Virtually arming genre with politics?
An analysis of electronic military recruitment in Venezuela, Colombia, and the United States.
A multimodal approach.

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ABSTRACT

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In this dissertation, I address the relationship between the content and design of governmental websites and the ideological interests of the overseeing political administrations. Three case studies contrast the contemporary political climates in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Republic of Colombia, and the United Stastes with the form and function of their respective military recruitment homepages. Through a semiotic, and specifically multimodal lens, I aim to determine to what degree there is evidence of the governing poltical party's ideological perspective on the websites.

To accomplish this task, each case study is introduced by a brief contemporary history in order to provide a summary of key political events within state. Each case study then includes a detailed analysis of 3-4 governmental homepages. Within those analyses, a comprehensive multimodal analysis is conducted for the most evocative content on each homepage. Finally, conclusions are reached for each case study, paying special attention to the content found along the reading path.

Table of Contents

List of Tables v
List of Figures vi
List of Abbreviations xxi
Acknowledgements xxiii
Dedication xxvi

Chapter One: Introduction 1

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Methodology
2.1 The Analysis of Visual Images 6
2.2 Defining Multimodality 39
2.3 The Study of Electronic Texts 42
2.4 The Examination of Military Websites and the Summary of Contemporary History 52

Chapter Three: Case Studies
3.1 The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
3.1.1 Contemporary History of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela 60
3.1.2 Homepage of the Venezuelan Army 105
3.1.3 Homepage of the Venezuelan Government 145
3.1.4 Homepage of the Venezuelan Ministry of Defense 191
3.1.5 Homepage of the President of Venezuela 227
3.1.6 Conclusions regarding Venezuelan websites 264

3.2 The Republic of Colombia
3.2.1 Contemporary History of the Republic of Colombia 267
3.2.2 Homepage of the Colombian Army 286
3.2.3 Homepage of the President of Colombia 322
3.2.4 Homepage of the Colombian Army Recruitment 358
3.2.5 Conclusions regarding Colombian websites 388

3.3 The United States of America
3.3.1 Contemporary History of the United States 389
3.3.2 Homepage of the President of the United States 417
3.3.3 Homepage of *Today's Military* 448
3.3.4 Homepage of the *America's Army* Video Game 471
3.3.5 Homepage of American Army Recruitment 492
3.3.6 Conclusions regarding American websites 510

4. Conclusion 517
4.1 Interconnectedness and message 518
4.2 A question of audience 521
4.3 Common content and design 522
4.4 The ethics of recruitment 530

Bibliography 532

List of Tables

Table 1 47
Total captures of Venezuelan websites 2007-2009.

Table 2 47
Total captures of Colombian websites 2007-2009.

Table 3 47
Total captures of American websites 2007-2009.

Table 4 234
Socialist content on Venezuelan websites.

Table 5 235
Verbal and visual presence of President Chávez on Venezuelan websites.

Table 6 464
Content found along the first, second, and third stops of the proposed reading path.

List of Figures

Figure	Title
1	Baseball player catching ball.
2	Painter and painting apparatus.
3	Ejercito.mil.ve on 14 July 2008.
4	Zones of ejercito.mil.ve.
5	Ejercito.mil.ve banner I.
6	Ejercito.mil.ve banner II.
7	Ejercito.mil.ve banner II on 21 April 2008.
8	Ejercito.mil.ve banner II on 26 May 2008
9	Ejercito.mil.ve banner II on 1 June 2008.
10	Ejercito.mil.ve banner II on 29 June 2008.
11	Ejercito.mil.ve banner II on 10 August 2008.
12	Army Division General's Welcome Message on 14 July 2008.
13	Army Division General's Welcome Message on 7 January 2007.
14	The *Bolívar Fuerte* Currency Conversion.
15	PageRank (sic).
16	Assimilation Process Begins.
17	Promotion of Assimilated Officers.
18	Prime Minister Harper commemorates Canadian and Allied soldiers who served during the Korean War.
19	Promotion of Assimilated Officers (information value).
20	*Contactar* (Contact) link located above banner I.
21	*Contactar* (Contact) link located in menu I.
22	*Buscar* (Search) link located above banner I.
23	*Buscar* (Search) link located in menu I
24	*Mapa del Sitio* (Website Map) link located above banner I.
25	*Mapa del Sitio* (Website Map) link located in menu II
26	*Sitios de Interés* (Websites of interest) link above banner I.
27	*Sitios de Interés*, *Enlaces* (Websites of Interest, Links) link in menu II.
28	*Reconversión Monetaria* (Money Restructuring) link in menu I.
29	*Reconversión Monetaria* (Money Restructuring) pdf and flash presentation links found in zone five.
30	*Sitios de Interés* (Websites of interest) link above banner I.
31	*Logístico* (Logistics) link in menu I.
32	*Descargas* (Downloads) link in menu II.
33	*Caja de Ahorros* (Savings Box) in menu I.
34	*SISA* (undefined acronym) in menu I.
35	Asymmetrical design of ejercito.mil.ve.

36 Upper menu above zone one.
37 Lower menu below zone two.
38 Lower limits of zones four and seven.
39 Font of *Gobierno Bolivariano de Venezuela* in zone one.
40 Font of *Patria, Socialismo o Muerte…¡Venceremos!* in zone two.
41 Font of *PageRank* in zone five.
42 Font of *Promoción de Oficiales Asimilados No. 25* in zone six.
43 Font of *Abierto el Proceso de Asimilación* in zone six.
44 Font of *Visor del Ejército Nacional Bolivariano* in zone six.
45 'Assimilated Officer's Promotion'.
46 '*Bolívar Fuerte*. A strong economy. A strong bolívar. A strong country.'
47 'Opened Assimilation Process 2008'.
48 Reading path on ejercito.mil.ve.
49 Gobiernoenlinea.ve on 4 November 2007.
50 Zones of gobiernoenlinea.ve.
51 Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II on 4 November 2007.
52 Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 28 January 2007.
53 Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 4 March 2007.
54 Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 11 March 2007.
55 Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 25 March 2007.
56 Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 14 April 2007.
57 Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 22 April 2007.
58 Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 6 May 2007.
59 Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 13 May 2007.
60 Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 19 May 2007.
61 Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 13 January 2008.
62 Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 10 February 2008.
63 Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 10 August 2008.
64 Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 16 November 2008.

65 Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 28 April 2008.
66 Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 11 May 2008.
67 Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 15 February 2009.
68 Featured news item *Gran marcha por el SI toma Caracas este domingo.*
69 *+ información* (More information) link below featured news article.
70 Information value of feature news item.
71 Repetition of *Noticias* (News), *Actualidad* (Current Events), and *Giras Presidenciales* (Presidential Tours) links.
72 Repetition of *billetes y monedas* (bills and coins) link.
73 Link to *Turismo* (tourism) in zone four.
74 Link to *Turismo* (tourism) in zone six.
75 Ministry of Tourism link (bridge at sunset).
76 Ministry of Tourism logo.
77 *Plan de Desarrollo* (Growth Plan) link.
78 *Plan de Desarrollo Económico y Social de la Nación 2007-2013* (Economic and Social Growth Plan for 2007-2013) link.
79 *Noticias* (News) link.
80 *Resumen del día* (Day's Summary) link.
81 News headings and article titles in zone six.
82 *Análisis* (Analysis) link in zone four.
83 *Estadísticas* (Statistics) link in zone four.
84 *Indicadores* (Indicators) link in zone four.
85 *Eventos* (Events) link in zone four.
86 *Documentos* (Documents) link in zone four.
87 *Trámites* (Procedures) link in zone four.
88 *Videos* (Videos) link in zone four.
89 *Visitas Virtuales* (Virtual Visits) link in zone four.
90 *Enlaces* (Links) link in zone three.
91 *Cadivi-Divisas* (Administrative Commission for Currency) link in zone four.
92 *IVSS* (Venezuelan Institute for Social Security) link in zone four.
93 *Onidex* (National Office for Identification and Immigration) link in zone four.
94 *Seniat* (Integrated National Service of Administration, Customs and Taxes) link in zone four.
95 *Regístrese* (Register Yourself) link in zone three
96 Clickable homepage banner in zone two.

97 Gobiernoenlinea.ve: Content Above-the-Fold and Below-the-Fold.
98 Featured news article on 1 February 2007.
99 Featured news article on 4 March 2007.
100 Featured news article on 18 March 2007.
101 Featured news article on 20 March 2007.
102 Featured news article on 25 March 2007.
103 Featured news article on 28 March 2007.
104 Featured news article on 22 April 2007.
105 Featured news article on 6 May 2007.
106 Featured news article on 17 June 2007.
107 Featured news article on 13 September 2007.
108 Featured news article on 24 November 2007.
109 *Reforma Constitucional* (Constitutional Reform) advertisement in zone seven.
110 *Reforma Constitucional* (Constitutional Reform) and *Debate. Constitucional* (Constitutional Debate) advertisements in zone seven.
111 *Constitución Ilustrada* (Illustrated Constitution) advertisement in zone seven.
112 *Pensamientos de El Libertador Simón Bolívar* (Thoughts of The Liberator Simón Bolívar) link in zone three.
113 Banner I in zone one names the *Gobierno Bolivariano de Venezuela* (Bolivarian Government of Venezuela) as the administrative body that oversees this webpage
114 A link in zone four's menu encourages the visitor to learn more about the government's *Logros Bolivarianos* (Bolivarian achievements).
115 The article excerpt from the featured news article in zone five communicates that the *Sí* march will head towards *avenida Bolívar* (Bolívar Avenue) in downtown Caracas.
116 An article title in zone six names the sixth national gathering of the university choirs as the "Simón Bolívar" meeting.
117 A second article in zone six states that Bolivarian youth are asking for responsibility to be taken for events that transpired at the CNE (National Electoral Council).
118 A hand drawn image of Bolívar illustrates an advertisement for a link to the *Constitución Ilustrada* (Illustrated Constitution) in zone seven.
119 An advertisement for the new currency, the *Bolívar Fuerte* (Strong Bolívar) appears in zone three.
120 *Motores Constituyentes* (Constitutional Motors) link at the top of zone four.

121 *Motores Constituyentes* (Constitutional Motors) webpage.
122 *Rumbo al Socialismo Bolivariano* (Moving towards Bolivarian Socialism) advertisement present on gobiernonelinea.ve (13 September 2007).
123 Reading path on gobiernoenlinea.ve.
124 Results page for *pasaporte* (passport) search on 30 March 2011.
125 Results page for *Gobernador de Amazonas* (Governor of Amazonas) search on 30 March 2011.
126 Mindefensa.gov.ve on 23 September 2007.
127 Zones of mindefensa.gov.ve.
128 Institutional Greeting on 23 September 2007.
129 Institutional Greeting on 18 March 2007.
130 Institutional Greeting on 20 January 2007.
131 Mindefensa.gov.ve background wallpaper.
132 Asymmetrical positioning of mindefensa.gov.ve website over Simón Bolívar/Palomo wallpaper.
133 Christmas themed wallpaper on Ministry of Defence website on 16 December 2007.
134 Mindefensa.gov.ve banner II.
135 Mindefensa.gov.ve banner III.
136 Mindefensa.gov.ve banner II on 5 January 2006.
137 Mindefensa.gov.ve banner II on 14 January 2007.
138 Mindefensa.gov.ve banner II on 20 January 2007.
139 Mindefensa.gov.ve banner III on 20 January 2007.
140 Mindefensa.gov.ve 22 February 2009.
141 Brightness differential: President Chávez versus General Rangel.
142 Leftward facing Bolívar and Chávez.
143 Use of national colours on mindefensa.gov.co: flag in zone one.
144 Use of national colours on mindefensa.gov.co: logo in zone one.
145 Use of national colours on mindefensa.gov.co: constitutional reform advertisement in zone six.
146 Use of national colours on mindefensa.gov.co: enlistment advertisement in zone six.
147 Use of national colours on mindefensa.gov.co: president's website advertisement in zone six.
148 Use of national colours on mindefensa.gov.co: Fundasmin advertisement in zone six.
149 Rectangular shape of zone one.
150 Rectangular shape of zone three.
151 Typography in constitutional reform advertisement in zone six.

152 Typography in enlistment advertisement in zone six.
153 Typography in military ethics and morals advertisement in zone six.
154 Typography in launching of National Armed Forces Social Welfare Institute in zone six.
155 Typography in Panorama Castrense newspaper advertisement in zone seven.
156 Typography in PageRank advertisement in zone five.
157 Mindefensa.gov.ve banner II: Information value.
158 Mindefensa.gov.ve banner III: Information Value.
159 *Resumen de Noticias* (News Summary) link.
160 *Comunicados de Prensa* (Press Releases) link.
161 *Correo Prensa MPPD* (Ministry of Defence Press Mail) link.
162 *Obituarios* (Obituaries) link.
163 *Datos Oficiales* (Official Facts) link.
164 *Símbolos* Patrios (Home Symbols) link.
165 *Símbolos Nacionales* (National Symbols) link.
166 *Efemérides* (Events) link.
167 *Resumen de Noticias* (News Summary) link.
168 PageRank link.
169 *Censo Económico 2007* (2007 Economic Census) link.
170 *Vicepresidencia* (Vice President's website) link.
171 *Presidencia* (President's website) link.
172 *Bolívar Fuerte* (Strong Bolívar currency) link.
173 *Inicio* (home) link.
174 Webmaster link.
175 PageRank link.
176 *Subir* (Up) link.
177 Photo of General Rangel.
178 *Descargar Foto del Ministro del Poder Popular para la Defensa* (Download the Photo of the Minister of the People's Power for Defence) link.
179 Get Adobe Reader link.
180 *Titulares* (Titles) link.
181 *Obituarios* (Obituaries) link.
182 *Enlaces* (Links) link.
183 *Foros* (Forums) link.
184 RSS feeds.
185 *Actividades Institucionales* (Institutional Activities) link.
186 *Formulario de Acceso* link (Access Form).
187 General's name written in blue in zone four.
188 *Visualice el Panorama Castrense simplemente haciendo clic sobre la imagen del deseado* (To view the *Panorama Castrense* simply click on the image of the desired text).
189 Military clock in zone three.

190 *¿Quién está en línea?* (Who is on-line?).
191 *Estadísticas* (Statistics).
192 Unused and underused space on mindefensa.gov.ve.
193 Asymmetrical design of mindefensa.gov.ve.
194 Reading Path on mindefensa.gov.ve.
195 Mindefensa.gov.ve: Content Above-the-Fold and Below-the-Fold.
196 Venzuela.gob.ve on 28 January 2007.
197 Zones of venezuela.gob.ve.
198 Venezuela.gob.ve banner II on 1 April 2007.
199 Venezuela.gob.ve banner II on 4 March 2007.
200 Venezuela.gob.ve banner II on 25 March 2007.
201 Venezuela.gob.ve banner II on 4 February 2007.
202 Venezuela.gob.ve banner II on 21 January 2007.
203 Venezuela.gob.ve banner II on 25 February 2007.
204 First set of photographs on 4 February 2007.
205 Second set of photographs on 21 January 2007.
206 Venezuela.gob.ve banner II on 14 April 2007.
207 Venezuela.gob.ve banner II from 2010-present.
208 News stories on venezuela.gov.ve on 28 January 2007.
209 First news story in zone five.
210 Second news story in zone five.
211 Third news story in zone five.
212 Fourth news story in zone five.
213 Featured news article in zone four.
214 The adjective *Bolivariano* (Bolivarian) in zone one.
215 The adjective *Bolivarianos* (Bolivarian) in zone three.
216 Title of third news story in zone five contains the adjective *Bolivariana* (Bolivarian).
217 An advertisement in zone six contains the adjective *Bolivariana* (Bolivarian).
218 A Bolívar citation and artistic drawing in zone six.
219 The adjective *Bolivariana* in an advertisement in zone seven.
220 The physical likeness of Bolívar in an advertisement in zone seven.
221 Red hue in title and borders of zone four.
222 Red hue in background of zone three.
223 Red hue on Chávez's hat, shirt and in background of advertisement in zone six.
224 Red hue in background of advertisement in zone six.
225 Red hue in advertisement in zone six.
226 Red hue in advertisement in zone seven.
227 Reference to the *nueva era revolucionaria* (new revolutionary era) in zone four's article title.

228 Reference to the *Revolución* (Revolution), ideología revolucionaria (revolutionary ideology), and *conciencia revolucionaria* (revolutionary consciousness) in zone four's image caption.
229 Venezuela.gob.ve on 28 January 2007, circles indicating the verbal or visual presence of President Chávez and Simón Bolívar.
230 Use of square shapes in zone two.
231 Use of square shapes in zone three.
232 Use of square shapes in zone six.
233 Use of square shapes in zone seven.
234 Round-edged design of advertisements on gobiernoenlinea.gob.ve on 4 November 2007.
235 Waving flag in zone one.
236 Waving flag in zone six.
237 Waving flag in zone seven.
238 Light blue background colour in zone seven advertisement.
239 Shaded background differentiation in zones three and four.
240 *Noticias* (News) heading in zone four.
241 *Biografías* (Biographies) heading in zone three.
242 *Institución* (Institution) heading in zone three.
243 *Secciones* (Sections) heading in zone three.
244 *Otros Sitios* (Other Sites) heading in zone three.
245 Article title in zone five.
246 *Noticias* (News) heading in zone four.
247 Framing of zone four.
248 Horizontal red line dividing zones one and two.
249 Horizontal red line dividing article headings in zone five.
250 Information zones (visual material).
251 Information zones (visual and verbal material).
252 *Institución* (Institution) heading in zone three.
253 *Secciones* (Sections) heading in zone three.
254 *Otros Sitios* (Other Sites) heading in zone three.
255 *Estructura* (Structure) link in zone three.
256 *Conv. Cuba-Venezuela* (Conversation Cuba-Venezuela) link in zone three.
257 *Visita Virtual* (Virtual Visit) link in zone three.
258 *Alocuciones* (Allocutions) link in zone three.
259 Links to *Misión y Reglamento* (Mission and Regulation) and *Misiones* (Missions) in zone three.
260 Unutilized space on venezuela.gob.ve.
261 Asymmetrical design of venezuela.gob.ve.
262 Right-alignment in zone six advertisement.

