the Russians will reinstate sanctions? The result: The United States is left isolated while the rest of the world does thriving business with Iran. (*USA Today*, 16 July 2015)

The exclusive *you* can be considered to be the most direct engagement marker. By directly addressing the readers, the author acknowledges their presence and considers them as active interlocutors. Excerpts 16 and 17 have two engagement markers simultaneously: exclusive *you* and *questions*. The use of rhetorical questions besides the pronoun *you* adds to the dialogic engagement of the text. By directly addressing the readers and asking them questions the answers to which seem to be

obvious, the author appears to be in a face-to-face conversation/argument with his readers. The dialogic function of questions will be explained in the next section below.

6.1.3. Questions and directives

Questions and directives are also important in creating the reader–writer relationship although in different ways. Questions “arouse interest and encourage the reader to explore an unresolved issue with the writer as an equal, a conversational partner, sharing his or her curiosity and following where the argument leads” (K. Hyland, 2005). Directives, however, “instruct the reader to perform an action or to see things in a way determined by the writer” (p. 184). While the former assigns equal positions to the author and the reader, the latter ascribes a subordinate position to the reader. Therefore, although both questions and directives are means through which an author engages with their reader, they assume different types of relationship being held between author and reader.

Starting with questions, I should note that they were the second-most-recurrent group of engagement markers in the corpus after the personal pronoun *we* (28 instances of questions). As just mentioned, questions are remarkable as engagement markers because they positively involve the reader through assigning the role of a judge to them (K. Hyland, 2005). The other point about questions is that all of the instances of questions in the four newspapers were *rhetorical*. As rhetorical questions, instead of expecting any answers from the readers, they offered opinions in the form of interrogatives. The authors used rhetorical questions for a variety of reasons, including *to grab readers’ attention, to raise a point, to emphasise an idea, to take a position, to align readers with their points of view, to mock their opponents, to show surprise*, etc. Rhetorical questions identified in the corpus were categorised into different groups, according to their functions. Questions were primarily divided into two groups, depending on whether or not they were answered by the authors.

Some of the questions from the first group (those not being answered by the authors) were asked in order to make the readers **approve the authors’ points of view** through answering their questions. The two excerpts below, as well as the two from the previous section (ex. 16 and 17), are of this type:

18. **Would** Mr. Bush argue that a succession of United States presidents should not have negotiated arms deals with the Soviet Union because they did not lead to full, unilateral disarmament and a renunciation of communism? (*The New York Times*, 14 July 2015)
19. **Will** the administration risk its precious nuclear deal if Iran threatens to break it every time the two countries are at loggerheads over regional crises in Yemen or Syria? (*The Wall Street Journal*, 14 July 2015)

Although these questions were not explicitly answered by the authors, the answers were implied in them. The implied answer for these yes/no questions was ‘no’. The authors asked questions with the assumption that the answers were self-evident and the readers would provide the desired answers themselves. Therefore, these questions were substitutions for negative statements; instead of asserting their opinions in the form of negative statements, the authors left it to the readers to provide those opinions by answering questions. This can have an empowering effect on readers and, thereby, can improve the reader–writer relationship. We can also see a demonstration of rhetorical questions that utilise pronouns in excerpts 16 and 17 in the previous section. Here, questions explicitly addressed readers (through the pronoun *you*) and, thereby, were more influential than were the questions that were asked without being overtly addressed to the readers. By simultaneously employing two engagement markers (the pronoun *you* and a *question*), the authors created a closer contact with the readers.

Some other questions from the first group were asked to express surprise, disbelief or sarcasm:

20. **Who** would have imagined we would be giving up the conventional arms and ballistic missile embargoes on Iran? (*USA Today*, 16 July 2015)
21. Also, **how** does a nuclear deal not wind up being Iran’s ultimate hostage in dictating terms for America’s broader Mideast policy? (*The Wall Street Journal*, 14 July 2015)
22. **Seriously? How about** the Bay of Pigs; Vietnam; the secret bombing of Cambodia...? (*The New York Times*, 14 July 2015)
23. **What** are congressional hearings and the US domestic political debate compared with the ‘international community’? (*New York Post*, 20 July 2015)

The authors’ purpose for asking the above questions seems to have been to express surprise/disappointment about what had happened or to mock what someone had

said. The first two questions above are examples of the former. *USA Today* and *The Wall Street Journal* authors asked questions that did not seek answers but intended to indicate how astonishing a situation was (ex. 20) or how impossible it would be to prevent something from happening (ex. 21). The other two examples, in addition to conveying disbelief and surprise, aimed to ridicule others' opinions (ex. 22 and 23). In response to a Republican critic who described *Obama's decision to sign a nuclear deal with Iran as one of the most destructive foreign policy decisions* in his lifetime, *The New York Times* author asked him about previous U.S. presidents' 'bizarre' decisions with a tone mixed with surprise and sarcasm. Or, the *New York Post* author sarcastically (by use of scare quotes) asked about the importance of U.S. domestic political decisions when they were compared with those regarding the international community. The author's purpose was to show that Obama and Kerry's insistence on following the path of the international community regarding Iran meant that they didn't care for U.S. national interests.

The second group of questions included those that were immediately answered by the authors within the text of the article. In some of these cases, the authors asked yes/no questions so that they could **declare their positions** by answering them. In these cases, they directly stated their dis/agreements with the opinions inserted in the questions:

24. **Should** Congress then give up? **No.** (*USA Today*, 16 July 2015)

25. **Is** Iran nuclear deal better than no deal? **Yes.** (*USA Today*, 14 July 2015)

This was the case especially when questions were presented as the headlines of the articles (ex. 25). In such cases, the authors could express their positions openly from the outset. In some other instances, the opinions expressed in yes/no questions belonged to the critics and the authors put them forward in order **to refute them**:

26. And this is 'one of the darkest days in world history'? No, it is a moment for guarded hope. (*The New York Times*, 16 July 2015)

Here, *The New York Times* author highlighted the claim made by some critics by presenting it in the form of a question (as well as putting it in scare quotes) in order to blatantly counter it. Similarly, in excerpt 27, *The Wall Street Journal* author asked a

question in order, firstly, to stress John Kerry's answer and then, secondly, to counter it (*but*):

27. **Will** the nuclear deal provide that? John Kerry will swear that it will **but** as recently as... (*The Wall Street Journal*, 14 July 2015)

Finally, in many cases, the authors' purpose for asking questions seemed to be to **focus readers' attention** on issues that they wanted to raise and then to **align readers' views** with their own through the answers they provided:

28. But **what about** 'anytime, anywhere' inspections? Again, the administration backtracked. (*New York Post*, 14 July 2015)
29. And **who's** responsible for that? The Obama administration cut a deal eviscerating the international sanctions regime and... (*New York Post*, 20 July 2015)
30. So **what** has been won by these arduous negotiations? First, an option other than war to... (*USA Today*, 14 July 2015)
31. So **what** do the critics... seek in place of the deal with Iran that verifiably blocks Tehran's path to a nuclear weapon for at least the next 10 to 15 years? Presumably, they want... (*The New York Times*, 16 July 2015)

In all the above examples, the authors intended to draw readers' attention to certain issues through questions. They presented the points that they wanted to emphasise in the form of interrogatives and then discussed them through the answers they provided. One important point is that, in addition to questions in excerpts 22 and 23 that had overt sarcastic functions, almost all these rhetorical questions had a slightly sarcastic tone as they conveyed more or less belittling attitudes towards other opinions or opinion-holders through phrases such as *so what... ?*, *what about... ?*, etc.

Another interesting point regarding rhetorical questions, particularly *wh* questions, is their embedded presuppositions. All these questions contained some taken-for-granted propositions. In excerpt 30, for example, it was assumed that the U.S. had won the negotiations, or, in excerpt 31, the claim that the deal verifiably prevented Iran's access to the nuclear weapons was considered to be a fact. The question in excerpt 20 above also assumed that the U.S. had surrendered to Iran regarding the conventional arms embargo. Apart from whether or not these presupposed propositions were correct, they were important in revealing authors' perspectives (the ways they viewed the issue). Phrases like *its precious nuclear deal* (ex. 19), scare

quotes around some phrases in excerpts 23 and 26, the verb *swear* in the phrase *John Kerry will swear that it will* (ex. 27), etc. revealed that these questions were rhetorically charged and conveyed authors' differing degrees of scornful attitudes.

Directives, as the other group of engagement markers, can be specified, according to K. Hyland (2005), by *imperatives* (note, see), *modals of obligation* (one must/should...) and the *indication of necessity or importance* (it is necessary to...). From these three groups of directives, only imperatives were found in the corpus of articles. A total of eight directives (imperatives) occurred in three newspapers while no instance of directives occurred in *The New York Times*). These imperatives, however, did not address only readers or only one group of readers. Predictably, some of them were addressed to the readers in general:

- 32. **Imagine** how Iran's acquisition of the most advanced anti-ship missiles would threaten our control over the Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. (*USA Today*, 16 July 2015)
- 33. **Note** the distinction: Agreeing on what is 'necessary' is going to be a preoccupation of the new inspections regime. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 16 July 2015)
- 34. **Start** with the inspections. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 15 July 2015)

As mentioned above, this group of imperatives is important in the writer–reader relationship. It assigns to authors positions of authority with regard to their readers. In the above excerpts, the authors directed readers about how to think, see or act regarding the nuclear deal. In some other imperatives, the authors addressed specific groups like their opponents:

- 35. **Dig** a little deeper and **expose** them to the specific arguments pro and con and their distaste for the agreement grows and grows. (*New York Post*, 28 July 2015)
- 36. **Not** so fast. (*New York Post*, 28 July 2015)

Directives in excerpts 35 and 36 from the *New York Post* addressed the proponents of the deal (the author's opponents). In excerpt 36, the imperative phrase is quite colloquial. By using a phrase typically occurring in speech for addressing his opponents, the author increased the informal conversational tone of the written text.

Finally, two of the imperatives in the corpus were directed at both authors and readers. This type of imperative is completely different from the previous ones in terms of addressee and power relations:

37. **Let's assume** Iran will spend this windfall on arms rather than, as the CIA has been telling folks, on its severely strained economy. (*USA Today*, 21 July 2015)

38. So **let's be** proleptic about the Iranian nuclear deal, whose apologists are already trotting out excuses for this historic diplomatic debacle. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 14 July 2015)

The above excerpts were written as first-person plural imperatives. These imperatives do not produce the same power inequality as do the typical imperatives. Since they invite readers to accompany the authors in taking some actions, they are closer to suggestions than to directives. The authors have positioned themselves in the same power status as that of their readers and, thus, have worked towards creating a close and friendly relationship with them.

6.1.4. Engagement markers and *good will* across newspapers

As discussed earlier in the chapter, engagement markers are the most evident signs of writer–reader interaction in the text. The more the authors employ engagement markers, the closer their ‘projected’ relationships with the readers become. In other words, engagement markers cause a sense of solidarity and informality between authors and readers. The inclusive pronoun *we* is the most obvious indication of the authors’ attempts to build unity with the readers. By representing themselves as being in the same situation or sharing the same values, goals or worries as the readers have, the authors approach their readers as closely as possible and express their *good will* towards them. The pronoun *you* and *questions* are similar to the pronoun *we* in terms of being indicators of the close interaction with readers; however, they do not result in the same feelings of solidarity and power equality. Although they provide an intimate conversation-like interaction with the readers (similar to *we*), they position authors slightly higher in the hierarchy of power as they are the ones who can ask questions or address the readers. Directives, in my opinion, are the last engagement markers in terms of solidarity and, as a result, the first in terms of power inequality (this excludes the first-person plural imperative *let's*). They explicitly place the authors in positions of knowledge and power.

Accordingly, it seems plausible to conclude that *USA Today* was the most ‘engaging’ newspaper in the corpus. *USA Today* authors employed different categories of engagement markers, especially the inclusive first-person pronoun *we* (32 times) and *questions* (10 times), more than did the other three papers. There were 48 instances of engagement markers in this paper compared to 19 instances in the *New York Post* and *The Wall Street Journal* (see Figure 6.2). *The New York Times*, on the other hand, seemed to be the least ‘engaging’ newspaper with only eight instances of engagement markers in its five collected articles (no instances of directives or of *you*). Although *The Wall Street Journal* had 19 engagement markers in total, it also seemed to be a non-engaging paper. Its first op-ed (published on 14 July) contained 15 engagement markers but the other four articles from this paper employed only four engagement markers in total. The other point about this paper is that it had four instances of directives (more than did any other paper). Therefore, given that directives can be suggestive of the power distance between the authors and readers as well as the fact that very few instances of engagement markers occurred in this paper (except in one article), *The Wall Street Journal* appeared to be at least as non-engaging as was *The New York Times* (if not more so).

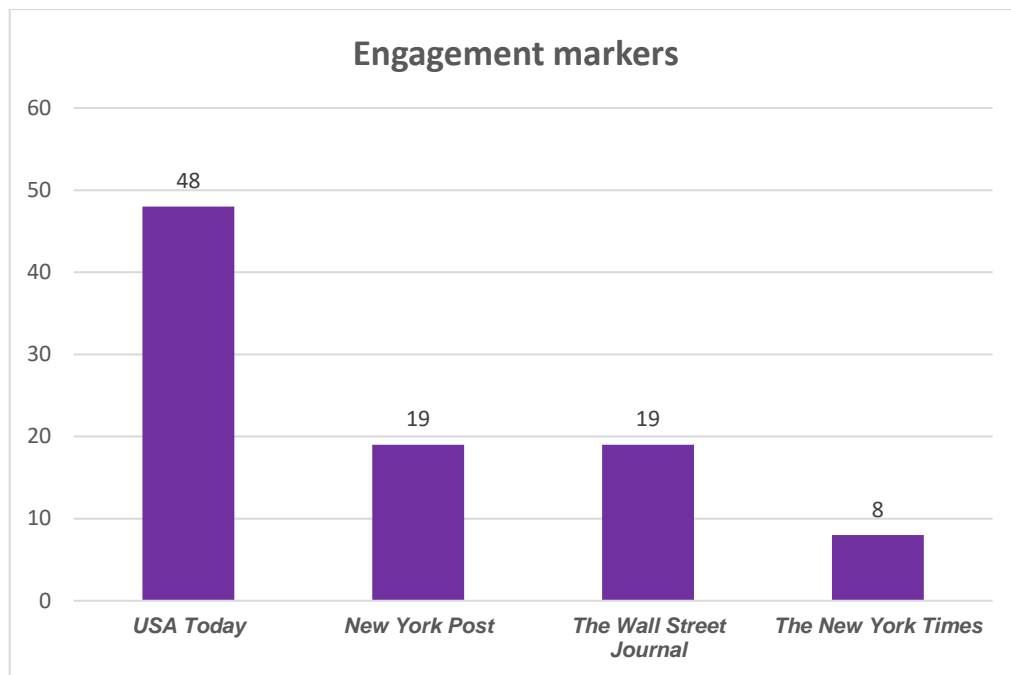


Figure 6.2. Total number of engagement markers in newspapers

6.2. Dialogue with Opinions: Stance Markers

As mentioned at the outset of the chapter, one crucial aspect of dialogue is stance (the author's interaction with other opinions and opinion holders), which can display the dialogical space of the discourse. The dialogical space is, itself, indicative of the author's (de/securitising actors) self-representation. Through stance, de/securitising actors attempt to construct their authority (or *good sense* in rhetoric) in order to leave a positive impression on their audience.

To examine the dialogical structure of the newspapers in terms of dialogical space (diversity of opinions and the space given to alternative views), I applied Hyland's (2005) classification of stance markers that included *hedges*, *boosters*, *self-mentions* and *attitude markers*. However, I modified this classification in the course of analysis by adopting ideas from Martin and White's (2005) appraisal model. Firstly, I added a third category of opinions to Hyland's (2005) two categories of stanced propositions (*hedged* and *boosted* propositions). This third category was *bare assertion*. Bare or categorical assertions are traditionally known as factive propositions – conveying facts rather than opinions. However, according to Martin and White (2005), bare assertions

can also be used to express opinions although this group of opinionated propositions contains no overt stance markers. Therefore, in order to take this type of proposition into account, I included it in my study as the third category of stanced propositions.

Secondly, again, by drawing on Martin and White's (2005) engagement system of appraisal model, I added one more stance marker to the category of boosters. This new category is called *Disclaim* by Martin and White (2005) and includes denial markers like *no*, *not* and *never* (*never* was already in the list of boosters presented by Hyland). They were added to the list of stance markers with the rationale that denying an opinion acknowledges the existence of that opinion and, thereby, unveils the diversity of opinion. Between the two categories of stance markers (hedges and boosters), denials were included in the group of boosters because they totally refute the alternative opinions and increase the strength of the author's voice.

Thirdly, *attitude markers* along with *personal asides* (one type of engagement marker in Hyland's (2005) classification) were put in a separate category of dialogue that I call *parenthetical* expressions. The reason for categorising them in one group was that they were similar in form and function. Most of the attitude markers in the corpus, similar to personal asides, were in the form of parenthetical expressions, and most of the personal asides, similar to attitude markers, were *argumentative* rather than *informative* or engaging (see the next section). They were similar in their syntactic form (parenthetical) and their propositional content (argumentative). This third category will be described and discussed in the next section.

To analyse the texts in terms of expressions of stance, I firstly made a distinction between two general groups of propositions: those that convey *facts* and those that convey *opinions*. Those propositions that contained stance markers as well as those that generally contained some types of attitude (although with no stance markers) were considered to be opinions. The remaining propositions that neither included any stance markers nor expressed any attitudes/judgements were categorised as factual propositions.

Table 6.2 presents the frequency of each category of opinionated propositions in each newspaper as well as self-mentions in the corpus (hedged, boosted and asserted opinions plus self-mentions):

Table 6.2 Types & frequencies of stance markers across newspapers

Newspapers	Stance markers			
	Opinions			Self-mention
	Hedged opinion	Boosted opinion	Asserted opinion (bare assertion)	
<i>USA Today</i>	21 (14%)	64 (41%)	69 (45%)	14
<i>New York Post</i>	33 (19%)	83 (46%)	63 (35%)	2
<i>The Wall Street Journal</i>	71 (31%)	83 (37%)	73 (32%)	3
<i>The New York Times</i>	77 (28%)	105 (39%)	89 (33%)	3

As the above table demonstrates (6.2), the occurrence of different categories of stance markers varies from newspaper to newspaper. Unlike the engagement aspect of dialogue that can be investigated directly through identifying frequency and type of engagement marker in the text, stance needs closer consideration. The strength of an author's or a newspaper's stance on an issue cannot be judged solely by counting the number of stance markers in the text. The markers should be examined in their contexts and in relation to the propositional content in order to see, for example, whose actions or opinions are intensified or mitigated or, if hedges and boosters occur together, what propositions precede or follow them.

The first important but predictable finding related to the stance markers was the high proportion of opinions when compared with facts (see Figure 6.3). This was predictable because data under analysis were examples of opinion discourse with a persuasive nature. In all four newspapers, the proportion of opinion or argumentative propositions was much higher than was the proportion of factual propositions ranging from 65 per cent in the *New York Post* to 85 per cent in *The New York Times*. These opinionated propositions were either asserted or stanced. In other words, the authors of the articles presented their opinions in two ways: either with stance markers

(boosters or hedges) or with no stance markers (bare assertions). Among the three categories of opinions, boosted and bare propositions were equally most dominant.

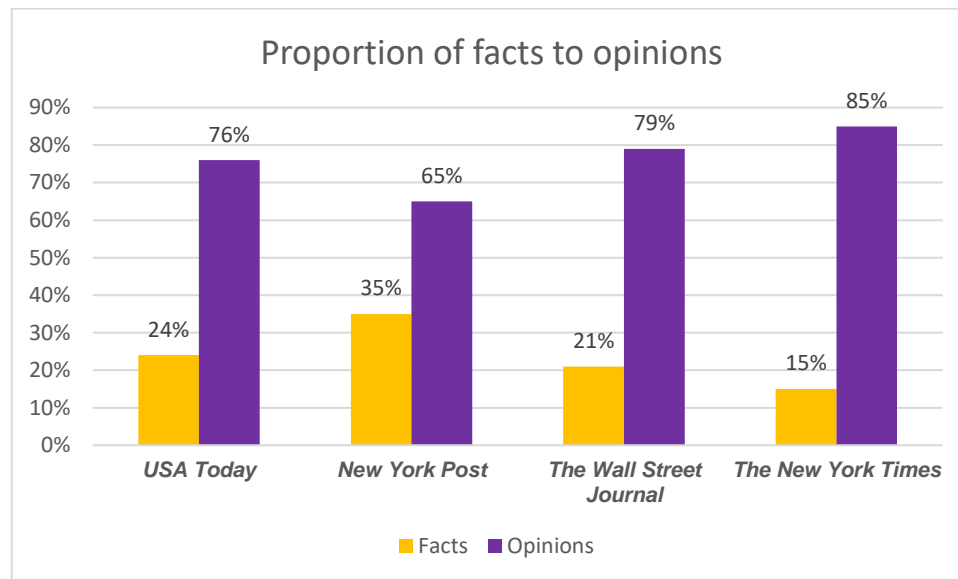


Figure 6.3. Facts and opinions across newspapers (five articles from each paper)

6.2.1. Asserted opinions

As indicated above, according to Martin and White (2005), *categorical* or *bare assertions* can be “just as intersubjectively loaded and hence ‘stanced’ as utterances including more overt markers of point of view or attitude”. The importance of these asserted opinions can be understood when we see that they formed a major part of the opinion propositions in the corpus (from 45% in *USA Today* to 33% in *The New York Times*). This means that from about a half to a third of the opinions in the newspapers were expressed as facts:

39. President Obama negotiated from a position of weakness and conveyed a message that... (*The New York Times*, 19 July 2015)
40. The anywhere, anytime inspections ideal is also misleading... (*The Wall Street Journal*, 16 July 2015)
41. Then, Kerry backed down on demands that inspectors be able to conduct snap inspections on military sites. (*New York Post*, 14 July 2015)
42. He has locked in his folly. (*USA Today*, 16 July 2015)

The four excerpts above are examples of authors expressing their attitudes and opinions in the form of bare assertions (facts) as there is no sign of subjectivity in the propositions (e.g. modals, adverbs of probability, epistemic verbs, self-mention,

comparatives, etc.). The above examples convey the authors' negative descriptions and appraisals of Obama/Kerry and the deal (e.g. negotiating from weakness, being misleading, backing down and being a fool) in present/present perfect or past simple tenses. This way of conveying opinions allows the authors (securitising actors) to present their personal views to their readers (audiences) as facts, and thereby, encourage them to perceive authors' opinions about threatening and urgent state of affairs as objective outside reality. This factual status given to subjective opinions increases the chances of acceptability of those opinions. However, a lack of intensifiers can decrease the strength of the propositions and of the authorial voice.

6.2.2. Boosted opinions

Boosted propositions, as the other main category of opinions, made up around 39 per cent to 47 per cent of the opinion propositions in each of the four newspapers:

43. **It's long been clear** that it won't happen, and it could **never** be verified in any case without a deal like the one Mr. Obama and other world leaders signed. (*The New York Times*, 14 July 2015)
44. Israel, which feels itself **most deeply** and **immediately** threatened by Iran's bellicose statements, will hardly be left out in the cold. (*USA Today*, 21 July 2015)
45. It is **still more** remarkable that the agreement says **nothing** about Iran's terrorist activities... (*The Wall Street Journal*, 15 July 2015)
46. The reality is **far more** complicated and favorable to the Iranians... (*The Wall Street Journal*, 14 July 2015)

The above excerpts, as examples of boosted opinions, illustrate the authors' high investment in their attitudes. By applying intensifying adverbs and phrases like *long been clear*, *never*, *most*, *deeply*, *still*, *more*, *far* and *nothing*, the authors highlight their opinions. In the first example above, *The New York Times* author emphasises his disagreement with the Republicans' views regarding the efficiency of increasing sanctions on Iran by adding an intensifying phrase at the beginning of his sentence and using the adverb *never*. In excerpt 44 again, the pro-deal author of *USA Today* uses the comparative *most* with intensifying adverbs *deeply* and *immediately* to show the hyperbolic nature of Israel's reaction to the deal (three intensifiers together). *The Wall Street Journal* authors, in excerpts 45 and 46 also stress their dissatisfaction and disappointment with the deal through comparative structures accompanied with

intensifying adverbs *still* and *far* as well as the denial *nothing* in excerpt 45. Employing these boosters by the anti-deal authors (securitising actors) meant to convey a sense of urgency and threat to the readers (audience).

These highly invested subjective opinions, on the one hand, increase the authorial voice and, on the other hand, reduce the dialogic space for any alternative views. In other words, although they promote the authors' authority (*good sense*), they can negatively affect their moral status because having a strong voice, in addition to being indicative of power, can be suggestive of egotism (presumption).

6.2.3. Hedged opinions

The third category of opinions in terms of frequency was the hedged propositions. They formed less than 30 per cent of the opinion propositions in each of the four newspapers (around 14% to 28%). This means that authors mainly tend to tone up rather than tone down their claims. This last group of opinions all include instances of authors playing down claims by using modifying (mitigating) adverbs, modals, verbs, etc.

47. The U.S. **appears** to have caved on this point at the last minute after ultimatums from Tehran. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 14 July 2015)
48. The deal **nearly** faltered on a demand by Iran and Russia that United Nations bans on the purchase and sale of conventional weapons and ballistic missiles be lifted immediately. (*The New York Times*, 14 July 2015)
49. **At best**, he has kicked that can down the road for a decade. (*New York Post*, 14 July 2015)
50. The appetites of many in the region are **likely** to know few bounds, and we **can hardly** count on all our partners to show the same restraint. (*USA Today*, 16 July 2015)

As demonstrated in the above excerpts, by employing adverbs such as *nearly*, *likely* and *hardly*, phrases like *at best*, modals of probability like *can* and epistemic verbs like *appears*, the authors lessened the strength of their opinions. In the first two excerpts from *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times* (ex. 47 and 48), the authors mitigated their claims about the U.S.' yielding to Iran or the deal's hesitation on Iran's demands by the use of the verb *appear* and the adverb *nearly*. Excerpt 48 is from a pro-deal article and, thereby, its alleviation of the negative claim about the deal is to be expected; however, collected from an anti-deal article, it is interesting to see the

application of a hedge in excerpt 47. Nevertheless, the closer reading shows that this hedging does not work to lighten the author's claim (that the U.S. caved). In other words, it seems to be a result of the author's lack of certainty about the *time* of the claimed action (*at the last minute after ultimatums*) rather than the action itself (the U.S.' caving). In excerpt 49, while the author has already underestimated Obama's success in stopping Iran's nuclear programme by using the metaphor *kicked the can down the road*⁹ (an instance of intertextuality), by adding the phrase *at best*, he makes it seem even less successful. In the last example, again, the pro-deal author softens his negative opinion regarding the untrustworthiness of the U.S.' partners and Middle East allies through adverbs of probability. Hedging, similar to boosting, bears both positive and negative impacts for authors. While it can be indicative of an author's high level of morality through expanding dialogical space (respecting others' right to disagree), it can also negatively affect the author's construction of authority by being suggestive of his/her lack of certainty or weakness of opinions.

6.2.4. Mixed opinions: Hedges and boosters together

One important finding regarding opinion markers was the co-occurrence of hedges and boosters in some propositions (less than 7% in each newspaper). In a few cases like the ones below, authors simultaneously intensified and mitigated their claims (hedges are shown in bold font and boosters are underlined):

51. The immediate threat to Saudi Arabia far exceeds that to Israel, which... in a real crisis **can almost** surely be more confident of U.S. support... (*The Wall Street Journal*, 17 July 2015)
52. Israel **may, at some point**, still have to go the military route, but... (*The New York Times*, 15 July 2015)
53. Even more striking, **perhaps**, is the **relative** softness of Democratic support... (*New York Post*, 22 July 2015)
54. Lost in the debate over the fine print of the Iran nuclear agreement is another, **potentially** more destabilizing near-term consequence... (*USA Today*, 21 July 2015)

It is very difficult to weigh the dialogical strength of propositions when intensifiers and hedges occur together. Nevertheless, each usually neutralises the effect of the other,

⁹ This metaphor was firstly used by Israeli Prime Minister for describing the upcoming nuclear deal in his speech addressed to the U.S. Congress in May 2015, and then borrowed by other critics of the deal.

especially in cases where the numbers of boosters and hedges in a proposition are equal as they are in the above examples. While such cases are, qualitatively, extremely interesting, they are quantitatively insignificant. Therefore, I did not count such cases separately. The importance of these cases is that they can be revealing of the constant struggle for authors to be *strong* as well as *moral* or *authoritative* as well as *unassertive* (unaggressive/respectful). It is particularly true when authors mitigate their already strong opinions regarding the past or present status of events. Employing hedges to mitigate a boosted opinion about something that has already happened can be suggestive of epistemic uncertainty as much as it is of ethical reservation. However, in cases when authors discuss future events (*may* in ex. 52, the use of hedges is more an indicator of future uncertainty than an attempt to be dialogically open and respectful to others.

55. Obama and Kerry... have convinced themselves that they scored a victory by delaying the lifting by five to eight years. (**Ostensibly**. The language is murky. The interval **could** be considerably shorter.) (*New York Post*, 28 July 2015)
56. The agreement **all but** guarantees that Tehran will eventually become a nuclear power... (*The Wall Street Journal*, 14 July 2015)
57. The IAEA needs to probe gaps and inconsistencies, which are **often** more difficult to hide than covert enrichment facilities. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 16 July 2015)
58. Yet a new conventional arms race **could** prove especially dangerous **if**, in an effort to appease Israel, the U.S. tilts the balance of power in a region already so delicately balanced. (*USA Today*, 21 July 2015)

In all the above excerpts, different types of hedging device accompany authors' strong opinions, expressed through verbs of certainty, adverbs of emphasis, adjectives of comparison, etc. These combinations of boosters and hedges that work to qualify strong claims are indicative of the fact that the natural human tendency to appear certain and assertive (to be powerful) is not boundless and free from constraint. There are several observations that constrain this tendency, including authors' concerns for saving their credibility by not making claims that they cannot substantiate. Employing hedges aids authors in avoiding loss of face while expressing strong opinions (careful construction of authority as a key to successful de/securitisation). In excerpt 56, by asserting the hedge *all but* before *guarantee*, *The Wall Street Journal* author both makes his claim about Iran's attainment of nuclear power and decreases the risk of

future blame if his prediction is not substantiated. In excerpt 58, similarly, the *USA Today* author's strong opinion regarding a dangerous arms race in the Middle East, expressed by the verb *prove* and adverb *especially*, is qualified by being presented as a possibility (modal *could*) and conditioned by an *if* clause. In excerpts 55 and 57, again, the authors mix hedges and boosters as they wish to express their opinions but, at the same time, prefer to do so cautiously.

Overall, as mentioned earlier, this latter approach to stance-taking (mixed hedges and boosters) was employed less often than were the other three approaches (asserting, boosting and hedging opinions) and was quantitatively insignificant in the study.

6.2.5. Self-mention

Self-mention is a significant determining meta-discourse marker in terms of authors' (de/securitising actors) displays of authority. In order for the analysis of self-mentions to be meaningful, it is necessary to study them in their contexts of occurrence in conjunction with the verbs/processes that accompany them. Thus, after identifying instances of self-mention in the corpus, I categorised them based on the types of action authors attributed to themselves. From 22 instances of self-mention in the corpus, nine were accompanied by verbal process, nine by mental process, three with relational process and one with material process. In this section, I provide an explanation of the two major categories of self-reference in the corpus: authors' references to their words (or words said to them) and authors' references to their feelings/judgements.

Occurrence of self-mention in verbal propositions included cases where the authors reported what they had said, what had been said to them or others' reactions to what they had said:

59. Veteran CIA nuclear-verification expert John Lauder recently **told me** that data declarations are "most important because they help set the stage for all other measures." (*The Wall Street Journal*, 16 July 2015)
60. The agreement all but guarantees that Tehran will eventually become a nuclear power, while limiting the ability of a future President to prevent it. **We say this** after reading the 159-page text... which offers a clearer view than the President's broad and happy description. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 14 July 2015)

61. As **I said** last week in this space, it is a historical anomaly for the public to oppose an international agreement of this sort in this way. (*New York Post*, 28 July 2015)
62. **My words** might be too brash for President Obama, but they echo the words of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu... (*USA Today*, 31 July 2015)

The authors' references to their words can be clear instances of stance-taking. In excerpts 60 and 61 above, *The Wall Street Journal* and *New York Post* authors not only express their positions on the nuclear agreement but also emphasise their voices (flag their own words by referring to themselves) and, consequently, display strong character. In some cases, the authors referred not to their own words but to what others told them (being passive receivers). Nevertheless, this can also be a strategy for construction of authority through intertextuality (personal connections or knowledge of what high authorities had said). In excerpt 59, *The Wall Street Journal* author (William Tobey) pictured himself as holding a high position by receiving information from expert officials (*explained to me* and *told me*). By indicating that he was in direct contact with prominent figures, the author was reminding his readers of his high social status and thus, his authority. In the last example, the strategy that *USA Today* author (Mike Huckabee) employed to display his credibility was to compare his words to those of an authority (Israeli Prime Minister). By indicating that he held the same position on the issue as did the Israeli Prime Minister, Huckabee as a securitising actor also meant to build a solidarity with those groups of audience whom he assumed would be pro-Israel.

As just mentioned, nine out of 22 instances of self-mention in the corpus were complemented with mental processes that expressed the authors' judgements or feelings regarding the preceding or following propositions:

63. No one knows if the nuclear agreement will be followed by a more moderate Iranian approach to Syria, Iraq and Lebanon. **I suspect** it won't be, because... (*The New York Times*, 15 July 2015)
64. Israelis understand we are giving their chief antagonist... the capability to develop a nuclear weapon. At the end of the day, **I fear** this could be a death sentence for the State of Israel. (*USA Today*, 14 July 2015)
65. ... and **I am skeptical** that Iran will be required to fully disclose all its past nuclear work. (*USA Today*, 14 July 2015)

66. They have to convince 13 Democratic Senators and 43 Democratic House members to vote against the deal... **I didn't think** this would be possible to achieve when all was said and done, but these poll numbers offer a glimmer of real hope the deal will be rejected by Congress in September... (*New York Post*, 22 July 2015)

In excerpts 63, 64, and 66, authors expressed their opinions regarding the preceding propositions (underlined) that they referred to by *it* or *this*. However, in excerpt 65, the author took a position regarding the following proposition. One important point is that in almost all cases, including the examples above (except ex. 66), the mental processes that accompanied self-mentions were emotionally rather than logically oriented. Since self-mention typically increases the subjectivity of a proposition and, thereby, reduces its degree of factuality, these emotional overtones could add to that subjectivity and make readers undervalue the author's claims as merely their personal opinions or feelings. However, there is another factor that needs to be taken into account here. This decisive factor that can determine readers' judgement is the author's social position. For example, regarding excerpts 64 and 65, given the high social position of the author (Lindsey Graham: a senator and a Republican candidate for the presidential nomination) that he implicitly indicated in the article, his expressions of *doubt*, *fear* and *imagination* did not seem to decrease the value of his propositions. Conversely, they could have increased the impact of his opinions on the readers by triggering similar emotions in them.

In only one case from the corpus, self-mention was accompanied by what I consider to be a strong mental process (believe). Although the epistemic verb *believe* is usually considered as a hedge showing uncertainty, the decision about whether it is a hedge or a booster needs to be made in its context of occurrence. In an op-ed from *USA Today* (31 July 2015), Mike Huckabee, a conservative politician, defended his comments on the nuclear deal that were perceived as *ridiculous* and *sad* by President Obama. He responded to Obama by saying that *I believe strong threats require strong words and action*. The context in which the author referred to himself (in a hot debate with Obama) and the content of the proposition bring me to the conclusion that *I believe* was a display of authority not uncertainty here.

Overall, since nearly all the authors of the articles in my corpus were famous politicians, journalists or nuclear experts, I can argue that self-mentions accompanied

by mental processes functioned as means of constructing authority and contributed to the authors' displays of *good sense*, in a similar way to that of boosters.

6.2.6. Stance markers and *good sense* across newspapers

Starting with different categories of opinions, the proportion of asserted opinions when compared to boosted/hedged opinions was about 33 per cent asserted to 67 per cent stanced in *The Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Post* and *The New York Times*, and 45 per cent asserted to 55 per cent stanced in *USA Today*. This means that at least one-third of the opinions in each newspaper were disguised as facts (contained no overt stance markers) and, therefore, dialogically closed down. This shows that both securitising and desecuritising actors endeavoured to represent their own versions of reality as objective. It was especially interesting in the case of *USA Today* where roughly half of the opinions were asserted (45%). The use of bare assertions is a sign of a tendency towards contracting the dialogic space as, according to Martin and White (2005), bare assertions deny any dialogic diversity and present opinions as facts.

Regarding the boosted opinions, the *New York Post* had the most intensified opinions among the four newspapers (46%). In other words, about half of the propositions in this paper were dialogically contracted. *USA Today*, *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* had 41 per cent, 39 per cent and 37 per cent boosted propositions, respectively. Except for *USA Today* that had a similar proportion of asserted and boosted opinions (45% and 41% respectively), boosted propositions formed the main category of opinions in the other three papers.