263 Centre-alignment in zone six advertisement for SENIAT.
264 Centre-alignment in Bolívar citation in zone six.
265 Centre-alignment in zone six advertisement for presidential videos .
266 Centre-alignment in zone seven advertisement for RNV (*Radio Nacional de Venezuela* –Venezuelan National Radio).
267 Centre-alignment in zone seven advertisement for *Aló Presidente.*
268 Use of uppercased lettering in *Buscar Últimas Noticias* link under zone five.
269 Incomplete wording in zone three menu.
270 Nearly illegible font size in zone six advertisement for YVKE Mundial.
271 Probable Reading Path on venezuela.gob.ve.
272 Provocative terminology on venezuela.gob.ve.
273 Ejercito.mil.co on 6 May 2007.
274 Zones of ejercito.mil.co.
275 Ejercito.mil.co featured article and advertisement.
276 Ejercito.mil.co featured article and advertisement on 4 March 2007.
277 Ejercito.mil.co featured article and advertisement on 13 January 2008.
278 Ejercito.mil.co featured article and advertisement on 10 February 2008.
279 Ejercito.mil.co featured article and advertisement on 21 July 2008.
280 *Preservación de la Fuerza* (Preservation of the Force) link in zone five.
281 Multiple menu locations.
282 Additional menu items on 1 July 2007.
283 Menu I on 6 May 2007.
284 Portuguese (*Portugués*) translation included in Menu I on 13 April 2008.
285 German (*Alemán*) translation included in Menu I on 1 June 2008.
286 Menu II on 6 May 2007.
287 Menu II within zone two.
288 Menu IV in zone five.
289 Menu IV on 17 August 2006.
290 Menu IV on 17 March 2008.
291 Menu V.
292 News articles.
293 Featured news article on 22 April 2007.
294 Featured news article on 29 April 2007.

295 Featured news article on 4 March 2008.
296 Overt and covert presence of human rights content
297 Ejercito.mil.co banner image and text.
298 Backgrounded watermarks and lines.
299 Banner image and text on 19 August 2007.
300 General Mario Montoya in camouflage uniform at a press briefing on 24 February 2008.
301 General Mario Montoya in camouflage uniform on 21 July 2011.
302 Banner image on 21 July 2008.
303 Watermark focus on soldier A.
304 Background frames in zone one.
305 Banner image on 26 February 2008.
306 Banner divided into visual and verbal content.
307 Banner's Information Value.
308 *Patria, Honor, Lealtad!* (Fatherland, Honour, Loyalty!) Motto.
309 Capitalization in banner.
310 Menu II accentuation.
311 Asymmetrical appearance and underutilized space.
312 Reading path on ejercito.mil.co.
313 Presidencia.gov.co on 11 March 2007.
314 Zones of presidencia.gov.co.
315 Presidencia.gov.co banner.
316 Presidencia.gov.co on 4 March 2007.
317 Presidencia.gov.co on 18 March 2007.
318 Presidencia.gov.co on 25 March 2007.
319 Presidencia.gov.co on 19 May 2008.
320 News headlines and news excerpts in zone three.
321 Official photograph of President Bush's 11th meeting with President Uribe.
322 Portrait of President Rafael Reyes in background of Presidents Uribe and Horst Köhler of Germany on 13 March 2007.
323 Portrait of President Rafael Reyes in background of President Uribe and Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany on 17 May 2008.
324 Official photograph of Presidents Uribe and Calderón of Mexico.
325 American flag in background of President Barack Obama and Argentinian Ambassador Jorge Argüello on 20 January 2012.
326 American flag in background of President George W. Bush and Nobel Prize for Economics winner Paul Krugman on 24 November 2008.

327 Presidents Bush and Uribe and first ladies of the United States and Colombia during a visit to the Bush Ranch in August 2005.
328 President Bush welcomes President Uribe to the Oval Office in September 2008.
329 Five images of Bush visit found in zone two.
330 Featured image divided into quadrants.
331 Centre line above George Bush (I).
332 Centre line above George Bush (II).
333 Featured image: Information value.
334 Presidencia.gov.co on 4 March 2007.
335 Presidencia.gov.co on 18 March 2007.
336 Presidencia.gov.co on 25 March 2007 during state visit of King Juan Carlos.
337 Presidencia.gov.co on 19 May 2007 during state visit of Chancellor Merkel.
338 Asymmetrical design of presidencia.gov.co.
339 Reading path for presidencia.gov.co.
340 Presidencia.gov.co: Content Above-the-Fold and Below-the-Fold.
341 President Uribe's opening remarks (located below article one).
342 President Bush's opening remarks (located below article two).
343 President Uribe's speech (located below article four).
344 President Bush's speech (located below article five).
345 President Bush's speech (located below article five).
346 President Bush's speech (located below article five).
347 Banner's stage one.
348 Banner stage two.
349 Banner stage three.
350 Banner stage four.
351 Banner stage five.
352 Banner stage six.
353 Banner stage seven.
354 Vector connecting zones one and two.
355 Repetition of contents in zones one and two.
356 Recruitment information.
357 *Decretos En Línea* (Decrees On-Line) homepage.
358 Requirements for Military Card.
359 Registration information for the demobilized, indigenous, and displaced individuals.
360 Image accompaniments to (1) *Incorporaciones de la Tarjeta Militar*, (2) *Jornada Regional*, and (3) *Incorporaciones*.
361 Zone two on 13 April 2008.

362 Featured advertisement stage one.
363 Featured advertisement stage two.
364 Featured advertisement stage three.
365 Featured advertisement stage four.
366 Featured advertisement stage five.
367 Featured advertisement stage six.
368 Featured advertisement stage seven.
369 Featured advertisement stage eight.
370 Framing above the advertisement.
371 Framing to the left of the advertisement.
372 Framing below the advertisement.
373 Framing to the left of the advertisement.
374 Internal frame incursions.
375 Advertisement's information value.
376 Formal verb conjugations.
377 Informal verb conjugations.
378 Orthographical error in zone five.
379 Asymmetrical appearance of reclutamiento.mil.co.
380 Reclutamiento.mil.co under construction message.
381 Probable reading path.
382 American President's homepage on 8 April 2007.
383 Zones of whitehouse.gov/president.
384 Whitehouse.gov/president banner I.
385 Mini-White House in zone one.
386 Textual identification of the president in banner I.
387 Whitehouse.gov/president banner II.
388 Signature of President George W. Bush.
389 Backgrounds of zone two.
390 Six images of President Bush in zones two, three, and six.
391 Presence of the Seal of the President.
392 Verbal references to *President.*
393 Multiple menu locations.
394 Repeated links on whitehouse.gov/president.
395 Three links to the president's homepage.
396 Link to whitehouse.gov in banner I.
397 Six links to *news*, each of which transport the visitor to the same *News & Policies* webpage that features *Presidential News & Speeches.*
398 Three links to *issues*, each of which send the visitor to the same *Policies & Initiatives* webpage.
399 Links to *Applications* and *Appointments*.
400 Whitehouse.gov/president featured article.
401 Identifiable parts of backgrounded tank.
402 Vectors in the featured image.
403 Vectors encompassing President Bush.

404 Vertical borders dividing zones three and four.
405 Above-the-fold verbal and visual presence of President George W. Bush.
406 Information Value.
407 Whitehouse.gov/president: content above-the-fold and below-the-fold.
408 Minimal distinction between whitehouse.gov and whitehouse.gov/president on 29 November 2007
409 Asymmetrical design of whitehouse.gov/president.
410 Reading path on whitehouse.gov/president.
411 Photograph of the Cabinet in zone six.
412 Todaysmilitary.com on 16 November 2008.
413 Zones of todaysmilitary.com.
414 *Did you know* content on 26 September 2003.
415 *Did you know* content on 1 February 2006.
416 *Did you know* content on 21 January 2007.
417 *Did you know* content on 6 January 2008.
418 *Did you know* content on 17 March 2008.
419 *Did you know* content on 28 April 2008.
420 *Did you know* content on 1 June 2008.
421 *Did you know* content on 16 November 2008.
422 Multiple menu locations.
423 Featured image on 11 February 2007.
424 Featured image on 5 June 2007.
425 Featured image on 6 January 2008.
426 Featured image on 16 November 2008.
427 Featured image vectors.
428 Lighting of the mother's head.
429 Proximity of the mother and son.
430 Featured image's information value.
431 Inconsistent capitalization of *military* in zone two.
432 Inconsistent capitalization of *military* in zones three and four
433 Inconsistent capitalization of *military* in zone six.
434 Redundant links.
435 Under-utilized space.
436 Asymmetrical design.
437 Probable reading path.
438 Marine Corps' insignia.
439 Americasarmy.com on 1 September 2008.
440 Zones of americasarmy.com.
441 Verbal and visual recruitment content.
442 Rifleman image in zone one.
443 U.S. Army link.
444 Automatic rifleman in zone four.
445 Red tone in America's Army logo and Bronze Star.

446 Video game content on americasarmy.com.
447 Banner image on 4 February 2006.
448 Banner image on 6 February 2006.
449 Banner image on 18 February 2006.
450 Banner image on 25 February 2006.
451 Banner image on 3 April 2006.
452 Banner image on 1 September 2008.
453 Vectors in the banner image.
454 Camouflage sky.
455 Lighting of the soldier's arm and helmet.
456 Banner image's information value.
457 Probable reading path.
458 Americasarmy.com: Above-the-fold versus Below-the-fold.
459 Goarmy.com on 28 January 2007.
460 Zones of goarmy.com.
461 Presence of Army Strong slogan.
462 Zone five content on 21 May 2006.
463 Zone five content on 11 September 2006.
464 Featured Image on 28 January 2007.
465 *Find your strength* campaign on 9 November 2006.
466 Featured image of Health Care Specialist Sergeant Tracey Lyons on 12 December 2006.
467 Featured image of Chief Warrant Officer Verdo Jackson on 16 December 2006.
468 Featured image of Infantryman-Sniper Private Andrew Todhunter on 23 January 2007.
469 AMEDD information in zone five.
470 Lower framing of feature image.
471 Upper camouflage frame.
472 Feature image's information value.
473 Capitalization of *soldier* in zones two, four, and five.
474 Probable reading path.
475 Goarmy.com: Above-the-fold versus Below-the-fold.
476 *There's strong and then there's army strong* slogan in zone four.
477 Repetition of the word *army*.
478 Featured images including soldiers in uniform on 14 April 2007, 17 June 2007, 8 July 2007, and 26 August 2007.
479 Featured image on 28 January 2007.
480 Featured image on 1 July 2007.
481 Featured image on 25 August 2008.
482 Featured image on 11 May 2008.
483 Goarmy.com on 21 November 2006.

484 Ejercito.mil.ve: first and second stops along the proposed reading path (banner I and welcome message).
485 Gobiernoenlinea.ve: first and second stops along the proposed reading path (banner I and featured news article).
486 Mindefensa.gov.ve: first, second, and third stops along the proposed reading path (banner I, featured images, and welcome message).
487 Venezuela.gob.ve: first and second stops along the proposed reading path (banner I and featured image).
488 Ejercito.mil.co: first and second stops along the proposed reading path (banner I and featured image).
489 Presidencia.gov.co: first and second stops along the proposed reading path (banner I and featured image).
490 Reclutamiento.mil.co: first and second stops along the proposed reading path (banner I and featured image).
491 Whitehouse.gov/president: first, second, and third stops along the proposed reading path (banner I, banner II, and featured image).
492 Todaysmilitary.com: first and second stops along the proposed reading path (featured image and 'honest and accurate' text).
493 Americasarmy.com: first, second, and third stops along the proposed reading path (banner, featured image, and 'real heroes').
494 Goarmy.com: first and second stops along the proposed reading path (featured image and 'army strong' advertisement).

List of Abbreviations

AA3	America's Army (Version 3)
AD	*Acción Democrática* (Democratic Action
ALBA	*Alternativa Bolivariana de las Américas* (Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas)
AMEDD	U.S. Army Medical Deparment
ASVAB	Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery
AUC	*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (Colombian Self Defense Units)
AVF	All-Volunteer-Force
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
Col.	Colonel
COPEI	*Partido Social Cristiano de Venezuela* (Christian Social Party of Venezuela)
CTV	*Confederación de Trabajadores de Venezuela* (Venezuelan Workers' Confederation)
DoD	Department of Defence
ECLA	(United Nations) Economic Commission on Latin America
ESMIC	(*General José María Córdova*) *Escuela Militar de Cadetes* (Military School for Cadets)
ESRB	Entertainment Software Rating Board
FARC	*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces)
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GED	General Education Diploma
Gen.	General
GI	Government Issue
GNP	Gross National Product
IACHR	Interamerican Commission on Human Rights
IBC	Iraqi Body Count
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MBR	*Movimiento Bolivariano Revolucionario* (Bolivarian Revolutionary Movement)
MBS	Master Browser Server
MFO	Multinational Forces and Observers
MP	Member of Parliament
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
Pfc.	Private First Class
PDVSA	Petróleo de Venezuela Sociedad Anónima. (Venezuelan Petroleum Incorporated).
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
RCTV	*Radio Caracas Televisión* (Radio Television Venezuela)

Sfc.	Sergeant First Class
Sgt.	Sergeant
TLC	*Tratado de Libre Comercio* (Free Trade Agreement)
UP	*Unión Patriótica* (Patriotic Union Party)
URD	*Unión Republicana Demócratica* (Democratic Republican Union)
VAE	Virtual Army Experience
WC	Washington Concensus

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I love you both very much.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my sons, Dylan and Jonah.

May it be a testament that with hard work, determination (and some trademark Resnick stubbornness), *anything* can be accomplished.

XX,
Mom.

Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis investigates the relationship between the content and design of governmental websites and the ideological interests of the overseeing political administration. To describe the correlation between ideology and electronic gubernatorial texts, the case studies will contrast the contemporary political climates in Venezuela, Colombia, and the United States with the form and function of their respective military recruitment websites. By deconstructing the content, design, and functionality of the websites through a multimodal[1] lens, I aim to determine if the governmental websites at hand are wholly neutral purveyors of information or if they can more accurately be described as promulgators of the dominant ideological stance.

At the crux of this thesis is the notion that, akin to other mundane bureaucratic procedures, the transmission of details related to military enlistment is, at least theoretically, no different from the administrative means by which a citizen applies for a passport or files federal income taxes. Consequently, the research questions listed below measure the political footprint in what can be considered an apolitical context.

The following primary research questions will guide the study:

1. During the period of study, what political events came to pass that may have shaped the role(s) and objective(s) of the military?

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[1] As is stated by Teo (2004: 192) "The value of a semiotic analysis (…) lies in its potential to offer perspective into the construction of ideology."

[2] An explanation of this term can be found in Chapter Two.

[3] Noteworthy definitions of ideology include: "the systematic distortion (of language) in the service of class interest," (Hodge and Kress 1993: 6); "meanings (that) support the power of one social group over another," (Lemke 1995: 2); "(an) accounting for relations between articulation/realization and other social practices, organization and events," (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001: 34); and "a special form

2. What is the website's objective(s)?
3. What is the relationship between the form and function of the website?
    i. Is the content relevant to the website's objective?
    ii. Does the design support or detract from the purpose(s) of the website?
    iii. Does the website's reading path[2] apprise the visitor of pertinent information? What information is found along the reading path?
4. Are there tangible references to the events delineated in question one?
    i. If so, are these references overt? How does their overt presence shape the overall website?
    ii. If so, are these references covert? What reasons might explain their veiled presence?
    iii. If not, how might one explain the absence of politically charged material?

Following those questions, my hypotheses related to the presence of political content on governmental websites are as follows: if there are either nominal or no detectable ideological leanings found on the website(s), it may be deduced that the military is an autonomous institution that is encouraged to conduct its business (including the virtual pursuit of new recruits) in territory that is outside partisan jurisdiction. This conclusion indicates that government-produced texts need not be considered a microcosm for an administration's political platform. However, tangible evidence of the governing party's ideological perspective on the military websites would indicate

[2] An explanation of this term can be found in Chapter Two.

that the bureaucratic processes of recruitment and enlistment are inherently political, vulnerable to changes in political philosophy, and can be considered a means of promoting sectarian interests and objectives. This outcome implies that politically charged rhetoric pervades all aspects of governmental communication and that one ought to employ a critical approach when exposed to such discourse.

While entire theses can be devoted defining the term *ideology*[3], within the realm of this thesis, I will employ the definition put forth by Teo in his 2004 examination of governmental posters in Singapore. According to Teo, ideology is "a mental framework of preconceived ideas that distorts people's perception and interpretation of the world, concealing, hiding, or otherwise obfuscating the truth for the reproduction of power relations in society." (p.192). Teo's interpretation of ideology is an appropriate choice for this dissertation because it aligns well with case studies that involve gubernatorial texts. Furthermore, in tandem with the related literature, it is reasonable to extend that definition to the study of photographs [4] and into the realm of electronic communication[5].

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[3] Noteworthy definitions of ideology include: "the systematic distortion (of language) in the service of class interest," (Hodge and Kress 1993: 6); "meanings (that) support the power of one social group over another," (Lemke 1995: 2); "(an) accounting for relations between articulation/realization and other social practices, organization and events," (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001: 34); and "a special form of social cognition shared by social groups," (Van Dijk 2001: 12).

[4] Tagg's (1993: 188) inquiry into the field of photography yielded the conclusion that "photographs are material items produced by a certain elaborate mode of production and distributed, circulated and consumed within a given set of social relations; images made meaningful and understood within the very relations of their production and sited with a wider ideological complex which must, in turn, be related to the practical and social problems which sustain and shape it."

[5] Knox's (2007: 47) study of on-line newspaper homepages extends this depiction of ideology into the electronic domain as he states "it is the institutional authors of the newspaper, not the reader, who determine the ideological paradigm and the positioning of the news stories therein." Similarly, the belief that one can conduct an ideological examination on web-based material is supported by Pauwels (2005: 609). In his study of the means by which analysts may appropriate traditional

Also consonant with Teo's conception of ideology (and vital to the objectives of this thesis), the analyses of the military websites will be predicated on the notion that texts are created purposefully. As is argued by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 32), "the 'assemblage' of all the items seen; requires prior selection, prior choice." One must therefore be mindful that the verbal/non-verbal material and design are deliberately positioned on the websites; and no elements shall be considered 'accidental'.

Also complementary to Teo's characterization of ideology, is the understanding that no text is entirely neutral or devoid of ideological content (Halliday 1978: 23; Gee 1991: xix-xx; Eggins & Martin in Van Dijk 2000: 338; Eggins 2004: 10-11; Fairclough 2006: 120; Kress 2010: 49). This thesis therefore brings to light the questions of 'degree' and 'type'. Can a text be characterized as only 'somewhat' or maximally as 'very' or 'profoundly' ideologically laden? And, if so, what amount of ideological material quantifies a text as 'very' or 'not very' fraught with depictions of power relationships? Furthermore, can the ideology present be categorized as nationalist or political? Indeed, a text's propensity to manifest the surrounding social atmosphere is not a new concept in the field of discourse studies.

With respect to the social semiotic perspective, all signs and meanings are socially motivated and, as such, the communication that takes place within a social context all signs is socially motivated. Therefore, the content and design of a text mirror the text producer's social-institutional setting, values, and perspectives. It is important

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research methods into the world of cyber documents, the author argues that "the cultural decoding of websites should involve an eclectic, multidimensional, and integrated search for explicit and implicit statements on cultural issues, such as values, norms and opinions regarding gender, class, race, religion, the state, etc. as they are intentionally or unintentionally expressed and materialized in the many features of this highly hybrid medium."

to note that expression of the social environment is discernable in both verbal and non-verbal bodies of work. Analogous to the marked usage of the subjunctive mood or the inclusion of italics in written language[6], the multimodal capacity of electronic texts provides the producer with myriad ways to communicate a potentially ideologically laden message.

This thesis will be organized as follows. Chapter two will provide a comprehensive literature review, concentrating on the analysis of visual images as a function of the semiotic theory of multimodality. The literature review will also discuss key ideas regarding the study of electronic texts. The last section of chapter two will delineate the method by which the governmental websites will be analyzed.

Chapter three will include the Venezuelan, Colombian, and American case studies. A detailed contemporary historical summary will introduce each case study. The historical description will be followed by the website analyses of the respective countries. A concluding statement regarding the presence of ideological content on the websites will culminate each case study. Chapter four, the conclusion, will compare and contrast the extent of ideologically charged content across the eleven websites.

[6] According to Lemke (2002: 300), an author can embed his ideological perspective by way of headers or sidebars and by choices related to paragraphing and the use of italics.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Methodology

As the homepages to be examined in this thesis will be evaluated according to Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) multimodal approach, the literature review section will explore multimodal theory and the related methods of electronic text analysis.

2.1 The Analysis of Visual Images

2.1.1 The Metafunctions: Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual

The following section will describe the fundamental features of Halliday's (1978) metafunctional theory as they relate to the study of images. According to this theory, language accomplishes three wide-ranging communicative functions simultaneously (Van Leeuwen 2006: 142). They are the ideational-representational function (how text represents the world), the interpersonal-orientational function (the expression of social relationships), and the textual-organizational function (the manifestation of text as a part of a greater whole) (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2002: 346).

2.1.1.1 The Ideational-Representational Metafunction

According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 46), although it is possible to align aspects of the semiotic mode of writing with that of an image, every mode has its own way of realizing semantic relations. For example, the task assigned to locative prepositions in a written clause is carried out by foregrounding and backgrounding in images. With respect to specific differences between the semiotic analysis of written text and images, the authors argue that there are two additional participants involved in an image: the interactive participants and the represented participants. Within the context of this thesis, while the interactive participants are the image's producer and website visitor, the represented participants are the people or things portrayed on the websites (Kress and Van Leeuwen

2006: 47-48 & 114). Furthermore, the authors emphasize that the producer's attitude toward the represented participants must be considered. One may then liken an image producer's attitude to the ideological leanings detectable in a written text.

2.1.1.1.1 Vectors

Vectors[7], or strong oblique lines that express direction in an image, play a powerful role in the articulation of the producer's vision because vectorial patterns convey the image's 'narrative' (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 59). Similar to transitivity in a written clause, the narrative orchestrates the spatial design of the image in order to express salient actions and events. Acting as a device that directs the movements of the eye across an image (Lemke 2005: 5), a vector indicates that something 'is connected to', 'is conjoined to' or 'is related to' something else (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 59). Such connections are crafted by the features of the objects or by the slanting of layout elements (Kress and Van Leeuwen in Bell and Garrett 1998: 203). Vectors are thereby an important factor in the framing of an image (Van Leeuwen 2005: 7) and act as visual guides to the image. For example, according to Van Leeuwen (2005: 7), the ability of vectors to connect and disconnect objects in the visual field compel the visitor to interpret the disconnected objects as being separate and independent, and the connected objects as coordinated,

[7] Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 4) provide the following detailed account of the five types of vectors possible in images:
"(1) Unidirectional Transactional Action: a vector formed by a (usually diagonal) depicted element, or an arrow, that connects two participants, an Actor and a Goal.
(2) Bidirectional Transactional Action: a vector, formed by a (usually diagonal) depicted element, or a double-headed arrow.
(3) Non-Transactional Action: A vector, formed by a (usually diagonal) depicted element, or an arrow, emanates from a participant, the Actor, but does not point at any other participant.
(4) Transactional Reaction: An eyeline connects two participants, a Reacter and a Phenomenon.
(5) Non-Transactional Reaction: An eyeline vector emanates from a participant, the Reacter, but does not point at another participant."

continuous, and/or complementary. Vectors that radiate from the eyes of the image's main participant to the eyes of the visitor create a 'direct address' and overtly speak to the visitor with a visual form of 'you'. Such vectors also work to delineate the identity of the anticipated visitor and present a 'demand' of something from the visitor (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 117-118).

The lines created by vectors are therefore quite significant to visual analyses. For example, in Chouliaraki's (2006: 268-269) analysis of war footage captured during the bombardment of Baghdad in 2003, she observes how the flashing blue light of an ambulance created a vector. That vector, coupled with the audible howl of the ambulances' sirens intensified the unrelenting destruction in the Iraqi capital. Teo's (2004:200-201) examination of the ideational and interpersonal meanings in government posters in Singapore also emphasizes the importance of vectors. For instance, strong vector lines are evident in government's *Speak Mandarin* poster in that they encourage the visitor's eyes to focus on the key verbal message written in the centre of the visual field. To implement the effect of vectors, it is necessary to consider from what/whom they emanate and toward what/whom they point.

2.1.1.1.2 Roles, Processes, and Circumstances

In an active clause, the actor is the 'doer' of an action. In an image, the actor plays an equally important role, as it is often the most prominent figure (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 63) whose eye-line produces a strong vector (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 75). In the case of images in which there is only one participant, the actor is involved in a non-transactional process (analogous to an intransitive verb in a written text). However, if the vector is aimed at an additional person or thing, the process becomes transactional (the equivalent of a transitive verb) and the target of the vector is called

the goal (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 63). In images, the goal is at the receiving end of a vector, whether or not the actor is visible. In written language, this is analogous to 'passive agent deletion', likewise in a photo; the actor may be absent or anonymous. For example, figure 1 depicts a baseball player about to catch a ball. In that image, the absence of both the batter and the baseball is unlikely to confuse the visitor (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 64).



Figure 1

Baseball player catching ball[8].

In written language, mental processes are those that originate in the mind of a participant and are denoted by the verbal group (thinks, hopes, wants, etc). However, in an image, visitors must rely on the vectors that emanate from the senser in order to identify the phenomenon in question (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 75). Consequently, except in the cases where a 'thought bubble' is drawn, it the visitor's task to imagine what the senser is actually thinking (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 68). Thus, the articulation of the phenomenon is open to interpretation. Similar to what is acceptable in written text, sensers in images need not be human or even animate. For example, Chouliaraki notes that (2006: 272-273) as the human victims of the coalition's attacks were (purposefully) neither

[8] upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d7/Matsui_catching_fly_ball.jpg

captured on film nor broadcast, the city of Baghdad itself became a collectivized 'sufferer'.

Behavioural processes in grammatical terms are psychological and physiological behaviours (Eggins 2004: 250) experienced by conscious (typically human) beings, such as smiling, laughing, or frowning. One can also recognize behavioural processes in visual images, as is accomplished by Teo's (2004) analysis. In his article, he draws attention to how the individuals photographed in the *Productivity* poster were smiling broadly, which is interpretable as "a physical manifestation of some inward, psychological state" (Teo 2004: 196). In written text, verbal processes typically entail the verbs *to say* and *to tell*. In an image, however, one can identify a verbal process by way of a vector that connects the sayer and the verbiage with the receiver (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 75).

Relational processes, both attributive and identifying are evident in both written texts and visual images. As an expression of 'being', attributive relational processes are able to communicate a conceptual phenomenon such as 'contentment'. For example, in Machin's (2004) investigation of image banks (the source of the generic images found in magazines, news, and advertising) he argues that an image producer can imbue a symbolic 'this is freedom' quality to a photograph by including a blue sky and a suspended or jumping model (Machin 2004: 331). The author also states that a model can purport membership in a scientific occupation (evidence of an identifying relational process) by clothing him or her in a white lab coat, glasses, and photographing the subject working at a computer or in a laboratory (Machin 2004: 322).

Circumstances, the optional adverbial, nominal, and/or prepositional elements in a clause that add extra information are also recognizable in images. Their non-essential quality is replicated in images in two ways. First, circumstances are not related to the

participants by way of vectors. Second, circumstances can be eliminated from the image without losing vital elements of the image's narrative (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 72). According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 72), circumstances of location link the essential participants to the setting. This connection allows the image's producer to alter the contrast between the fore-grounded participants and backgrounded setting details (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 75).

Circumstances of manner, or information regarding the means by which a process takes place, are also present in image analyses. Such circumstances are typically tools found in the background not connected to a participant by a vector (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 72). For example, the design of figure 2 indicates that the physical space is about to be painted. However, while the actor is not connected to the circumstances of manner (drop cloths, paint can, and paint roller) by a vector, the objects are related to the material process of painting.



Figure 2

Painter and painting apparatus[9].

Circumstances of accompaniment provide details regarding the 'with whom' side of the process. In an image, a circumstance of accompaniment is an element in which is not related to the main participants by a vector (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 75).

2.1.1.1.3 Classificational, Analytical, and Symbolic Structures

An analysis of an image's ideational metafunction involves a two-step process of examining the narrative structures (actions, events, and changes) and the conceptual structures (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 79). Conceptual structures can be sub-categorized further into classificational, analytical, and symbolic structures.

2.1.1.1.3.1 Classificational Structures

To perform a classificational analysis the analyst would aim to determine the taxonomical relationship between the image's participants. Within the taxonomy, it is likely that the analyst will realize that participants can be classified as either subordinate or superordinate (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 79). S/he will also want to decide if that relationship is covert or overt. In a covert taxonomy, the superordinate participant is assumed equal to the subordinate participants (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 79). On the other hand, in an overt taxonomy, such as a family tree, it is obvious that some participants (typically the eldest ancestors) are superordinate, as they are physically placed above the remaining participants (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 80).

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9 cache1.asset-cache.net/xc/dv1692012.jpg?v=1&c=IWSAsset&k=2&d=91F5CCEF208281FDF4603DC0D37C32F1FE5B77B702E8EF71116E26D1D2239140

2.1.1.1.3.2 Analytical Structures

An analytical analysis of an image determines how the participants relate to each other in terms of a part-whole structure. There are two kinds of participants involved, the carrier (the 'whole'), and at least one possessive attribute (the 'part') (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 87). An important aspect of an analytical structure is that there are no vectorial relations, nor is there compositional symmetry, as the goal of such an analysis is to recognize the carrier and examine the possessive attribute(s), not to provide details regarding the image's narrative (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 89). Kress and Van Leeuwen provide the example of a fashion advertisement in which the model (as the carrier) is verbally described as wearing "Easy-wearing inexpensive cottons, teamed with the right accessories" and a listing of the clothing (the attributes) is subsequently detailed for the potential consumer (2006: 88).

Analytical processes can be described as being exhaustive or conjoined-exhaustive. An exhaustive process involves the inclusion of all of (an exhaustive account of) the carrier's possessive attributes, thereby displaying all of the parts from which the carrier is composed (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 104). A conjoined-exhaustive structure connects the possessive attributes and, in so doing, demonstrates how they fit together (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 97). Analytical structures can also be characterized as unstructured or structured. An unstructured analytical process is one in which the image shows the carrier's possessive attributes, but not the carrier itself; these attributes can be unordered, lending to an unstructured meaning (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 92 & 104). Structured analytical processes can further be qualified as 'inclusive'. An inclusive structured analytical process details the carrier's possessive attributes, but also leaves some parts of the carrier unlabeled and unanalyzed (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 95-96).

There are three types of analytical structures: topographic, topological, and temporal. A study of topographic structures would evaluate the accuracy of the physical spatial relations and relative location of the carrier's possessive attributes. As such, the participants should also be drawn to scale and denote an exact number of possessive attributes (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 98 & 104). Topological analytical structures describe the interconnectedness between the carrier and the possessive attributes and between each of the possessive attributes. Important elements of the topological structure include the accuracy of common boundaries and sequence of connections between participants (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 99 & 103). A temporal analytical process is brought to fruition when participants are situated along a timeline (either horizontal or vertical axis) and are understood as part of a temporally progressive process (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 94 & 104).

2.1.1.1.3.3 Symbolic Structures

The goal of symbolic processes is to determine what the images signify. There are two kinds of possible participants: the carrier (the essential participant whose identity is developed by the relation) and the symbolic attribute[10] (the optional participant that stands for the meaning itself) (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 105). Symbolic

10 Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 105) provide the following characteristics of the symbolic attribute: "(1) They are made salient in the representation in one way or another; for instance, by being placed in the foreground, through exaggerated size, through being especially well lit, through being represented in especially fine detail or sharp focus, or through their conspicuous colour or tone.
(2) They are pointed at by means of a gesture which cannot be interpreted as an action other than the action of 'pointing out the symbolic attribute to the visitor' – here we can include also the arrows which can connect visual realizations of participants with verbal realizations of the same participant or vice versa, (…) for these also establish a relation of identity through pointing.
(3) They look out of place in the whole, in some way.
(4) They are conventionally associated with symbolic values."

structures have two forms, symbolic suggestive and symbolic attributive. In symbolic suggestive processes, the carrier portrays a generic mood or atmosphere in the image by way of, for example, a soft golden glow (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 106). A symbolic attributive process contains both the carrier and a symbolic attribute. In this type of process, the meaning is bestowed on the carrier (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 106).

2.1.1.2 The Interpersonal-Orientational Metafunction

With respect to the analysis of images, the interpersonal metafunction, or tenor, concentrates on the social roles realized (Halliday 1978) between the producer and receiver. As an expression of attitude in an image, this metafunction is realized by elements of perspective and modality (Van Leeuwen 2006: 142). Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 42-43) provide the example of a producer who designs an image so that the person depicted faces away from the camera (and thereby away from the image's receiver). This choice is deliberate and is an expression of the social relationship between the producer and receiver. The image design in this way also delineates to some degree both the identity of the expected receiver and which receivers are thus excluded (Van Leeuwen and Jewitt 2001: 30-31).

2.1.1.2.1 Perspective

One can perceive an image producer's objective or subjective attitude by way of investigating the image's perspective or 'point of view'. This is possible insofar as the production of an image requires the selection of the size of frame, vertical, and horizontal angle, all of which alter the visitor's perception (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 129). While an objective image is neutral and exposes all there is to see, a subjective image is biased and can distort elements of the image (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 130 & 143). It is interesting to

note that the producer's point of view not only influences the appearance of the represented participants, but is also thrust upon the visitor (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 131).

2.1.1.2.2.1 Shot type

The size of the frame corresponds to the projected intimacy, or lack thereof, between the image's represented participant(s) and the visitor. This means that a closer shot will indicate a closer social familiarity and a long shot will signal a more impersonal relationship. Van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001: 29) catalogue frame sizes by the amount of the human participant's body that is visible in the image. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) also provide a detailed inventory of frame sizes. According to the authors, to consider a shot to be a 'close-up', it should include no more than the represented participant's head, neck, and shoulders (2006: 125). Such an image would denote a 'close personal distance' between the represented participant and the visitor. A 'close personal distance' is defined as "the distance at which one can hold or grasp the other person" (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 124) and would be shared by people who are intimately related. Macken-Horarik's 2004 study of artwork featured in the Sydney exhibition called ArtExpress yields various hypotheses regarding audience's view type. For example, the painting entitled *Elaboration* takes advantage of a close-up view of a pair of open hands in order to encourage intimacy with the museum visitor (Macken-Horarik 2004: 14).

If the represented participant appears to be slightly farther away, at a distance in which touching the participant with your fingertips is only possible by fully extending your arms, the shot is called 'medium-close' and is from a far-personal distance (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 124-125). As a medium-close shot is from farther away, it will be possible to see the represented participant

from the knees or waist up (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 124-125). An image taken from this distance would indicate that the relationship between the represented participant and the visitor is to be a social one, neither deeply intimate nor estranged (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 148). The second piece of artwork evaluated by Macken-Horarik is a photograph compilation of a nude older woman entitled *Gloria*. As the photographs were taken from a medium-close distance, a close social distance is encouraged between *Gloria* and her visitor. However, the distance is lessened by the model's nakedness, which evokes a more personal relationship with the image (Macken-Horarik 2004: 14). If an image should contain only objects, a middle-distance shot would contain the entire object, leaving little room for background details. The object would also be within the potential reach of the visitor (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 127-128).