Finally, hedged propositions formed the smallest category of opinions in the four newspapers. Only 14 per cent to, at most, 31 per cent of the opinion propositions in the papers were hedged and, thereby, dialogically expansive. *The Wall Street Journal* and, after that, *The New York Times* had the largest numbers of hedged opinions among the papers (respectively 31% and 38%). The proportions of these three groups of opinions in each of the newspapers is presented in the Figure 6.4 below:

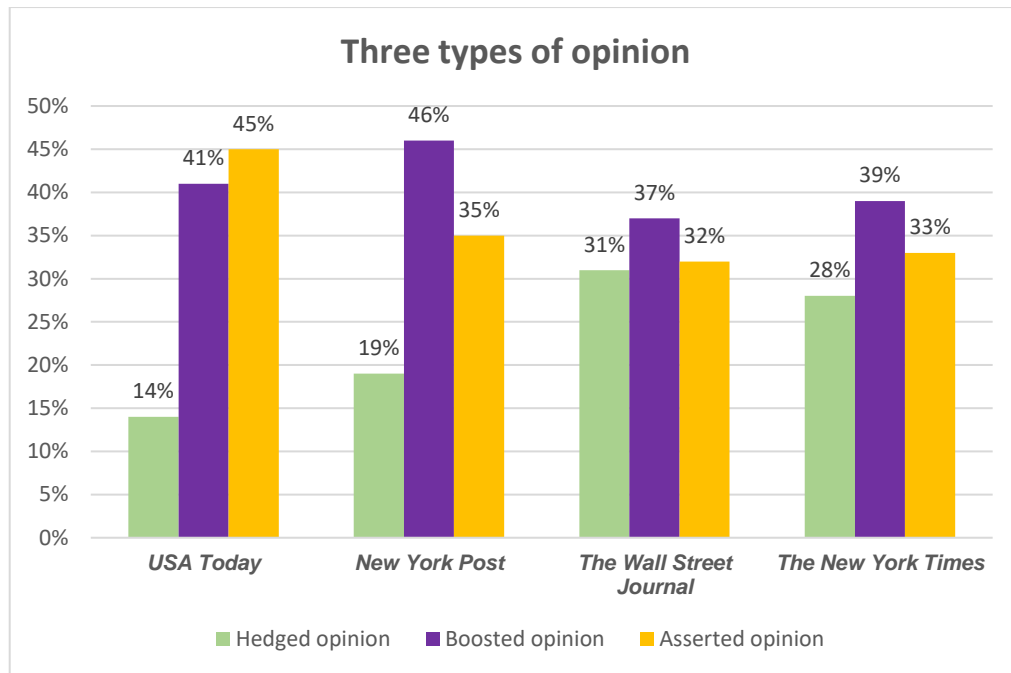


Figure 6.4. Proportions of opinions across newspapers

If we consider a scale for dialogic diversity, bare assertions are the least dialogic propositions. Boosted propositions also contract the dialogic space by investing highly in the authors' opinions; however, by strongly investing in their positions, the authors admit the existence of disagreement and the subjectivity of their opinions. Hedged propositions, on the contrary, expand the dialogic space by presenting the authors' positions overtly as one possibility among other alternative views (Martin & White, 2005; Mei, 2006; Mei & Allison, 2005; White, 1999). Accordingly, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times* seemed to be the most dialogically expansive or open newspapers. *USA Today* and, after that, the *New York Post* were the most dialogically contractive or closed papers. Nevertheless, in all the four newspapers, the percentages of dialogically contractive opinions were much higher than were the percentages of the dialogically expansive ones (86% in *USA Today* and 69% in *The Wall Street Journal*). It is important to note that the higher proportion of asserted and boosted opinions compared to hedged opinions was predictable, given the genre of the texts under study. Authors of these media opinion discourses, like those of any other form of argumentative discourse, typically tend towards asserting/emphasising their attitudes and positions with the purpose of securitisation or desecuritisation of Iran's nuclear programme, rather than mitigating or moderating them.

Regarding the other stance marker in the study (self-mention), the frequency of its occurrence in *USA Today* was considerably higher than it was in the other papers. While there were 14 instances of authors' references to themselves in *USA Today's* five articles, in the other three newspapers, I found only two or three instances of self-reference. Using self-mention for expressing judgements or feelings (mental processes) was employed six times in *USA Today*, and referring to self for reporting hearings or for saying things (verbal processes) was applied five times in this paper. One point concerning self-mention in *USA Today* is that all the instances of self-mention in this paper were from its three anti-deal articles; neither of the two pro-deal authors made any reference to themselves. Given that self-reference is a very strong authoritative expressive stance marker, especially when it is accompanied by boosted opinions, this implies that the anti-deal authors of the newspaper (securitising actors) constructed a stronger authority for themselves than their pro-deal counterparts (desecuritising actors). In other words, expressing attitudes and judgements generally illustrates authority and, when it is done through the author's personal voice (first-person pronoun), it indicates the author's high self-confidence and their high investment in their own opinions. In *The Wall Street Journal*, there were three instances of self-reference accompanied by verbal process and, in *The New York Times*, two instances of self-mention with mental and one instance with relational process. Given that all the op-ed writers in the corpus held high positions of power and expertise as prominent politicians, well-known journalists, academics, etc., differences between their uses of self-mention were related to factors other than differences in status. To put it another way, although all the authors were in positions of power, only some of them opted to show it.

To sum up, *USA Today* was the most outstanding newspaper in terms of stance-taking or display of authority. It had the highest proportion of dialogically contracting propositions consisting of boosted and asserted opinions (86%), and the highest number of self-mention (14 times) among the four papers. Even more interesting is that 45 per cent of its dialogically constricting propositions were in the form of bare assertion. In other words, about half of its propositions completely denied any diversity of opinion. However, as discussed above, this complete closure of dialogue

has the merit of presenting opinions as facts and, thereby, increases the chance that the propositions will be accepted by implying that there is no dialogical alternative. Therefore, while *USA Today* was the most dialogically closed paper, it was the *New York Post* that sounded the most antagonistic among the four papers. In fact, although the percentage of dialogically contracting opinions (including dialogically closed ones) in the *New York Post* was lower than it was for *USA Today* (81%), more than half of those opinions in the *New York Post* were in the form of boosted propositions and, thus, looked more antagonistic. Therefore, I should make a distinction between *being* contractive and *appearing to be* contractive. On the one hand, there are asserted opinions that are dialogically closed down but look *objective* and *non-aggressive* as no overt stance marker accompanies them (*USA Today*) and, on the other hand, there are boosted opinions that are dialogically constrictive rather than closed (because high investment in one's opinions still indicates the existence of diversity and conflict of opinions) but appear *subjective* and *aggressive* (*New York Post*).

The Wall Street Journal was different from the other papers in that it had very similar proportions of all the three types of opinion (hedged, boosted and asserted opinions). What brings about this difference is a higher percentage of hedges in this paper when it is compared to other newspapers (31%). This makes *The Wall Street Journal* the least dialogically contractive newspaper in the corpus. The other point about this newspaper is that it included only one instance of an author's referring to self in an active form. In other words, in two of the three cases of self-reference in *The Wall Street Journal*, the authors were the *receivers* (not the sayers) of verbal processes (passive role). This means that each of these authors did not tend to have a personal presence in the text. Finally, *The New York Times'* stance taking was more similar to that of *The Wall Street Journal* than to that of the other two papers, although its voice was slightly stronger than was the voice of *The Wall Street Journal*.

Overall, all the authors from the four newspapers employed stance-taking strategies (though each author opted for a particular stance-marker) to enhance their authority as a means paving their ways towards securitisation or desecuritisation of Iran's nuclear programme.

6.3. Commentaries/Parenthetical Expressions

Parentheticals are those elements that interrupt the flow of a sentence in order to provide some additional information or to express opinions regarding the propositional content of the sentence. Since parentheticals convey non-essential elements, they are separated from the rest of the sentence. A parenthetical element can be a single word or a whole clause. Grammatically, they include different categories, such as *appositives*, *non-restrictive relative clauses*, *asides*, *absolute phrases*, *modifier phrases* and *prepositional phrases*. Semantically, parenthetical elements can be either attitudinal/argumentative or informative. When these elements express an author's attitudes or stance on the preceding or following propositions, they are called commentary. The importance of parentheticals, from the securitisation perspective, is that they show what values, norms, and ideas the securitising actors (authors) assume to be shared with their audience (readers). It is so because parentheticals convey propositional content that is considered to be taken-for-granted by the authors.

6.3.1. Types of parentheticals

As stated before, parentheticals are additional elements and can be removed from a sentence without affecting its structure or its core content. In fact, parenthetical assertions are dialogically remarkable in opinion discourse both in terms of their interactional function (the authors' dialogue with their readers) and in terms of their content (the authors' expression of attitudes or comments). Therefore, applying them in discourse serves goals other than those of providing the necessary semantic or syntactic elements of a sentence. Drawing on the findings, I consider two main reasons for authors choosing to use parentheticals: to *inform* or to *argue*. The authors assert parentheticals in their articles either for providing their readers with information that assists them in understanding the text or for arguing for their points of view. *Informative parentheticals* are reader-oriented as they provide extra information for the sake of clarification or ease of understanding. *Argumentative parentheticals*, however, are author-oriented and applied in the text with the purpose of giving the authors more freedom to express themselves. As their names suggest, informative parentheticals are made up of factual information but argumentative parentheticals

can be of two types: either opinions or facts. In other words, they are employed either to express an opinion overtly (comment) or to provide some facts that can help the authors promote their arguments. In fact, what differentiates *informative facts* categorised as the first group of parentheticals from the *argumentative facts* classified as the second group is functionality (the purpose of using them) rather than content as both are factual.

In the corpus of 20 articles that I examined, more than 90 per cent of the parenthetical assertions were of the argumentative type. Newspapers employed large numbers of parentheticals mainly for expressing attitudes and opinions. From 261 instances of parentheticals in the corpus, 225 of them were argumentative (198 opinions and 27 facts). Only a very small proportion of parenthetical assertions (36 instances) were of the informative type. However, it should be noted that, given the nature of the discourse under study (opinion discourse), these results were by no means unexpected. The following excerpts from the corpus demonstrate different types of parenthetical:

67. Thus, 24 days might elapse between a request for access by the IAEA and a requirement upon Iran to provide it -- **ample time for Iran to hide or destroy evidence.** (*The Wall Street Journal*, 16 July 2015)

68. This complex poll, **conducted by Olive Tree Strategies**, had three different results. (*New York Post*, 28 July 2015)

69. The president is right to invoke the bold accords of past presidents — **both Republicans** — with hostile regimes in Beijing and Moscow. Neither was risk-free. Both proved transformative. (*The New York Times*, 16 July 2015)

The first example of a parenthetical here (ex. 67) is an argumentative phrase. It was asserted to express the author's opinion regarding the previous proposition. The second and third examples are both factual but they differ in their functions. While both parentheticals provide readers with more information about the previous proposition (the source of the poll and the political affiliations of the presidents), the purpose of the third one is more argumentative than informative – promoting the author's argument in favour of the President Obama's decision for negotiating with Iran – than clarification of a point that readers may not know. As this last example shows, categorisation of factual parentheticals into informative or argumentative

types is totally context-dependent. By context, I mean both the micro context of the article in which the parenthetical assertions have occurred and the macro socio-political context. For example, here, some contextual information is necessary in order to recognise the parenthetical assertion as argumentative. It includes information such as: the author has a positive position on the nuclear deal; *The New York Times* is a newspaper leaning towards the left and Democrats; and Republicans were against the nuclear deal with Iran. All this helps us to realise that the author's intention in pointing to the fact that both presidents in question were Republican was to provide historical examples in support of the deal from among critics themselves (Republicans). Overall, I should note that parentheticals could be multifunctional. This means that those parentheticals that contain facts, rather than opinions, could be both informative and argumentative, depending on their discursive and social contexts.

6.3.2. Parentheticals' references

Parenthetical expressions can also be categorised into two groups by considering their targets or reference. Depending on whether the parenthetical expression is referring to an *informative* proposition (factual) or an *argumentative* proposition (opinionated), it can be placed in one of the two groups. These categories are explained through examples below (reference propositions are underlined):

70. But the question facing Congress, **which has 60 days to review the deal**, isn't whether this is a perfect document. (*USA Today*, 14 July 2015)

71. The nearby United Arab Emirates spent \$23 billion, **buying \$1 billion in foreign arms**. (*USA Today*, 21 July 2015)

72. This is unfortunate, because the Iran deal is a solid achievement in terms of nuclear arms control — **not a geopolitical watershed**. (*The New York Times*, 21 July 2015)

The parenthetical expressions in excerpts 67 and 68 refer to the factual propositions that precede them. In excerpt 70, the reference is a noun phrase (*Congress*) but, in excerpt 71, the reference is a complete clause. In excerpt 72, the reference is, again, the noun phrase preceding the parenthetical expression but, this time, the reference proposition is an opinion not a fact. Based on such differentiation, the relationship

between parenthetical expressions and the propositions they refer to can be illustrated as follows:

Type of parenthetical	Informative	Argumentative
Type of reference	Informative	Argumentative

Figure 6.5 Types of the relation between parentheticals and their references

The different relationships held between parentheticals and their references are demonstrated below by a number of excerpts collected from the corpus (parentheticals are in bold and references are underlined):

73. Iran... is a repressive but pragmatic power under an aging leader, **Ayatollah Ali Khamenei**, whose conduct in the talks saw his anti-American instincts counterbalanced by understanding of a reform imperative. (*The New York Times*, 16 July 2015)
74. The denial is then adjudicated by a committee — **on which Iran sits**. (*USA Today*, 14 July 2015)
75. So let's be proleptic about the Iranian nuclear deal, **whose apologists are already trotting out excuses for this historic diplomatic debacle**. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 14 July 2015)
76. ... but this is the agreement that was reached — **and despite its faults, it is not a bad one**. (*The New York Times*, 19 July 2015)
77. **Blinded by a noxious mix of ambition and naïveté**, Kerry and, for that matter, Obama may not be so different. (*New York Post*, 14 July 2015)
78. Even more striking, perhaps, is the relative softness of Democratic support — **only 59 percent of Obama's fellow Dems support the pact, fewer than three in five**. (*New York Post*, 22 July 2015)
79. But Obama has promised to veto such a resolution — **and it's far from certain enough Democrats are willing to buck both him and Hillary Clinton (who gave the pact a cautious endorsement) to override it**. (*New York Post*, 14 July 2015)

As can be seen, in the first four excerpts above, references of the parenthetical expressions are factual (a noun phrase or a clause). Regarding excerpts 73 and 74, although both of the parentheticals are factual, the first one (an appositive) is informative and the second one (a relative clause) is argumentative. Therefore, while

the relationship in 73 can be shown as *informative reference + informative parenthetical*, the relationship in 74 is *informative reference + argumentative parenthetical*. Again, recognising the argumentative function of the parenthetical expression in excerpt 74 requires considering its surrounding context. Here, the author attempted to show that the inspection procedure provided by the nuclear deal was impractical and, to prove his claim, he pointed to the fact that Iran was a member of the committee that would make decisions in the case of conflict between Iran and the IAEA about inspections. Since, in the author's opinion, the presence of Iran in the committee was contradictory to its function, providing this parenthetical piece of information played an important role in achieving the author's argumentative purpose.

In excerpts 75, 76 and 77, on the other hand, parentheticals are argumentative and convey the authors' comments on the preceding facts (*argumentative parenthetical + informative reference*). In excerpt 78, both the parenthetical and its reference are argumentative propositions (*argumentative parenthetical + argumentative reference*). The last excerpt is an interesting case as it includes two parentheticals (one marked by dashes and the other between brackets). This type of double parenthetical is called a 'combined disjunct' by Espinal (1991). The first parenthetical expression, coming after the dash, is argumentative and refers to the preceding informative proposition. The second parenthetical, coming between brackets, is also argumentative (although it reports a fact, this factual information has been opinionated by the adjective *cautious*) and refers to the noun phrase *Hillary Clinton* that is, itself, a part of the previous parenthetical expression.

6.3.4. Functions of argumentative parentheticals

As mentioned above, more than 90 per cent of the parentheticals in the study were argumentative. The interesting point about these parenthetical assertions that makes them dialogically important is that they allow the authors to express their attitudes more freely. In other words, through parentheticals, the authors can make their points without arguing for them. Overall, argumentative parentheticals fulfilled various argumentative functions in the articles under study. They played different roles with regard to the preceding/following propositions, including *praising* (80), *contradicting*

(81), *predicting a consequence* (82), *deriving a conclusion* (83), *justifying* (84), *providing a reason or evidence* (85, 86), *expressing feelings*, such as sadness (87) or disbelief (88), *mocking* (89) and *blaming* (86):

80. ..., the United States and other world powers finally have a deal with Iran — **the first such accord with a nation that has been a global outlaw for three decades**. (*The New York Times*, 14 July 2015)

81. All of this assumes that Iran will honor its commitments, **notwithstanding its long record of cheating**. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 15 July 2015)

In excerpt 80, the praising parenthetical commentary that has been added to the information provided in the reference proposition could positively influence readers' perceptions of the nuclear deal since it introduces the deal as a unique accord. In excerpt 81, however, the parenthetical commentary reminds the readers of information that could negatively affect their judgements about the reasonableness of the reference proposition.

82. This will be especially upsetting to our regional allies, **which will have to cope with a newly empowered Iran flush with cash from sanctions relief**. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 15 July 2015)

83. And then Iran will be a nuclear threshold state — **too close to producing nukes to be stopped**. (*New York Post*, 14 July 2015)

In excerpts 82 and 83, the anti-deal authors make predictions about the outcomes of the deal (*Iran...flush with cash; Iran will be a nuclear threshold state*) and then draw conclusions – from their own claims – that convey a frightening picture of the future to the readers (*our regional allies... will have to cope with a newly empowered Iran; Iran will be... too close to producing nukes to be stopped*).

84. **As with most of history's important diplomatic documents, of course**, this agreement is flawed. (*USA Today*, 14 July 2015)

In excerpt 84, although the author admits that the deal is flawed, the parenthetical being placed at the beginning of the sentence mitigates this acknowledgement by providing a justification for the flaw through an analogy (it will be discussed as *an argument from analogy* in the next chapter). Inserting *of course* into this sentence as another parenthetical is also an interesting choice. Here, the author appears to agree

with the opponents completely by endorsing their claims that the deal is flawed although only after providing a strong justification for that through analogy.

85. Tehran would simply find an excuse to deny it -- **as has apparently occurred at Parchin, where past inspection requests yielded only elaborate clean-up efforts.** (*The Wall Street Journal*, 16 July 2015)

86. But Washington, **desperate for an agreement**, gave way on one issue after another until... (*New York Post*, 14 July 2015)

In excerpt 85, the author strengthens his claim about Iran's untrustworthiness by pointing to a suspicious past event (although he seems not to be certain about it as the adverb *apparently* mitigates the author's claim about what happened at Parchin). In excerpt 86 the author gives a reason for what he believes to be Washington's yielding to Iran. Moreover, the parenthetical in excerpt 86 seems to have a blaming and even a mocking tone as it places the responsibility for 'the defeat' on the U.S. administration's lack of patience and wisdom.

87. While Congress can stop this deal, **sadly**, they are heading home for an August recess. (*USA Today*, 31 July 2015)

88. **Amazingly enough**, the agreement with Iran doesn't mention the US Congress or its review of the deal... (*New York Post*, 20 July 2015)

In excerpt 87, the *USA Today* author expresses his feeling of disappointment and grief regarding what he views as the Congress members' lack of concern for a serious issue, and, in excerpt 88, the *New York Post* author indicates his surprise about the deal-makers' disregard for the US Congress.

89. A minister in his government, **unable to resist outrageous hyperbole**, calls it "one of the darkest days in world history". (*The New York Times*, 16 July 2015)

Finally, in excerpt 89, the mocking parenthetical commentary about the Israeli minister aims to degrade his negative evaluation of the nuclear deal. By showing that a minister cannot control his anger, the author discredits him and, consequently, his claims (it will be discussed as *an argument from ridicule* in the next chapter).

The other point regarding parentheticals is that, since they are not an obligatory part of the sentence, they can be considered as presuppositions (taken-for-granted opinions). The propositions conveyed through parentheticals are opinions or information that the authors assume are shared/accepted by themselves and their

readers. Two points need to be explained here: one is that parenthetical comments/information can, themselves, be presuppositions; and the other is that they may, also, include some other presuppositions. For example, in excerpt 80, not only is the whole parenthetical proposition a presupposition (as the author's claim about the deal being *the first such accord* is not asserted/argued for but taken as a fact) but it also contains another presupposition that says the Iranian nation *has been a global outlaw for three decades*. In excerpt 82, again, the claim conveyed by the parenthetical relative clause is presupposed as a fact by the author (*our regional allies... will have to cope with... Iran*). In addition, the parenthetical itself includes two other taken-for-granted opinions: there will be a newly empowered Iran; and Iran will be flush with cash. Similarly, other examples presented above contain some forms of presupposition, including: *Iran has a long record of cheating*; *Washington was desperate for an agreement*; *Iran will be too close to producing nukes to be stopped*; *most of history's important diplomatic documents are flawed*; etc. These are all contentious opinions that, firstly, need to be proved and, only then, can they be put forward as reasons or evidence for or against some other opinions. However, as the authors constantly make predictions about the ways in which the readers might respond to their arguments, their decisions to present some opinions through parentheticals should be based on the assumption that the readers have already accepted those opinions (they are non-contentious from their readers' perspectives). The relationship between parentheticals and authors'/readers' values is discussed in the next section.

6.3.5. Parentheticals and *virtue* across newspapers

Another point regarding parenthetical expressions is with regard to their places in the dialogic structure of opinion discourses. As stated above, more than 90 per cent of parentheticals identified in the corpus were argumentative. Although the high proportion of argumentative parentheticals in the study can suggest that parenthetical assertions in opinion discourses are primarily *stance markers* or *author-oriented* rather than being *engagement markers* or *reader-oriented*, two points should be considered in this regard. One is that, no matter whether they are argumentative or informative, parentheticals have an engaging character, which, at times, can be

seen to be conversational in style when contrasted with standard news articles. K. Hyland (2005) explains this point regarding personal asides that are one type of parenthetical:

Personal asides allow writers to address readers directly by briefly interrupting the argument to offer a comment on what has been said. While asides express something of the writer's personality and willingness to explicitly intervene to offer a view, they can also be seen as a key reader-oriented strategy. By turning to the reader in mid-flow, the writer acknowledges and responds to an active audience, often to initiate a brief dialogue that is largely interpersonal. (2005, p. 183)

The other important point is that argumentative parentheticals are the site where authors' and readers' values meet and are attuned. Therefore, parenthetical elements are very revealing of the third component of *Ethos*, namely the authors' *virtue* (moral character). As just mentioned, parentheticals contribute to realising those attitudes and knowledge that authors (as de/securitising actors) believe they are sharing with their readers (the audience). In other words, the opinion/information expressed in the parentheticals can be revealing of authors' attempts to appeal to their readers (a key factor in de/securitisation as an intersubjective process). The virtue that an author displays should be congruent with the readers' moral values; otherwise, it won't reach the readers. This means that the authors (de/securitising actors) assume some ideal/putative readers (audience) and construct their lines of reasoning based on their evaluation of the audiences' values and world views.

In other words, since these parenthetical assertions are dialogic spaces where the authors directly and freely convey their attitudes and feeling to their readers, by investigating them, we can recognise the types of moral character the de/securitising actors wish to display of themselves based on their evaluation of their audiences' values. These moral values can, in turn, be identified by examining what is judged as good/bad, right/wrong, moral/immoral, wise/foolish, strong/weak, etc., by the de/securitising actors, or by noting on which issues they take supportive/opposing positions. The examples below demonstrate the ways in which some of these values are expressed in parentheticals:

90. Imagine how Iran's acquisition of the most advanced anti-ship missiles would threaten our control over the Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, **waterways we have kept open for international commerce for a half-century**. (*USA Today*, 16 July 2015)

91. This is admirably internationalist, but Kerry's supposed to be the secretary of state of the United States, **not a representative of the interests and prerogatives of its allies and adversaries**. (*New York Post*, 20 July 2015)

In excerpt 90, the *USA Today* author wants to picture himself and Americans in general as caring and as working for the international community (value: internationalism). The interesting point, here, is that *internationalism* is a value supported by liberals; however, the author of this article was an anti-deal conservative (Charles Krauthammer). This contradictory position could be explained by referring to the fact that the *USA Today* readership is ideologically mixed. Thus, probably in an attempt to appeal to as many readers as possible, Krauthammer drew on liberal values as well his own. In excerpt 91, however, writing in a right-wing newspaper with a conservative readership, the *New York Post* author gave priority to national interests and put them above international interests (value: nationalism).

92. ... and in a real crisis can almost surely be more confident of U.S. support -- **from future American presidents, if not the current one** -- than can Saudi Arabia. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 17 July 2015)

In excerpt 92, which appeared in a newspaper with a readership leaning towards the Right-wing conservative side of the American political spectrum, the author's claim that Obama is non-supportive to Israel runs contrary to the readers' values of supporting allies and to pro-Israel attitudes. By indicating Obama's nonconformity with a value that is assumed to be important for his readers (value: supporting Israel/Jews), the author aims to convince the readers to doubt Obama's *good will* towards Israel or, at least, his concerns for Israel in making the nuclear deal.

93. Iran is prevented for at least 10 years from developing the capability to build a nuclear weapon, **helping to stabilize a region that needs no more instability**. (*The New York Times*, 14 July 2015)

In excerpt 93, the editorial board of a liberal newspaper, pictures itself as a group of peace-loving people who are concerned about the situation in the Middle East. Drawing on the liberal value of benevolence/humanitarianism, the board means to resonate with its liberal readers' perspectives.

94. The main achievement of the regime's negotiators is striking a deal that commits the West to removing almost all sanctions on Iran, **including most of those imposed to reduce terrorism or to prevent weapons proliferation.** (*The Wall Street Journal*, 15 July 2015)

95. Kerry's deal goes farther, and approaches that of his predecessor Frank B. Kellogg, **who, in 1928, crafted a pact to ensure "the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy."** (*New York Post*, 14 July 2015)

Although both of the above excerpts are from newspapers that are more conservative than liberal, they express rather opposing attitudes towards hard power issues of weapon and war. *The Wall Street Journal* author displays himself as against war and weapon proliferation (value: peace); however, in excerpt 95, the *New York Post* writer denounces the rejection of war as naïveté (value: power/strength). The reason for the open pro-war attitude of the latter could be that the newspaper is more Right-wing/conservative than is the former and, thus, such strong positions would be more acceptable to its readership.

96. ..., on Tuesday, Mr. Obama repeatedly invoked President Nixon's historic diplomacy with China and promoted the idea that Iran "will be and should be a regional power" — **precisely the kind of thinking that drives away potential supporters of a more limited approach.** (*The New York Times*, 15 July 2015)

In excerpt 96, the liberal author, in line with the liberal value of pragmatism, advocates a limited approach to Iran that does not upset the U.S.' regional allies. While the author supports the nuclear deal with Iran, he believes that it should be seen only as a step to promote the U.S.' and its allies' security interests (not as an attempt to normalise the Iran–U.S. relationship). This pragmatic approach insists on developing the relationship with Iran when it satisfies the U.S.' interests, in spite of all existing mutual differences and grievances.

To conclude, authors of each newspaper as de/securitising actors advocated specific moral standards in their discussions of the Iran nuclear deal. These values and standards were in line with the authors' own political affiliations and ideological perspectives as well as with those of their putative readers (the audience). The *New York Post*'s arguments revolved mainly around *nationalism*, *backing allies* and a *strong America*. The *New York Times* and pro-deal articles of *USA Today*, on the other hand, stressed *internationalism*, *peace*, *diplomacy*, *pragmatism* and *global responsibility*. *The Wall Street Journal* emphasised the importance of *wisdom* and *learning from past*

experiences and *avoiding naïve optimism and trust*, as well as *backing allies* and *nationalism*. These findings were congruent with Jones et al. (2018) study that showed different sets of values prevalent in Republican and Democratic Congress members' tweets. The former advocated values such as tradition, nationalism and national security, known as conservative values, and the latter opted for benevolence and universalism, called liberal values. The axiological roots of these values and the reasons for each paper's advocating particular values will be discussed in chapter eight.

Chapter Seven

Analysis of Argumentative Features

Political disputes do not arise only out of misunderstanding or mistakes, nor simply from the absence of sufficient data, but because parties to a dispute emerge from different contexts with different criteria of assessment, including those that specify the presence of a problem or dilemma and those that specify the persons who legitimately engage with it. The field of political dispute is addressed to what we might call problems without solution in as much as they are dilemmas or uncertainties for which there is no agreed external evaluative standard: disputes that are not reducible to factual or epistemological problems because people disagree not only about a particular matter but about what that matter in fact is and about what a resolution might look like. (Finlayson, 2007, p. 550)

In light of the above discussion, Finlayson (2007) states that political decision-making involves “the application of reasoning in conditions of irreducible contingency” or what Aristotle calls *deliberation*. Usually, we have to “come to decisions on the basis of claims that are at best probable rather than certain” (p. 549). In other words, certainty is not achievable in social life and we cannot base our decisions on absolute premises that are agreed upon universally. In addition to ‘empirical uncertainty’, the reason for contestability in social and political affairs is ‘social plurality’: the fact that human beings have varied and even contradictory opinions about socio-political issues. In other words, people disagree “not only about means but also about ends and even about the meaning and value of means and ends” (p. 550). Consequently, it is not possible to arrive at decisions that can be accepted by all.

As a result, doing CDS on political discourse necessitates going beyond representation. Practical argumentation or reasoning (deliberation over actions) is intrinsic to any political discourse. Newspaper opinion pieces, as examples of political discourse, are written with the aim of convincing readers (whether lay readers or elites like policy-makers) to accept a point of view (e.g. the Iran nuclear deal does/not tackle Iran as a

threat) and, consequently, to agree with or take a specific path of action (dis/approval of the nuclear deal in Congress). Practical argumentation is indeed the main discursive strategy adopted by authors as de/securitising actors to win their audience's consent for de/securitisation of Iran's nuclear programme under the conditions of continuous political disagreement and uncertainty. Therefore, argument analysis is imperative for understanding these de/securitisation moves or any political discourse. In my opinion, investigation of the argumentative structure of a discourse or the process of deliberation should be carried out in two phases. Firstly, we need to pinpoint the author's claims or what van Dijk (1980, 2001b) calls semantic macrostructures/topics. Secondly, we identify semantic microstructures: argumentation schemes/topoi that have been employed to prove the claims.

The first phase works at the macro-textual level. It exposes the boundaries of the dispute through identifying *topics* discussed in the texts. Topics reveal the points of controversy as they are established by the author. This means that they indicate which issues or which aspects of an issue are controversial from an author's point of view and need to be discussed and resolved. As such, topics are closely related to the issue of 'framing' (Finlayson, 2007, p. 555). By choosing a specific topic of discussion, an author establishes boundaries for the debate and frames the argument in a specific way. Consequently, establishing the topic results in highlighting some issues and backgrounding others. Thereby, readers' attention is directed towards some topics and deflected from others.

The second phase, on the other hand, works at the micro-textual level. It examines the ways in which the selected topics are elaborated upon and discussed in the text. It scrutinises the deliberation process in the texts to find out how the claims (topics) are developed and defended through *argumentation schemes* (semantic microstructures). These schemes are general forms of argumentation that represent stereotypical patterns of human reasoning. They are founded on the *defeasible* generalisations that are useful in deliberations about practical issues of life (practical reasoning).

Accordingly, this chapter will be divided into two sections: one dealing with semantic macrostructures that are the topics or claims of arguments (claims aiming at

securitisation or desecuritisation of Iran's nuclear programme); and the other relating to semantic microstructures that concern argumentation schemes (contextual/historical evidences proving the claims). The first section examines the argumentative focus of articles identified through their *topics* of discussion by drawing on van Dijk's (1980, 2001b) concept of topics. The second section examines the *argumentation schemes* employed as discursive strategies for proving the authors' claims by relying on the list of argumentation schemes developed by Walton (1996).

7.1. Semantic Macrostructures or Topics

For discursive, cognitive and social reasons, the topics of discourse play a fundamental role in communication and interaction: discursively, topics organise a text and give it a coherence; cognitively, they are chunks of discourse that remain in the memory; and, socially, they show which matters are worthy of consideration by society. Defined as 'semantic macrostructures' derived from the local (micro) structures of meaning, topics represent what a discourse 'is about', globally speaking, embody the important information of a discourse, and explain overall coherence of text and talk (van Dijk, 1980). Topics are "global meanings" created in the process of discourse production and consumption and the "gist that is best recalled". Since it is not possible to memorise all the details of a discourse, people tend to "organize these meanings by global meanings or topics". According to van Dijk (2001b),

topics provide a first, overall, idea of what a discourse or corpus of texts is all about, and control many other aspects of discourse and its analysis... They are often expressed in discourse, for instance in titles, headlines, summaries, abstracts, thematic sentences or conclusions... We see that these various topics/macropositions indeed represent very high-level, sometimes abstract principles. (pp. 100-103)

As it is mentioned in the above quote from van Dijk, topics or semantic macrostructures are typically expressed in titles, headlines, summaries, etc., of the texts. Therefore, to identify topics in the newspaper articles under study, I looked for the themes or ideas expressed in the headlines and topic sentences at the beginning of paragraphs, as well as conclusions of the articles. My approach was a bottom-up one; I started by identifying the most specific themes and then grouped them together as

meso and then macro-topics. For example, when several specific issues were discussed in an article (e.g. danger of the deal for the U.S., danger of the deal for Arab states, benefits of the deal for Iran), I considered each of them a micro-topic that, based on their similarity, could be grouped together under a meso-topic called 'negative outcomes of the deal'. Then, this meso-topic with another meso-topic that was identified in a similar way (i.e. 'failure of the deal in achieving its goal') were categorised under a macro-topic called 'questioning the deal'. In other words, the most overarching ideas in each article were considered as the main or macro-topics, and other more specific ideas were categorised in a hierarchical manner as meso and micro topics. After that, I compared these topics across all articles to find possible similarities and differences and came up with two typical patterns for two groups of articles.

Examination of the topics in the collected articles revealed their argumentative patterns. These patterns were consistent with the articles' positions on the Iran nuclear deal. Since the collected articles were written about a very disputed international issue (Iran's nuclear programme), every one of them took a stance on it: either supportive (pursuing desecuritisation) or critical (pursuing securitisation). In other words, no article had a neutral position regarding the Iran deal. Consequently, each of the collected articles could be categorised as either a **Pro-deal** or an **Anti-deal** text. I should note that there were some articles that included both positive and negative attitudes towards the deal or towards President Barak Obama. For example, some expressed critical views of Obama and his team but supported the deal while others acknowledged the flaws of the deal but argued, however, that it was worth supporting. I considered these cases as pro-deals because acknowledging flaws or criticising Obama did not change the opinion expressed that the deal was the best-possible option. In fact, indications of weaknesses or mistakes within these articles could be seen as strategies to align the authors with readers through self-critique. Admitting 'Our' shortcomings or criticising 'In-group' members can be indicative of honesty and encourages those with opposite views to trust 'Us' (the authors' attempt to display good sense).

As stated above, depending on their supportive or critical views of the deal, authors of the articles followed similar patterns of argumentation and focused on similar aspects of the topics or semantic macrostructures. Analysing the articles unveiled two main/macro-topics discussed in almost all the articles: 1) legitimisation versus delegitimisation of the deal; and 2) refuting Obama versus refuting critics/criticisms. Depending on their positions regarding the deal, articles discussed one or the other side of each topic. In articles that were against the nuclear deal and aimed at keeping Iran's nuclear programme securitised, authors centred on the antagonistic sides of the topics: 1) *questioning the deal*; and 2) *discrediting President Obama and his administration as the deal-makers*. In pro-deal articles, however, authors aimed at desecuritising the nuclear programme and thereby, concentrated on the protagonistic sides of these topics: 1) *praising the deal*; and 2) *refuting critics/criticisms*. These two patterns were present in 80 percent of the samples. In sum, nearly all the authors followed the general strategy of legitimising 'Self' and de-legitimising 'Other' but in different ways.

Though all the anti-deal articles (securitising moves) questioned the deal, each centred on specific problems. What these articles had in common was their emphasis on two points regarding the deal: 1) *failure of the deal to achieve its goals*; and 2) *its negative consequences*. In addition, all anti-deal articles endeavoured to disgrace Obama in two ways: 3) *displaying his untrustworthiness*; and 4) *picturing him as cowardly, naïve and ambitious*. These four specific topics in anti-deal articles can be called meso-topics.

On the other hand, in praising the deal, all pro-deal articles (desecuritisation moves) pointed to different aspects of it. Nevertheless, they all indicated two points: 1) *the success of the deal in achieving its goals*; and 2) *its positive outcomes*. In addition to legitimising the deal, this group of articles attempted to refute criticisms put forward by the opponents and to discredit the opponents themselves. In doing so, they relied on two topics: 3) *justifying the flaws of the deal*; and 4) *picturing critics as fools*. In a similar way to those of the anti-deal articles, these four topics were at the meso-level in the hierarchy of topics discussed in this group of articles. In fact, topics discussed by the opposite sides of the debate on the nuclear deal, including pro and anti-deal

articles in this research, were two sides of the same coin. Anti-dealers insisted on the failure of the deal and its negative consequences, whereas pro-dealers argued for the success of the deal and its positive consequences. Moreover, anti-dealers endeavoured to discredit Obama as the deal-maker while pro-dealers aimed to disgrace critics of the deal in addition to minimising the shortcomings of the deal.

The four meso-topics in each group were, in turn, elaborated and illustrated by more specific or micro-topics. For example, in anti-deal articles, the meso-topic *The deal did not achieve its goals* was discussed by pointing to *the technical shortcomings* of the deal (micro-topic) while, in pro-deal articles, the meso-topic *The deal brings about other positive outcomes* was demonstrated by referring to the deal's ability *to stabilise the Middle East*. These micro-topics or claims were then supported by examples, statistics, quotes, etc. that were themselves structured in the form of argumentation schemes (these are discussed in the next section). The two tables below (7.1 & 7.2) present a comprehensive list of macro, meso and micro-level topics discussed in two groups of pro and anti-deal articles:

Table 7.1 Semantic Macrostructure of Anti-deal Articles

Macro-Topics	Meso-topics	Micro-topics
QUESTIONING THE DEAL	The deal did not achieve its goals	The deal has technical shortcomings
	The deal brings about other negative outcomes	The deal endangers America
		The deal endangers Israel
		The deal endangers Arabs
		The deal empowers Iran
DISCREDITING OBAMA	Obama is untrustworthy	Obama did not stay committed to his promises
		Obama deceived people
	Obama is cowardly, naïve and ambitious	Obama capitulated to Iran
		Obama trusted Iranians
		Obama aimed to make a legacy for himself

Table 7.2 Semantic Macrostructure of Pro-deal Articles

Macro- Topics	Meso-topics	Micro-topics
PRAISING THE DEAL	The deal achieved its goals	The deal puts technical limits on Iran
	The deal brings about other positive outcomes	The deal stabilises the Middle East
		The deal buys time to work out other regional challenges
		The deal commits the U.S. and Iran to dialogue
		The deal helps Iran get out of its difficult economic situation
REFUTING CRITICISMS/CRITICS	The flaws of the deal are normal	Flaws are typical of most diplomatic documents
		Achieving a perfect deal was not possible
		The deal's goal was not to address all the Iran-U.S.' problems
		There are safeguards against Iran's possible violation of the deal
	The critics (Republicans and the Israeli government) are fools	The critics advocate a perilous option
		The critics discard a constructive option
		The critics do not offer a credible alternative
		The critics make reckless feel-good decisions

As demonstrated in the tables, the corpus under study included two macro-topics, four meso-topics, and at least 10 micro-topics for each group of articles. All the articles from the four newspapers revolved around two major points: 1) praising versus blaming the deal; 2) refuting criticisms/critics versus refuting Obama. While *The Wall Street Journal* and *the New York Post* believed in the complete failure of the deal (pursuing securitisation) and endeavoured to blame Obama and his administration, *The New York Times* was fully supportive of the deal (pursuing desecuritisation) and attempted to counter the blame targeted at the deal. *USA Today* was different from

the other three papers in that it embraced opposite sides of the two topics. This newspaper's policy is to publish op-eds that differ from its own editorial stance. Regarding the Iran deal, in a corpus collected over a period of 17 days, its editorial and one of its op-eds advocated the deal (desecuritisation) while three of its op-eds opposed it (securitisation).

At the meso-level, the anti-deal group of articles attempted to illustrate the failure of the deal by arguing that it did not achieve its goals and by insisting that it would cause other negative consequences. These articles also aimed to disgrace Obama by picturing him as untrustworthy, cowardly, naïve and ambitious. The pro-deal articles, at the meso-level, attempted to prove the success of the deal by contending that it reached its goals and by asserting that it would lead to other positive consequences. Moreover, this group of articles tried to refute criticisms of the deal/Obama by downplaying the shortcomings of the deal as well as by turning the points of criticism towards the critics themselves.

Finally, at the micro-level, the deal's technical shortcomings, its negative impacts on America, Israel and the Arab States, and its role in empowering Iran were discussed as evidence of its failure. On the other hand, highlighting the technical limits that the deal imposes on Iran, its role in stabilising the Middle East, its contribution to solving other regional problems, its positive consequences for the U.S.–Iran relationship and the benefits it would bring to Iran were proof of the success of the deal. Moreover, to justify the imperfections of the deal, pro-deal articles argued that flaws are normal in international agreements, raised the impossibility of achieving a perfect deal and pointed to the measures put in place to prevent Iran's cheating. They also accused critics of opting for a dangerous no-deal option and foolishly rejecting the deal without offering an appropriate alternative. In the next section on argumentation schemes, I provide excerpts from the corpus to elaborate upon these topics.

7.1.1. Active versus reactive topics

The above topics can also be discussed from another perspective that is related to the concept of intertextuality in discourse. The topics derived from the corpus of articles can be divided into two separate categories, according to their degree of *selectiveness* or *restrictedness*. In other words, depending upon whether the topic in question was

chosen freely by the author or in response to the situational context (previous discourses), the topic can be categorised as either **Active** or **Reactive**. For example, pointing to the technical shortcomings of the deal, the largest meso-topic discussed in anti-deal articles, can be called an active topic as it was chosen freely by the authors and actively aimed to problematise the technical aspects of the nuclear deal in a way that puts its proponents in a defensive position. Praising the regional benefits of the deal, the largest meso-topic in pro-deal articles, is also an active topic since it was chosen by the authors of these articles – rather than being dictated to them by the opponents' discourse – to highlight the positive dimensions of the deal.

However, where pro-deal articles justify the flaws of the deal as a main topic, this topic is reactive, imposed by the critics' discourse rather than being chosen freely by the authors. This means that the authors of the pro-deal articles had to refer to questions or doubts about the deal raised by previous critical discourses (intertextuality effect). In fact, their defence of the deal could not be successful without firstly refuting the opponents' criticisms of it. Overall, from the two groups of articles in this research, anti-deal ones were completely active in their choices of topic; however, pro-deal articles included both active and reactive topics. This can be explained by the fact that the anti-deal articles held an antagonistic position and the pro-deal articles held a defensive/protagonistic position regarding the nuclear deal.

The other important point regarding the two types of topic is their power of *framing*. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, topic selection relates to the issue of framing. In other words, by choosing a specific topic of discussion, authors frame the problem in the way that is most beneficial to them (that is, most helpful in convincing the readers and ensuring their consensus). Therefore, selected topics can, simultaneously, be the authors' points of strength and their opponents' points of weakness/sensitivity in the debate. By deciding upon topics of discussion freely, the authors can focus their readers' attention on what is desirable to Us (Our strengths and Their weaknesses) and deflect what is undesirable to Us (Our weaknesses and Their strengths). However, this is the case more with the topics I call 'active' than it is with the 'reactive' ones. Reactive topics are, to some extent, imposed on the authors (authors may have no choice but to include them in their discussions) so, instead of

being indicative of authors' strengths in the debate, they can be revealing of authors' weaknesses.

7.2. Semantic Microstructures: Argumentation Schemes

In this section, I discuss the *argumentation schemes* through which the editorial and op-ed writers presented the above topics/semantic macrostructures. As introduced earlier in the literature, argumentation schemes or topoi are general forms of inference that relate one or more premises to a conclusion (Walton et al., 2008). These schemes are what are called enthymemes in informal logic (quasi-logical arguments that have probable premises rather than certain ones). To identify these schemes, I drew on a selection of categories from Walton's classification (1996), which proposes 26 schemes, including *argument from consequences*, *from precedent*, *from analogy*, *from appeal to expert opinion/authority*, *from pragmatic inconsistency*, etc. In addition, I have added three new categories to the list in order to comply with my corpus. The 10 schemes that I identified in my corpus are presented in the Table 7.3:

Table 7.3 List of argumentation schemes identified in the corpus

Schemes included in Walton's classification	Schemes added by the researcher
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Argument from pragmatic inconsistency (ad hominem) 2. Argument from negative/undesirable consequences 3. Argument from analogy/comparison 4. Argument from positive consequences 5. Argument from ridicule (ad hominem) 6. Argument from appeal to an expert opinion/authority 7. Argument from cost-benefit 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Argument from history 9. Argument from contrast 10. Argument from pragmatism

Before introducing the above argumentation schemes and giving examples for them from the corpus, I should point out that, while I have assigned each excerpt to just one category of schemes, many of these examples are multivalent and would fit two or more categories. For example, I have presented excerpt 19 (section 7.2.5) as an example of argument from *ridicule* and excerpt 27 (section 7.2.6) as an example of an argument from *expert opinion*:

19. For his efforts, Kellogg won the Nobel Peace Prize — but he also laid the groundwork for a world war. Blinded by a noxious mix of ambition and naïveté, Kerry and, for that matter, Obama may not be so different. (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)

27. Critics characterize the Iran deal as the worst diplomatic bargain since British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain appeased German Chancellor Adolf Hitler on the eve of World War II. The Wall Street Journal's Bret Stephens explained, "In 1938, Chamberlain bought time to rearm. In 2013, Obama gives Iran time to go nuclear." (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)

However, both of these excerpts also represent an argument from *history* as they refer to historical figures and events. Moreover, they can be seen to be examples of an argument from *analogy* since they aim to show similarities between Obama/Kerry and historical figures (Kellogg and Chamberlain) as well as Iran and Hitler's regimes.

Overall, I have considered all these multifunctional cases in my interpretation of the findings though I have referred to only one of the functions of each in the discussion below.

7.2.1. Argument from pragmatic inconsistency (*ad hominem*)

The argument from *pragmatic inconsistency* questions a person's character or conduct and, hence, can be a sub-type of an *ad-hominem argument* that attacks the motive, character or attributes of a person, instead of his/her point of argument. The purpose of the argument from pragmatic inconsistency is to expose a person's lack of commitment to his/her promises or the inconsistency between his/her words and actions, and, accordingly, to cast doubt on that person's credibility. As illustrated in the previous section, one of the two main topics employed for the purpose of securitisation in the anti-deal articles was discrediting Obama and his administrative team. A very popular strategy in doing so was the use of this argumentation scheme. For example, in an op-ed from the *New York Post*, Michael Rubin applies this scheme as his main method of condemning Obama and, consequently, the deal he made:

1. In 2013, Kerry declared of the Iranians, "There is no right to enrich." Two years later? The final agreement allows Iran to keep 5,000 centrifuges, 2,000 more than Pakistan had when it secretly built a nuclear arsenal.
But centrifuges are only one part of Iran's illicit program. In 2013, Kerry told Congress the "whole point of the [sanctions] regime" was to force Iran to "dismantle its nuclear program." But the deal to which Kerry agreed lets Iran keep everything in place.

“They don’t need to have an underground, fortified facility like Fordo in order to have a peaceful nuclear program,” Obama said in 2013. Congress will likely ask what changed, since this deal allows Iran to keep Fordo. (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)

Here, the author presents several instances of Obama and Kerry contradicting themselves regarding Iran’s nuclear issue. He provides a number of quotes showing that Obama and Kerry have agreed to a nuclear deal whose terms and conditions are not consistent with what they claimed to be. The interrogative phrase *Two years later?* in the first paragraph implies dialogue and, thereby, has an important rhetorical function in developing the argument. It is presented as though the question were being asked by readers, and the author is merely repeating the readers’ question. This interrogative phrase aims at grabbing the attention of readers as well as highlighting the point that, after only two years (a short period), Kerry has contradicted his words. The clause *Congress will likely ask what changed* in the last sentence also has a framing function in the argument. Here again, the author presents his own criticism from others’ mouths. It aims to imply that it is Congress, not the author, that is confronting Obama by asking why he changed his words.

In the *New York Post* editorial, again, the deal’s inconsistency with Obama’s vows is the central claim of the article:

2. Back in 2009, President Obama vowed to “take concrete steps toward a world without nuclear weapons.” Now he and Secretary of State John Kerry have instead guaranteed a world with more nukes than ever — and in the most dangerous hands, to boot.
Obama insists the deal is “built on verification,” yet the verification process so favors Iran as to be practically meaningless.
Gone are the “anytime, anywhere” inspection rules. Instead, Tehran gets up to 24 days advance notice. (*New York Post* Editorial, 14 July 2015)

Here again, Obama’s lack of commitment is exposed by quoting back his own words and pointing out contradictions between his promises and the terms/conditions of the achieved deal. In these arguments, the authors’ point of emphasis is that not only did the deal not achieve its intended goals but, also, it contradicted them. The function of *to boot* in the first paragraph is to stress that the contradiction has happened in the worst possible way as this nuclear proliferation is going to be led by a very dangerous country (Iran as the referent subject). As a colloquial phrase, *to boot* gives a

conversational tone to the article and helps build a close relationship between writers and readers. The counter-productiveness of the deal is indicated by words like *yet* or *instead* in the following paragraphs. In this way, it is claimed that, instead of achieving America's goals, the deal serves Iran's interests.

The two arguments above can be summarised as follows:

Premise: *Obama and his Secretary of State made some promises regarding Iran's nuclear programme in the past.*

Premise: *Their actions have not been consistent with their promises.*

Scheme/Topos: *If someone doesn't hold to his/her promises, s/he is untrustworthy and*

his/her argument is not acceptable.

Conclusions: *Obama and Kerry are untrustworthy (they did not keep their promises); therefore, their arguments in defence of the nuclear deal are not acceptable.*

The *Wall Street Journal* editorial also employs the argument from pragmatic inconsistency as part of its argumentation process against the deal:

3. Start with the inspections. Contrary to Mr. Obama, the IAEA's enhanced monitoring isn't permanent but limited to between 15 and 25 years depending on the process. Also contrary to his "where necessary, when necessary" claim, inspectors will only be allowed to ask permission of the Iranians to inspect suspected sites... (*The Wall Street Journal* Editorial, 15 July 2015)

The opening sentence of the paragraph that contains an implied dialogue functions to introduce the argument and, thereby, frames the readers' minds. Moreover, because it is an imperative sentence, it does so more forcefully. By instructing the readers about the way in which they should analyse the deal (*Start with the inspections*), the authors play the role of guides for the readers and, thus, represent themselves as the ones with more knowledge and, consequently, more power (construction of authority). The discourse takes the form of an interaction between two groups of interlocutors: one with knowledge and power; and the other powerless and in need of guidance. The other point is that this argument, by its repetition of the phrase *contrary to*, aims to achieve two goals: to prove the defectiveness of the inspection procedure; and to discredit Obama. By claiming that Obama had given incorrect information about the deal, the authors question his honesty.

Charles Krauthammer, in a *USA Today* op-ed, attacks Obama's character in a similar manner. He attempts to prove contradictions in Obama's claims in relation to the deal:

4. Obama claimed in his Wednesday news conference that it really doesn't matter because we can always intercept Iranian arms shipments to, say, Hezbollah. But wait. Obama has insisted throughout that we are pursuing this Iranian diplomacy to avoid the use of force, yet now blithely discards a previous diplomatic achievement — the arms embargo — by suggesting, no matter, we can just shoot our way to interdiction. (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)

By reporting a recent claim made by Obama and comparing it to his previous claims, the author means to show that Obama recklessly changes his words to justify his actions. The imperative *But wait* functions rhetorically to grab the attention of readers. It also gives an informal, conversational tone to the text. In fact, there is a form of sub-surface dialogue embedded in the text. In addition to proving the paradoxical nature of Obama's claims, Krauthammer pursues another ad-hominem strategy: that of picturing Obama as an irresponsible person. The reason behind using words like *really doesn't matter*, *blithely*, *no matter* and *we can just shoot our way* for reporting Obama's speech is to imply a careless picture of him. Obama is represented as a person who makes decisions without considering consequences – an inappropriate human characteristic that is even worse for a leader than it is for others.

Premise: *Obama has insisted he is pursuing the diplomatic solution with Iran to avoid the use of force.*

Premise: *But he discards the arms embargo by suggesting the U.S. can always intercept Iranian arms shipments to Hezbollah by shooting them.*

Scheme/Topos: *If someone contradicts his/her own statements, s/he is untrustworthy and his/her argument is not acceptable.*

Conclusion: *Obama is untrustworthy (he contradicts his own words); therefore, his argument in defence of the deal is not acceptable.*

7.2.2. Argument from negative/undesirable consequences

The argument from negative consequences was employed in both pro-deal (desecuritisation moves) and anti-deal articles (securitisation moves). In anti-deal articles, it was used to suggest the disastrous outcomes of the nuclear deal for the U.S., its allies and the world in general. In pro-deal articles, on the other hand, the scheme was applied to prove the unfortunate consequences of choosing the

alternative to the deal (having no deal with Iran). For example, in a *USA Today* op-ed, Senator Lindsey Graham employs an *argument from undesirable consequences* to indicate how dreadful the situation would be after implementation of the deal:

5. They will be allowed to continue research on advanced centrifuges. Worst of all, Iran, the largest state sponsor of terrorism, will receive more than \$100 billion in sanctions relief in short order. Finally, Sunni Arab nations are going to feel threatened by this deal and are going to try to get a nuke of their own. Iran already controls four Arab capitals. With more money, Iran's destabilizing influence will only grow. Restrictions on Iran's ballistic missile systems are beyond the scope of the agreement. This alone guarantees a nuclear arms race in the region as Iran's rivals seek the means to protect themselves. (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)

The disadvantages of the deal, as they are presented by the anti-deal group, concern two areas. One is that it favours Iran (Iran, in spite of its criminal status, receives reimbursements for making the deal) and the other is that it impacts the U.S.' allies as the *referent objects* (the deal negatively affects the Arab States/Israel and the region). Regarding Arabs, Graham's argument is based on the claim that the deal with Iran causes feelings of threat and fear in Arab States; this fear causes them to take action to defend themselves and the consequence of these defensive actions is a worsening of the arms race in the Middle East. Both of these groups of negative consequences mentioned by Graham are founded on one premise. Both are derived from a taken-for-granted premise that Iran is a threat to its neighbours and to world peace (*referent subject*) and, therefore, any action that favours or empowers Iran is detrimental to others.

The *New York Post* editorial points to similar negative consequences caused by the deal as a strategy to de-legitimise it:

6. The global embargo on conventional arm sales to Tehran goes away in five years; the ban on its ballistic-missile program, in eight. Iran also gets an end to nuclear-related sanctions — and of many non-nuclear ones, too. That's an immediate \$150 billion windfall, leaving Tehran free to funnel cash and conventional weapons to its clients. (*New York Post* Editorial, 14 July 2015)

By stating the military and financial benefits that Iran will gain from the deal, authors intend to prove their claim that the deal is a failure (unable to cope with the threat). As stated above, the way in which this scheme is used in anti-deal articles implies that,

from the authors' perspective, any benefit to Iran is undesirable. Thus, in this context, a negative consequence does not necessarily mean something harmful; it is usually something beneficial for Iran that leads to the empowering of that country. Since Iran's empowerment is not desirable to 'Us', any action that allows it is presented as undesirable. Application of this scheme in anti-deal articles can be outlined as follows:

Premise: The deal brings about some outcomes that are not desirable to Us.

Scheme/Topos: If an action brings about consequences that are not desirable to Us, We should not take the action.

Conclusion: We should not accept the deal.

As discussed earlier, argument from negative consequences was also applied in pro-deal articles (desecuritisising moves). However, unlike anti-deal articles, pro-deal ones applied this scheme to picture a completely hypothetical future. In other words, while anti-deal authors named some actual consequences of the deal that were undesirable to the U.S. (e.g. removal of sanctions, freeing Iran's blocked money), pro-deal writers presented an imaginary no-deal future in which a number of disadvantageous events would happen. For example, *The New York Times* author Roger Cohen, in an attempt to defend the achieved nuclear deal with Iran, pictures the future of the world in a no-deal situation as follows:

7. Presumably, they want what would have happened if negotiations had collapsed. That would be renewed war talk as an unconstrained Iran installs sophisticated centrifuges, its stockpile of enriched uranium grows, Russia and China abandon the sanctions regime, moderates in Iran like Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif are sidelined, and a nuclear-armed Islamic Republic draws closer. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)

In pro-deal articles like this one, argument from negative consequences is always juxtaposed with argument from positive consequences. Authors first present a number of benefits of the deal to the U.S. and then put forward a list of hypothetical no-deal outcomes that are undesirable to Americans. This way, they aim to demonstrate their claim that the deal is a *constructive* option and no deal is a *peril*.

In another op-ed from *The New York Times*, Chuck Freilich employs the same scheme as part of the argumentation process in support of the deal:

8. A collapse of the talks would have freed Iran to go forward and left America struggling to maintain a sanctions regime weakened by international disunity. Israel would have remained isolated, left only with the military option. These are hardly desirable outcomes. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 19 July 2015)

Here, the author points to the difficult situation for the U.S. and Israel in a no-deal scenario as a strategy for convincing the critics that having the deal is better than abandoning it would have been. This scheme is employed in pro-deal articles as follows:

Premise: *If there were no deal, some undesirable consequences would result.*

Scheme/Topos: *If the consequences of an action are not desirable to Us, the action should not be taken.*

Conclusion: *The alternative option (no-deal option) should not be taken.*

Overall, the difference between anti-deal and pro-deal articles in using this argumentation scheme arises from their different perspectives. The former considers the deal out of its context – international and regional geopolitical affairs – and, thereby, regards it as flawed (a perfectionist/idealistic view) but the latter views it as the result of a choice between bad and worse and contends that it is the best-possible option (pragmatic/realistic view). While pro-deal authors argue that the negative outcomes are less problematic in the deal scenario when it is compared to the no-deal scenario, anti-deal writers maintains that not having a deal is better than having an imperfect deal. In fact, all these disputes stem from differences between the world views of the two groups and between their standards for evaluating the deal. As Finlayson (15)(2007, p. 550) argued, “parties to a dispute emerge from different contexts with different criteria of assessment”.

7.2.3. Argument from analogy/comparison

In an argument from analogy/comparison, perceived similarities between two phenomena are used to claim further similarities that are, as yet, unproven. This argumentation scheme was employed in both pro and anti-deal articles to justify their positive or negative views towards the deal.

For example, in a *New York Post* op-ed, Michael Rubin uses the analogy of a *criminal* to prove his claim against Obama as well as to de-legitimise Iran:

9. Finally, he allowed Iran essentially to pre-approve any inspection. That's the equivalent of having a criminal pre-approve a search warrant. (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)

When discussing the ineffectiveness of international inspections of Iran's nuclear programme, the author draws on an *argument from analogy* to make his claim more tangible for his readers. This analogy helps readers understand his point better by relating it to a similar case (that of a criminal being allowed to pre-approve an inspection). However, the actual consequence of comparing the deal to this similar-but-negative case is to influence readers' attitudes adversely towards Iran as the word *criminal* activates unconscious negative connotations in the readers' minds and leaves a negative impression of Iran (*referent subject*). The other function of this analogy is to express the author's extremely negative attitude towards Iran. This argument can be reconstructed as follows:

Premise: *Iran is similar to a criminal.*

Premise: *A criminal should not be allowed to pre-approve a search warrant.*

Scheme/topoi: *if two phenomena/events are similar, they should be treated similarly.*

Conclusion: *Iran should not be allowed to pre-approve any nuclear inspection.*

USA Today editorial, on the other hand, employs this argumentation scheme in support of the deal:

10. For all the complexity contained in its nearly 100 pages, the basic framework is a simple transaction that had been well telegraphed. (*USA Today* Editorial, 14 July 2015)

The transaction analogy employed by the authors not only makes understanding a complicated issue (the nuclear deal) easy but also persuades readers to associate the two concepts and their features. By comparing the deal to a transaction (implying mutual benefits), the authors persuade readers to see it as a two-way exchange; it can be seen as acceptable for the U.S. to make some concessions in return for what it gains from the deal. Therefore, although the authors seem to use this analogy to help readers understand the issue, the strategy also functions as a reply to criticism by

implicitly justifying the U.S.' concessions. The entire editorial is built on this analogy; all other arguments developed by the authors stem from this point.

Premise: *the nuclear deal is similar to a transaction.*

Premise: *A transaction requires giving and taking (both sides making concessions).*

Scheme/topoi: *if two phenomena/events are similar, they should be viewed/evaluated similarly.*

Conclusion: *the nuclear deal with Iran requires both Iran and the U.S. make concessions (not just Iran).*

James P. Rubin, in an op-ed from *The New York Times*, explicitly uses the word *analogy* in the argument he puts forward in favour of the deal:

11. The best analogy for the deal with Iran is the arms control agreements of the Cold War. The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) limited Soviet modernization of intercontinental ballistic missiles, and granted the United States an unprecedented degree of access to a closed society. Like the earlier agreements with the Soviet Union, the deal reached with Iran on Tuesday substantially reduces the potential nuclear threat from an adversary and provides access to a relatively closed society. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 15 July 2015)

Rubin maintains that Iran's deal is only an arms control agreement, like the U.S.–Soviet agreement, and should be viewed as such and not as a *geopolitical watershed* (as according to Rubin, some of its supporters claim it to be). He makes his comparison based on some perceived similarities between the two agreements: SALT limited Soviet modernisation of missiles and gave the U.S. access to Soviet society; similarly, the nuclear deal reduces Iran's nuclear threat and provides access to Iranian society.

7.2.4. Argument from positive/desirable consequences

Argument from positive or desirable consequences, unlike its counterpart (argument from negative consequences), was applied only in pro-deal articles (desecuritising moves). While anti-dealers used arguments from negative consequences for picturing a dreadful future after the deal, they did not use arguments from positive consequences in the same way (they could have presented an alternative option for the deal and shown its positive consequences in a hypothetical way). However, they opted to be silent on presenting/describing any alternative option. This absence of alternatives was, in fact, one of the points of criticism raised by the deal's supporters.

For example, Chuck Freilich, in an op-ed from *The New York Times*, raised this issue by saying that “the agreement’s detractors have been long on invective, short on suggestions” (*The New York Times’* Op-Ed, 19 July 2015). In another instance, *The New York Times’* editorial argued that “He — Netanyahu —, Republicans in Congress and most candidates for the Republican presidential nomination have opposed negotiations with Iran from the outset yet offered no credible alternative to a negotiated settlement. The Republican presidential hopefuls repeated that formula today — condemnation of the deal with no credible alternative to offer” (*The New York Times* Editorial, 15 July 2015).

As mentioned above, the argument from positive consequences, in the form of listing the deal’s benefits for the U.S., its regional allies and the Middle East region, was one of the central argumentation schemes employed in pro-deal articles. These benefits can be categorised into two groups: goals and impacts. Those outcomes that were set prior to the achievement of the deal can be called *goals* (intended consequences). These outcomes were, in fact, the reasons for making the deal. On the other hand, those beneficial outcomes that could be foreseen but were not the main purpose of making the deal can be called *impacts* (secondary consequences).

Both types of positive consequences can be found in the following excerpts from op-eds from *The New York Times* and an editorial from *USA Today*:

12. The Iran nuclear deal is not perfect, nor was it ever intended to address the long list of American—Iranian grievances, which will persist. It must be judged on what it set out to do — stop Iran going nuclear — not on whether Iran has a likeable regime (it does not) or does bad things (it does). (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)

In the above excerpt, *The New York Times* author (Roger Cohen) explicitly indicates that the deal should be evaluated in terms of its success in achieving its goals. Cohen states that the purpose of making a deal with Iran was to prevent it from building a nuclear bomb rather than to solve the long-lasting problems in the relationship between the U.S. and Iran. Based on these two statements, the author concludes that the deal has been successful (desecuritisising the issue). In most cases, intended and secondary outcomes of the deal are listed together in pro-deal articles as in the following excerpt from *The New York Times*:

13. It increases the distance between Iran and a bomb as it reduces the distance between Iran and the world. It makes the Middle East less dangerous by forestalling proliferation. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)

Here, increasing *the distance between Iran and a bomb* is the goal or intended consequence of the deal; however, reducing *the distance between Iran and the world* and making *the Middle East less dangerous* are positive impacts of the deal on Iran and the region but were not its goals (the main purpose of making the deal with Iran was stopping its nuclear programme).

14. This accord has the merit of condemning the United States and Tehran to a relationship — however hostile — over the next 15 years. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)
15. For at least the next decade, Israel will not have to live under the threat of a nuclear Iran and will not face the danger of annihilation. For Israel, that is a major achievement. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 19 July 2015)

Excerpts 14 and 15, however, point only to the positive impact of the deal on the Iran–U.S. relationship in general and the deal’s benefits for Israel. None of these benefits was the main purpose of making the deal with Iran; however, they can be seen as secondary goals.

16. So what has been won by these arduous negotiations? First, an option other than war to thwart Iran’s nuclear ambitions, one that positions the U.S. as a leader in making the world a safer place with a stroke of a pen rather than at the tip of a sword. The agreement also buys valuable time that can be used to work to end the deadly challenge from ISIL, restore some degree of normalcy in Iraq and Syria, and pursue new peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians. (*USA Today* Editorial, 14 July 2015)

In excerpt 16, in a similar way to that of excerpt 13, *USA Today’s* editorial discusses both the success of the deal in the attainment of its goal (*to thwart Iran’s nuclear ambitions*) and its positive consequences for the U.S. and the Middle East (positioning *the U.S. as a leader in... the world*, *buying time... to end the... challenge from ISIL*, *restoring... normalcy in Iran and Syria*, etc.). While achieving goals is necessary for evaluating an action as successful, having other positive impacts only adds to its desirability. The importance of goal accomplishment in the assessment of an action can explain the fact that the debate on the nuclear deal revolved chiefly around proving its (in)ability to prevent Iran from producing a nuclear bomb as an existential threat (its goal/intended consequence). The interesting point is that the premise

underlying these instances of argument from positive consequences (the deal is successful in stopping Iran from producing a nuclear bomb) is itself a claim that needs to be proved since the point of controversy in the debate over the deal was its success or failure in ending Iran's nuclear programme (i.e. tackling the existential threat from Iran). Therefore, pro-deal articles firstly needed to prove that the deal could prevent Iran from going nuclear and, only then, could they mention this as the main positive consequence of the deal.

Argument from intended consequences (goals):

Premise: *Our goal is to stop Iran from going nuclear.*

Premise: *The deal stops Iran from going nuclear.*

Scheme/Topos: *If an action is able to achieve Our goal, We should take the action.*

Conclusion: *We should make the deal.*

Argument from secondary consequences (impacts):

Premise: *The deal would bring about some desirable consequences.*

Scheme/Topos: *If an action brings about desirable consequences, We should take the action.*

Conclusion: *We should make the deal.*

7.2.5. Argument from ridicule (ad hominem)

Argument from ridicule is a sub-type of ad-hominem argument and, like all sub-types of this argument, it targets a person's character rather than his/her argument. This scheme, however, is different from the other type of ad-hominem argument discussed earlier (argument from pragmatic inconsistency). While argument from pragmatic inconsistency relies on contradictions between a person's words and his/her deeds as a foundation for refuting his/her argument, argument from ridicule derides/scorns a person's behaviour, statements or appearance. Both pro and anti-deal articles (i.e. securitisation and desecuritisation moves) used the strategy of ridiculing the 'Other' in the process of argumentation. In pro-deal articles, authors employed this scheme to picture the opponents negatively and, consequently, to reject their criticisms against the deal:

17. He (Netanyahu) argued; we are against it and will be the only American ally not only to oppose it, but to go down gloriously, fighting a battle in Congress that we are destined to lose.
Mr. Netanyahu often warns that Iran is like Nazi Germany in 1938, fooling naïve appeasers even as it plans a cataclysm for Jews. But only those who never see merit in any proposal and never initiate their own could respond as the Israeli leader has. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 19 July 2015)
18. To favour such peril, when a constructive alternative exists that engages one of the most highly educated societies in the Middle East, amounts to foolishness dressed up as machismo. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)

In the above excerpts, critics of the deal, including Netanyahu and Republicans, are either mocked for behaving foolishly (gloriously fighting a war that they are destined to lose; supporting the no-deal option – that is seen as peril by the author – with the false assumption that it means bravery) or are scorned for misleading others and being pessimistic (*fooling naïve appeasers and never see merit in any proposal*). The ways in which critics are described in excerpts 17 and 18 remind readers of fictional characters, such as Don Quixote, whether or not the authors had such intentions. Critics are represented as fools who fight a lost war or support a dangerous option but think of themselves as heroes (as Don Quixote did in the Spanish novel *The Ingenious Nobleman Sir Quixote of La Mancha*).

In anti-deal articles, on the other hand, this scheme was used to discredit President Obama and his Secretary of State (John Kerry):

19. For his efforts, Kellogg won the Nobel Peace Prize — but he also laid the groundwork for a world war. Blinded by a noxious mix of ambition and naïveté, Kerry and, for that matter, Obama may not be so different. (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)
20. Which is Obama's triumph. He has locked in his folly. He has laid down his legacy and we will have to live with the consequences for decades (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)
21. *The New York Times* reports that during the negotiations, Kerry actually pushed to delay a UN vote until Congress reviewed the deal. How sporting of him. It must have been vestigial loyalty to the Congress he served in for several decades. (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 20 July 2015)

The way in which this scheme was employed in the above excerpts is similar to that of the pro-deal articles. In the above extracts from op-eds from *USA Today* and the *New York Post*, authors scornfully mock Obama and Kerry for being ambitious and naïve. By pursuing this strategy, the authors attempted to achieve two simultaneous goals.

Their obvious goal was to de-legitimise Obama and Kerry as President and Secretary of State by exposing their lack of wisdom and courage, and their rather implicit goal was to indicate that Obama and Kerry's ambition and naïvety would lead to catastrophic consequences for all Americans and even the rest of the world (attempt to achieve securitisation through construction of the situation as urgent and dangerous).

On the issue of Iran's nuclear activities, the opposing sides of the debate accused each other of naïvety; however, each views naïvety differently. From the opponents' perspective, Obama and his team were *cowardly appeasers* who *capitulated* to Iran and *gave up* American interests instead of standing firmly and being tough (italic words are from the articles). In the proponents' view, on the other hand, critics of the deal were fools who indulged only in political posturing and bluffing without rationally considering the facts on the ground.

Premise: *Netanyahu/Obama/Kerry/critics are foolish/bad.*

Premise: *They made arguments against the deal.*

Scheme/Topos: *If someone is foolish or has a bad character, his/her arguments are worthless.*

Conclusion: *The arguments of Netanyahu/Obama/Kerry/critics are worthless.*

7.2.6. [Argument from appeal to an expert opinion/authority](#)

Appeals to expert opinions and authorities are popular schemes that use the verdict of an expert or an authority as evidence to support a position or a proposal. In my corpus, argument from *expert opinion* was employed in the anti-deal articles as a strategy to achieve securitisation through delegitimising the deal, while argument from *authority* was used in pro-deal articles to achieve desecuritisation through legitimising the deal. The latter group referred to the reasons given by Obama or American officials (authorities) for their support of the deal. For example, in several instances, authors of an editorial from *The New York Times*, relied on information from U.S. authorities when praising the deal or responding to the criticisms:

22. As described by Mr. Obama and other officials, the deal seems sound and clearly in the interest of the United States, the other nations that drafted it and the state of Israel.

23. American officials say that Iran will get that money over time, and that its immediate priority will be to deal with pressing domestic needs. (*The New York Times* Editorial, 14 July 2015)

In the first excerpt, although the authors endorse the deal, they refer their appraisal to Obama and other authorities. In excerpt 23, in response to the opponents' claim that Iran will use its released money for terrorist purposes, the authors present the claim of American officials (that Iran will receive money gradually and prioritise domestic needs) as proof for discarding the opponents' claim.