An image containing a complete human participant that is captured from a close social distance is an example of a medium-long shot (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 124). Long shots, which entail a far social distance between the represented participant and the visitor, will include the whole human figure and will have ample space surrounding him/her (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 125). Such a distance is commonly accepted as that in which business and impersonal social interaction come to pass (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 125 & 148). A long distance image of a non-human participant will display the object in question at an unreachable distance from the visitor (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 128). The farthest distance between the represented participant and the visitor is labelled 'public distance'. One can qualify this space between interactants as one that is between "people who are and are to remain strangers." (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 125). Such an image would contain only the torsos of multiple people (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 125).

The study of frame sizes is important because one can intimate that they reveal the social relationship between the visitor and the represented participants (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 127). For example, a close-up image of a building will make the edifice appear larger, and unconsciously to the visitor, more important (Alias in O'Halloran 2004: 61). Furthermore, Chouliaraki remarks that filming the bombing of Baghdad from far away (a long shot) gave the visitor an "imperial perspective" (Chouliaraki 2006: 275). Teo's analysis also reveals conclusions regarding frame size. The Singaporean *Productivity* poster is a 'medium-close' shot that encourages an affinity and solidarity between the poster participant and the visitor. This frame size thereby encourages the visitor to relate to the represented participant and emulate their behaviour (Teo 2004: 195). The *Courtesy* poster, which encourages Singaporeans to be thoughtful, considerate, punctual, and helpful, follows a similar trajectory by way of another medium-close shot. In this case, Teo perceives the distance as close enough to be encouraging the visitor to involve himself in the activities portrayed (Teo 2004: 202-204).

2.1.1.2.1.2 Vertical Angle

The vertical angle can significantly alter the visitor's perception and interpretation of an image. The three possible vertical angles are high, low, and eye-level. A high angle shot is one in which the camera is positioned above the represented participant and the image is taken in a downward direction. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 140), from a high angle, the object in the image will appear small and insignificant. Martin (1968: 37-38 as cited in Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 14) states that this angle will morally flatten the represented participant and weaken that individual. With respect to the relationship between the individual captured in the image and

the visitor, there is a power shift toward the visitor. For example, Teo (2004: 195) observes that the visitor is empowered by a high angle shot and is more prone to respond positively to the image's message, which supports the objective of the *Productivity* poster. Between the high angle and low angle, is the eye-level option.

An eye-level shot is one in which the camera is situated at the same level as the represented participant's eyes. Such a camera position is effective if the producer seeks to encourage a feeling of equality and connectedness between the visitor and the represented participant. A shot from a low angle, however, involves the camera being placed below the represented participant and the image is taken upwards toward that individual. From a low angle, the represented participant becomes superior, imposing, and in a position of greater power when compared to that of the visitor (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 140). Teo (2004: 199-200) notes a stark contrast between the *Productivity* poster (high angle) and the *Speak Mandarin* poster (low angle). The represented participant in the second image, a Chinese-style arch that towers high above the horizon, bears a commanding presence in the image. The visitor must then receive the imperative of the message and comply with the image's demand. Teo (2004: 200) concludes that the scene set in that image works in tandem with the verbal message (speak Mandarin) to create a feeling of power over the visitor. Chouliaraki (2006: 271-272) states that a high angle view of the Baghdad bombings confers onto the visitor an increasingly spectator-like quality. The visitor was thus a safe and disconnected onlooker witnessing death and destruction as a *tableau vivant*.

2.1.1.2.1.3 Horizontal Angle

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 134) define the horizontal angle as "a function of the relation between the frontal plane of the image-

producer and the frontal plane of the represented participants." Essentially, the horizontal angle is the degree to which the image is captured from a directly face-on or profiled position. There are two types of horizontal angles, frontal, and oblique.

To achieve a frontal angle, an image producer would have to align his/her camera in a parallel position to the frontal plane of the represented participant (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 134). Offering maximum involvement to the visitor, the horizontal angle provides details such as 'this is how it works', 'this is how you use it', 'this is how you do it' (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 145). Scientific and technical images tend to involve a frontal angle, as it is perceived as the most objective stance (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 143). Knox's (2007: 30) analysis of newspaper homepages corroborates that claim as he finds that their front-on layout contributed to a factual and objective stance.

An oblique angle is one in which the frontal plane of the represented participant diverges from the frontal plane of the image producer (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 134). The preference for a profiled view of the represented participant signals to the visitor "what you see here is not part of our world; it is their world, something we are not involved with." (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 136). Van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001: 99) provide the example of an image entitled *The Third World In Our Street* that was published in a school textbook in Holland. The photograph depicts three immigrant women walking down a Dutch street. By photographing the women from an oblique angle, the photographer encourages the receiver to feel detached from the represented participants.

2.1.1.2.5 Modality

Visual images are intangible representations of reality insofar that while an image may portray the likeness of an object, it is impossible

to touch said object merely by touching the image. Consequently, the limits of reality can be stretched and the presentation of the object can fluctuate from being credible and highly realistic to an absurdist version of the original. Modality is the means by which an image portrays veritable, consistent, and authoritative versions of reality (Hodge and Kress 1993: 85). Also known as the 'truth value' (Van Leeuwen and Jewitt 2001: 20), modality can suggest whether the illustration presented is to be received as fact or fiction, truth, or mere speculation (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2003: 93). According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 154) the credibility assigned to an image by way of 'modality markers', is socially constructed, because what is considered to be reliable and true stem from the values, beliefs, and needs of a societal group.

As a fundamental step in the analysis of images, it is valuable to ascertain why modality is considered such an important factor. Messaris (cited in Verser and Wicks 2006: 181) draws attention to the Kuleshov effect. A phenomenon commonly referenced in film studies, this effect accounts for the perception that images are largely authentic, when in reality, image producers draw on several premeditated methods of construction.

As our world is replete with myriad colours and shades, modality is built on a sliding scale. For example, a monochromatic (black and white) image expresses low modality and an image of highly saturated colours conveys high sensory modality (Bell in Van Leeuwen and Jewitt 2001: 30). Martinec and Salway (2005: 364) expand on that notion by naming depth, colour saturation, colour differentiation, contextualization, pictorial detail, illumination, and degree of brightness as critical facets of modality.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, and cited in Van Leeuwen 2005: 167) present a comprehensive account of modality cues. That list includes:

"Degrees of the articulation of detail form a scale which runs from the simplest line drawing to the sharpest and most finely grained photograph. Degrees of the articulation of the background range from zero articulation, as when something is shown against a white or black background, via lightly sketched in or out-of-focus backgrounds, to maximally sharp and detailed backgrounds. Degrees of colour saturation range from the absence of saturation – black and white – to the use of maximally saturated colours, with, in between, colours that are mixed with grey to various degrees. Degrees of colour modulation range from the use of flat, un-modulated colour to the representation of all the fine nuances and colour modulations of a given colour – for example, skin colour or the colour of grass. Degrees of colour differentiation range from monochrome to the use of a full palette of diverse colours. Degree of depth articulation range from the absence of any representation of depth to maximally deep perspective, with various other possibilities in between – for example, simple overlapping without perspectival foreshortening. Degrees of the articulation of light and shadow range from zero to the articulation of the maximum number of degrees of 'depth' of shade, with options such as simple hatching in between. Degrees of the articulation of tone range from just two shades of tonal gradation, black and white – or a light and dark version of another colour – to maximal tonal gradation."

As is described above, for a visitor to deem an image credible, the producer must design the modality markers so that they are a congruent depiction of what one 'normally' can see with the naked eye (Jewitt and Oyama in Van Leeuwen and Jewitt 2001: 151). For example, colour photographs tend to exhibit a truthful rendition of colour saturation, a crucial element to the creation of a naturalistic image (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 158-159).

For modality to function, it requires the participation of two interactants: the producer and the receiver. While the role of the producer is to design the image, the role of the receiver is voluntary and may only reluctantly to accept the producer's vision (Van Leeuwen 2005:162). In this way, modality creates a social affinity between the two parties, as the receiver is aligned with the image representation that was presented by the producer (Kress and Van

Leeuwen 2006: 171). Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 155-156) state that this 'alignment' creates an artificial 'we', compelling the receiver to join forces with the producer and see the image as a demonstration of what 'we' consider real.

In an image, the expected level of modality can be related to genre. For example, as newspaper cartoons have limited detail, background, depth, and colour gradation they have low modality and are as a result, not to be considered a 'real' image. However, news photographs, on the other hand, have significantly higher modality and are judged as truthful and trustworthy representations. In spite of this, we must also acknowledge that low modality does not automatically imply a lack of dependability. For example, scientific diagrams tend to lack in modality, but instinctively they are granted high truth value (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 167-168). Teo emphasizes the importance of modality by way of the robust lighting and organic colour combination found in the *Courtesy* poster. In his opinion, these features work together to provide a sense of realism, which encourage the receiver to replicate the poster's sentiments in his/her life (Teo 2004: 204).

With respect to the project at hand, while achieving a 'naturalistic realism' is a conventional barometer for measuring the truth-value in images, an assessment of high modality will be proportionate to the general credibility of the surrounding homepage, and is subject to various external factors. For example, in section 3.1.3.3 I describe the myriad errors and inconsistencies present on the Venezuelan government's homepage (gobiernoenlinea.ve). Such discrepancies reduce the homepage's truth-value and thereby threaten the believability of the images present. Alternatively, in section 3.3.4, a modality appraisal of the America's Army video game homepage (americasarmy.com) hinges on the fact that this website is based entirely on a video game, a mode

of interaction in which authentic photographs do not exist. That modality valuation will examine the degree to which the images present harmonize with what one might expect from a twenty-first century video game, rather than being an approximation of real life.

To clarify the means by which truth-value will be assessed, the following components of modality will be evaluated in the homepage images: depth, detail, colour, lighting, and contextualization.

2.1.1.2.5.1 Depth

Depth, a crucial component to the creation of perspective in an image, is a scale measurement that varies from a deficiency of depth to very deep perspective (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 162). For example, the Singaporean government's *Speak Mandarin* poster features a Chinese-style arch set in front of a horizon and is framed by a blue sky and rainbow. This design makes use of the affordances of depth perspective and directs the receiver's eyes deep into the horizon, to the boundless space of the seemingly endless road (Teo 2004: 200).

2.1.1.2.5.2 Detail

The depiction of detail is the extent to which pictorial detail is represented in an image. High modality is granted to the typically foregrounded elements whose detail is comprehensive and the low modality is assigned to the more vague, backgrounded components. Alternatively, too much detail can render an image 'hyper-real' and thereby decrease the overall modality (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 161). For example, providing more detail than can normally be seen by the human eye can be interpreted as a fabrication.

2.1.1.2.5.3 Colour

"Colour is a power which directly influences the soul. Colour is the keyboard, the eyes are the hammers, and the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand which plays, touching one key or

another, to cause vibrations in the soul" (Kandinsky 2006: 52). As colour is as much a semiotic resource as size of frame or horizontal angle, the image producer's colour choices cannot be considered arbitrary (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2002: 345). For instance, colour is a vital ingredient in the world of marketing, as evidenced by the American Lanham Act, which assigns legal protection and trademarks to particular colours (Madden et al. 2000: 90). Furthermore, in our daily lives, colour is a marker of social identity (for example, the use of black in goth culture) (Koller 2008: 397-398) and allows us to perform acts, such as cautioning others with the use of orange (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2002: 348). An exploration of the producer's colour choices entails both an inventory of the types of colours (including their modulation, differentiation, purity, saturation, hue, and coordination) and their potential interpretations by the receiver. As they covey similar meanings, it is possible to relate colour purity, colour modulation, and colour differentiation.

2.1.1.2.5.3.1 Colour Purity

Colour purity is a description of how pure a colour is and its scale ranges from maximum purity to hybridity (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2002: 356). For example, a bright blue would be considered pure, while turquoise would be considered a hybrid blue-green.

2.1.1.2.5.3.2 Colour Modulation

While colour modulation also measures an aspect of colour purity, it specifically qualifies whether the image contains multiple shades of a colour or one basic un-modulated colour. The modality of colour modulation is measured as follows: a black and white image would acquire low modality; a naturalistic amount of colour modulation would boast high modality; and intensely saturated colours would possess compromised modality (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 160-161). This is because the more ornately textured a colour is, the

more natural it will appear, and the higher modality it will be granted. However, if the depiction is judged too ornate, its modality will accordingly be lowered (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2002: 356-357).

2.1.1.2.5.3.3 Colour Coordination

By the same token, colour coordination ascertains if an image contains a repetition of a single colour of the same brightness and saturation or is a blend of various colours (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2002: 349).

Colour differentiation is similar to colour modulation. This feature of a colour analysis examines whether the image's colour palette is monochromatic (and thereby low in modality) or maximally varied (high in modality) (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2002: 357). As what can be seen by the naked eye is a fundamental aspect of modality, colours that are saturated and more natural in appearance are considered to be of higher modality. Similarly, pastels or pale renditions of colours are lower in modality and de-saturated black and white illustrations are of the lowest (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001: 30).

2.1.1.2.5.3.4 Colour Hue

Finally, colour hue determines if the colour in question is more red or more blue in nature. The value of a colour hue supposition is dependent on the social meanings assigned to those colours insofar as red tends to be correlated with warmth and energy and blue with cold and distance (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2002: 357). While the above-mentioned delineation of colour leads the receiver to distinguish types of colours, the related meaning potential guides interpretation.

2.1.1.2.5.3.5 Colour Meaning Potential

Meaning potential in this sense implies that certain colours are associated with the values of particular classes of people, places, and general ideas (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2002: 354-355). Kandinsky (1977: 47-39) contends that when the eye drifts over a colourful image, the result is two-fold. Firstly, the colours trigger a physical impact of pleasure by being warmed (by warm colours) or cooled and soothed (by cool tones). Secondly, the vision produces the 'psychic effect' of association. Kandinsky provides the example of viewing two distinct shades of red. While one may remind the visitor of the warmth created by fire, the other may cause the feeling of disgust by being reminiscent of running blood. For example, according to Madden et al (2000: 98), the colour red tends to be associated with the adjectives 'active', 'hot', and 'vibrant' in East Asia, Europe, North America, and South America. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2002: 355) term this reaction as 'provenance'. Koller (2008: 399-405) argues that our instinctual response to particular colours is a socialized behaviour that is based on cultural and historical associations with a colour. In her article, she argues that the association of the colour pink with the wardrobe of little girls is a relatively new phenomenon. In Western society, pink was the prevalent colour for little boys until 1920, whereas pale blue was associated with women, due to the *sacre bleu* tone of the Virgin Mary's robe.

2.1.1.2.5.3.6 Colour Saturation

Colour saturation also influences the receiver's interpretation of colour. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2002: 356) suggest that saturation expresses the emotive potency of an image. For example, high saturation can indicate maximum intensity and low saturation will signal a diminished amount of energy. Conversely, they also argue that there can be both positive and negative interpretations of

saturation insofar as a high saturation can signal exuberance or vulgarity while low saturation can signify subtlety or repression (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2002: 356). Colour purity can also purport particular reactions from receivers. For instance, while pure depictions of red, blue, and yellow are understood as indicators of modernity, pastels are signifiers of hybridity and postmodernism (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2002: 356). Koller also comments on the importance of colour saturation. In her study of the colour pink, she notes that a deeply saturated pink triggered feelings of artificiality and cheapness, while a light pink reminded respondents of innocence and femininity (2008: 404-405).

Teo suggests the importance of colour choice in his 2004 study. For example, the *Productivity* poster is a blend of rich, saturated natural colours, which make the image (and its message) realistic and believable (Teo 2004: 195-196). Kress and Van Leeuwen propose that the warm golden-brown tones used in an advertisement for instant coffee intentionally lower modality and work to portray a fantasy of what life may be like while consuming the product (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 159). On the Internet, the use (and potential for the manipulation) of colour is equally important and is deliberately selected. Knox (2007: 30) contends that the use of black and white on newspaper homepages purposefully reminds the receiver of the recognizable and reputable world of the print media. Chiew (in O'Halloran 2004:146) also comments on the use of black and white to intimate a level of seriousness on the Singaporean Ministry of Education's homepage. Askehave and Nielsen (2005: 135) note that vibrant colours are typically used on webpages to draw and maintain the visitor's attention.

The measurement of an image's brightness lies between colour and lighting to the extent that the brightness created by

lighting alters a colour's shade. The scale of brightness varies from many degrees of brightness to the polar distinction between black and white (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 162). When the degree of brightness is limited, the image can attain a hazy appearance, thereby lowering the modality (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 162).

2.1.1.2.5.4 Lighting/Illumination/Clarity

The ability to distinguish between light and dark is one of the most basic human experiences (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2002: 355-356) and the related measurement of illumination is an important component of a visual analysis. The scale of lighting runs from the depiction of light and shade to their absence. Modality increases with naturalistic representations of illumination and their effect on the participants (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 162). Lighting techniques can also be employed to make particular represented participants more or less prominent in an image. For example, O'Halloran (2004:119) describes how the lighting in the film *Chinatown* made the character Evelyn more salient.

2.1.1.2.5.5 Contextualization

A necessary canvas for the depth, detail, colour, and lighting of an image is the background or setting. The backdrop for the represented participant can vary in articulation and detail, meaning that the scale for contextualization runs from a lack of background features to an abundantly expressed context. A de-contextualized background produces an image that is non-specific and cannot be spatially or temporally identified (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 161). Machin's (2004: 320) examination of image bank photos presents many examples of the de-contextualized background. Such images are useful to advertisers as they can be utilized in many different contexts.

It is important to recognize that high modality is not necessarily achieved by way of a fully articulated background. For example, an image whose foreground is blurred, while its background is sharply detailed would have low modality and would in turn prove unrealistic to the receiver (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 161). In Marlin's (2002: 103) study of propaganda and ethics, he refers to a 1939 publication issued by the Institute for Propaganda Analysis that underscored the importance of 'transfer' as a 'trick of the trade' for architects of propaganda. As related to contextualization, transfer is the act of producing an image in which the authority and reputation of something is passed on (transferred) to something or someone else in order to make the latter more tolerable. For example, by placing a flag in the background of an image, the potent qualities of that symbol are consigned to the foregrounded participant. In Teo's (2004:196) assessment of the *Productivity* poster, he states that although the lack of background (a black backdrop) lowers the naturalistic modality of the image, it draws the receiver's attention to the participants, and consequently intensifies the overall effect of the image.