On the other hand, in the following excerpts, *The Wall Street Journal* authors strengthen their claims regarding technical deficiencies of the deal (inspection of Iran's nuclear sites) by quoting some nuclear experts:

24. ... and as recently as last week Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Martin Dempsey warned Congress that "under no circumstances should we relieve pressure on Iran relative to ballistic missile capabilities and arms trafficking." (*The Wall Street Journal* Editorial, 15 July 2015)
25. Veteran CIA nuclear-verification expert John Lauder recently told me that data declarations are "most important because they help set the stage for all other measures." (*The Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)
26. As former United Nations and U.S. weapons inspector David Kay recently explained to me: "Unfettered access to people and documents is required to tell inspectors what to look for and where to go." (*The Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)

A *New York Post* author also quotes a political commentator (*The Wall Street Journal* editor) to support the claims he makes against the deal:

27. Critics characterize the Iran deal as the worst diplomatic bargain since British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain appeased German Chancellor Adolf Hitler on the eve of World War II. The Wall Street Journal's Bret Stephens explained, "In 1938, Chamberlain bought time to rearm. In 2013, Obama gives Iran time to go nuclear." (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)

In anti-deal articles, authors' criticisms were usually followed by quotes from experts. The authors firstly presented their attitudes and opinions regarding the shortcomings of the deal, then, referred to information from experts to strengthen their points. In excerpt 24, the authors claim that lifting sanctions on Iran's ballistic missiles is *perhaps the most dismaying* outcome because missiles can be used to *deliver nuclear weapons* to the U.S. To support their opinion about the danger of Iran's missiles, they refer to

a military expert (Martin Dempsey); in excerpts 25 and 26, the authors emphasise the necessity of Iran's declaration of its activities and UN's access to Iran's nuclear sites, then, they bring evidence for their claims from experts involved in weapon inspections. Finally, in the last excerpt (27), there are two references to experts. Firstly, the author mentions some unspecified experts, generally called *critics*, who compare the Iran deal to Chamberlain's appeasement of Hitler (argument from analogy); then, he quotes a political expert (Bret Stephens), who made the same claim about the nuclear deal and Obama. The arguments from expert opinion and authority can be outlined as follows:

Premise: *John Lauder/David Kay/Bret Stephens/Barak Obama/Martin Dempsey is an expert/authority in the field of arms control/politics/military.*

Premise: *John Lauder/Bret Stephens/Martin Dempsey/Obama said something about nuclear inspections/the history of politics.*

Scheme/Topos: *If someone who is an expert/authority in a field says something about a subject in that field, his claim is correct.*

Conclusion: *What that person said about nuclear/political/military issues is correct.*

7.2.7. Argument from cost-benefit

Argument from cost-benefit is employed when an author intends to convince others that the benefits of an action outweigh its costs and, thereby, it is reasonable to take the action. As would be expected, it was the members of the pro-deal group (desecuritisers) that employed this scheme as they were the ones who needed support for the deal and intended to persuade others (the audience) to accept that the deal was worthwhile. In more than half of the pro-deal articles, authors relied on this scheme as part of their argumentation processes. In the following excerpts from *The New York Times* and *USA Today* articles, the authors compare the concessions made on the deal by the U.S. and by Iran with the aim of showing that Iran's concessions are more substantial than are those of the U.S.; in other words, the U.S.' benefits from the deal outweigh its costs. Examples of the key phrases in these arguments are: *in return* or *in exchange*. These phrases are like signposts that indicate the points of the arguments (comparing losses and gains):

28. In return for a phased lifting of international economic sanctions, Iran will reduce by 98 percent its stockpile of low-enriched uranium... and reduce the number of operating centrifuges used to enrich that fuel by two-thirds, to 5,060. (*The New York Times* Editorial, 14 July 2015)

29. Iran is prevented for at least 10 years from developing the capability to build a nuclear weapon, helping to stabilize a region that needs no more instability. In return, Iran gets out from under crushing economic sanctions, in phases beginning as soon as this year. (*USA Today* Editorial, 14 July 2015)
30. The accord simply offers sanctions relief in exchange for extensive limits on Iran's ability to enrich uranium... In exchange, and under tight controls, financial sanctions and the ban on oil sales will be lifted, allowing Iran much-needed access to frozen funds and Western investment. The accord's benefits far outweigh its costs. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 15 July 2015)

In all these excerpts, the lifting of economic sanctions is introduced as the only benefit to Iran from the deal. Phrases like *phased, in phases* or *under tight controls* mean to undermine the importance/value of the U.S.' concessions by emphasising the point that Iran would receive its benefits gradually and conditionally. On the other hand, when it comes to Iran's concessions, the authors attempt to magnify them by use of phrases like *extensive limits, 98 percent, two-thirds* and *at least 10 years*. In addition to this strategy of downplaying 'Our' concessions versus underscoring 'Their' concessions, which is equivalent to van Dijk's *ideological square* (1998), *The New York Times* authors also point to Iran's difficult economic situation in order to make readers feel sympathetic towards Iran (*under crushing sanctions, much-needed access*, etc.) and, thereby, win their consensus regarding the elimination of sanctions (desecuritisation).

Premise: *The deal has both benefits and costs.*

Premise: *The benefits of the deal for the U.S. exceed its costs.*

Scheme/Topos: *If an action's benefits outweigh its costs, it is worth taking.*

Conclusion: *The deal is worth taking.*

7.2.8. Argument from history

Argument from history is not in Walton's classification; however, it is similar to the argument from precedent mentioned there. While argument from history considers the occurrence of an event or an action in the past as a proof for its recurrence in the future, argument from precedent is mostly a legal argument that argues for changing an existing rule or adding a new rule by citing a similar past case. Argument from history was added to the list of argumentation schemes in this study in order to cover

cases where authors based their predictions of the future (their claims about future) on what had happened in the past.

While, in pro-deal articles, reference made to the past was mainly in the form of analogy (section 7.2.3.) as this group of articles compared the Iran deal to some successful U.S. agreements of the past that led to some form of desecuritisation, anti-deal articles referred to the past as a strategy to prove the untrustworthiness of Iran, based on what authors of these articles saw as its past criminal record. Iran's untrustworthiness, in turn, was used to de-legitimise the deal and the deal-makers (securitisation).

For instance, in a *USA Today* op-ed, the author claims that the money given to Iran as a result of the deal will be used for terrorist activities. The evidence he provides for his claim is Iran's past activities:

31. We know from Iran's track record that this won't be used for roads and bridges, but to fund Hamas and Hezbollah and further entrench Bashar Assad in Syria. (*USA Today* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)

According to this argument, Iran's criminal actions of the past are used as evidence for its present untrustworthiness. The whole argument is founded on a presupposition (an unspoken premise) that suggests that Hamas and Hezbollah are terrorist organisations and Assad is an unlawful tyrant (It is while some may argue that the first two are legitimate political parties in Palestine and Lebanon, and the third one is a legitimate president of Syria). Accordingly, the author concludes that Iran's support of these groups is a terrorist behaviour.

Premise: *In the past, Iran spent its money on funding Hamas, Hezbollah and Assad.*

Scheme/Topos: *If someone did something in the past, s/he will do it again.*

Conclusion: *Iran will use its received money to fund them again.*

The *New York Post* author (Michael Rubin) also appeals to history in order to de-legitimise Iran and, thereby, prove that Obama and his administration have made a mistake in trusting Iran:

32. The White House insists that Iran will use that money for good, but history disagrees. When Europe tried a similar strategy between 2000 and 2005, Iran invested the bulk of its hard-currency windfall in its covert nuclear program and ballistic missiles. (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015)

Here, by pointing to a past event when Europe trusted Iran and that trust was betrayed, Rubin aims to convince readers that the same scenario will happen for Obama's administration (Iran will again deceive the West). He explicitly refers to history (*but history disagrees*). Personification of history as someone who disagrees is a very thought-provoking notion. The author pictures history as a party to the debate. This strategy functions in two ways: Rubin avoids direct confrontation with the White House (he represents history as an active agent and removes himself from the debate); and, more importantly, expressing disagreement by history is more effective (because it is seen as objective and impartial) than is the author's disagreement (because it is seen as subjective and partisan).

Premise: *Iran invested its hard-currency windfall in its covert nuclear programme and ballistic missiles in 2000 and 2005.*

Scheme/Topos: *If someone did something in the past, s/he will do it again.*

Conclusion: *Iran will use its money for the same purpose again.*

7.2.9. Argument from contrast

Argument from contrast is another scheme that Watson's classification does not include. Here, I take it to mean contrasting two phenomena or situations in order to prioritise one on the other. This scheme is the absolute reverse of the argument from analogy. Argument from contrast relies on differences rather than similarities, and its purpose is to make a distinction between two phenomena or options rather than to associate them. This scheme was applied in both pro and anti-deal articles.

Roger Cohen, in an op-ed from *The New York Times*, compares two scenarios with regard to the U.S.–Iran relationship: keeping the deal and abandoning it. He concludes that the former is far more advantageous.

33. It is far better to have deep American-Iranian differences — over Hezbollah, over Syria, over regional Shiite irredentism, over Iran's vile anti-Israel outbursts — addressed through dialogue rather than have Iran do its worst as pariah. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015)

Premise: *The deal helps address American–Iranian differences through dialogue but no deal leaves Iran to do its worst as pariah.*

Premise: *It is more desirable to have differences solved through dialogue than to have Iran acting as pariah.*

Scheme/Topos: *If an option brings about more-desirable results, it is better than the other option.*

Conclusion (implied): *Keeping the deal is better than abandoning it.*

Similarly, Chuck Freilich, in another op-ed from *The New York Times* (excerpt 34), compares the deal with the alternative option suggested by Israel (attacking Iran) in terms of its success in postponing Iran's nuclear activities (tackling an existential threat). The same strategy is also employed in an editorial from *The New York Times* (excerpt 35). Again, the focus is on the deal's effect in terms of the time delay between Iran's decision to build a bomb and its attainment of the bomb:

34. An attack probably could not have achieved more than a few years' postponement of Iran's program, whereas the agreement will do so for at least 10 to 15 years. After the deal expires, it's conceivable that Iran will prefer to avoid becoming an international pariah again. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 19 July 2015)

35. These limits mean that if Iran ever decides to violate the agreement and make a dash for a nuclear bomb, it will take a year to produce the weapons-grade fuel needed for a single bomb, compared with a couple of months now. (*The New York Times* Editorial, 14 July 2015)

In excerpt 34, Freilich argues that not only can the deal provide the same benefits as would the opponents' suggested option (attack) but it does so peacefully. In excerpt 35, *The New York Times'* editorial compares the length of time needed by Iran to make a nuclear bomb at the present time and after implementation of the deal. The argument concludes that, in the latter case, it would be more difficult for Iran to build a nuclear bomb as it takes more time (*a year... compared with a couple of months*).

Premise: *Agreement brings about longer-lasting results than does attack/makes the process of producing a bomb longer.*

Scheme/Topos: *If an option brings about more desirable results, it is better than the other option.*

Conclusion: *The deal is better than an attack would be.*

Argument from contrast was also applied in anti-deal articles, although not as frequently as it was in pro-deal articles. *The Wall Street Journal's* editorial, for

example, compares the Iran deal to the U.S.–Soviet arms agreement, in order to prove that the former is worse than was the latter:

36. This is far worse than the U.S.-Soviet arms agreements, in which the U.S. could protest directly to Moscow. Iran now has an international bureaucratic guard to deflect and deter U.S. or IAEA concerns. (*The Wall Street Journal* Editorial, 15 July 2015)

The interesting point is that the U.S.–Soviet agreement (SALT) was used for two opposite purposes: in arguments against the deal and in those in favour of the deal. As discussed in section 7.2.3, James P. Rubin, in an op-ed in *The New York Times* (excerpt 11), refers to SALT in an argument from analogy to show similarities between it and the nuclear deal with the purpose of praising them. However, in the above excerpt (36), *The Wall Street Journal's* editorial indicates differences between the two with the aim of showing that one is worse than the other. By contrasting the Iran nuclear deal with the *U.S.–Soviet arms agreement*, the authors maintain that the Iran deal is worse because, contrary to SALT that allowed the U.S. to contact Moscow directly in case of any complaint, the nuclear deal's bureaucratic process makes it difficult for the U.S. or IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) to pursue their concerns about Iran's activities.

Premise: *The agreement with Iran brings about more undesirable results than did the U.S.–Soviet agreement.*

Scheme/Topos: *If an option brings about more undesirable results, it is worse than the other option.*

Conclusion: *The Iran agreement is worse than was the Soviet agreement.*

7.2.10. Argument from pragmatism

Argument from pragmatism is a scheme that I added to my categories of topoi for dealing with cases where the pro-deal authors (desecuritising actors) presented the situational conditions as reasons for the deal's deficiencies. These authors relied on existing conditions rather than on abstract or fixed principles to evaluate the deal. In the following excerpts from *The New York Times* and *USA Today*, the authors' point of emphasis is the impossibility of achieving a perfect deal because of situational realities:

37. The deal... would obviously have provided more cause for celebration if Iran had agreed to completely dismantle all of its nuclear facilities. But the chances of that

happening were effectively zero, and... no one can erase the knowledge Iranian scientists have acquired after working on nuclear projects for decades. (*The New York Times* Editorial, 14 July 2015)

38. Perfection in such matters is never possible, and the nature of negotiations is that neither side gets everything it wants. (*USA Today* Editorial, 14 July 2015)

39. So, yes, we could have gotten a better deal. Israel wanted something different (as did the United States), but this is the agreement that was reached — and despite its faults, it is not a bad one. (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 19 July 2015)

In the above excerpts as well as in other cases where this scheme is employed, the authors firstly entertain the opponents' point (concession) and, then, reject it on the basis of its impracticality (counter). In excerpt 39, by saying *yes*, the author explicitly agrees with opponents as if he is in a conversation with them; then, he counters what he agreed to by using *but*. In all the excerpts, the argumentative formula (yes... but) is employed. Authors agree with the critics that the deal is not perfect or that the U.S. could have achieved a better deal. However, they discard those expectations for practical reasons: reaching such perfection is impossible in diplomatic negotiations; there was no chance of forcing Iran to destroy all its facilities; and erasing scientists' nuclear knowledge is not possible. Accordingly, they argue that the U.S. and Israel should feel content with the achieved deal (as it is not a bad one). This last argumentation scheme can be summarised as follows:

Premise: *The deal is the best-possible agreement We (the U.S. and its allies) could achieve.*

Scheme/Topos: *If something is the best-possible option available to Us, We should accept it.*

Conclusion: *We (the U.S. and its allies) should accept the deal.*

7.3. Conclusion

This chapter investigated the argumentative structure of the corpus under study. The argumentative structure of these opinion discourses was constructed by a number of topics that were discussed through specific argumentation schemes/topoi. In other words, topics as the semantic macro-structures created the skeleton of each discourse, and argumentation schemes or semantic micro-structures formed its flesh.

The corpus under study included two macro-topics, four meso-topics, and at least 10 micro-topics for each group of articles. All the articles from the four newspapers revolved around two points: 1) praising versus questioning the deal; and 2) refuting criticisms/critics versus discrediting Obama's administration.

The anti-deal group of articles attempted to securitise Iran's nuclear programme through questioning the deal: showing its failure in achieving its goals (exposing its technical shortcomings) and its other dangerous consequences (its negative impacts on the U.S., Israel and Arab states and its role in empowering Iran). These articles also aimed to disgrace Obama/Kerry by picturing them as untrustworthy, naïve and ambitious (based on their lack of commitment, their capitulation to Iran, their trust in Iran, etc.). The pro-deal articles, on the other hand, planned to desecuritise Iran's nuclear programme through demonstrating the deal's success in reaching its goals (the technical limits it imposed on Iran) and its other desirable outcomes (its role in stabilising the Middle East, its positive consequences for the U.S.–Iran relationship, etc.). Moreover, this group of articles attempted to refute criticisms against the deal/Obama by bringing reasons and justifications for the shortcomings of the deal (flaws are typical of diplomatic documents, reaching a perfect deal was not possible, etc.) as well as by picturing critics as fools as a result of their advocacy for a dangerous option, their rejection of a constructive option with no credible alternative, etc.

Ten types of argumentation schemes or topoi were identified in the corpus of articles that discussed the above topics. These schemes were centred on similarities, differences, moral values, examples, reference to historical events/figures, statistics, etc. They were employed to illustrate and elaborate on the authors' points for or against the deal/Obama/critics. From among the 10 schemes, two were specific to anti-deal articles (securitising moves) and three were specific to pro-deal ones (desecuritising moves). Argument from *pragmatic inconsistency*, which intended to discredit Obama/Kerry, and argument from *history*, which aimed to predict the failure of the deal in achieving its goals based on historical records, were employed only in anti-deal articles. On the other hand, arguments from *positive consequences* and from *cost-benefit*, which attempted to show that the deal was successful in accomplishing its goals, as well as argument from *pragmatism*, which intended to justify the

deficiencies of the deal, were specific to pro-deal articles. The other five topoi were used in both pro and anti-deal articles. Both groups of articles employed arguments from *negative consequences*, *analogy*, *expert opinion/authority* and *contrast* to prove either the success or the failure of the deal. Finally, argument from *ridicule* was also applied equally in pro and anti-deal articles to discredit their opponents.

As described in the chapter two, three of the reviewed studies examined the argumentative features of some Western and Iranian newspapers' editorials and opinion articles regarding the nuclear issue. All the three studies employed Reisigl and Wodak's (2001) typology of *topoi* for the investigation of the argumentation in opinion discourses. Rasti and Sahragard (2012) and Hosseinpour and Heidari Tabrizi (2016) who studied two Western newspapers (*The Economist* and *The New York Times* respectively) ended up with similar findings. There were similarities in their reports of topoi such as *history*, *reality*, *threat*, and *danger*. Both studies showed that these topoi were employed in Western commentary articles to prove Iran's uncooperative and threatening behaviour and thereby, justify the West's punishing measures against Iran. Khosravinik (2014) who explored an Iranian newspaper's (*Kayhan*) argumentative features reported four topoi of *resistance*, *defiance*, *threat*, and *rights/laws* as forming the argumentative ground of this paper.

Although none of these studies followed the same methodology as mine, and their analyses were not as detailed and structured as the ones presented in this chapter, there were similarities between their findings and mine regarding the concept of threat. Both Rasti and Sahragard (2012) and Hosseinpour and Heidari Tabrizi (2016) reported that the notion of threat (what they called topoi) was pivotal in the newspaper texts they investigated. This implies that the newspaper discourses they examined, similar to the ones studies here, were involved in the process of securitisation of Iran. However, what they considered as topos of threat in their studies pointed to a general theme or motif (*leitmotifs*) used for developing topics or claims regarding the threatening nature of Iran—not warrants connecting arguments to conclusions, as topoi really are. They had a holistic approach to argumentation analysis and made general conclusions without providing nuances of their analyses or as Žagar (2010, p. 3) argues about this approach employed by some CDS researchers,

it “relies mostly on simplified, unreflected use of topoi” without making any reference to Aristotle’s ideas or including any analysis of arguments and their components (premises, conclusions, and topoi).

Chapter Eight

Securitisation versus De-securitisation of Iran's Nuclear Programme

In this chapter, I link up findings presented in the three previous chapters and explicate them as a unified whole by drawing on CDS and Securitisation theory. As discussed in chapter one (sections 1.3. and 1.4.), this research is positioned primarily as a CDS project. However, in order to demonstrate the fundamental principle of CDS regarding the reciprocity of the discourse–society relationship, I needed a middle-range theory related to the specific case I was studying (media opinion discourses on a political issue) through which I could demonstrate the mechanisms of this relationship. For that purpose, I employed securitisation theory from the field of international relations that was also congruent with critical and discursive character of this research.

My goal is to demonstrate the CDS principle that ‘discourse is both *constitutive* of and *constituted* by society’ through securitisation theory. I show how these newspaper opinion discourses, with their multiple dimensions that were analysed and discussed in three analytical chapters, were affected by social structures and what they intended to achieve from a security perspective. For explaining the first side of the discourse–society relationship, I draw on CDS and constructivist IR. In light of these discursive and constructivist frameworks and based on traces found in newspaper discourses, I explain how American social, political, cultural and historical contexts have shaped the authors’ perceptions of national security and threat. Regarding the other side of the relationship (the constitutive function of discourse), with the help of the securitisation model presented by Balzacq (2009, 2011b) and Balzacq et al. (2016), I describe how various aspects of the opinion discourses worked together towards a shared political

goal that was *securitisation* or *desecuritisation* of Iran and its nuclear programme (these concepts are defined in the next paragraph).

Securitisation theory is a description of how security threats in international relations are intersubjectively constructed. The concept of securitisation, as defined by the Copenhagen School, is “the elevation of an issue to that of threat” or “removing an issue from the realm of normal politics and placing it into the realm of extraordinary measures” (Fako, 2012, p. 2). According to the second generation of securitisation scholars, such as Balzacq and Stritzel, this elevation of a political issue to the status of a threat is achieved through discourse in conjunction with contextual material evidence. As Balzacq (2011b, p. 14) maintains, “the semantic repertoire of security is a combination of textual meaning – knowledge of the concept acquired through language (written and spoken) – and cultural meaning – knowledge historically gained through previous interactions and situations”. This means that securitisation is the outcome of discursive construction as well as of contextual facilitation, and its success depends on audiences’ consensus. Desecuritisation that is considered to be the reversal of securitisation is described as moving issues “out of emergency mode and into the normal bargaining process of the political sphere” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 4). According to securitisation scholars, desecuritisation can be enacted through different strategies, such as: *silencing* (not speaking about an issue as a threat); *détente* (managing securitisation so that it does not spiral); *re-articulation* (removing an issue from the realm of security by offering a political solution); and *replacement* (moving one issue out of security and substituting it with another issue) (Hansen, 2012). Securitisation, on the other hand, comprises five elements as mentioned by Balzacq (2011b):

- *Threatening subject*: e.g. immigrants and asylum-seekers in Europe
- *Threatened object*: e.g. European nation-states, including their sovereignty, identity, cultures, economies, etc.
- *Securitisating actor*: e.g. European elites, including officials, politicians, journalists, artists, etc.
- *Audience*: e.g. European nations, including elites and the public

- *Context*: e.g. social, political and historical conditions of Europe, in which security discourses are produced.

Accordingly, after showing how elements of social structures influenced the newspapers' discourses, I discuss the findings in terms of these five components to demonstrate that most of the opinion pieces I analysed were examples of securitisation. Moreover, I explain that some of the opinion pieces were combinations of securitisation and desecuritisation moves. In other words, they encompassed two parallel processes: one securitising some elements of Iran and the other de-securitising other elements.

Before embarking on a discussion of the findings, I clarify my view of securitisation. I advocate the externalist (sociological, as it is called by Balzacq (2011a)) model of security that views securitisation as an *intersubjective process* rather than a *self-referent speech act* (see chapter three, section 3.2.). Holding an *externalist sociological* perspective contributes to my understanding of security in two ways. The first is through the perception of de/securitisation as a *process* that comprises several *moves* (each article under study is considered to be one of many moves in the process of securitisation or desecuritisation of Iran's nuclear programme). The second is through seeing de/securitisation as a negotiation/dialogue between two agents and, thereby, regarding non-discursive factors such as audience and context as highly pivotal in the process of securitisation. This view of securitisation is entirely compatible with CDS. Indeed, the reason that I adopted this theory to explain the findings of a CDS project was its alignment with CDS' perception of discourse and society. The other point that I should make here is that, consistent with my findings, I agree with Austin and Beaulieu-Brossard's (2018) opinion that securitisation and desecuritisation are not necessarily two distinct processes (one preceding the other) but they can occur simultaneously (see section 2.2.2.). In fact, there are two possibilities regarding the relationship between securitisation and desecuritisation; they may occur separately (desecuritisation follows securitisation) or they may happen together in one move (elements of both can be found in a move).

It should also be noted that, applying the securitisation theory, all the discussions and explanations presented in this chapter rely on a constructivist view of international

relations. Constructivist social theory highlights the roles of ideas and interaction in forming human knowledge and social reality; reality is socially constructed. In international relations, constructivism is “characterized by an emphasis on the importance of the normative as well as the material structures, on the role of identity in shaping political actions and on the mutually constitutive relationship between agents and structures” (Rues-smit, 2013, p. 217). In other words, constructivism and, consequently, securitisation theory consider normative factors such as national identity, culture and ideologies to be as important as are material factors (e.g. military power, geographical position, economic capabilities, etc.) in the relations between states. For example, regarding Iran’s nuclear programme, what matters is not just Iran’s nuclear activities or even its access to nuclear weapons but the world powers’ perceptions and understandings of Iran’s enmity or amity. Drawing on such a normative and ideational perspective of international relations and in line with CDS’ view of discourse and society, I explain the reciprocal relationship between American newspapers’ opinion discourses and the social structures of the national and international context (e.g. national identity, political ideologies, foreign policy, international power relations, etc.). I refer to each side of this relationship as *power in discourse* and *power of discourse*.

I divide this chapter into two sections; one deals with the impact of *context* on discourse and the other with the influence of *discourse* on context.

Accordingly, I commence this chapter by discussing the social setting of security discourses (*macro-context*). Two levels of macro-context will be discussed here: American national myths, values and ideologies that form the *domestic macro-context*, and the relationship between the U.S. and Iran and the global system of power relations that form the *international macro-context*. I discuss what effects American society, with its various social structures, had on the opinion discourses under study or, to put it another way, how these discourses were shaped by the dominant social structures of American society. Besides, I explain how external evidence from the international environment and historical experiences contributed to the emergence of security discourses regarding Iran. In general, I investigate the ways in which the national and international contexts facilitated the conditions for the

de/securitisation of Iran. I call this section *power in discourse* because I believe that the self-perception of Americans, which is established in their national identity, and their historical experiences have resulted in an expectation of specific forms of relationship between the U.S. and other states, specifically Iran (the U.S.' superiority). In turn, this power relationship has been manifested in American discourses.

Then, in the second section, I discuss the discourse of securitisation that is constructed in accordance with the described context. Here, I explicate the other four components of the securitisation or what Balzacq (2009) refers to as levels of *agent* and *acts*. In other words, at these levels of analysis, four components of securitisation (threatening subject, threatened object, securitising actor and audience) and the linguistic/rhetorical devices used to enact de/securitisation ('heuristic artefacts' as Balzacq calls them) are explained. I show how the opinion discourses, as either *pure* securitisation moves or *combinations* of securitisation and desecuritisation, included the above components. In addition, I explain how differently they endeavoured to constitute American foreign policy regarding Iran and its nuclear programme. Both groups of moves (pure as well as combined ones) were similarly influenced by their actors' national identities as Americans; however, they diverged from one another by following different socio-political ideologies and values. I call this section *power of discourse* as it denotes how discourses endeavour to influence society. To achieve the goal of influencing the political decision-making process (constituting society), different opinion discourses seemed to emphasise particular aspects of the American identity that were congruent with their own world views and interests.

8.1. Power in Discourse: How Context Constituted Discourse

In this section, I briefly describe the context in which the security discourses under study were produced. In other words, I introduce some of the social structures that seemed to influence the production of American newspapers' opinion discourses regarding Iran, according to my research findings. The analysis of the four American newspapers revealed traces of some social structures, including American foundational myths and values (two important components of American national identity). After discussing the *American context*, I refer to two elements related to the

international context that I believe have deeply affected Iranians' and Americans' perceptions of each other: mutual traumatic experiences and the global power relation system (founded on American national identity and political ideologies). Finally, I conclude this section with a discussion of the deeply ideological identities of these two states.

8.1.1. The American domestic context: National identity and values

Given the multifaceted nature of the concept of identity and the process of identity formation, it is not easy to define it comprehensively here. Nevertheless, in these two subsections, I attempt to give a brief overview of these very complex scenarios. National identity is defined by Hutcheson et al. (2004) as "a constructed and public national self-image based on membership in a political community as well as history, myths, symbols, language, and cultural norms commonly held by members of a nation" (p. 28). Endorsing Anderson's (1991) widely accepted phrase *nations as imagined communities*, they maintain that national identity as a constructed/invented phenomenon needs to be constantly and publically reconstructed. Regarding Americans, Hutcheson et al. point to the three civil-religious beliefs of *liberty, equality* and *self-government* (individualism) as the core values of the American national identity. Huntington (1997), in his discussion on erosion of American National Interests after the Cold War, maintains that American national identity has two constituents: *culture* and *creed*. Culture is viewed as the specific values and institutions of American settlers (being Northern European and British, being Christian and Protestant, speaking English, and holding traditions regarding the relations between state and church and the position of individuals in society). Creed, on the other hand, is considered as that part of the culture that includes *universal ideas and principles* like liberty, equality, democracy, constitutionalism, etc. (Huntington, 1997, p. 29). According to Huntington, it is these two components of national identity that define American national interests. Beasley (2010) also, by pointing to the *ideational nature* of American identity (being founded on a set of shared ideas rather than on blood or a long history), examines what these ideals are and how they have been conveyed and promoted to the American public by politicians.

8.1.2. The American domestic context: National identity and myths

Apart from the axiological principles mentioned above, the other important constituent of the American national identity is myths. Galtung (1996) argues that national identity is formed by the three historical elements of Chosenness, Myths and Traumas, which are known as the CMT complex. Americans, like the people of many other nations, have heroic narratives of their history. Myths, such as 'chosen people', 'manifest destiny', 'innocent nation' and 'American exceptionalism', and their consequent modern versions of 'American leadership' and 'American diplomacy', form a significant part of the American national identity. Marsden (2011) refers to them as the *foundational* myths that have shaped American identity and brought people together.

Manifest destiny, according to Marsden (2011), conveys "a 'morally superior nation chosen by God' with a special obligation to redeem at least the continent, converting the heathens and savages, while providing moral justification for the expansion of America's borders" (p. 328). 'American exceptionalism', which is closely related to manifest destiny, stems from the idea that the U.S. "differs qualitatively from other developed nations, because of its unique origins, national credo, historical evolution, and distinctive political and religious institutions" as well as from the U.S.' commitment to the ideals of liberty, equality, individualism, populism and laissez-faire that "exempt it from the historical forces that have led to the corruption of other societies" (Hongju Koh, 2003, p. 1481). According to Marsden, what distinguishes American exceptionalism from other nations' senses of being exceptional is the fact that, in the case of the U.S., this mythical and religious belief has been reinforced and safeguarded by military and economic power. The myth of the 'innocent nation' that pictures the U.S. as a nation with the best intentions for liberating other nations and bringing high moral values to them works to complement the idea that "America is special, has been chosen by God and has ideals that are the envy of the world" (Marsden, 2011, p. 329). Such a mythical identity gives Americans a moral authority over other nations and results in political myths, such as 'American leadership' and 'American diplomacy', which shape U.S. foreign policy and interaction with other states.

All these myths are entrenched in the geopolitical context of America, glorious historical events, especially the establishment of America as a state, and the axiological ideals discussed in the previous section. Svein Stugu (2003) indicates the role of myths in “binding societies together, supporting collective identities” as well as “defining the properties of these identities” (p. 3). No matter whether they are real or fictional narratives, myths give communities a sense of belonging to the ‘Us’ group, by telling stories about a common past, and offer guidance on how to act and make decisions in times of confusion (Svein Stugu, 2003).

8.1.3. International context: Power relations and Iran’s defiance

The U.S.’ national identity, characterised by exceptionalism and religious mission (as the nation chosen by God to spread moral values), along with its supplementation by a powerful economy and military, has given rise to a global system of power relations that position the U.S. as the superpower (although its superpower status has been challenged by the Soviet Union before the 1990s and by China recently). The predominant realist view of international relations stresses the inevitability of the need for international rules and cooperation in a globalised world; however, it indicates that these rules are determined by the powerful states and, obviously, are in line with their self-interests. The advocates of the radical versions of realism like the *unipolar perspective* believe that the weaker nations should trust the U.S. as a superpower that is “able to use its military, diplomatic and economic power to maintain global peace” (Midgley, 2007, p. 616). The unipolar system of global order was suggested by Charles Krauthammer (whose opinion article in *USA Today* was analysed in this research) in the 1990s and was based on old ideas of American exceptionalism and manifest destiny (Midgley, 2007). The unipolarist perspective insists on American responsibility and on the notion that the U.S. is the only superpower capable of promoting peace, liberty and democracy in the world. It envisions an America that pursues its values/ideals and tolerates no opposition (Kagan & Kristol, 2000; Midgley, 2007). Such a unipolar view of the international system results in the rejection of multilateral ideals and increases inequality as it gives the U.S. the right and the power to decide on which global issues are given priority and which are ignored: consistent with its national interests.

However, such unipolar superiority has never been left unchallenged. In fact, it has more been a goal/an ideal pursued by American leaders rather than an actual practice. As Huntington (1999) contends, after the end of the bipolar system of the Cold War era, when two superpowers were in competition for a unipolar system, the global order has been experiencing a 'uni-multipolar' system. Although the U.S. is still the superpower in the new system, there are several major powers whose cooperation is required by the superpower so that it can exert its will (e.g. the presence of five world powers besides the U.S. in Iran's nuclear negotiations). Therefore, although, in practice, the U.S. is still far from being the unipolar superpower, this idea has greatly influenced the identity of the American people, and the U.S.' policies and interaction with other nations. It is based on such self-perception that Iran's struggle for power is not tolerated by the U.S. as Iran's dominance in the Middle East region is not in the interests of the U.S. and its allies (Israel and Saudi Arabia).

8.1.4. International context: Historical traumas

In addition to moral beliefs and cultural myths, an objective element that can shape national identity, as stated by Galtung (1996), is traumas or shocking historical experiences that remain in the collective memory of nations. Traumas are disastrous events that happen to a group of people but affect a whole nation. With regard to the U.S.–Iran relationship, there are a number of traumatic events that have greatly impacted both nations' collective memories. In case of the U.S., the most important trauma is the *hostage crisis* in 1979, when a group of Iranian students took 52 American officials and citizens hostage in the U.S. embassy in Teheran for 444 days. It happened in the first year after the Islamic revolution. The reason for this event, on Iran's side, was the suspicion that the U.S. embassy was attempting to overthrow the revolution. The Iranians' accusation that the U.S. was interfering in their internal affairs has a long history and dates back to the U.S.' and U.K.'s roles in the coup d'état that toppled the democratically elected, secular government of Mohammad Mosaddegh in 1953. This distrust was refuelled by American support of Saddam Hussein in the Iran–Iraq war in the 1980s and the bombing of the Iranian aeroplane, which killed 290 passengers in 1988 (although the Americans insisted that the killing was a mistake). Consequently, during governmental gatherings and marches in Iran,

since the beginning of Islamic revolution, there have always been anti-American chants by those Iranians that support the Islamic regime (e.g. “Death to America”), and this is another factor that has resulted in Americans’ resentment towards and distrust of Iran. Overall, these traumatic experiences have affected each nation’s *representation* and *misrecognition* of the other (see section 2.2.2.), and, therefore, as Duncombe (2016) argues, part of the conflict between Iran and the U.S. is the struggle for recognition.

8.1.5. Ideologically driven identities

The newly formed Islamic Republic of Iran, like any other state, needed an ‘Other’ against which to identify itself. The Islamic revolutionaries wanted to distinguish themselves from the Pahlavi dynasty that had ruled Iran for 55 years; therefore, they rejected the previous system along with all its political, social and cultural aspects, including its Western modernisation (Shoaib, 2015). As a result, they formed an ideology-driven identity that demonised the West (the ‘Other’). The foundation of this identity was Islamic values and ideals. Similar to what has been said about the ideational nature of American identity, the identity of Islamic Iran was based on the idealisation of the past Islamic era. The Islamic anti-West identity of Iran was manifested in strong, harsh statements against the domination and power of the West, especially the U.S., and a deep suspicion of its actions and policies (Shoaib, 2015). Therefore, resistance and defiance to the global status quo, which is described as *imperialistic* by Iranian revolutionaries, shapes the unique character of Iran’s foreign policy. The consequence of this revolutionary identity is the fear among Western countries, especially the U.S., which perceives the new Iran as a threat to its military, political and economic interests in the region as well as to its values and ideals.

The mutual fear and suspicion has led to a continuous process of perceiving and representing each other as the ‘Great Satan’ or the ‘Axis of Evil’. Such misrepresentation and its resulting mutual recognition of ‘enemy’ have deepened the distrust between the two countries. The reason that Iran’s nuclear programme turned into an unresolvable issue becomes more transparent when the standoff between the U.S. and Iran is considered from the perspective of identity. As Shoaib (2015) rightly

argued, I believe that the two states' profoundly ideological identities and the incompatible nature of these identities (one, Iran, defines itself as the opposite of the other, the U.S., make them see the nuclear issue not as mere political conflict but as a matter of threat to their identities.

All the social factors discussed in this section (values, myths, traumas, ideologies and power relations) had their traces in the opinion discourses that I analysed. The authors seemed to be under the influence of these social structures in their representations of the social actors and events, their dialogues with readers and alternative opinions, and their claims and arguments. In other words, the newspapers' discourses were sites for the manifestation of relations of power that resulted from the above factors. This means that all the discourses under study attempted to resonate with the context as much as they could in order to win their readers' consensus.

8.2. Power of Discourse: How Discourse Constituted Context

The goal I pursue in this section is to explain the constitutive function of the newspapers' discourses from the perspective of securitisation theory. In the previous section, I focused on the ways in which authors' perceptions of Iran and, consequently, their discourses were shaped by their national identities and their historical experiences as Americans (the context/social structures); here, I show how the discourses produced within a similar national context constructed the social reality differently, as a result of their differing political ideologies, and sought to influence American foreign policy regarding Iran's nuclear programme in different ways.

One important point to be noted here is that all these discourses, in spite of their different representations of reality and different goals, could similarly contribute to the strengthening of American national identity (as a social structure) through providing a sense of threat. As McAlister (2005, p. 6) by drawing on Campbell (1992) maintains, "the continuing sense of threat provides support for the power of the state, but it also provides the groundwork for securing 'the nation' as a cultural and social entity". In other words, articulation of danger is a guarantor of national identity. When CDS researchers discuss the constitutive function of discourse, they typically refer to this role of discourse in reproducing/reinforcing (or sometimes resisting) higher-order

social structures, such as national identity, power relations, ideologies, discrimination, etc. Here, while acknowledging the importance of such a reproductive function of discourse, I focus on demonstrating how these discourses endeavoured to influence a more tangible social structure that is American foreign policy regarding Iran's nuclear programme. Examining the impact of these discourses on the reproduction of higher-order social structures, such as American national identity, the international system of power relations, and ideologies needs a research project of its own.

My goal, here, is to illustrate how analyses presented in each analytical chapter correspond to specific aspects of the securitisation model. In a securitisation move, firstly, images of the subject and object of the threat need to be constructed, and the relationship between the actor and the audience, as well as the authority of the actor, should be established. Secondly, all these discursive constructions should be linked together via plausible arguments so that the existence of the threat and the urgent need for extraordinary measures to deal with the threat can be proved. Thirdly, having done all that, the success of the security claim (audience's acceptance) depends on how well the discursive constructions resonate with the audience's feelings, attitudes, values, etc., on the one hand, and external reality regarding the securitised issue, on the other. Elements of securitisation moves made by the newspapers under study were: authors (securitising actors); lay or elite readers (audience); Iran as a nation-state or regime and Iran's nuclear programme (threatening subjects); the U.S., its Middle East allies, the Middle East region and the world (threatened objects); and authors' ideologies and national identity, and the newspapers' political stances (domestic or micro-context), as well as the Iran–U.S. relationship, Iran's past records and the Middle East situation (international or macro-context).

In the following subsections, I show the ways in which the newspapers' opinion discourses systematically securitised Iran (but sometimes de-securitised its nuclear programme as in the case of pro-deal articles). From this perspective, each analysed opinion article or editorial, regardless of its success or failure in convincing its audience, was an example either of securitisation move or of a combination of securitisation and desecuritisation. The categorisation of articles as purely securitising moves or combined moves was determined by their positions regarding the nuclear

deal (whether they viewed it as a successful or a failed measure in dealing with Iran's threat). It should be noted that there was only one example of complete desecuritisation in the corpus: an opinion article from *USA Today*, which desecuritised both Iran and its nuclear programme (*USA Today*, 21 July 2015). This means that, while some articles (anti-deal articles) securitised both Iran and its nuclear programme, others (pro-deal articles) securitised only Iran and endeavoured to desecuritise Iran's nuclear programme. In other words, both groups of articles perceived Iran as a security threat to the U.S.; however, pro-deal ones saw the nuclear deal as a successful action taken by the U.S. administration to overcome Iran's nuclear threat. Therefore, while the former insisted that the threat still existed, the latter, acknowledging the threat, believed that it would be managed by the agreement deal. In fact, they differed in their views regarding *how to deal with the threat* rather than *the existence of the threat*.

8.2.1. Constructing the threatening subject versus threatened object

One crucial step in every securitisation move is to construct the threat and the threatened through representation. When speaking security, the securitising actor (authors here) needs to picture the two in a dichotomous relationship with traits and deeds appropriate to their antagonist–protagonist images. The process of 'Othering' is, indeed, an inseparable constituent of securitisation. The analysis of actor/action representation in chapter five demonstrates how Iran, on the one hand, and the U.S., Israel and Arab states, on the other, were pictured in each newspaper. The newspapers' desired images were constructed through assigning different roles and different degrees of agency to social actors as well as through labels (especially in the case of Iran) and metaphorical dichotomies. The crucial outcome of such image construction is arousing emotions in readers. In fact, emotionalisation of discourse is the goal that any securitising actor pursues. Without triggering emotions of threat, danger, enmity, fear and anger in the audience, securitisation cannot be successful. While desecuritisation can be achieved only through reasoning (providing logical arguments or plausible evidence), securitisation depends on both reasoning and emotions. In fact, in desecuritisation, the actor attempts to lessen the emotional aspect of the issue. As I discussed in chapter five in the discussion of newspapers'

headlines (5.8.), the discourse of the anti-deal articles (securitising moves) was more emotionalised than was that of the pro-deal articles (combined moves). The following sections on emotionalisation of discourse focus mainly on the anti-deal articles as instances of securitisation moves.

Emotionalisation of discourse

As indicated in chapters three (3.2.2.) and four (4.3.1.), representation and *pathos* (emotions) are closely related. It is through the former that the latter is induced/prompted. For issues like securitisation, where gaining the audience's consensus (persuasion) is essential, the role of emotions and 'emotionalisation' in discourse – as it is called by Reinke de Buitrago (2016)– becomes even more decisive. In cases when a security threat is at an international or inter-state level, according to Reinke de Buitrago (2016), national identity and its 'emotional content' determine how the dichotomy between threatening subject and threatened object is constructed. National identity itself is shaped through culture (see 8.1.) and culture is about who we are and how different we are from 'Others'. Answers to such questions are usually in form of 'We are good/legitimate/peaceful' and 'They are bad/illegitimate/threatening', especially when there exist traumatic experiences between 'Us' and 'Them' (van Dijk, 1998) that intensify such good–evil constructions (see 8.1.4.). In the next two sections, I explain how Iran's 'threat image' (Stritzel & Schmittchen, 2011) was constructed through rhetorical strategies, such as labelling, metaphors and hyperbole, that were referred to only briefly in previous chapters (construction of Iran's image through linguistic devices was fully discussed in chapter five), and how it contributed to provoking feelings of danger, mistrust and enmity in readers.

Ideological naming: Iran as a rogue state

Iran was introduced as the threatening subject in almost every single article under study. Although these articles differed in their attitudes towards and positions on the nuclear deal, they shared a similar view on Iran. They all perceived Iran as a threat to the U.S. and its allies; however, some represented it as an *existential* threat and,

therefore, insisted on encountering it resolutely (i.e. securitisation) while some considered it to be a *past* threat (a threat that has just been controlled) and wanted to take it out of the realm of emergency politics (i.e. desecuritisation). In addition to attributing negative social agency to Iran (see chapter five, section 5.2.), the other discursive strategy for picturing it as a threat was to employ ideological labels. In all four newspapers, there were instances of referring to Iran as *a rogue state*, *a pariah*, *an outcast*, *an outlaw*, etc. As indicated by Stritzel and Schmittchen (2011), 'rogue states', 'pariah states', 'outlaw states' and other similar expressions have been part of the official discourse of the American administration since the 1970s when they were crafted for the first time by American media. They are labels given to those states that have revisionist or revolutionary attitudes towards the international status quo, including its 'values' and 'main powers'. Regarding the label 'rogue states', Stritzel and Schmittchen (2011) explain that it "gives illegitimate political representation and repressive leadership practices a distinctly moral connotation of acting as a 'criminal against one's own people' which is portrayed to stand in contrast to the Western/liberal notion of democracy" (p. 172). They also maintain that these labels are typically used to frame security problems. Therefore, the newspapers' reference to Iran using these labels was part of their attempt to construct it as a security threat. Other ideological labels, such as *regime*, *tyrants*, *mullahs* and *Shia clerics*, were used also to refer to the Iranian government. Similarly, these terms functioned to demonise Iran. Two points were highlighted in the labels given to Iran by the newspapers: the religious character of the Iranian government (e.g. mullahs and Shia clerics) and its authoritarian nature (e.g. regime and tyrants). The former meant to disparage it by implying that it is a mediaeval theocracy as opposed to a modern democracy, and the latter intended to delegitimise it by pointing to its oppressive behaviour towards its people. According to Stritzel and Schmittchen, constructing such threat images of other states is an inseparable component of the American political discourse and is associated with American exceptionalism and other normative aspects of the American national identity. As explained above, in line with these traditions, enemies of the U.S. are evil entities standing against American values (Stritzel & Schmittchen, 2011). Since these traditions are rooted in the core of American 'Self' and 'Other'

perception, such threat images can be very appealing to Americans and can impact their emotions deeply.

Metaphorical scenarios

Metaphors are the other powerful types of device for image construction. Metaphors set the political scene with specified social actors and events, and, therefore, prepare the ground for acceptance or rejection of a particular solution or conclusion through simplifying a complicated political issue. By identifying deep metaphors that formed the foundations of scenarios/narratives presented by the articles, I can further demonstrate how threatening subject and threatened object fit different roles in scenarios and how de/securitised pictures of the event were constructed by different newspapers. In this regard, I divided the identified metaphorical scenarios into two groups: securitising and de-securitising.

Securitising scenarios

Scenarios found in anti-deal articles are called securitising scenarios as they contributed to the securitisation of Iran through providing threatening pictures of the situation. These scenarios were based on metaphorical dichotomies, such as *victim–victimiser*, *detective–criminal*, *authority–criminal*, *hero–enemy*, *aggressive–submissive* and *manipulator–public*.

In the victim–victimiser scenario, the after-deal situation was described as threatening to the U.S., the Arab states and Israel. Iran was portrayed as: a murderer whose hands were wet with *American soldiers’ and civilians’ blood*; as a *nightmare* for Saudi Arabia (*Wall Street Journal Op-Ed*, 17 July 2015); and as a terrorist planning to *wipe Israel from the map* (*USA Today Op-Ed*, 31 July 2015). In such a scenario, the U.S. was left alone to protect itself and its allies against Iran’s threats. Nevertheless, it would not be easy as the U.S. leader (President Obama) was *locked in his folly*.

In another example of this scenario, Iran was an untrustworthy actor and a *belligerent* enemy of the U.S., *ratcheting up tensions with the U.S.* and doing *illicit nuclear shopping*. The U.S. had no choice but to defend itself against these threats (protagonist) by *turning the screw* through imposing more severe sanctions. However, as the U.S. nation was *drunk on hope* and *led by fools*, they *relieved the pressure* on

Iran (*The Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed, 14 July 2015). As a result, there was even the danger of Iran's putting a nuclear bomb on the *top of its missiles* and attacking the U.S.

In a very specific case of this scenario, Saudi Arabia was the victim and Iran was a *cocky* victimiser who *made mischief* in the region, especially with regard to Saudi Arabia. Iran was the security threat to Saudi Arabia and even guilty because young Saudis were joining ISIS (*Saudis watch their Sunni coreligionists being killed by Iranian-backed Shiites across the region with little opposition from any force other than ISIS*) or to blame for Saudis *killing civilians* in Yemen (*Saudis see it as a campaign against an Iranian-backed insurgency by Houthi tribesmen*) (*The Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed, 17 July 2015). Saudis were the ones left helpless in this scenario where Obama *fervently courted* Iran, European nations *salivated at the prospect of business in Iran* and Israel could count on *the U.S.' support* in case of a threat to its security.

In the criminal–detective scenario, Iran played the role of a criminal who was *too practised at denying information, deceiving inspectors or destroying evidence*. Iran was an intelligent criminal that left no trace of its evil actions. As a result, IAEA inspectors would not have been able to detect its illicit activities. Iran was untrustworthy and there was *no reason to believe that it would end its recalcitrance*. *As past inspection requests yielded only elaborate clean-up efforts*, there was no hope of inspectors' success, and the whole inspection process in the deal was a *charade*, a *chimera* or an *illusion* (*The Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015).

In the naïve authority–opportunist criminal scenario, Iran was a deceitful criminal (antagonist) who made a deal with the simple-minded Western authorities (protagonist). Iran gained all the benefits from the deal by making the West, including Europeans, the U.S. and the UN Security Council, lift sanctions and resolutions against it. Instead of punishing Iran for its criminal record, the West rewarded it. Although Iran's *rhetoric and actions* showed the contrary, Obama naïvely bet that lifting sanctions would improve Iran's behaviour.

The fifth scenario was built on the dichotomy of naïve hero–opportunist enemy. Here, Obama (not the West in general) was the protagonist and had the responsibility of

confronting Iran (antagonist). He, in spite of all his heroic promises, surrendered to Iran. Obama was *blinded with a noxious mix of ambition and naivety*. He was *desperate* for a deal to *cement his foreign-policy legacy* and, thereby, failed to defeat Iran (*New York Post* Editorial, 14 July 2015). On the other hand, Iran was a canny and opportunistic enemy that took advantage of Obama's ambition and naivety and won the negotiations.

In a scenario that revolved around the aggressive–submissive dichotomy, Obama played the role of an antagonist who *kneecapped* the U.S. Congress (protagonist). Instead of being *hard-nosed* and *clever* regarding the U.S. adversary (Iran), he – *with malice aforethought* – put pressure on the Congress to agree with him regarding the deal. Obama made a bad deal with Iran and sent it to the UN Security Council to be approved; then, he *urged* the Congress to *follow the lead of the United Nations*. He lifted Iran's sanctions and left the Congress with *no alternative* but *submission* to him (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 20 July 2015).

The final securitising scenario was based on the *manipulator–public* dichotomy (Obama versus the American public). Here, Obama (antagonist) was a failed leader who attempted to manipulate his/her people (protagonist) by concealing disadvantages of the nuclear deal. However, as people were learning more about the deal, they were losing their *confidence* in their leader and were opposing the deal because they understood that the Iran deal was *a leap of faith — faith in the mullahs and, even more ominously, the so-called “international community”* (*New York Post* Op-Ed, 22 July 2015).

The Wall Street Journal, *New York Post* and, partly, *USA Today's* narratives on the nuclear negotiations/deal were founded on the above metaphorical scenarios. In all these scenarios, except the last two, Iran was the antagonist and the U.S., the West, Israel or Saudi Arabia were protagonists. In the last two scenarios, however, President Obama was the antagonist and the American public or congressmen were protagonists. Through these scenarios, anti-deal articles facilitated the conditions for securitising Iran and the nuclear deal, and for discrediting President Obama.

Desecuritising scenarios

Pro-deal articles, on the other hand, presented three metaphorical scenarios that were consistent with the de-securitising aims of these articles. These scenarios were grounded on *pragmatist–idealist*, *transaction*, and *opportunistic friends–naïve appeaser* dichotomies and metaphors.

In most of these articles, the issue of the nuclear deal was discussed simultaneously from two perspectives. On the one hand, the U.S.' concessions (Iran's gains) were justified as normal give-and-take in a transaction and, on the other hand, idealist opponents of the deal, including Republicans and the Israeli government (antagonist), were contrasted with pragmatic proponents (protagonist). The nuclear deal was seen as a *simple transaction* between the U.S. and Iran, who had a common enemy (ISIS). It was a business where the U.S. gained a great deal of benefits while Iran received its necessary requirements. In addition, the deal *bought valuable time* for solving conflicts in the Middle East, such as fighting ISIS. However, given the huge opposition to it, the deal was still a *tough sell* for Obama (*USA Today* Editorial, 14 July 2015).

Opponents were described as discarding the deal irrationally only because they did not like Iran's regime. Their opposition to the deal was *foolishness dressed up as machismo* (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 16 July 2015). They rejected the deal (a *constructive* option) and advocated the no-deal alternative (a *peril*). The opponents condemned the deal but did not offer any *credible alternative*. On the other side, there were realist proponents who repeatedly and humbly acknowledged the flaws of the deal; nevertheless, they argued that no agreement was *ironclad* and the deal *was not intended to address all Iranian–American grievances* (*The New York Times* Op-Ed, 19 July 2015). They reasonably believed that, since the deal prevented Iran's access to nuclear weapons, it was a good agreement.

Finally, the Arab states and Israel were portrayed as the opportunistic friends of the West, who tried to take advantage of the situation that resulted from the Iran nuclear deal. By pretending to be *under threat* and concerned with Iran's nuclear capabilities, they asked for more *arms purchases* from the West (appeasers). The Western countries, especially the U.S., for *reasons of guilt or political expediency or simply*

wanting to win friends, responded positively to their Arab and Israeli allies and risked *a new spiral of lethal firepower*. Iran's neighbours intended only to *pry more weapon sales out of the West* (USA Today Op-Ed, 21 July 2015).

The above three metaphorical scenarios underlay *The New York Times'* and, partly, *USA Today's* narratives of the nuclear negotiations/the deal. Such scenarios paved the way for justifying the nuclear deal and, to some extent, shifting the allegations from Iran to Saudi Arabia and Israel.

8.2.2. Constructing the shared identity of the securitising actors and the audience

In addition to the threatening subject and the threatened object, every securitisation move includes two other agents (securitising actor and the audience). Unlike the first two agents that may not necessarily be human, the latter two are always human beings. Balzacq (2011b, p. 12) emphasises that the success of the securitisation move depends on the securitising actor and the audience holding "a common structured perception of an ominous development". Although playing the most decisive roles in the securitisation process, as a non-discursive component, the audience has not been thoroughly identified and defined in the securitisation theory. Many of the later scholars of securitisation theory have pointed to this weakness regarding the nature and position of the audience (Balzacq, 2005; Leonard & Kaunert, 2011; McDonald, 2008; Stritzel, 2007). Therefore, the first task here is to clarify the identities of the securitising actors and audiences in the process of de/securitisation of Iran's nuclear programme (who were in negotiation/dialogue). While each article I analysed – as a de/securitisation move – had a distinct de/securitising actor (the author of the article), the threatening subject, threatened object and, sometimes, the audience were common.

Starting with the de/securitising actors, there were as many of them in this research as there were de/securitising moves (i.e. 20). The author of each article was a politician, a journalist or an expert who attempted to de/securitise Iran to a different degree and, thereby, was considered to be a de/securitising actor. All these actors were elite Americans holding high social positions. The main line of demarcation between them was drawn by the political affiliation and ideologies of each, and this

could be inferred easily from their position on the nuclear deal. Obviously, pro-deal authors were affiliated with the Democratic Party and supported liberal ideology, and the anti-deal authors were associated with the Republican Party and were advocates of conservative ideology (authors' characters and attitudes were discussed in analytical chapters in regards to their opinions).

Audiences, as the other side of this intersubjective process, comprised different groups: both Americans and non-Americans. All four kinds of audience indicated by Bell (1984) in his Audience Design Approach could be identifiable in these de/securitisation moves:

- *Addressee*: listeners/readers who are known, ratified and addressed
- *Auditor*: listeners/readers who are not directly addressed but are known and ratified
- *Overhearer*: non-ratified listeners/readers of whom the speaker is aware
- *Eavesdropper*: non-ratified listeners/readers of whom the speaker is unaware.

Each of the de/securitising moves (articles) had particular addressees and auditors. In some of them, the American nation as a unified entity, including the U.S. administration (President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry), were addressees; they were known, ratified and addressed by the de/securitising actors (authors). However, in others, the American nation, exclusive of the administration, were addressees. In these cases, Obama and Kerry were auditors (they were known by the de/securitising actors and ratified as part of interlocutor group but were not addressed). Moreover, in some desecuritising moves (pro-deal articles), members of the American public, exclusive of opponents of the deal, were addressees; here, opponents were considered as auditors. In other cases, proponents of the deal were addressed by the securitising actors; here, the American public was the auditor. In all these cases, Western officials of the P5+1 countries, Iranian officials and people, Arab officials and people, and Israeli officials and people seemed to be overhearers; they were known to the actors as the audience but were not considered as part of the discussion. All other people who may come to read these articles can be considered as eavesdroppers. Overall, American audiences were considered to be part of the

discussion by the actors (in-groups) and were either addressees or auditors; however, non-American audiences were considered to be out-groups and were either overhearers or eavesdroppers.

Balzacq (2011b), in his discussion of conditions under which a securitisation move can be successful, maintains that securitisation requires two types of support: *moral* and *formal*. While the former is crucial, it is not sufficient alone. In order for an issue to be securitised, it needs the formal support of those audiences who have a “direct causal connection” with the issue (p. 9). However, it does not mean that moral support is not important; it has a legitimising function. Without public moral support, a securitisation move would suffer from a lack of legitimacy. Balzacq’s (2005) discussion of audience in the process of securitisation evolves mainly around the rhetorical concept of ‘identification’ that is securitising actors’ attempts to win their audiences through identifying with their feeling, values, needs, etc.

In the following subsections, I explain how the de/securitising actors attempted to gain the agreement of their audiences. I believe that, in de/securitisation moves, in a similar way to any other persuasive act, the actors (authors here) need to undertake three tasks in order to appeal to their audiences or to establish their *ethos* as it is called in rhetoric (see chapter six). The reason for this is that, as Balzacq (2011b) argues, the power of security utterances arises from the combination of the legitimacy of the ‘securitising actor’ and the legitimacy of his/her ‘words’. Therefore, in addition to *what was said*, *who said that* also affects the outcome of a securitisation move. The three ethical elements that the actor should establish for him/herself are *good sense*, *good will* and *virtue* that respectively correspond to the construction of *authority*, building *solidarity* and drawing on *shared values* (see chapter six).

Construction of authority

As stated above, the actors of the 20 moves I examined were all prominent political figures and scholars, and enjoyed high positions of authority and expertise. However, as is emphasised in Aristotle’s rhetoric, orators (securitising actors/authors here) should also establish their authority in the *rhetoric/discourse* in order to influence the judgements of their audiences. In line with such a requirement, the authors attempted

to display their authority in order to make their words more appealing. However, there were sharp differences between their approaches. While some securitising actors opted to construct their authority through sounding strong or even tough, others preferred to sound modest and respectful. The former attempted to highlight their authorial voices through self-references or strong stances – *boosting* – but the latter, by avoiding personal voice and choosing more vigilant stances – *hedging* – preferred wisdom and modesty over strength and forcefulness (see chapter 6, section 6.2.). These two approaches to the construction of authority were evident in both securitising moves (anti-deal articles) and combined moves (pro-deal articles). The determining factor here seemed to be the *status* of each newspaper and the nature of its *readership* (part of what I consider to be the micro or immediate context of the situation). The actors in the context of *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times* (two prominent elite newspapers) tended mainly to choose the *moderate* approach. Generally, these actors established a wise and modest character for themselves through more frequent use of hedges. However, the actors in the *New York Post* and, partly, in *USA Today* preferred the *radical* approach to authority: constructing a firm and assertive character through more use of boosters. These differences between the newspapers' approaches to authority can also be related to their different types of readership. Given that elite readers advocate rational rather than emotionalised stances on issues, the tendency of the two elite newspapers towards the moderate approach could be associated with their elite readerships. Nevertheless, I should point out that this was true only with regard to the actors' construction of authorial voice. In other aspects, like emotionalisation of discourse, purely securitising moves (anti-deal articles), because of their fervent and passionate discourses, were less rational than were the combined moves (pro-deal articles), whether or not they occurred in high-standing newspapers.

Identification with readers: Solidarity and values

As is emphasised in classical rhetoric, the speaker/writer's identification with the audience through sharing similar concerns, goals and values contributes to his/her good will. Building solidarity with the audience through the expression of commonality aids the securitising actor to win the audience's consensus with his/her security

claims. It is achieved, in its most explicit manner, through the use of engagement markers, like personal pronouns *we* and *you*, or rhetorical questions in propositions that draw on the audience's feelings, values, goals, etc. It can also be achieved implicitly by securitising the actor's expressions of attitudes and judgements (parentheticals) that are based on ideological perspectives without using engagement markers.

At this stage, *group* values and normative standards are the most evident. As explained in the previous section, construction of threat images for 'Other' states, in a securitisation move, draws on national identity and the ways in which one nation differentiates itself from other nations. However, the securitising actor's identification with the audiences, as the other crucial factor in securitisation, can be founded on both *national* identity and *group* ideologies. Different actors draw on different aspects of national identity, depending on their political, ideological and institutional norms and interests. In the securitisation moves under study, two distinct approaches for building solidarity were noticeable. The moves from the anti-deal newspapers invested in conservative values and the moves from the pro-deal newspapers capitalised on liberal standards and ideals. As mentioned in chapter six (6.3.4.), in a study by, while American conservative congressmen stressed values of *tradition*, *conformity* and *national security* in their tweets, their liberal partners emphasised *benevolence*, *universalism* and *social/economic security*. Similarly, in this research project, actors from the anti-deal newspapers tended to highlight *nationalism*, *national security*, *exceptionalism* and *authority* while those from pro-deal newspapers concentrated on *internationalism*, *diplomacy*, *pragmatism* and *responsibility*.

In fact, when it is about 'national Self' versus 'national Other' (who we are), both groups of actors (conservative Right and liberal Left) foreground core common aspects of their national identity; however, when it comes to deciding which measure should be taken for dealing with a threat to national security (what we should do), ideological differences are prioritised. As Mirilovic and Kim (2016) argue, international issues "are often interpreted via ideological categories based in domestic politics" (p. 180). Therefore, while both groups of actors demonised Iran as a security threat for America ('national Self' versus 'national Other'), each group emphasised a different set of

American values and, consequently, opted for a different measure for addressing the threat.

Values chosen by the securitising actors as the foundation for their judgements and attitudes should be the audiences' values as well; otherwise, they would not be appealing to those audiences. In fact, each securitising actor invested in specific values based on his/her evaluation of the audience's (newspaper readers) political tendencies, socio-economic class, religious beliefs, etc. Accordingly, the types of value expressed in articles indicated who the putative readers were.

8.2.3. Speaking securitisation versus desecuritisation: How claims are made

The preliminary steps for making a security claim (to securitise a political issue) are discussed above in sections 8.2.1. and 8.2.2. Constructing the images of threatening subject and threatened object, by drawing on national identity, constructing the authority of the securitising actor and reaching the audience through identifying with their feelings, values, concerns, etc., form the ground on which the actor can base his/her claim¹⁰. Typically, the claim is a proposition arguing, firstly, that the subject in question is an existential threat to the object and, secondly, that urgent extraordinary measures should be taken in order to confront the threat. However, the case under study here was, to some extent, different. The difference was that the first part of the claim was not argued for in the de/securitisation moves (it was only acknowledged or emphasised). In fact, it was taken for granted; all the securitising actors (authors) agreed, whether implicitly or explicitly, on the existence of the threat caused by Iran's nuclear programme and the inevitability of dealing with it (they all constructed the threatening subject and the threatened object similarly). In other words, since the threat was already an existing one that had developed over many years, the actors were dealing with an existing image of Iran which had been under public scrutiny for a long time; therefore, the actors did not need to convince their audiences to regard Iran as a threat. This means that these texts did not exist in isolation but were linked intertextually and interdiscursively to other texts produced in various American social,

¹⁰ It should be noted that referring to stages here does not mean that images of threatening subject and threatened object or authors' characters are constructed by the authors before making claims. It is only for the sake of analysis and explanation of findings. In practice, all these processes occur simultaneously as the authors write their articles.

political and cultural fields regarding Iran. Thus, the first argumentative stage of securitisation that is proving/establishing the causal threatening relationship of the subject (Iran) to the object (the security of the U.S. and its allies) did not occur in the moves by the newspapers I analysed. The focus of all the moves was on proving whether or not a specific measure (the nuclear deal) was effective in handling the threat. It was here that *purely* securitising moves were distinguished from the moves *combining* securitisation and desecuritisation features. The former insisted that Iran's nuclear programme should remain securitised because the deal will not remove the threat (and, even, will worsen the situation) but the latter, acknowledging the threat caused by Iran's nuclear programme, believed that, since the nuclear deal would be able to resolve this threat, it was time to de-securitise Iran's nuclear programme and even gradually Iran itself.

As discussed in chapter seven, the actors made two opposing claims regarding the effectiveness of the nuclear deal in overcoming Iran's nuclear threat. Those actors that I refer to as anti-deal authors argued that the nuclear deal would not prevent Iran's threat, and those that I call pro-deal authors contended that the nuclear deal would, indeed, prevent it. Since both of these claims about the future could be only *presumably* rather than *absolutely* proved, the actors made use of a variety of rhetorical strategies and plausible arguments; each group of actors relied on the values and goals that they believed they shared with their audience in order to be more appealing to that audience.

Speaking security: The deal failed to stop Iran's threat

Given the Copenhagen School's definition of securitisation as the process of "framing issues as existential threats" or the social construction of threats "in order to justify taking extraordinary measures to deal with them" (Lupovici, 2014), I believe that three features need to be demonstrated in a discourse in order to call it a securitisation move. In other words, any securitisation move should establish three elements: *the existence of threat, the urgency of the situation and the need for extraordinary measures*. The group of articles in the corpus that I called 'anti-deal' contained all three elements. These articles attempted to show that the nuclear deal was a failed measure for tackling Iran's threat and the U.S. needed to take other severe and urgent

actions to resolve such a security threat. To do so, authors of these articles frequently reminded readers of the existing image of Iran as a *terrorist* and *supporter of terrorism*, *a criminal*, *a killer*, etc., and the deal with Iran as dangerous and threatening to the U.S., its allies, the Middle East and the world as a whole (e.g.: *it endangers our naval forces; it endangers our allies; it is so destructive to our national security* – see section 8.2.1 and chapter five on representation). In addition, they *argued* for their claim that the deal could not tackle the threat from Iran by bringing evidence from *history* or *experts/authorities*, or by making *analogies* (see chapter seven on argumentation).

To show the need for *emergency politics* (Honig, 2011), they hyperbolically expressed concerns, worries and fears (emotionalisation of discourse). In addition to the explicit expression of these feelings (e.g. *I fear, I suspect*), the authors also implicitly heightened the stake by describing the situation as horrifying (e.g.: *nightmare has arrived; we had hit the bottom; it gets worse; this is no time for a vacation; the most dismaying is that...*). Employing such rhetoric induces a feeling that there exists a pressing/exigent situation that indicates that, if we do not tackle the security threat, our survival or survival of some valuable referent object (e.g. our Middle East allies, our economic interests in the Middle East, our control/authority over the region, etc.) will be in danger.

After labelling Iran as the *existential threat* that must be dealt with *urgently*, the securitising actors (authors of the articles) mentioned the need for some extraordinary measures in order to eliminate Iran's threat. These included imposing *suffocating economic sanctions* and a *permanent conventional arms embargo* on Iran, *prosecuting Iranian officials*, *dismantling all the Iranian nuclear facilities* and '*anytime anywhere*' *inspections* of Iran's nuclear programme. Since all these suggested acts were exceptional and beyond the realm of normal politics, gaining consensus for implementing them would be possible only if the securitising actors could convince their audiences of the grave danger and the high urgency of the situation. It explains why the discourse of the anti-deal articles was so emotionalised and rhetorically rich.

There was a variety of factors behind these securitising moves, ranging from ideological world views and political rivalries to economic interests and lobbying pressures. It is here that we can see the impact of domestic politics on the negotiation

processes between countries. As Hurst (2016) emphasises, negotiation is a two level game: one happens at the level of states and the other at the domestic level. Conflicts or agreements in domestic politics can hinder or facilitate negotiation processes between states. In the case of the nuclear negotiations with Iran, the huge level of dispute and disagreement on the issue within the American political context caused many difficulties for Obama and his negotiating team in the international scene.

Speaking de-security: The deal succeeded in stopping Iran's threat

All the pro-deal actors, contrary to the anti-dealers, endeavoured to take Iran's nuclear programme to the realm of normal politics (desecuritisation). In doing so, they aimed to prove that the nuclear deal was a successful, extraordinary measure to curtail the perceived threat of Iran's nuclear programme. Desecuritisating Iran's nuclear programme as the first level of desecuritisation was common among all pro-deal articles. In fact, there were different degrees of desecuritisation or, more correctly, different combinations of securitisation and desecuritisation happening in these articles. At each level, different subjects, ranging from only Iran's nuclear programme to Iran as a whole, including its people, its government and the state, were desecuritisated.

At the first level, the narrowest form of desecuritisation, only the nuclear programme was de-securitisated while Iran remained securitisated. Here, the authors (securitising actors) emphasised the threatening nature of Iran but indicated that the threat from its nuclear programme was managed successfully by the deal. At the second level, in addition to the nuclear programme, Iranian people were also desecuritisated. In this case, the authors made a distinction between the people and the state and contended that it was the Iranian state that was the U.S.' enemy and a threat to the U.S.' security and interests. At the third level, in addition to the nuclear programme and the Iranian public, the moderate parts of the state were also desecuritisated. Some authors believed that the radical (fundamentalist) ruling sect of the state, including the supreme leader and the revolutionary guards, was against the U.S. and the moderates like the foreign minister (Javad Zarif) or even the president (Hassan Rouhani) had good intentions towards the U.S. Austin and Beaulieu-Brossard (2018), in reporting their study on simultaneous enactment of securitisation and desecuritisation, point to a

similar case in President Obama's speech on the nuclear deal. They show how Obama desecuritisised one sector of Iranians (the people) and kept the rest (the state) securitised. Finally, at the fourth level of desecuritisation, which was the broadest one as well, Iran as a state (implicitly including its nuclear programme and its people) was de-securitised. Here, it was insisted that Iran was a pragmatic player in the Middle East region and, in spite of its neighbours' claims, it did/could not impose any security threat to them (through comparing its military investment to that of its neighbours). In this case, unlike the previous ones, desecuritisation was complete as there was no securitisation of any part of Iran.

In the case of desecuritisation of Iran by the American newspapers, I detected three of the four desecuritisation strategies referred to at the beginning of this chapter. At the first level, mentioned above, the strategy employed for desecuritisising Iran's nuclear programme was *re-articulation*; by offering a diplomatic solution (the nuclear deal), the security threat caused by Iran's nuclear programme was handled and this issue was no longer considered securitised. At the second and third levels, desecuritisation was achieved through *re-articulation* as well as *détente*. In other words, two threatening subjects were de-securitised here: the nuclear programme through re-articulation and the Iranian people/moderates through détente. Employing détente meant trying to ease tensions between the two countries through highlighting the positive aspects of Iran, such as its pragmatism, its cooperation in solving regional problems, its moderate officials or, even, its educated people. It was a strategy to improve the Iran–U.S. relationship by partially de-securitising Iran (its moderate officials and its people). At the fourth level, desecuritisation of Iran was accomplished through *replacement* but in only one article from *USA Today* (21 July 2015), which shifted the security threat from Iran to Israel and the Arab states. In this article, the author argued that the real threat came from Iran's neighbours and Israel, which attempted to use Iran's case to *pry more arms sales from the U.S. and the Europeans* (causing an arms race in the region). It was, however, shown that Iran was spending much less than were these other countries on buying arms and, therefore, could not have been causing a threat to them.

Overall, in the pro-deal articles that contained features of both securitisation and desecuritisation, securitisation was achieved in the same way as it was in the anti-deal articles. That was through negative labelling of Iran and indicating its hostility towards the U.S. and its allies. However, in the desecuritising parts of these parallel processes, some elements of Iran (e.g. its nuclear programme, its moderate officials, its people) were taken out of the security sector and brought into the realm of normal politics.

8.3. Which Discourse was Successful in ‘Resonating with’ the Context?

Balzacq (2011b, p. 13), by emphasising the importance of external reality (even in a constructivist approach to security), maintains that “analyzing security problems then becomes a matter of understanding how external contexts, including external objective developments, affect securitization”. In other words, he argues that, when a security claim is made, the audience looks around to find out if contextual clues approve or disprove the claim. Without facilitative external conditions, mere articulation of security would not win the audience’s assent. The same point can be made about desecuritisation; any attempt to desecuritize a formerly securitised issue needs to be congruent with the contextual evidence demonstrating that the issue no longer causes any threat. Given the point made by Balzacq and considering that the nuclear deal was finally approved in the Congress and implemented for two years or so (before Donald Trump, as the new U.S. president, abandoned the deal in May 2018), it seems logical to conclude that, in the case of Iran’s nuclear programme, desecuritising discourses, including those by the newspapers’ opinion pieces analysed here, resonated with the context better and, therefore, were successful in gaining formal and, probably, moral support from the audience. However, looking at the issue retrospectively in 2018 (discussing what happened in 2015), we know that the nuclear deal was much debated among Americans, both the public and the elites. As a number of polls that were conducted in 2015 showed, the amount of public support for the deal was very similar to that of opposition to it.¹¹ In fact, the approval and implementation of the nuclear deal can be attributed to reasons other than the

¹¹ Pew: 38% support versus 48% oppose; YouGov: 43% support versus 30% oppose; PPP: 54% support versus 38% oppose.

success of desecuritisation discourses in convincing the audience. These reasons include: Obama's warning that he could use his right to veto any congressional disapproval; the Democrats having enough seats in the Congress to prevent a two-thirds veto; and the approval of the deal in the UN Security Council prior to the Congress' vote on it.

All in all, it is extremely difficult to come to a conclusion about the effect of a de/securitisation process. Any such judgement requires longitudinal and triangulated research to consider different types of de/securitising move, including various actors, discourses and audiences, as well as surveys of the impact of de/securitising moves on the audience. What I intended to show in this research project, however, were the roles of four major American newspapers in the process of de/securitisation of Iran's nuclear programme. While media are typically considered to be *functional actors* in securitisation (not having a direct role in securitisation but indirectly affecting it), I considered their opinion pieces as examples of de/securitisation moves here. Through this chapter, I pursued two aims: *describing the context of security* by identifying the ideational, normative and historical factors that impacted American authors' perceptions of Iran and, consequently, their discourses; and, *unfolding the discourse of security* by showing how they endeavoured to securitise or de-securitise Iran's nuclear programme as persuasively as possible by drawing on logical, emotional and ethical means.

In the next chapter, I summarise the whole study with a particular focus on the main findings, their implications and contributions to the fields of CDS and securitisation, and suggestions for further research.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

This thesis has investigated American media discourses regarding the Iran nuclear dispute during July 2015 when media intensified their coverage and discussion of Iran and its nuclear programme. Achievement of the nuclear agreement deal on 14 July 2015 led to a long vigorous debate among American elites on whether or not this deal would be capable of halting the threat from Iran. American media, especially newspapers' opinion sections, were the leading platforms for such debates and discussions.