2.1.1.3 The Textual-Organizational Metafunction

The textual metafunction, as applied to visual texts, is the organizational means by which the image is internally coherent and externally cohesive with the context in which it was developed (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 43). The successful combination of coherence and cohesion allow the seemingly separate fragments of image to become a communicative event (Van Leeuwen 2006: 142).

2.1.1.3.1 Coherence

As stated above, an author creates coherence in a written text by establishing a link between the wording and its social and cultural environment (Eggins 2004: 24). Additionally, Eggins (2004:29)

defines a text as bearing 'generic coherence' if its membership to a particular genre is demonstrable. The notion of coherence can also be extended to the analysis of visual images. An image qualifies as being internally coherent if the represented participants and physical features portray a consistent message. External coherence is accomplished when the image can be linked to the environment in which it was produced and is to be utilized (Kress 2010: 148). Interestingly, Van Dijk's (1990: 64) contention that coherence necessitates "assumed knowledge and beliefs" plays a substantial role in the faulty construction of a Singaporean government poster. According to Teo (2004: 208), the *Speak Mandarin* poster's depiction of a jumbled medley of cultural symbols, including some that are more significant to a western audience, lends to a noticeable lack of coherence. Incoherence is also noted by Kress (2010: 38), as he states that an older visitor to the Children's BBC website may find the site's slightly chaotic design difficult to follow.

Coherence is an important facet of the textual metafunction insofar as it shapes the ideational and interpersonal meanings into whole texts (Knox 2007: 22) and thereby 'breathes relevance' into those two metafunctions (Van Leeuwen 2003: 77). Pang Kah Meng (in O'Halloran 2004:31) supports this view in his study of museum displays. He reports that the ideational function and interpersonal function of an exhibition become interconnected, and thereby meaningful and coherent, by way of the textual function.

As multiple modes can appear simultaneously in a text, such as written and spoken language, moving images, still images, and music, it is necessary to emphasize the role of coherence in both digital and 'analog' documents. Essentially, coherence allows the many modes not only to appear concurrently and interact logically amongst each other (Martinec and Salway 2005: 338-339), but also to stylistically collaborate in a single communicative act (Levine and

Scollon 2004: 8). For example, Van Leeuwen's (in Norris and Jones 2005: 79-80) analysis of the ubiquitous Lord Kitchener 'Your country needs you!' World War I British military recruitment poster reveals that framing (or lack of it) is also an essential component of coherence. He states that the lack of framing lines between the image of the pointing soldier and the text provides a sense of unity and coherence between the two modes. In electronic documents, DeWitt (in Dewitt and Strasma 1999: 117) stresses the role that linking plays in the establishment of coherence in hypertext. In Knox's (2007: 23-25) study of the Bangkok Post, People's Daily, and Sydney Morning Herald newspaper homepages, he reasons that each homepage is a complex entity, which is composed of a series of signs. These signs work together to create a coherent text.

Notable authors writing on this subject refer to various sub-types of coherence. For example, 'chronological coherence' can be attained when a voiceover-narrative is effectively blended with moving images, as is documented by Chouliaraki (2005: 148-149) in her study of the Iraq invasion of 2003. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2003: 242) describe the linear nature of temporal coherence that can typically be found in moving images. In Lemke's (in Norris & Jones 2005: 110) study of video games, he noted that spatial coherence is a key ingredient in both real and virtual environments, as related to the interactive quality of gaming. In Van Dijk's (2001: 30) analysis of a speech presented by a Member of Parliament (MP) in the British House of Commons, he noted that the MP's speech was formal in nature, until she included the term 'bogus'. This change of tone, perhaps being evidence of a populist strategy, was a violation of stylistic coherence. Lemke (2002: 311) seeks visual cohesive ties on the NASA Goddard Space Flight Earth Sciences homepage. Examples of such ties include the repetition of the colour blue throughout the website.

2.1.1.3.2 Cohesion

To classify a text or image as cohesive, it must display an organizational connectedness or visual rhyme amongst the represented participants (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 204). As formal features of text (Paltridge 1997:10-11), the elements that contribute to cohesion are rhythm (Van Leeuwen 2005:181), layout, colour, and typography (Van Leeuwen 2006: 139). A multimodal text will benefit greatly from the various sub-types of cohesion (componential, textual, and chronological). As stated by Van Leeuwen (in Levine & Scollon 2004: 7), the maintenance of a stylistic unity between an image and verbal text enhances cohesion. Martinec and Salway (2005: 347) confirm this notion in their study of the relationship between images and their accompanying texts. In their investigation, they provide a detailed method by which an analyst can determine the degree of componential cohesion. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 349; 2006: 230) comment on the importance of colour in the construction of textual cohesion. It is their position that an image that contains multiple colours of the same brightness and saturation is more cohesive than one in which a single colour is repeated. Chouliaraki (2006: 269) provides an example of chronological cohesion. By way of video narration, the journalist's voice-over statement of '*but seconds later*' marks a time-sensitive recounting of violent events in Baghdad. Lemke (2002: 306; 2005: 49-50) refers to Halliday and Hasan's (1976) commentary on cohesion chains, a linguistic device that allows authors to link similar units across a text. Lemke (2002: 313) also argues that lexical cohesion is evident on a NASA website by way of word repetition.

2.1.1.3.3 Framing

"Without frame, no meaning." Gunther Kress (2010:149)

A fundamental aspect of cohesion, by demarcating elements in the text (Van Leeuwen 2006: 145), framing organizes the text's physical space, and clarifies which elements are to be considered connected and which are purposefully disconnected. A lack of framing would cause confusion to the receiver insofar as it would be impossible to determine the relationships between the represented participants (Kress 2010: 149). While the most obvious framing mechanism is a border, such as one between articles in a newspaper, disconnection can also be fashioned with other components in an image, such as the edge of a building or a tree (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001: 2).

Similarly, a connection can be intimated by the continuity of color (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001: 2), vectors (Kress and Van Leeuwen in Bell and Garrett 1998: 188) or absence of a disconnecting device (Van Leeuwen 2005: 7). In Van Leeuwen's (2005: 13) study of social semiotics, he provides an exhaustive list of framing terms[11] that denote the subtleties of connection and disconnection in images. It is important to note that the represented participants can be framed either strongly or weakly. Indeed, a bold frame would signify that the separated elements are to be understood as inherently detached (Kress and Van Leeuwen in Bell and Garrett 1998: 203). For example, Knox (2007: 32) argues that the Bangkok Post's homepage

[11] "(1) Segregation: two or more elements occupy entirely different territories, and this indicates that they should be seen as belonging to different orders.
(2) Separation: two or more elements are separated by empty space, and this suggests that they should be seen as similar in some respects and different in others.
(3) Integration: text and picture occupy the same space –either the text is integrated in (for example, superimposed on) the pictorial space, or the picture in the textual space.
(4) Overlap: frames may be porous –for example, part of the picture may break through the frame or letters may be half in the pictorial space and half in the textual space.
(5) Rhyme: two elements, although separate, have a quality in common –what that quality is depends on the common feature (for example, a feature of form such as angularity or roundness, etc).
(6) Contrast: two elements differ in terms of a quality (as realized by a colour, or by formal features, etc.)

utilizes colourful horizontal bars to frame news articles of different subject matter and that a blue line distinguishes the *General News* section from nearby elements.

2.1.1.3.4 Salience

Salience is a term that refers to an element's ability to attract the attention of a visitor (Kress and Van Leeuwen in Bell and Garrett 1998: 188). It establishes a 'hierarchy of importance' (Knox 2007: 36-37) that communicates which of the represented participants is most worthy of the visitor's interest (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 201). The producer's methods for encoding salience to particular facets of an image include the manipulation of size, colour tone, colour saturation (for example, the use of black and white for borders or the pairing of deep colours with their pastel counterparts), perspective (back-grounding and foregrounding), and the inclusion of culturally relevant figures (Kress and Van Leeuwen in Bell and Garrett 1998: 200-201). The overlapping of elements is also a function of salience, as the overlapped objects are understood as being less significant (Van Leeuwen 2005: 198). Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 63) discuss the importance of 'psychological salience' by way of the conspicuous usage of a human face in order to draw the visitor's attention. Baldry (in O'Halloran 2004: 92) describes how the producer of a car advertisement intensifies the salience of a represented participant by adjusting the camera's focus from blurry to sharp. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (in Bell and Garrett 1998: 200-201), the visual balance of participants, which are deliberately salient versus non-salient, is linked to the producer's ideology.

Many authors underscore the importance of salience in multimodal studies. For example, in Pang Kah Meng's (in O'Halloran 2004:47) investigation of the *From Colony to Nation* exhibit at the

Singapore History Museum, he notes that while one of the display's purposes was to neutrally document the past, historical animosities regarding communism were detectable in the arrangement of photographs. Meng calls attention to a collection of thirteen photographs documenting a riot. Of those images, the only detectable injured party is a police officer. The image of the police officer is thereby salient in its uniqueness amongst the rest of the collection. On a computer screen, visual salience is achieved in a similar manner. For instance, Chiew (in O'Halloran 2004: 150) affirms that on the Singaporean Ministry of Education's homepage, the visitor's eyes are attracted to the right side of the page as a consequence of increasing colour brightness. As Knox (2007: 36-37) argues, the scrollable nature of webpages is a significant factor in the creation of salience. In his analysis of newspaper homepages, he contends that greater proximity to the top of the page translates into increased salience.

Salience also plays an important role in the promotion of a specific reading path through a text. While the reading path of a verbal text is somewhat limited, the visitor's visual trajectory through an image is quite malleable. Kress and Van Leeuwen (in Bell and Garrett 1998: 205) make the case that the layout of an image can persuade the receiver to view it in a particular way, starting with the most salient represented participant. Further details regarding reading path can be found in section 2.3.1.

2.1.1.3.5 Information Value

Information value, a term coined by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996: 193), refers to the sectioning of an image into zones of specific value (Kress and Van Leeuwen in Bell and Garrett 1998: 188) in which the producer places the represented participants (Knox 2007: 36). Dependent entirely on layout (Kress and Van Leeuwen in Bell and Garrett 1998: 206), information value depicts compositional choices

rooted in the opposition of top-bottom, left-right, and centre-margin (Knox 2007: 37).

The top-bottom division allocates the upper portion of the image to be the 'ideal' and assigns the bottom section to be the 'real' (Knox 2007: 37). While 'ideal' implies the idealized nature of the information, 'real' suggests the true, specific details regarding the image (Kress and Van Leeuwen in Bell and Garrett 1998: 194). For example, when viewing an advertisement for a medication, a depiction of how one will feel after exposure to the medication will appear in the upper part of the page/screen while the advisory information for that product will be found at the bottom of the screen or page. Although 'ideal' does not always suggest a positive meaning (Kress and Van Leeuwen in Bell and Garrett 1998: 194), the top-bottom demarcation is unconsciously understood as a reflection of social difference. For example, according to Van Leeuwen (2005: 193), just as we commonly relate positive attributes to those that are 'above us' or 'high on the hog' we also mentally demote those who are of the 'lower' classes or are 'down on their luck'. Kress (2003: 2) also notes that the placement of a participant 'above' can also indicate that it is superior to the items found below. It is Van Leeuwen's (2005: 205) contention that our moral tendency to associate 'high' with 'good' and 'low' with 'bad' leads to the semiotic propensity to position positively represented participants in the upper segment of an image. For example, Teo (2004: 197) notes that in the *Productivity* poster, which contains a grouping of men and women of different occupations, the two women are placed in the lower section of the image. The author argues that their location may be a reflection of the lower status of women in that society.

The placement of participants on the left or right is also a significant facet of image design. Objects or persons situated on the left suggest information that is 'given', already known or familiar to

the receiver. Whereas, participants located on the right indicate 'new' information that is unknown to the visitor (Kress and Van Leeuwen in Bell and Garrett 1998: 189). For example, an advertisement for a cosmetic product may include 'before and after' photographs. The 'before' photograph is placed on the left and the 'after' is located on the right. The reasoning behind this separation of participants originates in Western writing, where the previously known details are found in the initial part of a sentence and the new information is saved for the next clause (Van Leeuwen 2005: 201).

Finally, the placement of a represented participant in the centre (rather than the margin) of an image is evidence of a significant choice made by the producer. Content that is positioned in the centre is the nucleus of the image and the details that appear near the edges are less important or ancillary (Kress and Van Leeuwen in Bell and Garrett 1998: 196; Kress 2003: 2). Knox (2007: 39) discovers that newspaper homepages capitalize on the centre-margin distinction by placing articles of primary importance in the middle of the screen and those of secondary value along the edges. It is also noteworthy to mention that the centre-margin separation can be measured in degrees insofar as the marginality of represented participants is a function of the salience of the most central item (Van Leeuwen 2005: 208).

In the virtual world, because of the vertical scrolling ability, the most salient space on a website is the top-left corner of the screen. According to Chiew (in O'Halloran 2004: 146), this is a 'guaranteed viewing area' where webpage designers will often present the most pertinent information. Askehave & Ellerup (2005: 132) support this notion and affirm that hyperlinks to related websites are typically located at the top of a website in this area of ideal and salient information. Knox (2007: 38) also comments on the effect of vertical scrolling on websites. In his study of newspaper

homepages, he observes that the articles found at the bottom of a website are of diminished salience when compared to those found at the top. This is because the internet visitor must not only look down, but also physically scroll down the screen to view those articles.

2.2. Defining Multimodality

Candidly stated, all texts are multimodal (Kress and Van Leeuwen in Bell and Garrett 1998: 186) and furthermore, every written genre has always been multimodal (Lemke 2005: 45). The implications of the above statements regarding contemporary [12] multimodality, or multimodal theory, grew from the work of systemic functional linguists who sought a method to interpret visual communication (Martinec and Salway 2005: 339; Knox 2007: 22). In its essence, multimodal theory acknowledges our inherently human auditory, visual, tactile, and olfactory capacities, which enable us to utilize a vast range of communicative modes (Hull and Nelson 2005: 227; Finnegan 2002: 223). Indeed, the integration and interplay of visual and verbal semiotic systems to create different forms of meaning are the fundamental properties of a dynamic multimodal text (O'Halloran in O'Halloran 2004: 110; Saint Georges in Levine and Scollon 2004: 72; Teo 2004: 189-190; Hull and Nelson 2005: 224-225). Lemke (2002: 302) describes the types of possible modes as "analytically distinguishable semiotic resource systems", or, in other words, possible modal varieties include verbal text (words), images, moving images, sound, speech, and gesture (Hull and Nelson 2005: 224-225). It is important to note that multimodal studies have triggered a scholarly shift from the designation of language as the preferred

[12] Kaltenbacher (2004: 191-192) presents the argument that the origins of multimodal reasoning began well before the time of Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen. In his article, he draws attention to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's 1776 publication of *Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*. According to Kaltenbacher, this work is the first recorded example of multimodal thought insofar as the author compares the effect of expressing an event (in this case, the death of the Trojan priest Laocoon and his sons) by way of sculpture and epic poetry.

method of communication, to the recognition that image, page layout, document design, and language all convey comparable amounts of meaning simultaneously (Iedema 2003: 33).

As many modes are active at the same time, each is incorporated into the message so that every mode accomplishes what it is best at communicating while also complementing the efforts of the other modes (Hull and Nelson 2005: 247). Effectively, every mode possesses distinctive affordances (Kress 2010: 147), meaning that there is an intrinsic division of labour (Iedema 2003: 48) between the modes. For instance, while written text will convey one set of meanings, images will transmit others (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2003: 18). This assignment of particular significance to specific modes is variable according to the individual text and audience. For example, while Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 2) state that music communicates action, Hull and Nelson (2005: 252-253) contend that music imparts an emotional element to a text.

Another necessary component of multimodal texts is the establishment of a connection between the multiple modes. In the related literature, it is stated that the modes present in a multimodal text will 'fuse' together (Van Leeuwen in Norris and Jones 2005: 80; Van Leeuwen in Levine and Scollon 2004: 7; Teo 2004: 189-190). Kress (2003: 134) provides a similar approach by referring to the concept of 'orchestration'. This term is used to signify the means by which the producer integrates multiple elements in order to create a coherent entity. As related to digital texts, the connection between the verbal, the visual, and the audio becomes more complicated. According to Lemke (2002: 300 & 310), electronic documents are not just multimodal, but are *hyper*modal due to the numerous interconnections between the modes and links between text units. Furthermore, the popularity of the internet as a field of study semiotic and linguistic investigation (Mautner 2005: 809) and its

almost intrinsically multimodal nature (Kress 2003: 5) foster even greater interest in the simultaneous presentation of text, sound, image, and moving image (Iedema 2003: 33). Indeed, the immersive nature of a multimodal text is intensified by the interactive qualities of a website in which the medium is designed to react to the user's actions (Lemke in Jewitt 2009: 146-147).

A necessary question in the analysis of a multimodal text is 'what mode, for what purpose?' Bezermer and Kress (2008: 171-172) approach this query by consigning those choices to the sign-maker. According to those authors, the sign-maker exploits the capabilities of each mode so that s/he can accomplish the "complex, often contradictory demands of their own interest, the needs of the matter to be communicated, and the characteristics of the audience." Kress (2010: 173) re-affirms that the sign-maker's assumptions regarding the identity of the audience are of utmost importance to his/her modal choices. He argues that such decisions reflect the sign-maker's sense of and relation to the receiver. Maiorani (2007: 46) elaborates on this notion by stating that while discourse can expose information about the selected audience, it can also tell us about the society and cultural context of which that audience is part.

Furthermore, modal choices are also subject to epistemological consequences, as knowledge can change with modal selection (Kress 2003: 50).

Kress (2003: 35; 46) raises interesting questions regarding the equality of modes within a multimodal message. He asks whether the visual material simply duplicates written language, or whether the more striking visual and audio elements assume peripheral roles? Kress also insists that one mode will most often be the chief communicator of a message, which forces the analyst to tally how much information is depicted by each mode. Finally, when approaching a multimodal text, it is crucial to isolate which of the

many modes will be focused on in an analysis. According to Hull and Nelson (2005: 234), in a perfect world, each individual mode would be included; however, such complexity would rapidly overwhelm both the analyst and audience, especially when the document to be analyzed is electronic.