In this thesis, I have sought to examine various accounts of the nuclear deal presented by prominent American newspapers with different political stances. Accordingly, I developed five research questions and attempted to answer them in four analytical and discussion chapters (i.e. Chapters Five to Eight). In chapters five to seven, I focused on answering three questions related to textual aspects of the newspaper discourses (1. In what ways was social reality regarding the Iran nuclear dispute constructed differently in the discourse of the four newspapers? 2. In what ways did the different authors employ different strategies to engage with readers as well as opinion-holders and did they express different values and norms? 3. What positions did the authors take on the Iran nuclear dispute and how did they support their positions?). Particularly, I was curious to identify discursive and rhetorical strategies employed by the newspapers' opinion writers for constructing their accounts of reality (what they convey to their readers as the reality of the nuclear negotiations and the deal) and for defending and promoting their accounts. In chapter eight, however, my focus was on the social dimension of these discourses and answering the last two questions (4. How did social structures appear to influence opinion discourses? 5. How did opinion discourses seek to influence social structures?). I was interested in the relationship between these media opinion discourses and the larger socio-political

context of the U.S. I wanted to examine this relationship from two interrelated perspectives: the ways in which these discourses were shaped by their context, and how they functioned to shape their context.

To achieve these objectives, I decided to conduct a critical analysis of opinion discourses published in four American newspapers (*The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *New York Post*, *USA Today*). The interdisciplinary nature of CDS encouraged me to make use of other approaches and theories that could enrich my study. In designing the analytical framework of the study, I drew on ideas from rhetoric. The reason was that the discourses under study (i.e. op-eds and editorials) were of the opinion type, and *persuasion* was their pivotal feature. As a result, the analytical framework covered three dimensions of persuasion in the opinion discourses, namely representation (*pathos*), dialogue (*ethos*) and argumentation (*logos*). In addition, stimulated by writings of CDS scholars who emphasise the social foundation of discourse and the bilateral relationship of discourse and its context, I aimed to integrate discourse analysis with socio-political interpretations. Therefore, I drew on constructivist international relations and, particularly, securitisation theory. The main reason that I employed these theories for explaining the findings was the nature of the issue under study. Since the Iran nuclear issue was an international political conflict and *security* was the central theme associated with it, I needed a political theory related to international relations to discuss the reciprocal relationship between development of the concept of threat in opinion discourses and the American socio-political context.

It is important to note that the frameworks that were applied at different stages of the study (CDS, classical rhetoric, and securitisation theory) were theoretically compatible as all of them (whether explicitly or implicitly) share constructivist and critical ideas such as the role of language in shaping understanding, the intersubjective formation of human knowledge, the inseparableness of knowledge and its context, and the political/ideological nature of human language and knowledge.

The analytical stage of the study was conducted in three phases; each examining a specific textual dimension of the newspapers' opinion discourses (i.e. representational, dialogical and argumentative features) to understand how these

discourses constructed different versions of the situation concerning the Iran nuclear negotiations/deal and endeavoured to promote them.

9.1. Reality or Realities?

The first research question concerned the construction of social reality in newspapers or, as it is known in constructivist media studies, the portrayal of objective outside reality through the symbolic reality of media (RQ1: In what ways was social reality regarding the Iran nuclear dispute constructed differently in the discourse of the four newspapers?). As indicated in chapter one, what inspired me regarding the dispute on the Iran nuclear deal was the fact that representations of the situation given by American officials, politicians, journalists and experts (elites in general) differed significantly. As a discourse analyst, I was interested in discursive mechanisms and strategies through which each of these elites constructed their representations of the situation as the one and only reality. Therefore, van Leeuwen's (2008) model was applied to examine actor and action representations in newspaper articles. The outcome of the detailed analysis revealed that there were noticeable differences as well as similarities among newspapers in the ways in which social actors (countries as well as officials who were involved in Iran's nuclear dispute and negotiations) and their actions were represented. The most significant point of similarity was the near total absence of some of the influential social actors who were present in the nuclear negotiations and the presence of some actors who were not part of the negotiating teams. In other words, discursive practices or the symbolic realities (newspapers representations) were not synchronised with the social practice or the objective reality (nuclear negotiations). While U.K., France, Germany, China and Russia (all were members of P5+1) were referred to only peripherally in the four papers, Saudi Arabia and Israel, which were not involved in negotiations, had a remarkable presence, respectively, in *The Wall Street Journal* and in *The New York Times* and *USA Today*.

The main point of divergence among newspapers was the allocation of different types of action and different degrees of activeness to each social actor. Such differences in their approaches to actor and action representation resulted in conflicting narratives presented by pro-deal and anti-deal newspaper articles. In each of these versions of

reality, a specific network of relations was imagined to be held between social actors and the nuclear deal as well as among actors themselves. In anti-deal articles that were from *The Wall Street Journal*, *New York Post* and *USA Today*, the overarching representational tendency was to demonise Iran.

This tendency was noticeable in all actor representations as well as action attributions and activation of social actors. These strategies included use of ideological and vague references such as *Mullahs* or *tyrants* for Iranian officials; applying Us-Them dichotomies such as *Americans/Our allies are peaceful/innocent- Iranians are terrorist/immoral* to legitimise Self and delegitimise Other; and representation of Them as active in harmful deeds and Us/Our allies as either active in humanitarian actions or totally passive. The interesting point here, similar to what KhosraviNik (2015) found regarding representation of the Iranian nuclear issue in the British newspaper *The Times*, was the negative shared assumption of the Other or the already established evilness of Iran.

In pro-deal articles that were from *The New York Times* and *USA Today*, however, the overarching tendency was to legitimise Self (the U.S.) rather than to delegitimise Other (Iran). In other words, these articles sought to highlight Our strength/positive points more than Their weakness/negative points. Accordingly, actor and action representation as well as activation strategies of these articles were different from the previous group. On the one hand, they rarely used ideologically loaded references for Iran; they used fewer negative attributions; and Iran was less activated in these articles. On the other, there was an attempt to glorify the U.S. including the Obama administration through positive attributions.

9.2. Building Authority

The second question that the study intended to answer dealt with the opinion writers' preferred strategies for self-display or establishment of their ethos. (RQ2: In what ways did the different authors employ different strategies to engage with readers as well as opinion-holders and did they express different values and norms?) All the authors from the four newspapers under study were from American elites and held high social positions. They were either presidential nominees and diplomats or

political pundits, academics and journalists (see Table 4.4). These elites attempted to appeal to their readers with their high statuses and their senses of authority. However, they adopted different strategies for displaying their authority and engaging with their readers. In other words, they seemed to have different attitudes regarding which features would constitute a good character for them.

Founded on Hyland's (2005) classification of meta-discourse markers, the investigation of the dialogical features of the discourses showed that authors from *USA Today* tended towards building solidarity with their readers more than did authors from other papers and, thereby, they employed the largest number of *engagement markers*. By employing meta-discourse markers, such as personal pronouns and questions, these authors intended to express their *good will* towards readers and create a feeling of solidarity and trust in them. *New York Post* authors, on the other hand, preferred having strong authorial voices, and thereby, resorted to *stance markers*. They employed the largest number of *boosters* among the four newspapers as a way to prove their *good sense*.

The Wall Street Journal and *The New York Times* authors, however, neither engaged closely with their readers nor stood firmly on their positions. These authors preferred to write more formally and modestly. They did not use many engagement markers so that they could avoid informality in their discourses. They also showed less rigidity in their expression of opinions and stances through endorsing some of the criticisms (*The New York Times*) or at least acknowledging opposite opinions (*The Wall Street Journal*). On the contrary, authors from *USA Today* and *New York Post* either denied the existence of alternative opinions (*USA Today*) or rejected such opinions altogether (*New York Post*). The former did so by presenting their versions of reality as facts and the latter by firmly standing on their own positions. Nevertheless, being argumentative texts, all the opinion pieces from the four newspapers were dialogically more contractive than expansive (i.e. they made more use of boosters and bare assertions than of hedges, and, thereby, made their voices stronger).

Regarding authors' expressions of moral values, the analysis indicated that, except *USA Today*, which hosted opposing values from different authors, the other three newspapers embraced a set of fixed values that were supposedly consistent with their

readers' values. While *The New York Times* and the pro-deal articles of *USA Today* supported liberal values, such as benevolence, global peace and internationalism, *The Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Post*, and the anti-deal articles of *USA Today* emphasised conservative values of nationalism, backing allies and a strong America.

9.3. Arguing For or Against?

The third research question inquired about the argumentative structures of the opinion discourses (RQ3: What positions did the authors take on the Iran nuclear dispute and how did they support their positions?). At this phase, the positions the authors took towards the nuclear dispute/deal and the ways they argued for their positions were investigated. Drawing on van Dijk's (1980, 2001b) *semantic macro-structures* or *topics* and Walton's (1996) classification of *argumentation schemes*, the argumentative patterns of each article and then the schemes or topoi that the author applied in order to defend their claims were identified. The analysis revealed that all the articles from *The Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Post* condemned the deal, and all the articles from *The New York Times* supported it. However, *USA Today*, unlike the other three papers, included both pro-deal and anti-deal articles. Moreover, the articles from each side of the debate (pro or anti-deal) followed a similar argumentative pattern. This means that the anti-deal articles, no matter from which newspaper, revolved around two main topics: questioning the deal and discrediting Obama/his administration. Pro-deal articles also centred on two topics: praising the deal and refuting critics/criticisms. Each of these was again discussed through more-detailed meso and micro-topics.

All these argumentative topics (claims), at their deepest level, were founded on 10 argumentation schemes, including argument from *history*, *analogy*, *positive consequences*, etc. Arguments from *history* and *pragmatic inconsistency* were exclusively employed in anti-deal articles to respectively predict the future failure of the deal, based on historical evidence, and discredit Obama by showing his lack of commitment to his words. On the other hand, arguments from *positive consequences*, *cost-benefit* and *pragmatism* were used only by pro-deal authors. The first two schemes demonstrated the benefits of the deal and the third one justified the deal from a realistic perspective that believed that no deal could be perfect. The other five

argumentation schemes were arguments from *negative consequences*, *analogy*, *expert opinion/authority*, *contrast* and *ridicule*, which were employed in both anti-deal and pro-deal articles, either to support the deal/deal-makers or oppose them. Reliance on these five schemes by both sides of the debate corresponds to their popularity in everyday language use. They are among the most effective forms of plausible arguments that are employed in deliberations on different aspects of life from personal decision-makings to political debates. Pointing to negative outcomes of an action or its alternative; comparing it to some other un/desirable actions; dis/approving it through words of an expert or authority; and mocking someone's personality as a way to discard his argument are popular argumentative strategies employed for or against a path of action.

Regarding the schemes used specifically in pro or anti-deal articles, one interesting argumentative pattern was that the pro-deal group focused on the future (argument from *positive consequences*) and the anti-deal group drew on the past (argument from *history*). This suggests that rhetoric was closely tied to tribal political assumptions in conservative and liberal politics rather than to questions about the deal itself (i.e. conservative ideology cherishes traditions and stability while liberal perspective values future and new prospects). The other noticeable difference in argumentation strategies of the two groups of articles was their context of argument. While the anti-deal group discussed the nuclear issue within the context of domestic politics as a part of Republican-Democrat struggle, the pro-deal group viewed it as a matter of international politics and emphasised that arguing from the perspective of domestic rivalries is a deviance from discussion and a misunderstanding of the goal of the deal. KhosraviNik (2015) also came to a similar conclusion about the discussion of the Iran nuclear issue in the British conservative newspaper *The Times* and liberal newspaper *The Guardian*. He argued that the former, conservative paper, discussed the issue from the perspective of U.K. domestic politics and the latter, liberal paper, from an international perspective.

9.4. A Short Critique of the U.S. Elite Discourses

The three sets of textual findings summarised above reveal interesting aspects about the American context of elite discourses and journalistic practices that help answer

the fourth research question (RQ4: How did social structures appear to influence opinion discourses?). I have presented these implications in terms of two issues: elites' similar Orientalist mindsets and nonconformity of elite discourse with its own ideals. As KhosraviNik (2015) rightly indicates, familiarity with the socio-political context of discourse helps answer the important question of 'who says what to whom'. This question investigates the context in which discourse is produced and consumed. It asks who the producers of the discourses are; why they draw on certain themes and strategies; and how audiences may interpret these discourses.

Before embarking on the critique, I would like to indicate that the findings of this study, although not being generalisable to all American newspapers or elite discourses, has enabled a better understanding about the representation of the Iranian nuclear deal by specific American elites and newspapers. Indeed, working on a small size of data in this research maybe seen as a limitation of this study; however, the aim of conducting a detailed and thorough analysis allowed me to make deep observations of the American newspaper opinion discourses.

9.4.1. Orientalist mindset

One feature that articles from both anti and pro-deal perspectives more-or-less shared was their negative view towards Iran. This negative attitude, in turn, was based on a set of taken-for-granted assumptions. It suggests that, at the macro social and cognitive levels, there was an overall consensus among the American elites whose discourses I examined regarding how to see Iran. This is closely related to the fourth research question as it shows how social structures (e.g. American national identity) have influenced the production of elite discourses. In this regard, perceiving Iran as a threat was the common theme of almost all the newspaper articles under study regardless of whether their stances towards the nuclear deal were positive or negative. As KhosraviNik (2015, p. 224) rightly argues, "the perception of threat from Iran necessarily requires a pre-established construction of the country as dangerous, hostile and unfriendly". Otherwise, mere access to the nuclear technology or even having a nuclear bomb cannot automatically trigger a perception of threat.

Construction of such a dangerous, hostile and unfriendly image of Iran can be seen as a part of the Western Orientalist tradition. The Orientalist perspective, as introduced

and examined by Said (1978), presents a prejudiced and distorted picture of the East. Such construction serves two general purposes; on the one hand, it helps the West define the Self against a weak and retarded or sometimes evil and dangerous Other, and, on the other hand, it serves to legitimise the dominance of the West over the East. As discussed in chapter eight, perceiving Iran as a threatening Other has been an indispensable element in construction of American identity by elites since 1979 as without the existence of an Other to differentiate against, it is not possible to define the Self. An interesting point is that, as KhosraviNik (2015) states, in an attempt to confront the West, the Islamic Republic of Iran has adopted a reversed-orientalist strategy. This means that Islamic Iran has defined itself as the exact opposite of its constructed image of the West and especially the U.S. as the Other.

One direct outcome of defining Other (East) as evil, wild or primitive and Self (West) as good, civilised or powerful is the justification of the dominance of Self over Other (We should decide for Them because we know better or because We are right and good). Such perception is the basis of ideas like American exceptionalism or American world leadership and has brought about a situation regarding nuclear technology that is described as 'nuclear Orientalism' or 'nuclear apartheid'. These expressions refer to the idea held by the West that "nuclear weapons are safe in 'our' hands because 'we' are civilised and rational, but represent a major national security threat when in 'their' hands, because they are barbaric and irrational" (Kadkhodaei & Ghasemi Tari, 2019, p. 121).

As just mentioned, the American elites' Orientalist perspective regarding Iran was reinforced and became more negative after the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Before the revolution, under Mohammad-Reza Shah's reign, although Americans had their Orientalist view of Iran as they had of any other Eastern nation, such a perspective was softened by the close partnership between Iran and the U.S. The dominant discourses in Iran's political sphere under the second Pahlavi Dynasty including *Modernisation, Westernisation and Dependence on the U.S.* (KhosraviNik, 2015) had a significant role in bringing the two countries close. During Mohammad-Reza Shah's period, Iran was seen as a junior ally to America and enjoyed benefits of the partnership with the U.S., nonetheless, being an Eastern country (belonging to the

Orient), it did not hold similar high status to that of Western nations (belonging to the Occident). In other words, Americans saw Iran as a weak third world country under the influence of the U.S. (but not an evil and dangerous enemy). As stated by Dorman and Farhang (1987), one of the shortcomings in American press' coverage of Iran during this period, which was shaped by "the foreign policy establishment" and their "highly West-centered preconceptions" was their denial of the political culture in Iran. Driven by an Orientalist perspective, American policy makers and journalists believed that "Iranian people were incapable of politics, that they were incapable of self-rule, and that they were incapable of authentic desire for freedom" (Dorman & Farhang, 1987, p. 13).

Since the Islamic Revolution, however, this perception of Iran has been exacerbated. If, before 1979, Iran was an unimportant country in the Middle-East that many Americans did not know much about it, after 1979, it became an extreme concern for Americans. The Islamic Revolution with the radical changes it brought about in Iran's socio-political structures and Middle- East's geopolitical context came as a shock to Americans. Iran was no longer 'the land of stability' and the protector of U.S. interests in the region. It was instead seen as the cause of instability in the Middle-East and a threat to U.S. interests by American elites as well as the public. *Anti-Americanism, anti-Westernism, Independence, and Islamism* as the dominant discourses of this era formed the identity of the new regime in Iran, and thereby, its hostile approach towards the Western countries especially the U.S. Such a fundamental change in Iran's foreign policy was worsened by the hostage crisis of 1979 and made Americans deeply suspicious of Iran. Since then, Americans' perception of Iran has become extremely negative. Iran is not just an Orientalist country standing lower than Western countries. It is a barbaric theocracy ruled by fundamentalist Islamic clergies who aspire to demolish 'Our' Western civilisation and democracy.

Traces of this orientalist mindset were present in all layers of elite discourses examined here, from micro levels of actor and action representation to macro-levels of argumentation. Perception of Iran as dangerous, irrational and ambitious and of the U.S. as saviour, civilised and honourable was noticeable in the ways these two were named and described as well as in arguments made for or against the nuclear deal.

Particularly, those elites that were against the nuclear deal grounded their arguments on notions of legitimacy and rightfulness of the Self that, in turn, was justified based on the evilness of the Other (although the pro-deal articles also considered the Self as legitimate and right, they did not specifically link it to de-legitimacy of Other). In other words, while both groups of elites seemed to hold Orientalist views, it was stronger among anti-deal group. This means that the anti-deal elites viewed the nuclear issue as a part of the diachronically and synchronically broader stand-off between the U.S. and Iran (and accordingly the West and the East) and put more emphasis on negative Other-representation by reminding their readers of the long history of animosity; however, pro-deal elites seemed to separate this issue from the long list of the grievances between the two countries and were more focused on positive Self-representation by glorifying the deal as another success for the U.S. leadership and diplomacy.

This difference between approaches adopted by American elites can be seen to have its roots in two popular political traditions in the U.S., conservative and liberal ideologies. As argued by Hurst (2016), domestic opposition between political parties has a direct impact on a country's foreign relations and decisions. Although all the opinion discourses under study were produced in a similar macro-context – that of the U.S. – and shared several ideational features including their perception of Iran as a threat, they pursued different goals and acted differently, depending on the characteristics of their micro-contexts, especially authors' personal ideologies and affiliations, newspapers' political stances, readers' values and political partisanship or political rivalries at the domestic level in general. Such domestic contentions led authors to adopt different approaches towards the Iran nuclear deal. Indeed, Ideological differences between conservatives and liberals can be seen as the main reason behind all the disputes regarding the Iran nuclear deal in the U.S. As mentioned in section 9.2, these two traditions hold different beliefs and values regarding the U.S.' interaction with the world and accordingly respond differently to international issues. *Internationalism* and *global peace* as the two important liberal values led liberal elites (pro-deal authors here) to endorse a diplomatic solution (i.e. the nuclear deal) to a global conflict and attempt to reduce tensions. That is why delegitimising 'Other' was

less emphasised in the pro-deal articles in spite of their view of Iran as a threat. Obama's insistence on making the deal with Iran can also be interpreted as an effort to avoid more tensions and settle the ongoing struggle in both bilateral relations with Iran and in the Middle-East region. On the other hand, *nationalism* and *backing allies* as conservative ideals for foreign policy made conservative elites prioritise the U.S. and its allies over other countries and advocate harsh strategies against non-allies (i.e. 'Other'). Accordingly, anti-deal articles focused more on negative 'Other' representation and delegitimising Iran.

9.4.2. Ideals of journalism & public discourse

The other feature of the newspaper articles under study was their deviance from ethical norms of journalistic and public discourse, though each to a different degree. As explained in chapter four (see section 4.4), there are a number of moral values and ideals that together form the standard practice or behavior expected in the field of journalism or public discourse in the U.S. in particular, and in Western democracies in general. These include values such as *openness*, *honesty*, *rationality*, *respect*, *tolerance*, *fairness*, etc., or *civility*, in one word. As stated by Boatright, Shaffer, Sobieraj, and Young (2019, p. 3), civility "assumes we speak to each other- whether in political debate or in our interpersonal relations- in a manner that respects our shared status as citizens, or more broadly, as humans. It means that we should always maintain a certain level of humility when we discuss our rights or our aims".

Different aspects of elite discourses examined in this research showed traces of the uncivility and lack of humility indicated by Boatright et al (2019). Manners of representation, dialogue, and argumentation adopted by the newspaper opinion writers as American elites, sometimes, violated civil values and norms. For example, some authors' scornful or sarcastic tone raises questions about whether the U.S. elite discourse is falling short of norms of rational, respectful, and honest discussion. Similarly, applying ridicule as a form of argumentation in elite political discourse or attributing disrespectful names and labels such as *fool* or *naïve* to opponents (found

in both pro and anti-deal discourses) were not consistent with standards of an open and wide-ranging debate or generally with ethical ideals of living well together¹².

While the previous critique regarding the elites' Orientalist mindset concerned the interaction of American elites with Iran as a national Other, here, the point of concern is the interaction among American elites as members of a national Self; in other words, how these elites dealt with their fellow citizens regarding matters of high public concern, and how much they maintain norms of public discourse.

What can be said based on the findings of this research is that, sometimes, the elites seemed to be more interested in invalidating each other's character than in argument. This means that elites attempted to disprove the Other's argument through attacking their character. Accordingly, in many cases, ethical norms and values were not observed by these elites; they were not respectful and fair; they did not show tolerance and mutual understanding; and sometimes even, they were not rational in their debates. The elites felt free to make allegations against each other and use harsh language. It seemed that civility was sacrificed for freedom of speech.

Winning the debate at any cost seemed to be the only purpose pursued by these elites. To put it another way, winning the audience's consensus was the top priority for the elites. Elite authors of the commentary articles, examined here, made use of all language resources, both civil and uncivil, to appeal to their American readers. These language strategies included logical arguments as well as populist allegations and ridicule. Depending on the target audience assumed by the authors and the newspaper they wrote for and their own character, they tended to employ specific language. The other factor that seemed to influence the elites' choice of language was their position on the issue. Depending on whether they aimed to securitise or desecuritise the nuclear issue, their language was more or less uncivil. As indicated before, the authors who endeavoured to promote securitisation employed a more emotional and hyperbolic language (including use of sarcastic labelling and appeal to negative emotions and ridicule) compared to those who advocated desecuritisation.

¹² This tendency among elites towards uncivil discourse has taken its full shape after Donald Trump's presidency. His election and his manner of doing politics has radically reshaped American political style towards the uncivil.

The reason could be that the stakes were higher for them and the need for mobilising the public against the nuclear deal was more urgent. These anti-deal elites endeavoured to prevent the deal from being approved in the Congress by any means at their disposal ranging from rational reasoning to offensive labels and accusation.

9.5. Foreign Policy and Securitisation

The last research question concerned the active political function that the newspaper opinion discourses fulfilled (RQ 5: How did opinion discourses seek to influence social structures?). The study showed that these discourses sought to influence U.S. foreign policy through de/securitising the Iran nuclear programme. Different dimensions of the opinion discourses investigated in the three analytical chapters were revealed to be equivalent to different aspects of securitisation moves. This implies that the newspapers' opinion discourses were intended to carry out specific actions (i.e. securitisation or desecuritisation of Iran's nuclear programme), and all their representational, interactional and argumentative features were means for conducting those actions.

Representational devices, such as metaphors, activation/passivation, ideological naming and action attribution, aimed at constructing images for Iran, the U.S., Israel and Saudi Arabia appropriate to their roles as either *threatening* subjects or *threatened* objects in the process of securitisation. These devices also worked to emotionalise the discourse through representing the social actors and the situation in a way that touched readers' feelings. For example, anti-deal articles that aimed to keep Iran's nuclear programme securitised portrayed Iran as an *existential* threat and the U.S.' administration as *cowardly losers* and *appeasers*. However, the pro-deal articles that aimed to desecuritise Iran's nuclear programme pictured Iran as a past *threat* (a *pariah* that was reined in) and represented the U.S. administration as *heroes* and *saviours* of the world.

In line with such representations of the situation, authors as the securitising actors, made claims and employed topoi in order to prove that either the nuclear deal tackled or did not tackle the threat from Iran's nuclear programme. In other words, with the help of representational strategies, authors intended to convince their readers that

the situation was either threatening or under control. Authors who aimed to securitise the Iran nuclear programme demonstrated three features in their discourse: existence of threat, urgency of the situation and the need for extraordinary measures to tackle the threat. However, those authors who intended to desecuritise Iran's nuclear programme attempted to show that the threat was controlled by the nuclear deal (an extraordinary measure) and the situation was not urgent any more. To do so, they applied three strategies of *re-articulation* (i.e. offering a diplomatic solution – the nuclear deal – for resolving the nuclear dispute), *détente* (i.e. trying to ease tensions between the two countries through highlighting the positive aspects of Iran, such as its pragmatism, its cooperation in solving regional problems, etc.); and *replacement* (i.e. shifting the cause of threat from Iran to Israel and the Arab states). These findings were similar to what Rubaduka (2017) found regarding Bush's and Obama's discourses towards Iran. Rubaduka found that the former aimed to securitise Iran's nuclear issue by highlighting Iran's illicit activities and the possibility of war, however, the latter attempted to de-securitise the issue by emphasising the progress in negotiation with Iran and the possibility of achieving an agreement.

In order to convince readers to agree with their claims, the authors, as securitising actors, employed dialogical devices (meta-discourse markers). By use of these devices, they built their authority as well as their relationships with readers.

In addition, by sharing values and interests through the expression of attitudes and judgements, the authors attempted to appeal to the readers. Overall, construction of *ethos* that means displaying credibility of the author's character was a key factor in the process of de/securitisation. That was so because audiences' acceptance of the claims made by the securitising actors depended on whether they viewed the actors as wise, benevolent and moral. Such a positive perception of the actors, in turn, depended on how similar their norms and values were to those of the audience.

In a study by Hayes (2009), he demonstrates the importance of democratic norms and values in the U.S.' securitisation of Iran. Comparing the U.S.' reactions towards Iran and India's nuclear programmes, Hayes argues that the process of de/securitisation in American foreign policy is determined by the concept of 'democratic peace'. Perceiving a country as sharing democratic values and being similar to Us (e.g. India)

makes American leaders and the public believe that there is no threat in that country's pursuing nuclear technology (desecuritisation); however, viewing a country as undemocratic (e.g. Iran), leads to Americans developing feelings of insecurity and a desire to prevent the nuclear deal from proceeding (securitisation).

9.6. Foreign Policy and Media

As the study showed, each of the four newspapers provided the public and decision-makers with a particular type of elite discourses with the aim of influencing American foreign policy. Therefore, the role of media institutions in the distribution process of these discourses and in foreign policy process was pivotal. As indicated in chapter four (see section 4.3), there are different models, in communication studies, describing the relationship between media and state/elites. Some of these models such as *hegemony* and *manufacturing consent* see media as subservient to the state/elites and being used to feed the public with the information that state elites desire; some like *indexing* and *cascading* models view media as reflecting state/elites' opinions whether these opinions are in agreement or not; and finally, some models like the *CNN effect* describe media as influencing state/elites' decisions rather than being controlled by them.

Regarding the newspapers examined here and their positions on the nuclear issue, the second group of models seem to apply in this case. According to these models, media are like mirrors reflecting elites' agendas and ideas; if there is an agreement among state and nonstate elites regarding how to deal with an issue, media convey the elites' agreed-upon frames to the public, and if there is a disagreement, media spread conflicting frames, each desired by a group of elites, and, thereby, come to play an influential role in making policies. In other words, the possibility that media might be critical of government policy and their ability to influence government occur when there is a conflict among elites regarding that policy (Bennett, 1990; Hallin, 1986). This means that media follow the elites' divisions on foreign policies rather than causing them (Mermin, 1999).

Accordingly, the newspaper opinion discourses in this research reflected the conflict among American elites about the efficacy of the nuclear deal. In light of Entman's

(2004) cascading activation model, the process can be explained as starting with Obama's administration framing the nuclear deal as a historical breakthrough in American foreign policy and international politics. Cascading down, this frame was not welcomed/activated by all other elites. It was challenged by some non-administration elites in Congress as well as some other political/academic/military figures. These elites framed the nuclear deal in ways that were different from or even contradictory to the administration's frames. These frames portrayed the nuclear deal as 'a national security threat', 'a national disgrace', 'a nightmare', 'a historic mistake', etc. Each newspaper studied here spread certain frames in line with the ideological/political tendencies of its owners/editors. The *New York Post* and *The Wall Street Journal*, being under the ownership of Murdoch's company and advocating conservative ideology, published articles by those elites that promoted Republicans' frames and were against the frames presented by Obama's Democrat administration. However, these two papers were slightly different in their approaches. *The Wall Street Journal* was more vigilant; sometimes, it isolated the nuclear deal from other related issues and only attended to de-legitimisation of the deal. However, the *New York Post* reframed the nuclear deal in light of macro-political hostilities between Iran-U.S. and Republicans-Democrats. The *New York Times*, well-known liberal paper, endorsed the administration's frames and spread discourses by those elites that supported such framing of the issue. Finally, *USA Today*, as a centrist paper, included both groups of frames, although its own position was aligned with the administration.

Overall, the construction of the Iranian nuclear deal as a massive conflict disseminated by way of these news articles was a reflection of elites' discord at the higher levels of political hierarchy. However, this does not mean to deny the significant role that media played in this debate. As Robinson (2001) argues, when there is a disagreement among elites, media can exert their influence by taking sides in the elite debate. To put it another way, "by promoting a particular policy line advocated either by elites outside the executive or particular members of the executive itself, news media can play a key role in causing policy change" (Robinson 2001, p. 531). As we saw here, each newspaper, except *USA Today*, took one side of the debate on the Iranian nuclear issue in both its editorials and opinion articles and endeavoured to promote a

particular perspective. Thereby, although these media indexed the elites' disagreement on the foreign policy, they played a crucial role themselves by selecting and publishing elite discourses that advocated specific policy lines.

9.7. Implications of the Research

During the preparation of an initial draft of my PhD proposal around July 2015, this research was greatly influenced by the substantial dispute regarding the Iran nuclear negotiations and the agreement deal that occurred on 14 July that year. Several years have passed; nevertheless, Iran's nuclear programme is still one of the most conflicting international issues and, probably, will continue to be so for a long time in future. As indicated through this thesis (in chapters one, two and eight), this nuclear dispute between Iran and the U.S. is deeply rooted in social, cultural and historical factors, and entangled in a web of several other conflicts and grievances.

Viewing my research through a constructivist lens, I contend that, as long as the ideational opposition between the two countries remains unresolved, not only will the misrepresentation of each other by Iran and the U.S. persist but it will generate more conflict. Experiences with Iran, North Korea, Cuba and Libya have proved that ideational factors can sometimes be more determining of states' behaviour than are material factors. When it comes to conflicts resulting from differences in ideologies, beliefs, values and identities, realist and other rationalist theories of international relations fail to explain the situation (Walt, 1998; Wendt, 1992). In such cases, Discourse, in all its cultural, social and political forms, ranging from cinema and television to literature and religion, and from speeches and newspaper articles of elites to graffiti and slogans, needs to be critically considered. By analysing these discourses, the ideational causes of the conflicts can be better understood. It is so because one of the crucial steps towards finding solutions is to apprehend how ideologies and attitudes that lead to the persistence of the conflict are produced, disseminated and reinforced through discourse.

In addition, this study, congruent with the point made by prominent CDS scholars regarding the need for choosing methods of analysis that are appropriate for the type of data being studied and the research objectives, shows that analysing each discourse

requires a particular analytical model proper to its genre and characteristics. This means that CDS researchers cannot employ a ready-made approach or model in their study without considering its compatibility with the distinctive features of the discourse they are investigating. For example, opinion discourses, no matter in which field, have a unique character that distinguishes them from other discourses (i.e. being *persuasive*, *argumentative* and *evaluative*). These features make the study of opinion discourses distinct from that of non-opinion (non-argumentative) discourses and require investigation of more than just the representational dimension of discourse.

Conducting this thesis was also consistent with some securitisation scholars' and students' calls for employing CDS to enrich securitisation studies (Bilgic, 2006; Kraak, 2018; MacDonald & Hunter, 2013; Stritzel, 2012). CDS as a programme of discourse analysis whose scope goes beyond textual aspects of discourse and involves social dimensions is compatible with sociological approaches to securitisation that believe the performative power of security discourse should be studied within the context of social power. Given that security discourses are of an argumentative/persuasive type, the model designed for the analysis of newspaper opinion discourses in this study can be adopted for the study of any security discourse. Overall, I believe that a combination of CDS and securitisation theory can work as a suitable methodological framework for studying a range of discourses related to the topic of security.

Regarding the Iran nuclear dispute, given its persistence, there is still a broad space and a crucial need for asking new questions and exploring new fields. Future studies can continue examining media discourses on this nuclear conflict by gathering samples from a wider range of newspapers or other types of media. In addition to newspapers, prominent TV news channels, such as BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera and Fox News, can be abundant sources for data collection. CDS researchers can also examine other types of political discourse, such as political speeches, news conferences and interviews, official documents, or the nuclear deal document itself in their studies. Conducting comparative studies of Iranian and American officials' discourses can be another way of looking at this topic, which might show differences in the two sides' representations and interpretations of the situation concerning the nuclear dispute.

As a final word, I hope that this CDS project carried out by a student of discourse studies, whose background is in the field of language, provides an impetus for other CDS researchers to strengthen their research by drawing on theories from other disciplines of the social sciences, consistent with the subject of the discourse on which they are working.

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Appendices 1. Sample Newspaper Articles

An Iran Nuclear Deal That Reduces the Chance of War

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD JULY 14, 2015

<https://www.nytimes.com/.../an-iran-nuclear-deal-that-reduces-the-chance-of-war.html>

The final deal with Iran announced by the United States and other major world powers does what no amount of political posturing and vague threats of military action had managed to do before. It puts strong, verifiable limits on Iran's ability to develop a nuclear weapon for at least the next 10 to 15 years and is potentially one of the most consequential accords in recent diplomatic history, with the ability not just to keep Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon but also to reshape Middle East politics.

The deal, the product of 20 arduous months of negotiations, would obviously have provided more cause for celebration if Iran had agreed to completely dismantle all of its nuclear facilities. But the chances of that happening were effectively zero, and even if all of Iran's nuclear-related buildings and installations were destroyed, no one can erase the knowledge Iranian scientists have acquired after working on nuclear projects for decades.

As described by Mr. Obama and other officials, the deal seems sound and clearly in the interest of the United States, the other nations that drafted it and the state of Israel. In return for a phased lifting of international economic sanctions, Iran will reduce by 98 percent its stockpile of low-enriched uranium, which can be processed further into bomb-grade fuel, and reduce the number of operating centrifuges used to enrich that fuel by two-thirds, to 5,060. These limits mean that if Iran ever decides to violate the agreement and make a dash for a nuclear bomb, it will take a year to produce the weapons-grade fuel needed for a single bomb, compared with a couple of months now.

Many of the various restrictions in the agreement will be in force for 10 to 25 years. Some, notably Iran's agreement to constant and technologically advanced monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency, will last indefinitely, as will its commitment under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty to never produce a nuclear weapon. Inspectors will have access to suspicious sites "where necessary, when necessary," President Obama said, and if Iran cheats, that will be detected early enough to respond, including by quickly reimposing sanctions or taking military action.

The deal nearly faltered on a demand by Iran and Russia that United Nations bans on the purchase and sale of conventional weapons and ballistic missiles be lifted immediately. But in the end, the accord requires that the conventional weapons ban remain in place for five years and the missile ban for eight years — assuming Iran abides by its commitments.

It is deeply unsettling that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel derisively dismissed the deal immediately as a "historic mistake." He, Republicans in Congress

and most candidates for the Republican presidential nomination have opposed negotiations with Iran from the outset yet offered no credible alternative to a negotiated settlement. The Republican presidential hopefuls repeated that formula today — condemnation of the deal with no credible alternative to offer.

That said, no one should have any illusions about Iran, which considers Israel a sworn enemy; often condemns the United States; supports Hezbollah and other terrorist organizations; and aspires to greater influence in the region. Once sanctions are lifted, it stands to gain access to billions of dollars from accounts in international banks that have been frozen and from new oil exports and other business deals.

American officials say that Iran will get that money over time, and that its immediate priority will be to deal with pressing domestic needs. More important, many American sanctions will remain in place even after the deal is implemented, including those relating to Iran's support for terrorism and its human rights violations. The United States has to be extremely vigilant in monitoring how Iran uses those new funds and in enforcing those sanctions.

Agreeing on the nuclear deal is just the first step. Congress gets to review and vote on it. Powerful forces, like Mr. Netanyahu, have vowed to defeat it, and Mr. Obama may have to make good on his vow to veto any resolution of disapproval. It would be irresponsible to squander this chance to rein in Iran's nuclear program.