2.3 The Study of Electronic Texts

An important question to attend to, before beginning an analysis of electronic text is: what distinguishes an electronic text from one printed on paper? Although there are countless answers to that question, a statement made by Lemke (2002: 299) is particularly apt: "Why would one prefer an interactive hypertext to the printed page? -The less we're constrained by realism, the more engaged out imaginations become." With reference to the related literature, while a printed document can be transferred almost seamlessly into the electronic realm, the inverse cannot necessarily be maintained. Askehave & Neilsen (2005: 128) comment that electronic texts become utterly 'handicapped' when they are printed. Similarly, Ihlstrom and Henfridsson (2005: 173) provide the example of a printed newspaper and its electronic equivalent. These authors argue that the existence of archives/search engines, interactive features, and multimedia are possible only in the on-line forum. In the following section, I will detail the other fundamental differences between printed and virtual texts. This comparison will complement the visual and verbal analyses and will facilitate an examination of the hyper-characteristics of the military recruitment websites. Specifically, the next section will contain information regarding electronic reading path (linearity & scanning practices), information related to hyperlinks, the inclusion of (many) more modes, a description of the necessary elements of a homepage, and the importance of logo placement.

2.3.1 Reading Path

With respect to the reading path in printed documents, such as a book, there is typically only one standard reading order (Lemke 2002: 300), in which the reader is figuratively taken by the hand and guided through the text (Kress and Van Leeuwen in Bell & Garrett 1998: 206). Furthermore, according to Kress and Van Leeuwen (in Bell and Garrett 1998: 205), for a printed document to make sense, the reading path is linear and is strictly coded so that the reader approaches the text from left to right (or right to left, according to the language) and top to bottom, line by line. When faced with the hard copy of a newspaper front page, however, the reader is first likely to scan the entire page and then concede to following the premeditated reading path (Kress and Van Leeuwen in Bell & Garrett 1998: 205). Even the reading path, or perhaps what can be called 'experience path', of walking through an art exhibition is constrained by the museum's design. According to Macken-Horarik (2004: 7), when visiting an exhibition we can only move into subsequent rooms by entering and exiting the earlier ones. Essentially, the reading path is a method by which the text shall be read 'properly', and the text, electronic or otherwise, is subject to the wishes of the designer (Kress 2003: 50).

With regards to web-based texts, various studies have demonstrated that our eyes tend to follow a particular path through a webpage. According to Thurston (2004: 65), the human eye is initially attracted to moving images, then to still images, and finally to written text. Spatially, our attention to a webpage centres first on the top of the computer screen, moving left to right while searching for valuable information. The bottom of the webpage tends to receive the least of our attention.

Jakob Nielsen, who has published numerous studies on how we read webpages, argues that scanning is the method of choice for

most web users (Nielsen: 6 May 2008). Nielsen also states that the most common website reading path resembles the shape of the letter 'F'. With the use of an eye-tracking heatmap, his studies indicate that we initially read horizontally across the top of the screen, then our eyes move down the page to the second area of horizontal interest, finally, we vertically scan the left side of the page (Nielsen: 17 April 2006). This seemingly innate electronic reading path has many implications for website designers.

Scanning is an important facet of the website reading process, as website readers will rarely read a text word-by-word. It is therefore reasonable for a website producer to alter the design so that verbose material is deleted and concise paragraphs contain only the most crucial details (Nielsen: 17 April 2006). Interestingly, the search for significant words and headings on a webpage is 25 per cent slower than reading a printed text (Nielsen: 15 March 2007). Askehave & Nielsen (2005: 131) raise the important notion that while the website's designer may have conceived of a specific path for the website visitor to follow, it is scanning that allows the reader to 'choose his own adventure'. The reader's freedom to scan the website also means that there is no 'wrong order' or incorrect way to read an electronic document (Jewitt in Levine & Scollon 2004: 187). Furthermore, multiple pathways provide the reader with additional means by which to respond to the text (Jones in Jewitt 2009: 116). However, scanning an electronic document rather than a printed one is made more complicated due to the need to physically scroll down the computer page with a mouse or keyboard (Knox 2007: 28). That physical manipulation of the screen makes reading on-line a uniquely physical activity (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001: 68).

A fundamental property of web-based texts is the non-linear communication of information. In other words, hypertext is non-sequential in its ordering, which allows the reader to select his or her

own reading path through the webpage and website (Askehave and Nielsen 2005: 125). However, it is important to note that even an apparent lack of sequence does not imply that the user is entirely unconstrained; Askehave and Nielsen (2005: 125) note that an internet user cannot make more than one selection at a time. In addition, one must acknowledge that institutional websites are not constructed randomly, but are thoughtfully built and make use of ordering in a deliberate way (Van Leeuwen in Norris and Jones 2005: 73). Part of a website's design is a sequence of information that is at least somewhat constrained (Lemke 2005: 48) and encourages navigation through particular sections (McGann 2001: 73). Similarly, Lemke (2005: 51) provides the example of the typical trajectories that are made possible in on-line video games.

It is argued that a reading path on a website is in many ways dependent upon the links provided (Danesi 2002: 158; Duguay in DeWitt and Strasma 1999: 15-16; Knox 2007: 47). Nielsen's (9 June 2008) studies demonstrate that if the website designer includes a powerful 'information scent', the reader will click on that link because s/he would be able to accurately predict what information will be revealed on the next webpage. However, clicking on links can interfere with a designer's premeditated reading path as upon selecting the link the visitor is instantly transported to another (potentially unrelated) webpage. The movement from webpage to webpage poses a greater risk to the reading path because no physical relationship exists between the electronic text and the reader (Knox 2007: 42); the act of turning a book's page is less intimidating than remembering the website users's original location. It is not uncommon, then, for an internet reader to become lost amongst the links and become oblivious to his or her positioning within a website (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 85).

Website designers may also aim to persuade their reader to follow a specific course by way of salience (Van Leeuwen in Norris and Jones 2005: 82; Chiew in O'Halloran 2004: 145). This concept, termed 'differential salience' by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996: 218), argues that by making certain components of the page more noticeable than others, the website designer can encourage the visitor to observe the most salient parts first and then continue on to the components which are less visually prominent (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996: 218). However, sometimes intended salience is negated by the actual behaviour of website users. For example, while the upper portion of a website is the most noticeable, and is thereby a practical place to post a banner, it is also the most ignored zone on a webpage. According to Nielsen and Tahir (2002: 19), seasoned website visitors develop 'banner blindness' and will either pay no attention to or utterly reject the messages found in the rectangular boxes located in the upper portion of the page. The suggestion that salience guides the reading path is further complicated by the presence of various components on the page, each of which is equally noticeable. Van Leeuwen (in Norris & Jones 2005: 82) argues that it is difficult to determine the order in which each element will attract the reader's attention.

Other authors posit that reading path is idiosyncratic and is a function of the reader's interests, background, and value system (Kress 2010: 175; McKillop and Myers in DeWitt and Strasma 1999: 67). From this standpoint, reading path is user-driven (Nielsen: 9 June 2008) and will fluctuate according to the reader's desires (Kress 2003: 138; 2010: 170). Interestingly, Finneman (1999: 27) presents the idea that when reading a hypertext, we approach the electronic text in either a reading mode or a navigating mode that allows us to make sense of the text as a whole. Indeed, information regarding reading path and scanning are all for naught when one considers the

web-literacy skills of most internet voyagers. According to Graber (1996: 34), as millions of Americans are functionally illiterate, the internet will become a vibrant space only for those who have the financial means to access it and the superior education necessary to understand it.

2.3.2 Links

One can find hyperlinks on most webpages; in fact, most webpages provide access to approximately 40 links per webpage (Crowston & Williams 1999: 4). Within a website, links perform several important tasks. To facilitate web navigation, links ought to be easily identifiable and they are typically blue underlined words (Thurston 2004: 60) or they appear as boxed graphic buttons (McKillop and Myers in DeWitt and Strasma 1999: 66). Links steer the visitor from one part of the website to another (DeWitt in DeWitt and Strasma 1999: 117), thereby creating a meaningful connection between disparate text units (Van Leeuwen 2005: 219). Links also promote the 'flow of meaning' (Askehave & Nielsen 2005: 132) and instill a sense of multi-sequentiality (Lemke 2002: 300).

There are several views regarding the types of links that are possible on a webpage. According to Askehave and Nielsen (2005: 132-134), there are two kinds of links: general and specific. General links allow the web visitor to find the key topics on a website with ease. Specific links work to entice the visitor with hints of what can be found elsewhere on the website. By luring a more tentative visitor, specific links make a visit to the website's homepage impulsive and exciting. Ashman, O'Neill, and Clothier (1997: 2-3) classify links in terms of action, association, and ordering. Clicking on an action link would elicit an action, selecting an association link would indicate that there is a connection between the associated webpages, and enacting an ordering link implies a sequentiality

between seemingly unrelated texts. Crowston and Williams (1999: 4) describe three classes of links: links that connect items within the same file, those that connect with webpages produced by the same host, and those that send the reader to websites produced by an unrelated host. Van Leeuwen (2005: 237-240) states that there are four types of links: elaboration, addition, similarity, and next event. Those links indicate to the reader that following a link will lead them to 'elaboration on the original idea', 'additional details', 'similar topics', and 'what is next'. With respect to the thesis at hand, it is important to note that a website designer can encourage a web visitor to follow a particular path through a website by linking sequential pages (and thereby get access to a particular narrative) (Crowston and Williams 1999: 2). In so doing, the user's interests and desires are made secondary to those of the producing company or institution (Marlin 2002: 286).

2.3.3 Many (More) Modes

The uploading of a document from the traditional printed page to the computer screen is significant because it establishes new manners of communication and presents to producers and designers the opportunity to harness the vast capabilities of multimedia (Iedema 2003: 38). The essence and consequences of multimodality in electronic documents, which had been overlooked in scholarly communications (Pauwels 2005: 604), are considerable. For example, while the image dominates and organizes the electronic environment (Jewitt in Levine and Scollon 2004: 185; Kress 2010: 19), the meaning of written text is further enhanced by video and audio data (Askehave & Nielsen 2005: 124). The interplay of written, spoken, and/or audiovisual segments compel the web visitor's eyes (and ears) to continue experiencing a webpage. Askehave and Nielsen (2005: 135) state that the visitor's attraction to a page is

intensified by vibrant colours and flash effects[13], memorable slogans, puns, and words such as 'new', 'recent', and 'today'.

The overall effect of a webpage can be greatly boosted by the inclusion of images. However, according to Nielsen and Tahir (2002: 22) graphics tend to slow down the downloading process and can clutter the visual space. It is their view that visual images should be chosen with great care and consideration. Music is frequently included in website design to "cast a mood around one's story through a musical choice; to accent, punctuate, or emphasize spoken words through their connection to a beat" (Hull and Nelson 205: 253). Music can also be used to instill particular values. For example, Jewitt (in Van Leeuwen and Jewitt 2001: 191-192) notes that the inclusion of choral church music can imbue sentiments of spirituality and 'higher values'.

2.3.4 The Homepage

To a corporation or institution, the homepage is "the most valuable real estate in the world. Millions of dollars are funneled through a space that's not even a square foot in size" (Nielsen and Tahir 2002: preface). A website's homepage has many objectives, the most obvious of which are to provide a gateway to the rest of the site (Askehave and Nielsen 2005: 122-123) and introduce the site to their visitor (Askehave and Nielsen 2005: 129). According to Nielsen (25 August 2003), such information is essential because a homepage that does not communicate its purpose clearly will lose the interest of its visitor. From a navigational perspective, the homepage serves both as an anchor, facilitating the user's spatial orientation within the website (Djonov 2007: 145) and as a map, supplying an orderly

[13] It is interesting to note that in 2000 an eyetrack study conducted by the Poynter Institute and Stanford University revealed that graphics attracted very little attention from website users when viewing their favourite news websites (Thurston 2004: 65-66).

listing of links to important internal webpages (Thurston 2004: 58). The links found on a homepage should function as visual 'appetizers' that command the visitor's interest (Askehave and Nielsen 2005: 133).

Regarding the language found on homepages, Thurston (2004: 63) suggests that writers of electronic text aspire to use as few words as possible, which is evidenced by high lexical density. Written text ought to be minimized because web visitors tend to scan content sections for keywords (Thurston 2004: 62 & 66). The homepage, which imparts the website's first impression, also conveys the website's mission (Djonov 2007: 146), values (Djonov 2007: 152), and establishes the site's authority (Knox 2007: 23). Typically, the homepage also offers a method for the reader to contact the organizing institution (Crowston and Williams 2000: 208). For example, the British government's investigation into social benefit fraud is aided by a 'report a cheat' link found on the government's homepage (Mautner 2005: 819-820).

Askehave and Nielsen 2005: 123 & 129) provide the useful analogy of comparing a homepage to the front door of a house. As per the authors, a sign on the door describes the name of the residents and the door is the medium by which a visitor can enter the structure. In addition, the appearance of the front door also reveals details about the home; is it 'shabby chic' or representative of 'days gone by'? Normally, a homepage will include the institution's logo in a salient position (Chiew in O'Halloran 2004: 140; Nielsen: 3 October 1999) and will display the most vital sections 'above-the-fold' (Nielsen and Tahir 2002: 23). Website designers also tend to divide the visual space of a homepages into two or three columns. The most significant verbal information is centrally located in the middle column, while less important links and the option to print the page are relegated to the right-hand and left-hand sections (Thurston

2004: 58; 60). Kress (2010: 172) supplies an example of such a design in his description of the BBC's homepage.

2.3.4.1 Logo Placement

As a website's logo (commonly also the institution's logo or masthead) represents the website as a whole (Djonov 2007: 155), it should be located on each page of the site, and must be a clickable link that returns the visitor to the homepage[14] (Nielsen 3 October 1999). Even if the logo is an abstract representation (Martinec and Salway 2005: 362), it is part of a larger "rhetorical strategy for identification" (Askehave and Nielsen 2005: 135) and "connotative signification system" (Danesi 2002: 187) that establishes a recognizable icon for the audience.

While the physical manifestation of logos varies, there are several commonalities among their use on websites. For example, logos are typically found in the top portion of each webpage of a website, the purported 'guaranteed viewing area' of the screen (Knox 2007: 42-43). A logo is also an important focal point on the page due to its salient colours, font style, and size (Chiew in O'Halloran 2004: 152-153). With respect to placement, in their study of homepage usability on 50 popular homepages, Nielsen and Tahir (2002: 41) discover that 84 per cent of the homepages placed their logo in the upper-left corner of the screen. The repetition of the logo (and its colours, font, and/or style) throughout a website serves more than the practical purpose of offering the visitor a quick means to return to the homepage, as its reappearance is also an example of deliberate repetition. Following the adage 'repetition is the mother of learning' (Fleming: 1998), slogans and logos are intentionally repeated so that they are not forgotten (Marlin 2002: 49).

[14] Nielsen (3 October 1999) also notes that the logo on the homepage should not link to the homepage because a link should never connect the visitor to the current page.

2.4 The Examination of Military Websites and the Summary of Contemporary History

2.4.1 Why study military recruitment websites?

This study had its genesis in a graduate course on discourse analysis at the University of Ottawa. When confronted with writing the final essay, in which the class was assigned the task of applying theoretical models to a text, I chose to examine how the Lord Kitchener 'I want you for [the] U.S. Army' poster had evolved from its original paper form into the electronic web-based text of the goarmy.com homepage. From that study, I determined that the American Army recruitment website was merely one piece of a larger communicative puzzle. By extending the limits of the study beyond an AVF[15] (All Volunteer Force) and into countries that impose compulsory enlistment[16] upon their populations, I aimed to decipher *what* was being promoted on those countries' military homepages. Why publicize military recruitment to a population obligated to serve? That question led me to question whether other forces were at work in the construction of military recruitment websites. Namely, did the host country's contemporary history or surrounding political climate shape the websites' design, content, and overarching objective?

2.4.2 The Construction of a 'Contemporary' History

Indeed, the description of a historical summary as 'contemporary' invites a criticism of ambiguity from the historically trained reader. However, the need to consider the recent historical chronicles of each

[15] Enlistees may join the U.S. Army at any point from the age of majority (18 years) until 42 years of age (CIA Publications: The World Factbook. Field Listing: Military Service Age and Obligation).

[16] In Colombia, citizens aged 18-24 years must comply with a minimum 18-months of service (CIA Publications: The World Factbook. Field Listing: Military Service Age and Obligation. Accessed 7 November 2012). In Venezuela, a minimum of 30-months military service is mandatory for all those aged 18-60 in Venezuela (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada: 18 December 2003; CIA Publications: The World Factbook. Accessed 7 November 2012).

nation is twofold valuable as they allow me to identify the pertinent issues around which the website ideologies might gravitate and therefore enable me to compose related arguments regarding the present-day appearance of the websites. In this way, the historical summaries act as a foothold for the study and provide the reader with a frame of reference for the political events that may have shaped the military in Venezuela, Colombia, and the United States.

In order to delineate the current events taking place in each country that may impact on the military, I visited various news websites [17] on a daily basis and constructed an electronic bibliography of pertinent news articles[18]. Additionally, periodical search engines, such as Lexus Nexus and Factiva, were used to supply news articles related to events that took place before the period of study. To further demarcate important political events, scholarly books and journal articles were included in the research material. In total, the complete bibliography totals more than 2,300 texts. A summary of the news information accumulated can be found at the beginning of each case study under the heading 'Contemporary History'. This subsection of each case study will respond to the first primary research question posed on pages 1-2.

2.4.3 The Selection of the Data Set

Foremost in the analysis of a body of websites is the selection of which texts will be included in the examination, and which will not.