Republicans Race to Condemn the Iran Deal

BY ANDREW ROSENTHAL JULY 14, 2015

<https://takingnote.blogs.nytimes.com/.../republicans-race-to-condemn-the-iran-deal/>

The Republican presidential candidates fell all over themselves today trying to see who could condemn the nuclear deal with Iran the most quickly and in the most cataclysmic terms. It made no difference whether they actually knew anything about the deal, about Iran, about nuclear arms, or about foreign policy in general. They had their attacks ready, just as they have had and will have to anything President Obama does or wants.

Gov. Scott Walker of Wisconsin, who reportedly has been getting briefings on foreign affairs because he's the governor of a Midwestern state with no actual experience in the area, announced: "The deal allows Tehran to dismantle U.S. and international sanctions without dismantling its illicit nuclear infrastructure — giving Iran's nuclear weapons capability an American stamp of approval."

Actually, no. It requires Iran to dismantle a great deal of its "illicit nuclear infrastructure" before sanctions start to be lifted, would restore them and impose more if Iran cheats, and keeps in place many sanctions based on Iran's human rights record and its support for terrorist organizations.

"Shame on the Obama administration for agreeing to a deal that empowers an evil Iranian regime to carry out its threat to 'wipe Israel off the map' and bring 'death to America,'" said Mike Huckabee, the former Arkansas governor.

Mr. Huckabee, like the rest of the G.O.P. field, offers not a clue as to how he would prevent Iran from doing those things, which don't actually require a nuclear weapon, which the United States and Israel have, by the way.

"Based on what we know thus far, I believe that this deal undermines our national security," said Marco Rubio, the Florida senator. Mr. Rubio said the United States should ratchet up sanctions until Iran agrees to completely dismantle its nuclear program. It's long been clear that won't happen, and it could never be verified in any case without a deal like the one Mr. Obama and other world leaders signed.

"A comprehensive agreement should require Iran to verifiably abandon — not simply delay — its pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability," said Jeb Bush, former governor of Florida. Well, yes, that would have been comprehensive. Again, it was never going to happen.

Would Mr. Bush argue that a succession of United States presidents should not have negotiated arms deals with the Soviet Union because they did not lead to full, unilateral disarmament and a renunciation of communism? I hope not.

The same applies to a comment by Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey, who said: "The deal threatens Israel, it threatens the United States, and it turns 70 years of nuclear policy on its head." It does not do those things.

One of my favorite lines of attack was the one voiced by (among others) Rick Perry, the former governor of Texas and former spectacular failure in the Republican primary process. "President Obama's decision to sign a nuclear deal with Iran is one of the most destructive foreign policy decisions in my lifetime," he said.

Seriously?

How about the Bay of Pigs; Vietnam; the secret bombing of Cambodia; the invasion of Cambodia; the C.I.A. plot to overthrow and perhaps murder the president of Chile, ushering in decades of military dictatorship and the slaughter of countless Chileans; Iran-Contra; the failure to take prompt action against the Balkan genocide; the decision to retreat from the war against terrorism in Afghanistan and invade Iraq based on propaganda and disinformation; and the botched invasion of Iraq, which laid the groundwork for regional warfare and the formation of the Islamic State terrorist group?

Going back just a few years before Mr. Perry was born in 1950, there was the decision to carve up Europe with Stalin, creating the Soviet bloc, sparking a nuclear arms race and leaving entire nations in bondage to the Kremlin for a half century.

Meanwhile, over in the land of reality TV, Donald Trump predicted that the Iranians would cheat. Perhaps they will, but this assessment comes from the man who reportedly told some Hollywood conservatives last Friday that the United States should have invaded Mexico instead of Iraq.

How Obama Should Sell the Iran Deal

By JAMES P. RUBIN JULY 15, 2015

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/15/.../how-obama-should-sell-the-iran-deal.html>

LONDON — IN the long run-up to Tuesday's nuclear agreement with Iran, the Obama administration repeatedly suggested that the accord was part of a larger strategic shift in Washington's approach to Iran. Past experience with arms control debates during the Cold War demonstrates that this is a big mistake that could jeopardize hard-won security gains.

The administration should now seek to justify the deal exclusively on narrow national security grounds.

Although President Obama and his advisers have recently begun to change their tune, they have repeatedly, over the past few years, characterized the nuclear talks as part of a more comprehensive administration strategy to establish "a new equilibrium" between Sunnis and Shiites in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf.

The unfortunate consequence of these and other exaggerated claims was the alienation of moderate Republicans and friendly Arab leaders, many of whom supported steps to reduce the risk from Iran's nuclear program but opposed any attempt to improve relations with the Iranian government.

As recently as April, when the framework for Tuesday's deal was announced, Mr. Obama was emphasizing the idea that as the United States reduces its presence in the Middle East, better relations with Iran could help establish a new balance of power there. In an extensive interview with The New York Times's Thomas L. Friedman at the time, Mr. Obama envisioned a nuclear accord and sanctions relief changing Iran's overall approach, and "then what's possible is you start seeing an equilibrium in the region, and Sunni and Shia, Saudi and Iran" would begin to consider reducing their tensions.

These and similar statements have become fodder, among some observers, for a heroic narrative that Mr. Obama has achieved a rapprochement with Iran comparable to Richard M. Nixon's breakthrough visit to China in 1972. Indeed, in another interview with Mr. Friedman, on Tuesday, Mr. Obama repeatedly invoked President Nixon's historic diplomacy with China and promoted the idea that Iran "will be and should be a regional power" — precisely the kind of thinking that drives away potential supporters of a more limited approach. This is unfortunate, because the Iran deal is a solid achievement in terms of nuclear arms control — not a geopolitical watershed.

The accord simply offers sanctions relief in exchange for extensive limits on Iran's ability to enrich uranium, which is the hard part of building a nuclear weapon. By limiting the equipment that can be used for this purpose, it will be far more difficult for Iran to transform its civilian nuclear program into a weapons program. In exchange, and under tight controls, financial sanctions and the ban on oil sales will be lifted, allowing Iran much-needed access to frozen funds and Western investment.

The accord's benefits far outweigh its costs. While the agreement will not prevent a determined Iran from building a nuclear weapon, it will make doing so much harder, and the extensive verification and inspection procedures will make it much easier to discover any such attempt. The easing of sanctions, and the ease with which they can be reimposed, provides a powerful incentive for Iran not to take that risk.

In addition to worrying allies abroad, the other problem with linking the nuclear accord to improved American-Iranian relations is the fact that ties may not get better, especially if Iran's regional policies — like providing life support to Bashar al-Assad's government in Syria and supporting terrorist organizations — become more aggressive.

No one knows if the nuclear agreement will be followed by a more moderate Iranian approach to Syria, Iraq and Lebanon. I suspect it won't be, because the Revolutionary Guards remain at the core of the Supreme Leader's coalition and they, not the moderate foreign minister, are the crucial advocates of an aggressive stance in the region. It's far better to explain how the accord advances American national interests, whether or not Iran changes its regional policies.

The best analogy for the deal with Iran is the arms control agreements of the Cold War. The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) limited Soviet modernization of intercontinental ballistic missiles, and granted the United States an unprecedented degree of access to a closed society.

SALT I and SALT II drew strong opposition in Congress when the agreements were seen as part of a broader improvement in American-Soviet relations. In fact, SALT II was never ratified, partly because the Senate debate was hijacked by other foreign policy problems, including the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan and its deployment of troops in Angola and Cuba.

The fact that American military and intelligence agencies supported SALT II was forgotten in the larger political firestorm. Only because President Ronald Reagan decided to continue American compliance with the treaty's main numerical limits was the steady increase in Moscow's overall number of missiles and launchers halted.

Like the earlier agreements with the Soviet Union, the deal reached with Iran on Tuesday substantially reduces the potential nuclear threat from an adversary and provides access to a relatively closed society. But Iran's program will not be completely abolished, as many wished.

To maximize congressional and international support, Mr. Obama must now focus on the national security benefits of this accord and avoid any new suggestions that the deal was intended as part of a grand strategy for the region.

American-Iranian relations may one day improve when Tehran's destabilizing policies in the region change.

The White House can hope that will happen but should not expect it. Whether it occurs is irrelevant to the wisdom of Tuesday's arms control agreement.

James P. Rubin was the assistant secretary of state for public affairs from 1997 to 2000, under President Bill Clinton.

A Good Deal for Israel

By CHUCK FREILICH JULY 19, 2015

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/20/opinion/a-good-deal-for-israel.html>

The prime minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, responded to the Iran deal as expected: It is bad, endangers Israel, he argued; we are against it and will be the only American ally not only to oppose it, but to go down gloriously, fighting a battle in Congress that we are destined to lose.

Mr. Netanyahu often warns that Iran is like Nazi Germany in 1938, fooling naïve appeasers even as it plans a cataclysm for Jews. But only those who never see merit in any proposal and never initiate their own could respond as the Israeli leader has.

Not that the agreement is without faults. President Obama negotiated from a position of weakness and conveyed a message that failure to obtain a deal was not an option. He misguidedly took the military option off the table long ago and made it clear that a return to sanctions would be a poor outcome.

Indeed, Iran will be allowed to retain its nuclear infrastructure instead of dismantling it, and most parts of the agreement are limited to 10 to 15 years, instead of being permanent. It remains to be seen what inspections Iran will actually allow, and the dispute resolution mechanism is cumbersome.

The agreement also does not address Iran's destructive regional role, including its support for terrorism. In fact, the added revenue it will receive as a result of the relaxation of sanctions may enable more aggressive action.

So, yes, we could have gotten a better deal. Israel wanted something different (as did the United States), but this is the agreement that was reached — and despite its faults, it is not a bad one. Crucially, it will contribute to Israel's security.

For at least the next decade, Israel will not have to live under the threat of a nuclear Iran and will not face the danger of annihilation. For Israel, that is a major achievement. It will enable Israel to divert precious resources to more immediate threats, like Hezbollah's more than 130,000 rockets, Hamas and the Islamic State, and no less important, to pressing domestic needs.

No agreement is ironclad, but the inspections provisions provide a high degree of confidence that Iran will not be able to renew the nuclear program without its being detected. A regime that has staked so much on this agreement will be reluctant to incur the costs.

It was Israel that decided years ago to give priority to the nuclear issue, as an existential threat, over all other Iranian transgressions, and concluded that if we can just resolve the nuclear threat, that would be good enough. Malign as Iran's other actions are — its regional role, support for terrorism and more — they can be dealt with at a later date; the overriding priority is the nuclear threat.

By portraying the issue in absolute terms, Mr. Netanyahu obfuscated the fact that the agreement is not the end of the story, merely another stage in a decades-long struggle to prevent Iran from going nuclear. Both Israel and the United States wanted a knockout blow; what we got was a punt.

The nuclear issue has not been resolved, but postponed for at least 10 years. When the agreement expires, or in the event of a violation, the international community may have to resume its efforts. Iran has not given up its long-term nuclear aspirations.

The agreement's detractors have been long on invective, short on suggestions. A collapse of the talks would have freed Iran to go forward and left America struggling to maintain a sanctions regime weakened by international disunity. Israel would have remained isolated, left only with the military option. These are hardly desirable outcomes.

Israel may, at some point, still have to go the military route, but it is abundantly clear that no one in Jerusalem has been avid to do so. Had Mr. Netanyahu wanted to launch an attack, he had many chances. But for very good reasons, not the least of which was American opposition, he did not.

An attack probably could not have achieved more than a few years' postponement of Iran's program, whereas the agreement will do so for at least 10 to 15 years. After the deal expires, it's conceivable that Iran will prefer to avoid becoming an international pariah again.

Over decades, Israel has built a unique alliance with the United States. This partnership has provided Israel with extensive aid, turned the Israel Defense Forces into one of the world's most advanced militaries and safeguarded Israel's interests in hostile international forums. Without America, the I.D.F. would be an empty shell, and Israel would be isolated and sanctioned.

Part of being a junior ally is knowing when to say, "Enough, we have made our case, time to be a team player." Nothing is more important for Israel's security than the vitality of its relationship with the United States — which Israel will still need in order to deal with Iran in the future.

Chuck Freilich, a former deputy national security adviser in Israel, is a senior fellow at Harvard's Belfer Center and the author of "Zion's Dilemmas: How Israel Makes National Security Policy."

Avoid a black-and-white view of the Middle East. The idea that Iran is everywhere our enemy and the Sunni Arabs our allies is a mistake. Saudi Arabia's leadership has been a steadfast U.S. ally in the Cold War; many Saudis are pro-American. But the Saudi leadership's ruling bargain is toxic: It says to the Saudi people that the al-Saud tribe gets to rule and in return the Saudi Wahhabi religious establishment gets billions of dollars to transform the face of Sunni Islam from an open and modernizing faith to a puritanical, anti-women, anti-Shiite, anti-pluralistic one. The Saudis have lost control of this puritanical-Salafist transformation of Islam, and it has mutated into the ideology that inspired the 9/11 hijackers — 15 of 19 of whom were Saudis — and the Islamic State.

Iran aided the U.S. in toppling the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, and, at the same time, Tehran, and its cat's paw, Hezbollah, have propped up the Syrian regime while it has perpetrated a genocide against its own people, mostly Syrian Sunnis. We need to confront Iran's regional behavior when it contradicts our interests, but align with it when it comports with our interests. We want to balance the autocratic Sunnis and Shiites, not promote either. Neither share our values.

Finally, when it comes to the Middle East broadly, we need to contain, amplify and innovate: Contain the most aggressive forces there, amplify any leaders or people building decency there, and innovate on energy like crazy to keep prices low, reduce oil money to bad actors and reduce our exposure to a region that is going to be in turmoil for a long, long, long time.

The Door to Iran Opens

Roger Cohen JULY 16, 2015

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/17/.../roger-cohen-the-door-to-iran-opens.html>

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel calls it a “historic mistake” that permits Iran “a sure path to nuclear weapons.” A minister in his government, unable to resist outrageous hyperbole, calls it “one of the darkest days in world history.” Jeb Bush, doing the tired Chamberlain-Obama number, dismisses it as “appeasement.”

So what do the critics, from Republican presidential hopefuls to the Israeli government, seek in place of the deal with Iran that verifiably blocks Tehran’s path to a nuclear weapon for at least the next 10 to 15 years? Presumably, they want what would have happened if negotiations had collapsed. That would be renewed war talk as an unconstrained Iran installs sophisticated centrifuges, its stockpile of enriched uranium grows, Russia and China abandon the sanctions regime, moderates in Iran like Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif are sidelined, and a nuclear-armed Islamic Republic draws closer.

To favor such peril, when a constructive alternative exists that engages one of the most highly educated societies in the Middle East, amounts to foolishness dressed up as machismo.

The Iran nuclear deal is not perfect, nor was it ever intended to address the long list of American-Iranian grievances, which will persist. It must be judged on what it set out to do — stop Iran going nuclear — not on whether Iran has a likeable regime (it does not) or does bad things (it does). President Obama did not set out to change Iran but he has created a framework that, over a decade, might.

If implemented, the agreement constitutes the most remarkable American diplomatic achievement since the Dayton Accords put an end to the Bosnian war two decades ago. It increases the distance between Iran and a bomb as it reduces the distance between Iran and the world. It makes the Middle East less dangerous by forestalling proliferation. In a cacophonous age of short-termism, it offers a lesson of stubborn leadership in pursuit of a long-term goal.

For many years, before Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry embarked on their diplomacy, Iran had been increasing its operating centrifuges and the size and enrichment level of its uranium stockpile. Now, the number of centrifuges is to be slashed by two-thirds to 5,060; the stockpile is to be all but eliminated; enrichment levels are capped at 3.7 percent, a long way from bomb grade; the potential route to weapons-grade plutonium at Arak is disabled; international inspection is redoubled and, in Obama’s words, will extend “where necessary,” “when necessary.” In return, Iran gets the phased elimination of most sanctions, the end to its pariah status, and a windfall that will alleviate its economic crisis.

And this is “one of the darkest days in world history”? No, it is a moment for guarded hope.

Iran, at 36 years from its theocratic revolution, is a repressive but pragmatic power under an aging leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, whose conduct in the talks saw his anti-American instincts counterbalanced by understanding of a reform imperative. Iran is finely poised between a tough old guard forged in revolution and its aspirational, Westward-looking youth. A decade is a long time in societies in transition.

It is far better to have deep American-Iranian differences — over Hezbollah, over Syria, over regional Shiite irredentism, over Iran's vile anti-Israel outbursts — addressed through dialogue rather than have Iran do its worst as pariah.

This accord has the merit of condemning the United States and Tehran to a relationship — however hostile — over the next 15 years. The Middle East, several of its states irremediably fractured, needs a new security framework. This will take years. But to imagine it could ever be fashioned without Iran's involvement is fantasy. Meanwhile, the West and Iran have a common enemy: the medieval slaughterers of Islamic State. Whether concerted action will result from a shared objective is unclear, but the possibility is there.

Many possibilities have been opened by this accord. They include the doomsayers' vision of a dissembling, newly solvent Iran at work to subversive, anti-American ends. Strict verification is imperative.

But Congress should think twice before the feel-good, reckless adoption of a resolution condemning a deal that advances American interests. Obama would veto it, and almost certainly has the votes to resist an override, but this would be a regrettable way for the nation to assume such a ground-shifting agreement.

The president is right to invoke the bold accords of past presidents — both Republicans — with hostile regimes in Beijing and Moscow. Neither was risk-free. Both proved transformative — not only of bilateral relations but the entire world.

Israel, too, should ask the hard questions rather than dismiss a deal that puts Iran much further from a bomb, empowers Iranian reformists, locks in American-Iranian dialogue and will be leveraged by Netanyahu to secure more advanced American weapons systems.

The darkest days in history for the Jewish people were of an altogether different order. They should never be trivialized.

Tehran's Nuclear Triumph

Anonymous. Wall Street Journal, Eastern edition; New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y] 15 July 2015: A.18.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/tehrans-nuclear-triumph-1436917096>

President Obama was right on Tuesday to hail his nuclear agreement with Iran as historic, though not because of his claim that it will "prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon." The agreement all but guarantees that Tehran will eventually become a nuclear power, while limiting the ability of a future President to prevent it.

We say this after reading the 159-page text, complete with five annexes, which offers a clearer view than the President's broad and happy description. "We give up nothing by testing whether or not this problem can be solved peacefully," Mr. Obama said. "If, in a worst-case scenario, Iran violates the deal, the same options will be available to me today will be available to any U.S. President in the future."

The President's case is that the deal effectively rents Iran's nuclear compliance for 15 years -- longer than anticipated by April's framework. Iran won't be allowed to enrich uranium to more than civilian-grade, and it will have to ship or sell all but 300 kilos abroad. Iran pledges to build no new heavy-water reactors and modify the one it has so it can't produce bomb-grade plutonium.

As for inspections, Iran has promised to sign the Additional Protocol of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which allows watchdogs from the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) greater licence to monitor nuclear sites. Iran has also agreed to buy its nuclear-related material through a monitored procurement channel; as recently as January it was caught trying to procure dual-use technologies in the Czech Republic.

Iran has also promised to answer the IAEA's questions about the military dimensions of its past nuclear work, though the answers won't be forthcoming until December. "The IAEA will have access where necessary, when necessary," Mr. Obama promised. "That arrangement is permanent." In exchange Iran gets sanctions relief that Mr. Obama promises can "snap back into place" if Iran violates the deal.

The reality is far more complicated and favorable to the Iranians, which explains the celebrations at high levels in Tehran.

Start with the inspections. Contrary to Mr. Obama, the IAEA's enhanced monitoring isn't permanent but limited to between 15 and 25 years depending on the process. Also contrary to his "where necessary, when necessary" claim, inspectors will only be allowed to ask permission of the Iranians to inspect suspected sites, and "such requests will not be aimed at interfering with Iranian military or other national security activities."

If Iran objects, as it will, "the Agency may request access", and Iran can propose "alternative arrangements" to address the concerns. If that fails, as it will, the dispute

gets kicked upstairs, first to a "Joint Commission," then to a Ministerial review, then to an "Advisory Board," then to the U.N. Security Council -- with each stop on the bureaucratic road taking weeks or months.

This is far worse than the U.S.-Soviet arms agreements, in which the U.S. could protest directly to Moscow. Iran now has an international bureaucratic guard to deflect and deter U.S. or IAEA concerns.

The deal places sharp limits on Iran's current use of first-generation IR-1 centrifuges. But it allows hundreds of those centrifuges to remain in the heavily defended Fordo facility, where they are supposed to remain idle but could be reactivated at the flick of a switch. The deal also permits Iran to build and test advanced centrifuges. This means Iran can quickly field a highly sophisticated, and easily dispersed, enrichment capability when the agreement expires.

All of this assumes that Iran will honor its commitments, notwithstanding its long record of cheating. Mr. Obama's answer here is that he or his successor can reimpose sanctions, but that will be a tough sell once sanctions relief kicks in over 12 to 16 months and a pro-Iran commercial lobby resurfaces in Europe, China and Russia. A committee of the eight signatories would have to vote to restore sanctions. "Snap-back" is a mirage.

Perhaps most dismaying is that this nuclear deal also lifts sanctions on Iran's conventional weapons' trade in five years, and ballistic missiles in eight. Missiles are the most effective way of delivering a nuclear weapon -- including to the U.S. -- and as recently as last week Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Martin Dempsey warned Congress that "under no circumstances should we relieve pressure on Iran relative to ballistic missile capabilities and arms trafficking."

The U.S. appears to have caved on this point at the last minute after ultimatums from Tehran. This will be especially upsetting to our regional allies, which will have to cope with a newly empowered Iran flush with cash from sanctions relief.

All of this means that the deal leaves Tehran as a nuclear-threshold state even if it adheres to the terms, able to continue its nuclear research and retain its facilities while it waits for U.N. supervision to end. The other nations of the region will take that point, no matter Mr. Obama's assurances. Instead of eliminating a revolutionary regime's nuclear ambitions, the Vienna accord promises to usher in a new age of nuclear proliferation.

(See related letters: "Letters to the Editor: Iran Will Treat Any Obama Red Lines With Contempt" -- WSJ July 21, 2015)

Word count: 863

The Best Arguments for an Iran Deal

Stephens, Bret Author Information. , Eastern edition; New York, N.Y. 14 July 2015: A.11.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-best-arguments-for-an-iran-deal-1436829351>

In formal rhetoric, prolepsis means the anticipation of possible objections to an argument for the sake of answering them. So let's be proleptic about the Iranian nuclear deal, whose apologists are already trotting out excuses for this historic diplomatic debacle.

The heroic case. Sure, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei is an irascible and violent revolutionary bent on imposing a dark ideology on his people and his neighborhood. Much the same could be said of Mao Zedong when Henry Kissinger paid him a visit in 1971 -- a diplomatic gamble that paid spectacular dividends as China became a de facto U.S. ally in the Cold War and opened up to the world under Deng Xiaoping.

But the hope that Iran is the new China fails a few tests. Mao faced an overwhelming external threat from the Soviet Union. Iran faces no such threat and is winning most of its foreign proxy wars. Beijing ratcheted down tensions with Washington with friendly table-tennis matches. Tehran ratchets them up by locking up American citizens and seizing cargo ships in the Strait of Hormuz. Deng Xiaoping believed that to get rich is glorious. Iranian President Hasan Rouhani, a supposed reformer, spent last Friday marching prominently in the regime's yearly "Death to America, Death to Israel" parade.

If there is evidence of an Iranian trend toward moderation it behooves proponents of a deal to show it.

The transactional case. OK, so Iran hasn't really moderated its belligerent behavior, much less its antediluvian worldview. And a deal won't mean we won't still have to oppose Iran on other battlefields, whether it's Yemen or Syria or Gaza. But that doesn't matter, because a nuclear deal is nothing more than a calculated swap. Iran puts its nuclear ambitions into cold storage for a decade. In exchange, it comes in from the cold economically and diplomatically. Within circumscribed parameters, everyone can be a winner.

But a transaction requires some degree of trust. Since we can't trust Iran we need an airtight system of monitoring and verification. Will the nuclear deal provide that? John Kerry will swear that it will, but as recently as January Czech officials blocked a covert \$61 million purchase by Iran of "dual-use" nuclear technologies. A month before that, the U.S. found evidence that Iran had gone on an illicit "shopping spree" for its plutonium plant in Arak. That's what we know. What do we not know?

Also, how does a nuclear deal not wind up being Iran's ultimate hostage in dictating terms for America's broader Mideast policy? Will the administration risk its precious nuclear deal if Iran threatens to break it every time the two countries are at loggerheads over regional crises in Yemen or Syria? The North Koreans already

mastered the art of selling their nuclear compliance for one concession after another -- and they still got the bomb.

The defeatist case. All right: So the Iran deal is full of holes. Maybe it won't work. Got any better ideas? Sanctions weren't about to stop a determined regime, and we couldn't have enforced them for much longer. Nobody wants to go to war to stop an Iranian bomb, not the American public and not even the Israelis. And conservatives, of all people, should know that foreign policy often amounts to a choice between evils. The best case for a nuclear deal is that it is the lesser evil.

Then again, serious sanctions were only imposed on Iran in November 2011. They cut the country's oil exports by half, shut off its banking system from the rest of the world, sent the rial into free fall and caused the inflation rate to soar to 60%. By October 2013 Iran was six months away from a severe balance-of-payments crisis, according to estimates by the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. And that was only the first turn of the economic screw: Iran's permitted oil exports could have been cut further; additional sanctions could have been imposed on the "charitable" foundations controlled by Iran's political, military and clerical elite. Instead of turning the screw, Mr. Obama relieved the pressure the next month by signing on to the interim agreement now in force.

It's true that nobody wants war. But a deal that gives Iran the right to enrich unlimited quantities of uranium after a decade or so would leave a future president no option other than war to stop Iran from building dozens of bombs. And a deal that does nothing to stop Iran's development of ballistic missiles would allow them to put one of those bombs atop one of those missiles.

Good luck. Americans are a lucky people -- lucky in our geography, our founders and the immigrants we attract to our shores. So lucky that Bismarck supposedly once said "there is a special providence for drunkards, fools, and the United States of America."

Maybe we'll get lucky again. Maybe Iran will change for the better after Mr. Khamenei passes from the scene. Maybe international monitors will succeed with Iran where they failed with North Korea. Maybe John Kerry is the world's best negotiator, and this deal was the best we could do.

Or maybe we won't be lucky. Maybe there's no special providence for nations drunk on hope, led by fools.

(See related letter: "Letters to the Editor: A Submission to Iran's Ambitions" -- WSJ July 18, 2015)

Credit: By Bret Stephens

Word count: 895

Why They're Cheering in Tehran

Kagan, Frederick Author Information. Wall Street Journal, Eastern edition; New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y] 15 July 2015: A.19.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/why-theyre-cheering-in-tehran-1436916912>

The nuclear agreement with Iran announced Tuesday is an astoundingly good deal, far surpassing the hopes of anyone . . . in Tehran. It requires Iran to reduce the number of centrifuges enriching uranium by about half, to sell most of its current uranium stockpile or "downblend" it to lower levels of enrichment, and to accept inspections (whose precise nature is yet to be specified) by the International Atomic Energy Agency, something that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei had wanted to avoid.

But the agreement also permits Iran to phase out the first-generation centrifuges on which it now relies and focus its research and development by exclusively using a number of advanced centrifuge models many times more efficient, which has been Tehran's plan all along. The deal will also entirely end the United Nations' involvement in Iran's nuclear program in 10 years, and in 15 years will lift most restrictions on the program.

Even that, though, is not Tehran's biggest win. The main achievement of the regime's negotiators is striking a deal that commits the West to removing almost all sanctions on Iran, including most of those imposed to reduce terrorism or to prevent weapons proliferation. Most of the sanctions are likely to end in a few months. Thus the agreement ensures that after a short delay Iran will be able to lay the groundwork for a large nuclear arsenal and, in the interim, expand its conventional military capabilities as much as the regime pleases. The supreme leader should be very proud of his team.

The agreement consists of 159 pages of opaque prose, and key sections are referred to but are not clearly marked. Even figuring out the timeline embodied in the deal is hard, but it appears to run about as follows:

"Finalization Day" was July 14. The agreement stipulates that a resolution will be submitted to the United Nations Security Council "promptly after the conclusion of the negotiations . . . for adoption without delay" that will "terminate" all preceding U.N. Security Council resolutions against Iran. The document doesn't mention the 60-day window for review by the U.S. Congress, and the language in this section suggests that action in the U.N. will not await any congressional vote.

"Adoption Day" is the next major milestone, coming either 90 days after the approval of the Security Council resolution or "at an earlier date by mutual consent." If the Security Council moves smartly, Adoption Day could come in October. At that point Iran commits to apply the Additional Protocol of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which governs enhanced international inspections. But this commitment is provisional, "pending ratification by the Majlis" -- the Iranian parliament. It is again noteworthy that no mention is made of any action to be taken by the U.S. Congress, despite the nod to Iran's legislature.

Determining when "Implementation Day" happens is even more difficult, since it depends on the completion of a series of negotiations between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency. The timeline for those negotiations, however, is spelled out in a separate document: Discussions are to be complete by Oct. 15, 2015, and the IAEA director general will submit a final report to his board of governors by Dec. 15.

Iran at this point will be rewarded. The European Union will end a large number of sanctions; President Obama will issue waivers for a number of U.S. sanctions or rescind the executive orders that imposed them. Iranian banks will be allowed back into the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications system, or Swift, allowing Iran to reintegrate into the dollar economy and move money freely.

The agreement also specifies that the EU will lift sanctions against the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps; the Quds Force and possibly its commander, Maj. Gen. Qasem Soleimani; and a large number of other individuals and entities sanctioned not simply for their roles in the nuclear program but for terrorism and human-rights abuses. This sanctions relief will come by 2023 at the latest. The agreement does not appear to oblige the U.S. to lift sanctions on those people and entities.

The survival of the international arms embargo against Iran, however, depends entirely on the U.N. Security Council resolution passed to implement this agreement. Nothing in the text of the agreement itself supports President Obama's assertion that the embargo will last for another five years, although he may have that time frame in mind.

The current embargo was implemented by two resolutions: No. 1696 (2006) and No. 1929 (2010). The first bars the sale or transfer to Iran of any material or technology that might be useful to a ballistic-missile program, and the second does the same for "battle tanks, armored combat vehicles, large caliber artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, missiles, or missile systems."

A new resolution that simply terminates all of the previous sanctions would allow Russia and China to provide Iran with any military technology they choose. To preserve the embargo, the U.S. would need to add the appropriate language to the resolution that must be passed by the Security Council this summer. But that means getting agreement from the Russians, who have already said that the embargo should be ended immediately. The U.S. is not in a very strong position to engage the Russians on this point, since the Obama administration must get the resolution through the Security Council quickly or risk having the entire nuclear deal fall apart.

Experts will debate the value of the concessions Iran has made on the nuclear front, but the value to Iran of the concessions the U.S. has made on nonnuclear issues is immeasurable. It is hard to imagine any other circumstance under which Tehran could have hoped to get an international, U.N. Security Council-backed commitment to remove the Republican Guard and Quds Force from any sanctions list, or to have the fate of the arms embargo placed in the hands of Vladimir Putin.

It is still more remarkable that the agreement says nothing about Iran's terrorist activities, human-rights violations or role in regional weapons proliferation -- all of

which were drivers of the embargo in the first place. Iran makes no commitment to change its terrorist or oppressive ways, but the international community promises to eliminate those sanctions anyway.

Nor is there much mystery about what Iran will do with these concessions. Tehran has recently concluded an agreement giving Syria's Bashar Assad a \$1 billion line of credit. The Iranian regime has announced that it is preparing to take delivery of the Russian S-300 anti-aircraft missile system. The supreme leader has released a five-year economic plan calling for a significant expansion of Iran's ballistic-missile and cyberwar programs and an increase in Iran's defense capabilities.

The Obama administration seems to be betting that lifting sanctions will cause Iran to moderate its behavior in both nuclear and nonnuclear matters. The rhetoric and actions of the regime's leaders provide little evidence to support this notion and much evidence to the contrary. The likelihood is, therefore, that this agreement will lead to a significant expansion in the capabilities of the Iranian military, including the Republican Guard and the Quds Force. It comes just as Iran is straining to keep Bashar Assad in power, dominate the portions of Iraq not controlled by Islamic State and help the Houthis fight Saudi Arabia in Yemen. That makes it a very good deal for Iran.

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Credit: By Frederick Kagan

Word count: 1248

The Iranian Nuclear-Inspection Charade

Tobey, William Author Information. Wall Street Journal, Eastern edition; New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y] 16 July 2015: A.11.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-iranian-nuclear-inspection-charade-1437001048>

In the months leading up to Tuesday's announcement of a nuclear agreement with Iran, American proponents and skeptics of the deal at least agreed on one thing: the importance of "anywhere, anytime" inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities.

On the skeptical side, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R., Calif.) said on June 30: "The standard needs to be 'go anywhere, anytime' -- not go 'some places, sometimes.'" Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell that same day called for "complete agreement on 'anytime, anywhere' inspections."

On the Obama administration side, there was Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz in April saying, "We expect to have anywhere, anytime access." And Deputy National Security Adviser Ben Rhodes also in April saying: "In the first place we will have anytime, anywhere access [to] nuclear facilities."

Yet in announcing the deal this week, President Obama said inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency "will have access where necessary, when necessary."

Note the distinction: Agreeing on what is "necessary" is going to be a preoccupation of the new inspections regime. No wonder Mr. Rhodes was on CNN on Wednesday denying that negotiators had ever sought anytime, anywhere inspections.

Under the deal's terms, when the IAEA demands access to a suspect site, Iran will have 14 days to fulfill the request or propose other means to satisfy it. If the matter remains unresolved, a joint commission with representatives from each of the eight parties to the agreement would have a further week to act, and Iran would then be given three days to comply. Thus, 24 days might elapse between a request for access by the IAEA and a requirement upon Iran to provide it -- ample time for Iran to hide or destroy evidence.

Many observers now are in despair over how far short the nuclear agreement falls of the "anywhere, anytime" standard. But the promise of what such unfettered access could accomplish was always a chimera. Much more would be required for any attempt to monitor Iran's nuclear program to be a success.

Verifying Iran's nuclear-safeguards obligations to the IAEA could never have been accomplished solely with anywhere, anytime inspections. Iran is too vast and its government too practiced at denying information and deceiving inspectors for such an Easter egg hunt to succeed.

For inspections to be meaningful, Iran would have to completely and correctly declare all its relevant nuclear activities and procurement, past and present. Veteran CIA nuclear-verification expert John Lauder recently told me that data declarations are

"most important because they help set the stage for all other measures." As former IAEA chief inspector Olli Heinonen told the New York Times last year: "You don't need to see every nut and bolt, but you are taking a heck of a risk if you don't establish a baseline of how far they went."

Tehran should already have made a full declaration under its obligations that predated the Tuesday accord, but the IAEA has found that Iran repeatedly failed to do so. Moreover, the agency as far back as November 2011 identified 12 areas of Iranian activities that could only be explained by nuclear-weapons development, calling them the "possible military dimensions" of Iran's nuclear program.

Despite repeated IAEA efforts to investigate these matters, and Iranian promises to cooperate, Tehran blocked meaningful progress. Now the new agreement calls again on Iran to cooperate, but it offers no reason to believe that the Iranian regime will end its recalcitrance.

For inspectors to do their job, they require access to supporting records and knowledgeable individuals. They would need to examine invoices, lab notes, personnel files, organization charts, production inventories, building plans and other documents supporting the declaration -- assuming one is ever provided -- and to discuss the material with scientists and program managers. As former United Nations and U.S. weapons inspector David Kay recently explained to me: "Unfettered access to people and documents is required to tell inspectors what to look for and where to go."

From there, the inspectors -- in a genuine nuclear-inspections program -- would construct a comprehensive mosaic of Iran's nuclear programs, overt and covert. Tile by tile, they would pursue missing pieces, and flag false or inconsistent ones for closer scrutiny. This would have to proceed until the IAEA concluded that it has a complete and correct declaration covering all nuclear-related activities. The IAEA needs to probe gaps and inconsistencies, which are often more difficult to hide than covert enrichment facilities.

The anywhere, anytime inspections ideal is also misleading because, as a practical matter, such inspections would be impossible in Iran. The regime will always have the power to deny inspectors access to a suspect site. Inspectors are few; minders are many, and backed by an army. If the IAEA requested admittance to a site where covert weapons work had been conducted, Tehran would simply find an excuse to deny it -- as has apparently occurred at Parchin, where past inspection requests yielded only elaborate cleanup efforts.

A successful Iran nuclear agreement would have required far more than anywhere, anytime inspections, let alone the delayed, managed access with a 24-day duration provided under the Iran nuclear deal that President Obama hailed on Tuesday. What was essential is now conspicuously missing: Tehran's submission of a complete and correct nuclear declaration, and the regime's cooperation with IAEA efforts to verify it. Anything short of that is an illusion.

Mr. Tobey, a senior fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard's Kennedy School, is a former deputy administrator for defense nuclear nonproliferation at the National Nuclear Security Administration.