[17] The news websites visited included: The Associated Press, The Army Times (United States), BBC News (UK), *BBC Mundo* (UK), The CBC, CNN, The Economist, *El Espectador* (Bogotá) Fox News, The Globe and Mail, The Guardian (UK), The Houston Chronicle, The International Herald Tribune, The Los Angeles Times, *El Nacional* (Caracas), The New York Times, *El Nuevo Herald* (Miami), *Prensa Latina* (Havana), Reuters, Semana, *El Tiempo* (Bogotá), The Toronto Star, and *El Universal* (Caracas).

[18] It is important to emphasize that the purpose of constructing a contemporary history is to *summarize* recent historical events, rather than cite historical analyses and discuss those contributions. While certainly valid, that type of discussion would create an unbalance in the dissertation and lies outside the scope and purpose of the thesis.

As the objective of this thesis is to analyze military recruitment websites in Venezuela, Colombia, and the United States, the homepages [19] of the following websites were automatically considered for the study: the Venezuelan Army's homepage [20] (ejercito.mil.ve), the Venezuelan Ministry of Defence's homepage[21] (mindefensa.gov.ve), the Colombian Military's homepages (reclutamiento.mil.co [22] and ejercito.mil.co [23]), the U.S. Army's recruitment homepage (goarmy.com[24]), the homepage of Today's Military (todaysmilitary.com[25]) and the homepage of the U.S. Army's video game (americasarmy.com [26]). These three military-based homepages figuratively feed each other and fill voids of content left by the sister webpages. For example, a young person that is interested in the military may be apt to try his hand at the America's Army game. The game's homepage provides a concrete link to the U.S. Army's recruitment page. Subsequent to his interest, the

[19] As is stated by Neilsen and Tahir (2002: preface) "a homepage is the most valuable real estate in the world." For the purposes of this dissertation, while related 'sibling' websites may be discussed *ad hoc*, it is the homepage of each website that will be the primary focus of the research.

[20] The Venezuelan Army's homepage provides links to general information regarding the Venezuelan Military. Specifically, the reader is capable of learning about the military institution, the organization of military divisions, and military symbols.

[21] The Venezuelan Ministry of Defence's homepage offers the visitor details regarding defence symbols and organization (including the Ministry's mission and vision for the future), links to services (such as enlistment), and access to the *Panorama Castrense* military magazine.

[22] The Colombian Military's Recruitment homepage enables the visitor to access general information, including the details regarding obligatory military service and access to the *tarjeta militar* (military card).

[23] Alternatively, the Colombian Military's Homepage mostly dispenses news of military successes with respect to the drug trade and/or terrorism.

[24] The U.S. Army's recruitment homepage presents the reader with several Q & A style links that are meant to satisfy the initial queries held by a potential recruit. For example, on the 28 January 2007 edition analyzed, the following questions can be found in a salient location: *How does the Army work? What's it like being a Soldier? What jobs does the Army offer? How are the benefits?*

[25] While limited in verbal content, the Today's Military homepage affords the parents/guardians of potential recruits access to information regarding military service.

[26] Among the other ten homepages analyzed, Americasarmy.com stands alone as the sole example of a video game entrypoint to military recruitment data.

potential enlistee's parents may seek advice from the Today's Military website.

In addition to the above-mentioned websites, upon visiting the Venezuelan Government's on-line website (gobiernoenlinea.gob.ve[27]), it became clear that that website may be a fruitful source of complementary information regarding Venezuela and the leadership of President Chávez. Also, I included each country's presidential homepage[28] as an exemplar of a website that is likely to reflect the political leaders' ideological perspective.

The accumulation of primary documents took place in 2007 and 2008, and the website captures reflect those dates. With respect to the images captured, tables 1, 2, and 3 denote the quantities captured per year, per website:

Venezuela	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**Total**
1. Government On Line	50	35	8	93
2. Ministry of Defence	51	35	8	94
3. Army Homepage	51	34	8	93
4. Presidential Homepage	49	35	7	91
				371

Table 1

[27] The bulk of the Venezuelan Government On-Line homepage is devoted to news articles and gubernatorial advertisements.

[28] The Venezuelan President's homepage (ven.gov.ve) renders biographical and institutional information regarding the Commander-In-Chief's role within the federal government. The majority of the visual space is devoted to news items that detail President Chávez's recent actions.

On the date analyzed, the Colombian President's homepage (presidencia.mil.co) was subsumed by the diplomatic visit of American President George W. Bush.

The American President's homepage (whitehouse.gov/president) provides the visitor with biographical information and crucial facets of the president's domestic agenda (for example, the budget and administration of Medicare).

Total captures of Venezuelan websites 2007-2009.

Colombia	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**Total**
5. Army Homepage	51	35	6	92
6. Presidential Homepage	50	34	8	92
7. Military Recruitment	50	36	7	93
				277

Table 2

Total captures of Colombian websites 2007-2009.

The United States	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**Total**
8. Presidential Homepage	52	35	0	87
9. Today's Military	49	34	7	90
10. America's Army	52	35	6	93
11. Army Recruitment	55	34	8	97
				367

Table 3

Total captures of American websites 2007-2009.

Total number of website captures performed 2007-2009	**1015**

While the evolution of each of the websites from 2007-2009 is interesting in itself (and aspects of particular websites' past and future will be included at an *ad hoc* basis), it is not feasible in terms of time and space to scrutinize the weekly, monthly, and yearly changes

that take place on each of the eleven websites. However, as the target of this study is to measure the presence of ideologically charged content on governmental websites, it is useful to employ each country's contemporary history summaries as a guide to the data selection. By further condensing the recent political histories into a list of key themes (for example, 'socialism'), it is possible to apply a checklist[29] to the data set and identify the specific date in which a website is most reflective of current events or of the prevailing political themes. While the selection of one exemplar per website narrows down the field of study to one per cent of the websites captured, this approach ensures an analysis of apples-to-apples insofar as only the maximally politically laden edition of each of the websites will be scrutinized.

2.5 The Multimodal Analysis of Electronic Documents

The danger of attempting a multimodal-hypertextual analysis of a webpage is that it can quickly devolve into a convoluted mess of seemingly unorganized and unrelated details. This is because an electronic document is the site of multiple modes and potential reading paths, all of which present to the website visitor[30] (and analyst) numerous points of entry and an almost unlimited quantity of images and texts. To avoid the hazards of a frustratingly orchestrated analysis, I will manage each website's analysis in the following manner:

1. Each analysis will begin with a preliminary demarcation of the website. By delineating specific zones according to function and prototypical components (e.g. Zone one: Banner I; Zone

[29] The checklist for each country's primary themes can be found at the end of each historical summary.
[30] While it would have been fascinating to construct a 'real audience analysis' of the homepages, such an undertaking lies outside the practical scope of this thesis.

two: Welcome Message), the thesis reader will be able to follow which parts of the website are being referenced.

2. Limits of space and time do not allow us to account for every facet of a website's content and design, therefore only certain components of the website will be considered for analysis. Although the selection of the focal points will be subjective, the inclusion (or exclusion) of particular images or texts in the analysis will be based on visual salience[31] and perceived importance within the site as a whole. As a result, the second section of a website analysis will begin with a list of the texts or images to be examined. The subsequent investigation of those texts/images will include a physical description and an analysis. The content of the analysis will vary with each text/image. However, an image analysis will typically include the discussion of the design, relationship between the image/text and the website as a whole (including, but not limited to its relative location), and the interaction of modes within the image/text. In some instances, the history (or future) of an image/text within that website will be considered, as is appropriate[32]. The analysis may also include discussion of the relationship between elements of the image/text and direct linkages to the contemporary political climate in the host country.

[31] According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 210), salience is "the degree to which an element draws attention to itself, due to its size, its place in the foreground or its overlapping of other elements, its colour, its tonal values, its sharpness or definition, and other features."

[32] As is argued by Mautner (2005: 818), contrasting the old and new versions of an electronic document is important due to the ephemeral nature of web-based texts. Specifically, the author states that a critical discourse analyst must acknowledge how websites change (for example, due to policy changes and national events) so as to counter the methodological difficulties associated with studying an a-historic text sample.

3. A complete multimodal analysis will be performed on at least one image per webpage. The selection of the analyzed image will be based on salience and impact on the website as a whole.
4. The conclusion of this website analysis will be sub-divided into two sections. The first section will contain general conclusions regarding the content, design, and organization of the webpage. The second will describe the page's most likely reading path. Following the work of Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996: 218), who argue that reading path is most often attributed to differential salience, I will rank the verbal and visual features in order of visual prominence on the webpage.
5. The final section of each case study will discuss conclusions reached regarding each of the country's websites.

Chapter Three: Case Studies

3.1 The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

3.1.1 Contemporary History of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

In this chapter, I will argue that the relationship between the Venezuelan military and *el pueblo* (the people of Venezuela) has drastically changed since the election of Hugo Chávez as president in 1998. This is because one of the key ingredients of Chávez's mandate was re-establishing a positive connection between the civilian population and the military in Venezuela. By way of joint military-civilian programs such as the Plan Bolívar 2000, the Chávez government has been able to heal the wounds inflicted upon the populace by previous military operations while simultaneously propagating a socialist method of governance.

To measure the confluence of the current Venezuelan political climate and the design/content of Venezuela's military and governmental websites, I will summarize key political events in Venezuela's contemporary history. The events to be examined include: the adaptation of el *Pacto de Punto Fijo* (Fixed Point Pact), a bilateral political system ratified in 1958 by the AD or *Acción Democrática* (Democratic Action) and the COPEI or *Partido Social*

Cristiano de Venezuela (Christian Social Party of Venezuela) political parties; the *Caracazo* (loosely translated as the 'smashing' of Venezuela's capital city, Caracas) that took place in February 1989 in which the Venezuelan military was commanded to fire on fellow citizens; the plummeting economic conditions and corruption accusations which triggered the 1992 attempted coup d'état led by Hugo Chávez Frías; and Chávez's electoral victory in 1998.

Following those details, I will explore how President Chávez's enactment of socialist policies has succeeded in uniting *el pueblo* with the Venezuelan military. I will then describe the armed forces in Venezuela, paying particular attention to the alleged politicization of Venezuela's military. Finally, I will chronicle how the strained diplomatic relationship between Presidents Chávez and G.W. Bush expedited the growth of the Venezuelan military reserves and active-duty armed forces.

3.1.1.1 El Pacto de Punto Fijo

In 1958, in response to the dissent that was growing in the *barrios* (slums) against the presidency of dictator Marcos Pérez Jiménez, a combination of leftist activists and military officers overthrew the president (Adelman 2002: 45). Fearing that insurgent military factions would work with the poor and install a socialist president, right-wing political parties AD, COPEI, and the politically moderate Democratic Republican Union or URD (*Unión Republicana Democrática*), devised a political system which ensured that power would always remain in their hands (Adelman 2002: 44; Ledezma 2001; Norden in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 98-99). They named the system the *Pacto de Punto Fijo* (Fixed Point Pact). The Pact, which set the terms for Venezuelan democracy[33], certified that either AD or

33 The Pact gave AD and COPEI control over the entire state apparatus; namely, domination over appointments to the judiciary and the military, regulated

COPEI would occupy the highest political office[34]. The truce worked insofar as the party that won the presidential or legislative election was compelled to share power with the losing party in accordance with its share of the votes. This allowed AD and COPEI to maintain jobs, contracts, and access to the different ministries (Wilpert 2003). According to Romero (1997: 8) AD and COPEI were able to reach this political agreement due to a strong oil economy. As allegations of corruption and inefficiency tarnished the dictatorship of Marcos Pérez Jiménez, AD and COPEI leaders were able to promote the Pact by stating that, their democratic regime would be "a more legitimate, stable, and efficient instrument for mediating the distribution of oil rents" (Romero 1997: 8).

The public, relieved to be free of a dictatorship, applauded the Pact's democratic goals of stability and fair-mindedness with respect to the distribution of oil rents. However, the staunchly bilateral and fundamentally undemocratic nature of *Punto Fijo* prevented all other parties (especially those of the left) from campaigning and gaining power (Gott 2005: 21; Norden in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 99; Norden 1998: 147). According to its defenders, the Pact "secured democracy from the threat of extremism" (Zagorski 2003: 91). To critics, however, it was a system designed to preserve the rule of the old guard.

As the Pact eliminated all competition from the Venezuelan political arena, opposition to the government was stifled. In the

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elections, privileged roles to the church and military, and government protection over private enterprise (McCaughan 2004: 54; Norden in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 98-99).

34 As AD was substantially larger and more powerful, it maintained political domination over Venezuela more regularly than COPEI. In chronological order, the Venezuelan presidential administrations 1959-1999 were as follows: Rómulo Bentacourt (1959-1964) AD; Raúl Leoni (1964-1969) AD; Rafael Caldera (1969-1974) COPEI; Carlos Andrés Pérez (1974-1979) AD; Luis Herrera Campins (1979-1984) COPEI; Jaime Lusinchi (1984-1989) AD; Carlos Andrés Pérez (1989-1994) AD; Ramón José Velásquez (1993-1994) AD; Rafael Caldera (1994-1999) COPEI. (http://www.gobiernoenlinea.ve/venezuela/perfil_historia4.html).

1980s and 1990s, the limitations of the system began to be challenged by the populace because it was seen as a rigid (Wilpert 2007: 13), elitist, and unresponsive *partidocracia* (party-ocracy) (Zagorski 2003: 91; Norden 1998: 158). There was also a racial component of the *Punto Fijo* in that the white-skinned and wealthy minority was able to exclude the dark-skinned poor majority from the political process (Ali 2006: 26). The *Punto Fijo* governments' implementation of policies, which were solely advantageous to *adecos* (AD members), and *copeyanos* (COPEI members), provoked widespread public resentment, protests, and riots. (Golinger 2006: 23; Wilpert 2007: 14; Damarys Canache in McCoy & Myers 2004: 37)

3.1.1.2 El Caracazo (1989)

In 1989, for the second time in twenty years, Carlos Andrés Pérez of the AD party campaigned for the highest political office in Venezuela. He tied his presidential campaign to the hope that he would re-kindle the economic successes previously enjoyed from 1974-1979 during his first presidential administration. An important component of his first administration was the nationalization of the oil company PDVSA (*Petroleos de Venezuela Sociedad Anónima.*) (Golinger 2006: 24). By bringing the oil company under public control, the financial status of the state improved because it was able to re-invest royalties from oil sales into public improvement projects[35] (Kozloff 2007: 9). During that time of economic change, Venezuela became internationally known as *Venezuela Saudita* (Saudi Venezuela); a country where oil wealth created a 'new rich' who shopped on weekends in Miami, a middle class who enjoyed stable economic

35 Along with nationalizing PDVSA, President Pérez also converted Shell and Exxon into public enterprises. His first term in office corresponded with an increase in the country's economic fortunes as an oil embargo in the Middle East generated a boom time in Venezuela (revenue increased 170 per cent). Pérez was thus able to spend copious amounts of money on development projects to the delight of the poor and rich alike (Kozloff 2007: 43).

lifestyles, and generated hope amongst the poorest citizens that they could also benefit from upward social mobility (Marcano & Tyszka 2006: 72).

During the 1989 presidential campaign, Carlos Andrés Pérez condemned global finance operations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), claiming that their policies were akin to "*una bomba que solo mata a gente*" (a bomb that only kills people) (McCaughan 2004: 64). In fact, his populist campaign promises were so convincing that even left wing parties sided with his policy plans (Kozloff 2007: 43; McCaughan 2004: 64). Pérez made these promises despite the economic turmoil that Venezuela faced in the 1970s and 1980s. In that period, Venezuela suffered from plunging oil profits and large international debts (Norden 1998: 158). For example, at the time of President Pérez's second inauguration, Venezuela owed $4.5 billion dollars to the IMF[36] and the World Bank (Ali 2006: 50).

After successfully winning the election, Pérez reversed most of his economic promises and introduced the most aggressively neo-liberal economic policy in Venezuelan history (Wilpert 2007: 14). In doing so, he adopted an IMF-prescribed 'austerity package', otherwise known as the Washington Consensus (WC) (Gott 2005: 50)[37]. Designed by economist and former IMF adviser John Williamson, the WC was a means to force indebted nations to reform their internal economic procedures so that they could repay their

36 Hugo Chávez would later describe the IMF as "a revolting instrument of exploitation at the service of the world's most powerful.'" (El Universal: 6 November 2004).

37 Gott (2005: 51) summarizes the ten fundamental elements of the Washington Consensus as: (1) Guarantees of fiscal discipline, and curb to budget deficits; (2) Reduction in public expenditure, particularly in the military and in public administration; (3) Tax reform, aiming at the creation of a system with a broad base and with effective enforcement; (4) Financial liberalization, with interest rates determined by the market; (5) Competitive exchange rates, to assist export-led growth; (6) Trade liberalization, coupled with the abolition of import licensing and a reduction in tariffs; (7) A welcome to foreign direct investment; (8) Privatization of state enterprises, leading to efficient management and improved performance; (9) Deregulation of the economy; (10) Protection of property rights."

debts quickly (Gott 2005: 50). To appease the IMF and World Bank, Pérez implemented a widespread privatization of government industries and services and dramatically cut government spending (Kozloff 2007: 37).

In Venezuela, the most contentious components of the WC were the elimination of price controls for basic staples and aggressive cutbacks to public subsidies (Ali 2006: 50). Chief among those subsidies was the price of petroleum, which increased 100 per cent overnight on 26 February 1989 (Gott 2005: 45; Golinger 2006: 24). The cost of public transportation also increased by 100 per cent, as bus owners passed their increased operating costs onto consumers. This new fiscal burden greatly affected the lives of Venezuela's vast poverty-stricken population who relied on inexpensive public transportation to bring them from the *barrios* surrounding Caracas to their jobs in the capital (Gott 2005: 45). The increase in the price of petrol not only bruised the pocketbooks of poor Venezuelans, but also effectively barred them from what they considered a collectively shared petroleum industry (McCaughan 2004: 64; Kozloff 2007: 44).