(See related letters: "Letters to the Editor: Iran's Declared Sites Subject to Continual Inspection" -- WSJ July 23, 2015)

Credit: By William Tobey

Word count: 951

Obama Pours Gas on the Mideast Fire

Karen Elliott House. Wall Street Journal, Eastern edition; New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y] 17 July 2015: A.11.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/obama-pours-gas-on-the-mideast-fire-1437087768>

While President Obama hopes his nuclear deal with Iran will burnish his presidential legacy as a great peacemaker, the near-term consequence will be more -- and even bloodier -- sectarian violence in the Middle East. In particular, security threats will escalate for Saudi Arabia and Israel, until now America's two major Mideast allies.

The Israelis and Saudis, longtime adversaries, in recent years have joined in vehement opposition to Mr. Obama's attempts to negotiate a nuclear deal with Tehran. For the Israelis the concern was entirely about an Iranian atomic weapon. But for the Saudis the fear was less about future nuclear capability than about the real and present threat that a deal would further enhance Iran's regional stature and its capability to ratchet up the regime's exploitation of regional sectarian divisions.

That nightmare has arrived. The immediate threat to Saudi Arabia far exceeds that to Israel, which (without saying so) already possesses nuclear weapons and in a real crisis can almost surely be more confident of U.S. support -- from future American presidents, if not the current one -- than can Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, Sunni Saudi Arabia, not Jewish Israel, is Shiite Iran's primary rival for regional hegemony.

Under the deal announced Tuesday, Iran stands to have \$100 billion of assets unfrozen by late this year. That, coupled with the bizarre U.S. decision to unfreeze the ban on selling Iran conventional weapons and ballistic missiles down the road, means that Tehran can use those billions of freshly available assets not to enhance its economy, as the Iranians promised negotiators, but rather to buy deadly new arms for its nefarious partners across the region. These include Shiite militias in Iraq, Syria's Bashar Assad, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Syria, and the Houthi rebels in Yemen.

A cocky, conventionally armed Iran increasing regional mischief-making puts Saudi Arabia in the cross hairs -- of Iran, but also of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). As Iranian-backed Shiites across the region increase efforts to exploit turmoil in failing Mideast states for Tehran's benefit, so too will their Sunni opponents in ISIS, who are no friends of the Saudis.

The expansion of Iran and ISIS also means ever-greater internal threats to Saudi stability. Some 60% of the Saudi population is under 30 years old, and unemployment among those young Saudis is about 30%. Saudi Arabia has made it a crime for its citizens to join ISIS, but the Saudi Interior Ministry has acknowledged that in recent years some 2,200 young Saudis have gone to Syria to fight. As Saudi Sunnis watch their Sunni coreligionists being killed by Iranian-backed Shiites across the region with little opposition from any force other than ISIS, that terror organization's appeal grows, especially among deeply religious young Saudis.

But what are Saudi Arabia's choices? The short, subdued statement this week by Riyadh's embassy in Washington again calling for "strict, sustainable" inspections speaks volumes about the kingdom's precarious position and its lack of good options. The deal obviously comes as no surprise to the Saudis, who have watched the Obama administration fervently court Iran at Saudi expense. Given that the kingdom already has taken any number of actions to try to protect itself, few remain. So don't expect any significant Saudi action in the short term, not even openly lobbying Congress against the deal.

Already, Riyadh has reached out to a broader range of countries, sending its top officials to China last year and Russia last month. Only last week, the kingdom's young deputy crown prince boarded a U.S. aircraft carrier in the Persian Gulf to keep alive the impression, however dubious, that Saudi Arabia still can count on the U.S. for protection.

The kingdom has become more assertive on its own behalf, though this can easily be overstated. Saudi efforts to confront Syria's Assad have been mostly unsuccessful, and as Iran gains the freedom under the nuclear deal to buy and share new conventional armaments, overthrowing the Assad regime will be ever harder. Riyadh's bombing campaign against what it sees as an Iranian-backed insurgency by Houthi tribesmen in Yemen has killed more than a thousand civilians but failed to achieve the Saudi goal of restoring Yemen's deposed president.

One semi-successful action by the Saudis: increasing their oil production to put pressure on an Iranian economy already staggering under economic sanctions from the U.S. and Europe. This month the Saudis have been pumping 10.6 million barrels of oil a day, a historic high.

A final option open to the Saudis: Get a nuclear weapon as soon as possible. Prince Turki al Faisal, the kingdom's former head of intelligence, vowed in the spring that "whatever the Iranians have, we will have." The kingdom doesn't have the technological ability to build its own nuclear program and is more likely to lobby Pakistan -- whose nuclear development the Saudis helped fund -- to establish a weapons program on Saudi soil. But Pakistan's nonproliferation commitments make that solution less likely than many Saudis like to pretend.

So, while the nuclear agreement is being cheered in Tehran, while Obama aides are fist-pumping in the White House, while Europeans are salivating at the prospect of doing business in Iran, and while the Israelis are trying to lobby the U.S. Congress against the deal, the Saudis are left grinding their teeth in Riyadh, surveying a bleak future and no good options to change it.

Ms. House, a former publisher of The Wall Street Journal who won a Pulitzer Prize as a reporter for her coverage of the Middle East, is the author of "On Saudi Arabia: Its People, Past, Religion, Fault Lines -- and Future" (Knopf, 2012).

Credit: By Karen Elliott House

Word count: 945

Obama's Iran-nuke deal far, far worse than no deal at all

By Post Editorial Board July 14, 2015 | 7:58pm

<https://nypost.com/2015/07/.../obamas-iran-nuke-deal-far-far-worse-than-no-deal-at-a...>

Back in 2009, President Obama vowed to “take concrete steps toward a world without nuclear weapons.” Now he and Secretary of State John Kerry have instead guaranteed a world with more nukes than ever — and in the most dangerous hands, to boot.

No deal would’ve been far better than the dangerous and misguided one the White House and Tehran are now celebrating.

Indeed, had you told Obama and Kerry two years ago that an Iran accord would contain the conditions outlined Tuesday, they would’ve laughed you out of the room.

But Washington, desperate for an agreement, gave way on one issue after another until — as Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ) rightly noted — Obama’s strict red lines all “turned into green lights.”

Simply put, this deal doesn’t end Iran’s nuclear program — it preserves it.

Obama once vowed that he was committed to ensuring that Iran never acquired nuclear weapons. At best, he’s kicked that can down the road for a decade. And then Iran will be a nuclear threshold state — too close to producing nukes to be stopped.

The deal doesn’t force Iran to halt all uranium enrichment, as Washington once demanded. Or to shut its heavy-water reactor and plutonium-production plant at Arak, or its Fordow underground enrichment facility.

Obama insists the deal is “built on verification,” yet the verification process so favors Iran as to be practically meaningless.

Gone are the “anytime, anywhere” inspection rules. Instead, Tehran gets up to 24 days advance notice. As French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius recently noted, “In 24 days, a lot of things can disappear.”

Where Obama once promised that Iran would have to dismantle all its centrifuges, it can keep 6,000 — and gets international help in advancing its nuclear technology.

The global embargo on conventional arm sales to Tehran goes away in five years; the ban on its ballistic-missile program, in eight.

Iran also gets an end to nuclear-related sanctions — and of many non-nuclear ones, too. That’s an immediate \$150 billion windfall, leaving Tehran free to funnel cash and conventional weapons to its clients.

And the State Department last month confirmed that Iran’s “state sponsorship of terrorism worldwide remain[s] undiminished.”

All this leaves Israel endangered and US allies like Saudi Arabia and Jordan determined to build their own nuclear arsenals.

Déjà vu time: Two decades ago, then-President Bill Clinton promised his nuclear deal with North Korea would be “carefully monitored.” Pyongyang violated that pact from Day One; today, it’s a full-fledged (and bellicose) nuclear power.

Congress has 60 days to review the Iran agreement and issue a resolution of disapproval, which would prevent the president from lifting US sanctions, collapsing the deal.

But Obama has promised to veto such a resolution — and it’s far from certain enough Democrats are willing to buck both him and Hillary Clinton (who gave the pact a cautious endorsement) to override it.

From the day he took office, President Obama has looked to an Iran deal to cement his foreign-policy legacy. It’s a legacy the world will come to regret.

Obama and Kerry crossed every one of their own red lines

By Michael Rubin July 14, 2015 | 7:32pm

<https://nypost.com/2015/.../obama-and-kerry-crossed-every-one-of-their-own-red-line...>

President Obama announced a “historic” agreement with Iran on Tuesday to end decades of conflict over its nuclear ambitions.

Unfortunately, the price tag for this slice of history is craven capitulation on what were once American red lines.

The deal “makes our country and the world safer and more secure,” Obama declared.

Under a compromise worked out by Sens. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) and Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Congress now has 60 days to review the deal. The irony is that congressional critics might base their opposition on the red lines once drawn by Secretary of State John Kerry and President Obama themselves.

In 2013, Kerry declared of the Iranians, “There is no right to enrich.” Two years later? The final agreement allows Iran to keep 5,000 centrifuges, 2,000 more than Pakistan had when it secretly built a nuclear arsenal.

Nor will Iran be limited to current technology; Kerry has ceded Iran’s right to experiment with new-generation centrifuges exponentially more powerful than Iran has now.

But centrifuges are only one part of Iran’s illicit program. In 2013, Kerry told Congress the “whole point of the [sanctions] regime” was to force Iran to “dismantle its nuclear program.” But the deal to which Kerry agreed lets Iran keep everything in place.

This includes Fordo, the once-covert nuclear site Iran built under a mountain.

“They don’t need to have an underground, fortified facility like Fordo in order to have a peaceful nuclear program,” Obama said in 2013. Congress will likely ask what changed, since this deal allows Iran to keep Fordo.

It gets worse. In 1991, the International Atomic Energy Agency required South Africa to come clean on the past 20 years of its nuclear work in order to certify that it had ceased its nuclear weapons program.

Anything short of that, and the IAEA said it could not certify that all material was accounted for. And yet, Kerry caved on this, effectively crafting a deal the IAEA can’t certify.

But what about “anytime, anywhere” inspections? Again, the administration backtracked. First, they qualified by saying they’d be the most intrusive inspections on any country “not defeated in war.”

Then, Kerry backed down on demands that inspectors be able to conduct snap inspections on military sites. Those inspections are necessary because this is where,

according to the IAEA, Iran worked on everything from components for a warhead to detonators.

Finally, he allowed Iran essentially to pre-approve any inspection. That's the equivalent of having a criminal pre-approve a search warrant.

Then, of course, there's the arms embargo. It gets lifted after a short period of time.

This not only means Iran can use its \$100 billion signing bonus (equivalent to 15 times the annual budget of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps) to buy weapons.

It also means Iran can export them to terrorist groups across the region.

Essentially, Obama is reimbursing Iran in full for decades of investment in a covert nuclear program.

The White House insists that Iran will use that money for good, but history disagrees. When Europe tried a similar strategy between 2000 and 2005, Iran invested the bulk of its hard-currency windfall in its covert nuclear program and ballistic missiles.

The White House believes that even if Congress rejects the deal, Obama retains enough support among Democrats to veto any rejection and have the deal hold.

Loyalty to a lame-duck president should never be an excuse to bless a deal so destructive to American and regional security.

Critics characterize the Iran deal as the worst diplomatic bargain since British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain appeased German Chancellor Adolf Hitler on the eve of World War II.

The Wall Street Journal's Bret Stephens explained, "In 1938, Chamberlain bought time to rearm. In 2013, Obama gives Iran time to go nuclear."

Kerry's deal goes farther, and approaches that of his predecessor Frank B. Kellogg, who, in 1928, crafted a pact to ensure "the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy."

Indeed, even before finalizing the agreement, Kerry told The Boston Globe over the weekend that a nuclear deal could open new doors to a broader Middle East peace:

"I think that there's an opportunity here to galvanize people." Members of his negotiating team already reportedly talk about who might play them in a future movie.

For his efforts, Kellogg won the Nobel Peace Prize — but he also laid the groundwork for a world war. Blinded by a noxious mix of ambition and naïveté, Kerry and, for that matter, Obama may not be so different.

Michael Rubin is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

How Obama kneecapped the US Congress on Iran — again

By Rich Lowry July 20, 2015 | 7:25pm

<https://nypost.com/2015/07/.../how-obama-kneecapped-the-us-congress-on-iran-again...>

If only President Obama were as hard-nosed and clever in undermining our adversaries as he is in kneecapping the US Congress, the country's strategic position might be transformed.

The Iran deal went to the UN Security Council for approval Monday, months before Congress will vote on it, and got unanimous approval. The UN vote doesn't bind Congress, but it boxes it in and minimizes it — with malice aforethought.

Republicans and Democrats in Congress issued sharply worded statements about getting pre-empted by Turtle Bay, although the vast international machinery that has been set in motion won't be deflected by a few sharp words from people under the misapprehension that they occupy a co-equal branch of the American government.

What are congressional hearings and the US domestic political debate compared with the "international community"?

Shortly after the UN vote, President Obama urged Congress to get with the program: "There is broad international consensus around this issue," he said, adding that his "assumption is that Congress will pay attention to that broad-based consensus."

In other words, follow the lead of the United Nations on a matter of utmost importance to the national interest of the United States.

Secretary of State John Kerry issued his own warning over the weekend about the dangers of going our own way: "If Congress says 'no' to this deal, then there will be no restraints on Iran. There will be no sanctions left. Our friends in this effort will desert us."

And who's responsible for that? The Obama administration cut a deal eviscerating the international sanctions regime and got it blessed by the United Nations, then turns around and tells Congress it has no alternative but to assent because there will be no meaningful sanctions regime left regardless.

The agreement is written to favor business with Iran. It grandfathers in all commercial deals cut after the initial lifting of the sanctions, even in the unlikely event they are reimposed.

Plus, Iran isn't going to give back its windfall of tens of billions of dollars handed to it under the agreement.

Over the weekend, Kerry seemed offended by the notion that Congress should get to vote before everyone else locks the Iran agreement into place.

"It is presumptuous of some people to say that France, Russia, China, Germany, Britain ought to do what the Congress tells them to do," he said.

This is admirably internationalist, but Kerry's supposed to be the secretary of state of the United States, not a representative of the interests and prerogatives of its allies and adversaries.

The New York Times reports that during the negotiations, Kerry actually pushed to delay a UN vote until Congress reviewed the deal.

How sporting of him. It must have been vestigial loyalty to the Congress he served in for several decades.

Predictably, the Iranians balked (they're not fools), and so did the Russians and the Europeans. Equally predictably, Kerry resorted to his solution to most every knotty negotiating problem — he caved.

Amazingly enough, the agreement with Iran doesn't mention the US Congress or its review of the deal, but specifically cites the Iranian parliament and its role in approving the so-called additional protocol of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

At least someone is willing to stick up for Iran's (largely fraudulent) legislative branch.

It is President Obama's curse that he doesn't have a legislature as compliant as that of Iran's supreme leader.

The president clearly disdains Congress as a body that harbors several hundred Republicans and that can only complicate his grand, legacy-defining initiatives.

He didn't want Congress to have a say at all over the Iran deal, but accepted the Corker bill that requires a near-impossible two-thirds vote to block it.

The administration's message to opponents is that even that supermajority would be too little, too late. Submission is the only option.

Why the Iran deal is in danger

By John Podhoretz July 22, 2015 | 8:13pm

<https://nypost.com/2015/07/22/why-the-iran-deal-is-in-danger/>

The Obama administration has to be worried about the polling data on the Iran deal. It's not good, not good at all.

According to Pew, which released a survey this week, 38 percent support it and 48 percent oppose.

Given the fact that the American people usually follow the president's lead when it comes to foreign policy, this is a pretty bleak result for President Obama.

Even more striking, perhaps, is the relative softness of Democratic support — only 59 percent of Obama's fellow Dems support the pact, fewer than three in five. (Unsurprisingly, nearly 80 percent of Republicans oppose the deal.)

The Pew results appear to contradict an earlier Washington Post/ABC poll that found 56 percent support for the deal with 37 percent against.

But that 56-37 number is hinky. It doesn't jibe with other findings in the same survey.

For example, 35 percent said they approved of the president's handling of Iran, while 52 percent disapproved.

Since the president's "handling of Iran" now boils down exclusively to the pact he made with the mullahs, that painfully low 35 percent approval rating for Obama on Iran is impossible to square with 56 percent support for the deal.

Even more impossible to square are the feelings the public has about the deal.

In the words of James Arkin of Real Clear Politics, "just 35 percent of Americans said they were confident the deal would prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon — and only 6 percent were 'very confident.'"

"Meanwhile, 64 percent said they were not confident the deal would halt Iran's nuclear ambitions, with 42 percent saying they had absolutely no confidence."

These numbers actually confirm rather than undermine the subsequent Pew findings.

Pew's survey is much larger than its predecessor, with nearly 1,700 respondents who say they know something about the terms of the deal.

Pew explains the discrepancy by pointing to the difference in the way the organizations approached the issue:

"The Pew Research question, which does not describe the agreement, finds lower levels of support than the Post/ABC News question, which details the intention to monitor Iran's facilities and raises the possibility of re-imposition of sanctions if Iran does not comply."

In other words, when the pact is described as the administration would want it to be described, it gets soft support — but the overall sense remains that Obama has done a bad job of it when it comes to Iran.

Even more important, the two surveys agree when it comes to the public's confidence that the deal will actually restrain Iran's nuclear ambitions.

The public has no such confidence.

What the polls suggest is that the people of the United States understand that, in the end, the Iran deal is a leap of faith — faith in the mullahs, if you can imagine that, and even more ominously, faith in the so-called "international community."

It is only remotely sensible, as a matter of policy, if you believe that Iran won't cheat and that the international community would care enough if Iran did cheat to enact punishments for its misbehavior.

But if the lessons of recent history teach you that Iran will cheat and there won't be any real will outside the US Congress (and perhaps the next president) to impose sanctions on it for doing so, then it's a mistake.

So it all comes down to what you believe, and a week of intense lobbying has not changed the public's lack of trust in the Iranians or its sense that the president isn't handling the Iranians effectively.

Opponents of the deal have a nearly Sisyphean task ahead in the next two months.

They have to convince 13 Democratic Senators and 43 Democratic House members to vote against the deal — and then to vote a second time to override a presidential veto.

I didn't think this would be possible to achieve when all was said and done, but these poll numbers offer a glimmer of real hope the deal will be rejected by Congress in September — especially since wavering representatives and senators will be going home in August and will be barraged by arguments on the part of those opposed to the deal.

It ain't over yet.

Why the Iran deal's public support is plummeting

By John Podhoretz July 28, 2015 | 8:26pm

<https://nypost.com/2015/07/28/why-the-iran-deals-public-support-is-plummeting/>

It's been two weeks since the Iran deal was announced, and the American public's discomfort with its terms is deepening. American Jews don't like it, despite efforts by Obama's court Jews to make it seem as though they're far more supportive of it than Americans in general.

On Tuesday, CNN released a poll showing opposition to the deal at 52 percent and support at 42 percent. This came on the heels of last week's Pew poll that showed 48 percent opposition and 38 percent support. It also followed passionate testimony on behalf of the deal in the Senate from Secretary of State John Kerry and Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz.

As I said last week in this space, it is a historical anomaly for the public to oppose an international agreement of this sort in this way. One example: In 1979, an NBC News/Associated Press poll showed an astonishing level of support — 81 percent, if you can believe it — for the proposed SALT 2 treaty in the wake of the negotiations between President Jimmy Carter and Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev. (Once the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan at the end of the year, the SALT treaty was toast. It was never presented to Congress for a vote.)

Here's something remarkable: The Israel Project released a poll on Tuesday of 1,000 American Jews. This complex poll, conducted by Olive Tree Strategies, had three different results.

Initially, before any other questions were asked about the Iran deal, Jews opposed it 45-40.

The poll then went through a series of six talking points about specific agreements in the deal. For each of these six talking points, it used the administration's language to defend those points and provided a dispassionate rendering of the opposition's arguments against it.

After going through those six talking points, opposition to the deal rose to 51-35.

A third series of questions designed to gauge levels of concern on points raised against the deal led to a final result in which American Jews opposed it 58-30.

This shows us a few things. First, American Jews basically feel the same way Americans in general feel about the deal. They're against it, though they're also far more positive about Obama in general and therefore some seem inclined on first blush to give him benefit of the doubt.

Dig a little deeper and expose them to the specific arguments pro and con and their distaste for the agreement grows and grows.

Ah, but Obama's court Jews will say, we have a poll, too! J Street released a survey yesterday as well, showing 60 percent Jewish support for the Iran deal.

Not so fast. In the first place, its survey took place between July 21 and July 23; the Israel Project poll ran from July 21-July 26 and is therefore a little fresher.

Second, the J Street survey used the same wording that an ABC News/Washington Post poll completed on July 19 had used. It found 56 percent support for the deal.

But of course it did, since the question the ABC/Post poll had asked was basically pure administration spin with no counter-argument.

The ABC/Post question copied by J Street ran as follows: "The US and other countries have announced a deal to lift economic sanctions against Iran in exchange for Iran agreeing not to produce nuclear weapons. International inspectors would monitor Iran's facilities, and if Iran was caught breaking the agreement economic sanctions would be imposed again. Do you support or oppose this agreement?"

When Pew asked the question without embellishment, the result was 48-38 against. When CNN asked it without embellishment, the result was 52-42 against. When the Israel Project asked it of Jews alone without embellishment, it was 45-40 against. The ABC/Post poll is an outlier, and so is the J Street poll.

Liberal Jews who want to support the deal — like Reps. Sander Levin and John Yarmuth, and Sen. Dianne Feinstein — will surely use these bad data points to shore up their case and comfort themselves. They'd better be wary. The hidden danger for them can be found in the Israel Project poll, and it's this: The more people know, the more they are inclined to oppose it.

And they're only going to learn more and more about it as the weeks pass.

Is Iran nuclear deal better than no deal? Yes: Our view

USA TODAY 6:37 p.m. EDT July 14, 2015

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2015/07/14/iran...nuclear../30126475/>

But details are important, particularly with regard to verification.

Americans awoke to the news Tuesday that, after marathon negotiations, the United States and other world powers finally have a deal with Iran — the first such accord with a nation that has been a global outlaw for three decades.

For all the complexity contained in its , the basic framework is a simple transaction that had been well telegraphed. Iran is prevented from developing the capability to build a nuclear weapon, helping to stabilize a region that needs no more instability. In return, Iran gets out from under crushing economic sanctions, in phases beginning as soon as this year.

As with most of history's important diplomatic documents, of course, this agreement is flawed. Perfection in such matters is never possible, and the nature of negotiations is that neither side gets everything it wants.

Hard-liners in Washington, Tel Aviv and Tehran will do their best to torpedo the agreement. But the question facing Congress, which has 60 days to review the deal, isn't whether this is a perfect document. It's whether this is better than no deal, and whether more attractive options exist.

That's where the details are important, particularly with regard to verification. How, for example, can it be guaranteed that, buried deep within a mountainside, Iran won't quietly build a nuclear capability that could allow it to hurtle toward a weapon?

The agreement entrusts this responsibility to the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations body that has, more or less effectively, monitored compliance with nuclear non-proliferation. Now, IAEA scientists and investigators will have unprecedented access, with onsite inspection and around-the-clock online monitoring of known nuclear sites. Without this pact, they will have none.

If Iran cheats, there remains the option of a "snap back" to the tough sanctions that played a significant role in bringing Iran to the negotiating table in the first place.

The biggest concern about the deal, which makes this an especially tough call, is that a nasty regime in a tinderbox of a region — a regime that continues to threaten Israel's existence and hold at least three Americans — will gain billions of dollars from sanctions relief to stir up trouble.

It's worth remembering, however, that the Shiite clerics of Iran are every bit as opposed as America to the expansionist and violent attacks of the Sunni terrorists of the Islamic State. The Iranians are as likely to pour new resources into neutralizing this threat as into any anti-American, anti-Western operations.

So what has been won by these arduous negotiations? First, an option other than war to thwart Iran's nuclear ambitions, one that positions the U.S. as a leader in making the world a safer place with a stroke of a pen rather than at the tip of a sword.

The agreement also buys valuable time that can be used to work to end the deadly challenge from ISIL, restore some degree of normalcy in Iraq and Syria, and pursue new peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians. All these tasks are more difficult with the spectre of an imminent Iranian bomb hanging over the world.

President Obama faces a tough sell. But his critics — who've been wrong about the effectiveness of sanctions, and wrong about Iran's willingness to bargain, allow intrusive inspections and reduce its stock of enriched uranium — will have to make the case that this time, they're finally right.

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Sen. Graham: Iran deal fails on all fronts

Lindsey Graham 6:33 p.m. EDT July 14, 2015

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/.../iran-nuclear...sen-lindsey-graham.../30143217/>

With the mere passage of time, Iran will become a nuclear nation.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., is a candidate for the Republican presidential nomination.

Three perspectives must be taken into account to judge this deal: how it affects the United States, our allies in Israel and the Sunni Arab states. The agreement fails on each front.

As Americans, we did not achieve our initial goal, which President Obama and I both shared, of dismantling and rolling back the Iranians' ability to build a nuclear bomb. Instead, we have ensured that with the mere passage of time, Iran will become a nuclear nation.

There is no requirement that Iran change its behavior before restrictions on its nuclear program are lifted, and the deal does not require the Iranians to dismantle all their nuclear infrastructure. They will be allowed to continue research on advanced centrifuges.

"Anytime, anywhere" inspections of Iranian military facilities were dropped, and I am skeptical that Iran will be required to fully disclose all its past nuclear work. Worst of all, Iran, the largest state sponsor of terrorism, will receive more than \$100 billion in sanctions relief in short order. We know from Iran's track record that this won't be used for roads and bridges, but to fund Hamas and Hezbollah and further entrench Bashar Assad in Syria.

In Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the agreement a "mistake of historic proportions." This may prove to be an understatement. This deal puts our close ally Israel in a box. Israelis understand we are giving their chief antagonist — the very people who hate Israel the most — the capability to develop a nuclear weapon. At the end of the day, I fear this could be a death sentence for the State of Israel.

Finally, Sunni Arab nations are going to feel threatened by this deal and are going to try to get a nuke of their own. Iran already controls four Arab capitals. With more money, Iran's destabilizing influence will only grow. Restrictions on Iran's ballistic missile systems are beyond the scope of the agreement. This alone guarantees a nuclear arms race in the region as Iran's rivals seek the means to protect themselves.

This agreement is far worse than I ever imagined it could be. Over time, it will prove to be a nightmare for our own national security, the region as a whole, and eventually the world at large.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., is a candidate for the Republican presidential nomination.

Nuclear deal worse than imagined

Charles Krauthammer 8:02 p.m. EDT July 16, 2015

When you write a column, as did I two weeks ago, headlined “The worst agreement in U.S. diplomatic history,” you don’t expect to revisit the issue. We had hit bottom. Or so I thought. Then on Tuesday the final terms of the Iranian nuclear deal were published. I was wrong.

Who would have imagined we would be giving up the conventional arms and ballistic missile embargoes on Iran? In nuclear negotiations?

When asked at his Wednesday news conference why there is nothing in the deal about the four American hostages being held by Iran, President Obama explained that this is a separate issue, not part of nuclear talks.

Are conventional weapons not a separate issue? After all, conventional, by definition, means non-nuclear. Why are we giving up the embargoes?

Because Iran, joined by Russia — our “reset” partner — sprung the demand at the last minute, calculating that Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry were so desperate for a deal that they would cave. They did. And have convinced themselves that they scored a victory by delaying the lifting by five to eight years. (Ostensibly. The language is murky. The interval could be considerably shorter.)

Obama claimed in his Wednesday news conference that it really doesn’t matter because we can always intercept Iranian arms shipments to, say, Hezbollah.

But wait. Obama has insisted throughout that we are pursuing this Iranian diplomacy to avoid the use of force, yet now blithely discards a previous diplomatic achievement — the arms embargo — by suggesting, no matter, we can just shoot our way to interdiction.

Moreover, the most serious issue is not Iranian exports but Iranian imports — of sophisticated Russian and Chinese weapons. These are untouchable. We are not going to attack Russian and Chinese transports.

The net effect of this capitulation will be not only to endanger our Middle East allies now under threat from Iran and its proxies, but to endanger our own naval forces in the Persian Gulf. Imagine how Iran’s acquisition of the most advanced anti-ship missiles would threaten our control over the Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, waterways we have kept open for international commerce for a half-century.

The other major shock in the final deal is what happened to our insistence on “anytime, anywhere” inspections. Under the final agreement, Iran has the right to deny international inspectors access to any undeclared nuclear site. The denial is then adjudicated by a committee — on which Iran sits. It then goes through several other bodies, on all of which Iran sits. Even if the inspectors’ request prevails, the approval process can take 24 days.

And what do you think will be left to be found, left un scrubbed, after 24 days? The whole process is farcical.

The action now shifts to Congress. The debate is being hailed as momentous. It is not. It's irrelevant.

Congress won't get to vote on the deal until September. But Obama is taking the agreement to the U.N. Security Council for approval within days. Approval there will cancel all previous U.N. resolutions outlawing and sanctioning Iran's nuclear activities.

Meaning: Whatever Congress ultimately does, it won't matter because the legal underpinning for the entire international sanctions regime against Iran will have been dismantled at the Security Council. Ten years of painstakingly constructed international sanctions will vanish overnight, irretrievably.

Even if Congress rejects the agreement, do you think the Europeans, the Chinese or the Russians will reinstate sanctions? The result: The United States is left isolated while the rest of the world does thriving business with Iran.

Should Congress then give up? No. Congress needs to act in order to rob this deal of, at least, its domestic legitimacy. Rejection will make little difference on the ground. But it will make it easier for a successor president to legitimately reconsider an executive agreement (Obama dare not call it a treaty — it would be instantly rejected by the Senate) that garnered such pathetically little backing in either house of Congress.

It's a future hope, but amid dire circumstances. By then, Iran will be flush with cash, legitimized as a normal international actor in good standing, recognized (as Obama once said) as "a very successful regional power." Stopping Iran from going nuclear at that point will be infinitely more difficult and risky.

Which is Obama's triumph. He has locked in his folly. He has laid down his legacy and we will have to live with the consequences for decades.

Not nuclear, but no matter: Column

David A. Andelman 1:55 p.m. EDT July 21, 2015

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2015/07/21/nuclear-weapons.../30380641/>

Lost in the rhetoric of the Iran deal is another lethal and looming arms race.

Lost in the debate over the fine print of the Iran nuclear agreement is another, potentially more destabilizing near-term consequence: a newly energized conventional arms race in the Middle East.

The United States and our allies could halt or slow this quiet race by countries in the region to arm themselves to the hilt. But for reasons of guilt, political expediency or simply wanting to win friends, we risk abrogating our responsibilities and touching off a new spiral of lethal firepower.

The widely expressed fear about the Iran deal is over the sudden \$100 billion windfall of long-frozen assets available to Tehran once economic sanctions come off — funds in theory available to augment the conventional military arsenal it can place at the service of unsavory and destabilizing elements in the region. Let's assume Iran will spend this windfall on arms rather than, as the CIA has been telling folks, on its severely strained economy. Under terms of the nuclear deal, Iran can't even begin buying arms with that windfall for five years.

Meanwhile, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, which monitors worldwide arms sales, Saudi Arabia spent \$80 billion on its armed forces in 2014, including \$2.6 billion on arms from abroad. The nearby United Arab Emirates spent \$23 billion, buying \$1 billion in foreign arms.

This year, Saudi Arabia is poised to become the largest single market for U.S. arms sales abroad with \$2.8 billion already on the books, and that's before the Iran agreement has been inked. Even Qatar in May bought 24 Rafale fighters from France for \$7.1 billion.

As for Iran, during this same two-year period, with the full weight of international sanctions in effect, its arms purchases totaled \$44 million. But even at the height of its pre-embargo arms purchases in 2006, it bought barely \$423 million in arms from abroad — a tiny fraction of the purchases by many of its most bitter foes.

Israel, which feels itself most deeply and immediately threatened by Iran's bellicose statements, will hardly be left out in the cold. Back in February, long before the nuclear accord was concluded and before Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's controversial address to a joint session of the U.S. Congress, Israel had already agreed to more \$3.3 billion in arms purchases from the U.S. The package included 14 F-35 fighter jets — the most advanced in America's arsenal — from Lockheed Martin for \$1.4 billion, plus 3,000 Hellfire missiles, 250 AIM-120C Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles and 50 BLU-113 "bunker-buster" bombs — for an additional \$1.9 billion. Congress quietly and overwhelmingly approved that deal in May, two months after Netanyahu's visit.

This week, in an effort to reassure the region, Defense Secretary Ashton Carter embarked on a swing through Israel, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Israeli officials were quick to say new arms sales weren't on the table, but then Tzachi Hanegbi, head of the foreign affairs and defense committee of the Israeli parliament, told reporters, "I assume that if Congress fails to change or improve the agreement, we will discuss solutions."

Critics of the nuclear deal also worry that Russia will leap into the fray with its own massive conventional military sales to Iran as soon as the money's available. But it's unlikely the Russians will want to turn over their most advanced weapons systems to Iran. They don't want to run the risk of the arsenals being turned back someday on them.

The reality is that Saudi Arabia and Israel, as well as the oil-rich Persian Gulf emirates, aren't arming themselves against the possibility of a sudden breakout dash to a nuclear weapon by Iran, though that argument might well resonate most effectively on Capitol Hill. Saudi Arabia simply does not want to see Iran as any immediate challenge to its role as regional leader. And Israel wants no break in the uneasy but enduring stability it has managed to maintain in the wake of three major wars and innumerable skirmishes it has won over its Arab neighbors. Yet a new conventional arms race could prove especially dangerous if, in an effort to appease Israel, the U.S. tilts the balance of power in a region already so delicately balanced.

The cynical case, of course, is that Iran's neighbors will use the specter of a newly resurgent Iran to pry more weapons sales out of the West. We shouldn't succumb. Certainly, our defense contractors will be slaving at the prospect. And doubtless there will be promises made and winks and nods exchanged in the course of the debate over the nuclear accord — particularly because many of these products are made in defense plants vital to many in Congress and their districts.

Even so, this is the very moment when wisdom must trump avarice. The appetites of many in the region are likely to know few bounds, and we can hardly count on all our partners to show the same restraint.

David A. Andelman, a member of USA TODAY's Board of Contributors, is editor and publisher of World Policy Journal and author of *A Shattered Peace: Versailles 1919 and the Price We Pay Today*.

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Mike Huckabee: No apologies for Iran truth

Mike Huckabee 10:13 a.m. EDT July 31, 2015

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2015/07/31/huckabee...iran.../30907491/>

President Obama, Hillary Clinton need to take Iran's threats to kill millions seriously.

The world said "never again" after the Holocaust, yet today, some refuse to take Iran's evil threats seriously.

Hillary Clinton directly attacked me this week and said my comments about Iran were "offensive." President Obama said they were "ridiculous" and "sad". What's offensive, ridiculous and sad is that Obama and Clinton are more upset about my comments than Iran's threat to kill millions of Jews and then direct their missiles at the United States.

Iran has the blood of American soldiers and civilians on its hands. For decades, Iranians have murdered Jews, Christians and Muslims across the world.

While some attack my "tone," I believe strong threats require strong words and bold action.

Iran has been crystal clear. Iran's leaders and politicians have directly called Israel a "barbaric, wolflike and infanticidal regime" that must be "erase[d]" and "wiped off" the map. They have threatened to "replace Israel...with a big Holocaust."

Tehran's tyrants can be trusted no more than Goebbels or the Gestapo. The last time the world ignored these types of threats against Jews, millions died. Never again.

After negotiating a deal with Adolf Hitler in 1938, Neville Chamberlain claimed he secured "peace in our time". One year later, Hitler's tanks rolled into Poland and Europe descended into war. Never again.

Sadly, this administration signed a nuclear deal that injects \$150 billion into Iran's economy. Why would we reward the world's biggest sponsor of terrorism with money, power, global recognition and a path to a nuclear weapon?

The Saudis, Israel, and Iran's other neighbors — despite diplomatic murmurs to the contrary — must oppose this deal because it could trigger a nuclear arms race across the Middle East. We should be tightening the noose on Iran with suffocating sanctions, not softening our grip. We should be prosecuting Iranian officials for genocide and crimes against humanity, not allowing them to enrich uranium to be used to build a bomb.

My words might be too brash for President Obama, but they echo the words of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu: "The Ayatollahs in Iran, they deny the Holocaust while planning another genocide against our people," he said. The nuclear deal with Iran "signals that the lessons of the Holocaust have not been learned." Netanyahu is a Winston Churchill in a world full of Chamberlains.

I support diplomacy, but diplomacy doesn't mean surrender. This deal was so bad, the Obama Administration was unable to secure the release of four American hostages who remain locked-up in Iranian prisons. America, Israel and the world deserve much better.

While Congress can stop this deal, sadly, they are heading home for an August recess. This is no time for a vacation. This is not a political battle between Democrats and Republicans. Many courageous Democrats refuse to wave the white flag and betray our ally. I will continue to fight against this flawed, failed nuclear deal with Iran and I will never apologize for defending Israel or the United States of America.

Mike Huckabee, a former governor of Arkansas, is a GOP presidential candidate.

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