As a result, on 27 February 1989, many metropolitan centres[38] in Venezuela erupted with widespread protests (Gott 2005: 4; Branford: 13 August 2004; Ali 2006: 51). In Caracas, the *Caracazo* began at the main bus terminal where students voiced their disapproval of the inflated bus fares. The demonstration moved to a nearby roadway where a human barrier obstructed the entrance to the bus terminal, and then progressed to the city's main thoroughfare blocking all traffic. Violence quickly ensued when protesters set a bus on fire and began looting nearby shops (Kozloff 2007: 44-45).

As President Pérez was out of the province on the day of unrest, security forces in Caracas reacted slowly to the escalating

38 Rioting took place in Caracas, Caricuao, La Guara, Maracay, Valencia, Barquisimeto, Guayana, Merida, and Maracaibo (Ali 2006: 51).

violence, thus overwhelming the National Guard (McCaughan 2004: 65). Upon receiving news of the hostility, Pérez delegated control of the situation to Minister of Defense, General Italo del Valle Alliegro, who in turn, summoned the Venezuelan army to address the crisis. On 28 February 1989, Pérez declared a state of emergency in which all constitutionally protected civil liberties were suspended. He also imposed a twelve-hour civilian curfew and commissioned assaults on the poorest *barrios* to instill fear amongst the protesters. In order to restore civil order Pérez took the egregious step of ordering the military to 'shoot to kill' (Ali 2006: 51).

The use of deadly force by the Venezuelan military occurred in impoverished quarters such as Petare, where on 1 March 1989, the army fired indiscriminately on crowds, killing more than twenty unarmed civilians (Kozloff 2007: 46). There were also confirmed accounts in the blue-collar neighbourhood of 23 de Enero that inexperienced soldiers took sniper positions on rooftops and fired at apartment buildings, killing residents in their homes (McCaughan 2004: 66). This brutal repression of the poor continued for several days even after the riots in Caracas had been defeated (Wilpert 2007: 16). Although the government contended that the military action caused the deaths of 276 people, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), challenged the government's claim upon the discovery of mass graves. In fact, the IACHR stated that the total of confirmed dead was approximately 3000 citizens[39]. The IACHR also disclosed that the majority of the fatalities were the result of haphazard gunshots fired by the military (Ali 2006: 52).

When examining the *Caracazo*, it is important to note that the training that militaries normally receive focuses on waging war

39 According to Hugo Chávez, following the *Caracazo*, rumors were spread by the upper echelons of the military that Fidel Castro was ultimately responsible for the protests and ensuing riots. However, it has been proven that President Castro's visit to Venezuela had ended 20 days earlier. (Guevara 2005: 30)

against foreign enemies (Trinkunas as cited by Norden in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 96). However, during the 1989 riots, the armed forces were obligated to attack fellow Venezuelans. Moreover, when the military's role unexpectedly morphed into riot control, it reverted to wartime tactics and used conventional military weapons to police the streets of Caracas (Trinkunas in McCoy & Myers 2004: 55).

The military's conduct during the 1989 riots outraged the majority of Venezuelans. Furthermore, many soldiers became disillusioned as a result of the order to fire upon civilians (Ali 2006: 54; Kozloff 2007: 46). Future political leader Hugo Chávez[40], a young officer at the time, also experienced such disillusionment. Although due to illness he did not take part in the Caracazo[41], Chavez understood that the military was being used to kill fellow citizens (Guevara 2005: 10). During an interview with Aleida Guevara (2005: 32), daughter of Marxist revolutionary Che Guevara, Chávez stated, "They sent us soldiers to fill those people with lead." Chávez also

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[40] Born into neither wealth nor power, Hugo Chávez never had political aspirations; rather he had hoped to become a professional baseball player in the United States. Indeed, the current president's humble beginnings in the rural towns of Sabaneta and Barinas (Kozloff 2007: 19) left an indelible mark on Chávez. Unable to afford school fees in Caracas, where Chávez believed his baseball career would be most viable, he decided to finish high school in Barinas and move to the capital city by entering the military academy (Guevara 2005: 15-16). Chávez's time in the military academy was profoundly influential on the president's character. Chávez's reverence for fellow soldier and Latin American liberator, Simón Bolívar, is evident in his political missions and in his rhetoric. To Chávez, Bolívar was larger than life; he was a humanitarian concept, an amalgamation of political, societal, and judicial ideals (Guevara 2005: 11). Chávez has established a connection with the *pueblo* by way of his populist rhetorical style. His inclusion of everyday metaphors (Wilpert 2003), humor, personal anecdotes (Otis: 17 December 2006), and the term *el pueblo* (the people) (Roberts in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 67; López in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 84) endear Chávez to the poor majority. By addressing the grievances of the public at large (Zagorski 2003: 95), the president can champion the needs of the poor (Hudson: 3 February 2009) and appear to solve their problems with ease and genuine kindness. Finally, Chávez's natural charisma rallies his supporters, who previously were apathetic to the political process. Their support for the president has grown into support for the entire democratic process, that they view as a means by which Venezuela can become an egalitarian and just society (Wilpert 2007: 186).

41 During the *Caracazo*, Chávez was sick with a bout of the measles (Kozloff 2007: 45).

asserted that the *Caracazo* triggered 'Bolívar's curse' as Latin American liberator Simón Bolívar[42] once said, "Damned is the soldier who uses his weapon against his own people" (Guevara 2005: 10). Chávez was also convinced that the *Caracazo* was the harbinger of bad tidings within the military because the event 'sensitized' soldiers to repeat similar acts of violence in the future (Marcano & Tyszka 2006: 91). It was following the *Caracazo* that Chavez decided, "We could not continue to be the custodians of a genocidal regime" (Kozloff 2007: 46). He then began to host secret meetings with like-minded soldiers to discuss the achievements of Simón Bolívar (Ali 2006: 53).

3.1.1.3 The Venezuelan Economy Post-Caracazo (1970-1998)

Immediately following the *Caracazo*, President Pérez recognized that he would have to soften his approach and withdraw the harshest aspects of the WC (Kozloff 2007: 46). Despite these reforms, the economic situation remained volatile as the austerity measures severely reduced the average citizen's purchasing power and cut desperately needed social programs (Canache in McCoy & Myers 2004: 33). While these changes were drastic, one can attribute the real problems in Venezuela's economy to the state's management of the oil industry. Despite nationalizing oil, the Pérez reforms led to extensive divisions of wealth throughout the country. For example, as

42 Simón Bolívar (1783-1830) led several Latin American rebellions against the Spanish empire. Along with liberating Venezuela and Colombia, his efforts are also lauded in Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia (Gott 2005: 94) . Gott (2005: 94) provides the following brief summary of Bolívar's life: "Born on July 24, 1783, in Caracas, Bolívar died in Colombia before he was fifty, on December 17, 1830. The principal leader of the Latin American rebellions against the Spanish empire, he fought for the liberation of Venezuela and Colombia, as well as Ecuador, Peru and Upper Peru (Bolivia); his campaigns spanned a period of more than ten years. He fought backwards and forwards across Venezuela, up and down Colombia, and then made an inspired march down the Andes into Ecuador and Peru. Not since the battles of the first generation of conquistadors in the sixteenth century had a single general covered so much ground with such far-reaching results."

his government funneled public money into the oil industry, it ignored other sectors of the economy such as manufacturing and agriculture. It became financially more efficient to import goods rather than manufacture them locally (Wilpert 2007: 11). According to Parker (2005: 39), federal monies dedicated to the non-oil based economy stagnated and, as such, investment was sporadic in nature and yielded only short-termed growth.

PDVSA suffered from poor management during this period. In the early 1990s, PDVSA was a public company that "fashioned its own agenda" (Mommer in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 132) and was run exclusively for the benefit of its managers (Gott 2005: 251). According to economists, the problems in PDVSA's management triggered at least three major economic crises. First, profits from PDVSA's overseas investments were not re-invested in the Venezuelan economy (Parker 2005: 42). Second, the company's successful urging for a reduced taxation rate gave rise to the decline of its fiscal income from 16 per cent of the Gross National Product (GNP) in 1991 to less than 5 per cent by 1998 (Parker 2005: 42). Third, the Pérez administration also permitted the opening of the petroleum industry to foreign capital, known as the *apertura* (opening) (Mommer in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 131). Under the watchful eye of the oil company's president, Luis Giusti, PDVSA was able to align petroleum policies to the interests of his Washington-based clientele. Essentially, the *apertura* privatized the industry's wealth and fostered deep economic declines. In a country where oil is an essential part of national sovereignty, the *apertura* was an assault on the populace and incited public hostility (Kozloff 2007: 10).

Wilpert (2003) suggests that the problems in the state oil industry led to a political crisis. In order to salvage the declining economy, the Venezuelan government cut social spending and

employers reduced wages. This reduction increased the percentage of those living in poverty from 36 per cent in 1984 to over 66 per cent in 1995. Moreover, the amount of people living in critical poverty[43] rose from 11 per cent to 36 per cent during the same period. Simultaneously, the urban unemployment rate in Venezuela doubled and became the highest on the South American continent.

The stark division of wealth can also illustrate the disparity between the rich and the poor during that period. In 1981, the richest earned 21.8 per cent of the national income. By 1997, this number grew to 32.8 per cent. Meanwhile, the poor's share of the national income dropped from 19.1 per cent to 14.7 per cent (Wilpert 2003). Gott (2005: 173) suggests that that there was an even larger gap between the rich and the poor. He estimates that in 1995, 80 per cent of the population earned the minimum wage or less and 40 per cent lived in critical poverty. Meanwhile, 10 per cent of the country's 23 million people earned over half of the national income. By 1995, Venezuela had the greatest percentage of people living in financial need on the continent (Wilpert 2007: 108).

The economic situation in Venezuela was exacerbated by the general exclusion of the poor from the political process (Canache in McCoy & Myers 2004: 35). There are two possible explanations for this political alienation. First, the poor viewed the two-party system dominated by AD and COPEI as corrupt and unrepresentative of their needs (Kozloff 2007: 42). Second, the poor saw themselves as lacking the competence necessary to be involved in political matters. This lack of confidence was duly internalized by the AD and COPEI that felt it unnecessary to pay heed to the needs of a population that did not vote (Ray as cited by Canache in McCoy & Myers 2004: 35). By 1992,

43 'Critical poverty' is defined by Sachs 2005 as the most severe state of poverty in which basic needs for survival such as food, water, clothing, shelter, sanitation, education, and health care cannot be met.

however, the exploitation of the poor became the defining issue of a political coup attempt that directly challenged Perez's economic reforms (Lieuwen 1964: 8-9).

Nearing the end of the twentieth century when the country's oil wealth had been squandered, the public's disillusionment with the continual failure of AD and COPEI to address the issues of the poor reached its climax. The country's vast impoverished citizenry began to challenge the traditional parties' cycle of broken promises and American-inspired economic policies and mobilized for reform (Ali 2006: 27-28; Damarys Canache in McCoy & Myers 2004: 33-34).

3.1.1.4 Attempted Coup (1992)

In response to the tumultuous conditions of the early 1990s, Hugo Chávez and fellow lieutenant colonel, Francisco Arias Cárdenas staged a coup d'état on 4 February 1992 (Norden 1998: 155; Marcano & Tyszka 2004: 92). They named their revolutionary movement *Movimiento Bolivariano Revolucionario-200* (Bolivarian Revolutionary Movement-200 or MBR-200) after Simón Bolívar and the bicentennial of Venezuelan independence (Wilpert 2007: 16). At midnight, Chávez and 6,000 troops attacked Caracas and three other Venezuelan cities (Kozloff 2007: 47). Chávez directed the coup operation from his command post at the History Museum of La Planicie. While President Pérez slept, a convoy of tanks and troop carriers maneuvered through the streets of Caracas and converged at tactically important locations, such as the capital city's main airport and the president's official residence, La Casona. Upon his awakening by Defense Minister General Fernando Ochoa, the government safely transported Pérez to the presidential palace, Miraflores. While soldiers barraged the palace with mortar and rifle fire, the president then safely traveled to the television studios of *Venevisión TV* and addressed the nation (Kozloff 2007: 47-48).

Ultimately, the coup was unsuccessful. It failed due to organizational flaws, excessive caution, and MBR-200's inability to capture media attention. Norden (1998: 154-155) notes that the rebels' lack of media savvy impeded their ability to communicate their goals to potential supporters and incite a mass public uprising (Ali 2006: 55). Furthermore, the insurgents' inability to capture President Pérez effectively halted their efforts (Zagorski 2003: 92). Following the attempted coup, Chávez briefly appeared on television and publicly accepted full responsibility for the day's events (Ali 2006: 55). During his speech, he also stated that his dreams were only to be suppressed *por ahora* (for the moment). This statement, which sounded like a promise (Marcano & Tyszka 2004: 75), insinuated that his struggle would continue in spite of the unsuccessful coup and his impending imprisonment (Branford: 13 August 1994; Gott 2005: 23). Following his arrest, Chávez's punishment was to be imprisoned in Yare prison for two years (Kozloff 2007: 48).

Although the Pérez government was successful in its suppression of the coup, political and social repercussions were not stifled. In fact, according to Ali (2006: 55), polls taken on 4 February 1992 illustrated that 60 per cent of Venezuelans were sympathetic to Chávez's efforts. Furthermore, 81 per cent of the population did not trust the actions of President Pérez, and 57 per cent were in favour of a new government (Marcano & Tyszka 2006: 103). Following Chávez' arrest, thousands of Venezuelans took to the streets to demonstrate their support for the MBR-200 leader[44] (Damarys Canache in McCoy & Myers (eds), 2004: 39).

[44] The support for Chávez even seeped into the political awareness of young Venezuelans as the most popular children's costume for Carnival that year was a military uniform and Chávez's favourite red beret (McCaughan 2004: 68).

Political division was not limited to civilian society. The coup also divided the armed forces because many soldiers supported Chávez and the MBR-200 (Gott 2005: 68). According to Norden (1998: 144), mid-level officers joined the coup and thrust aside their roles in the Venezuelan military for two reasons. First, these soldiers began to identify with the plight of civilians rather than with that of their superiors. Second, the national crisis gave the disaffected officers who were sympathetic to Chávez the unique chance to disregard their standard military responsibilities (Norden 1998: 155). In 1994, President Rafael Caldera dismissed the case against Hugo Chávez, indirectly giving Chávez the ability to run for president (Marcano & Tyszka 2004: 107).

3.1.1.5 Hugo Chávez' Presidential Victory (1998)

In 1998, Hugo Chávez based his campaign for the presidency on his desire to bring about radical economic and social changes in Venezuela (Golinger 2006: 26). Specifically, his aim was to introduce reforms such as land re-distribution and a new constitution (Adelman 2002: 62; Trinkunas 2005: 209; BBC News: 2 February 1999). Chávez also campaigned to restructure Venezuela's oil industry in order to re-establish governmental control and redistribute wealth (Lander & López Maya 2002)[45]. His reasoning for those changes was to purge the Venezuelan political system of the corruption and cronyism that had tainted *Punto Fijo* governments since 1958 (Ali 2006: 58; BBC News: 2 February 1999; Marcano & Tszyka 2004: 5; Marcano & Tyszyka 2006: 29; Wilpert 2007: 18). According to Ali (2006: 26), Chávez also sought to overcome his

45 According to Lander & López Maya, Chávez' proposed oil policy reforms included: (1) Decision making bodies regarding the design and implementation of energy policy would be transferred from PDVSA to the Ministry of Energy and Mining; (2) The state would be granted a greater share in all oil revenues; (3) In order to improve Venezuela's role in the world economy, Venezuela would become a key player in OPEC; (4) The trend towards the privatization of the oil industry would be effectively halted.

country's racist history, where the wants and needs of the wealthy and light-skinned minority were obtained at the expense of the dark-skinned majority.

Although Chávez was able to build a strong base amongst the urban poor, (Damarys Canache in McCoy & Myers 2004: 45; Hudson: 3 February 2009) the middle class played a crucial role in Chávez's victory. As that sector of society desired an overhaul of the corrupt political bureaucracy (Wilpert 2007: 18), Chávez provided them with the opportunity to exact revenge on previous leadership (Marcano & Tyszka, 2004: 5). On 6 December 1998, Chávez was elected president by 56 per cent of the electorate (Márquez in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 197). The oligarchic rule of AD and COPEI was defeated by a landslide (Golinger 2006: 5). The *Chavistas* (Chávez supporters) were now in power, yielding a direct relationship between the *soberano* (soverign) and their newly elected leader (Trinkunas 2005: 209).

3.1.1.5.1 Plan Bolívar 2000

Upon assuming the presidency, one of Chávez's first missions was to improve the conditions[46] under which most Venezuelans lived. On 27 February 1999, he announced the implementation of Plan Bolívar 2000 (Gott 2005: 178). The Plan was a program in which the armed forces assumed tasks intended to improve the lives of the civilian population. Working jointly with civilians, the military's new duties included making improvements to general infrastructure (Norden in

46 The poverty statistics mentioned by Chávez at that time of his first inauguration are as follows: the poverty rate was 86 per cent and of that amount, 39 per cent lived in 'misery' and 14 per cent were homeless. The unemployment rate was roughly 15 per cent and underemployment is 50 per cent. Approximately 37 per cent of children were malnourished and a third of the school-aged population was not receiving an education. Chavez also stated that infant mortality was 21 per 1,000 live births, which is double that of Costa Rica. He said the country had a housing shortage of more than 1.5 million units, and the incidences of preventable diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, and dengue were increasing (Noticen: 12 March 1999).

Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 104-105) including the construction of buildings (Rohter: 16 April 2001), roads (Hughes: 29 September 1999), schools (La Jornada: 28 February 1999; Caistor 1999), and sanitation technology (Hellinger in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 44). The armed forces were also to assist with agricultural projects (Zagorski 2003: 96), conduct literacy programs (Trinkunas in McCoy & Myers 2004: 57), sell food to the public at below-market price (Guevara 2005: 24-25), offer inexpensive air transportation (La Vanguardia: 18 November 1999), and provide free medical care to those in need (Reuters: 3 April 2001).

In total, approximately 80,000 soldiers took part in the program (Del Naranco: 28 June 1999) at a cost of $113 million dollars per year (Marcano & Tyszka 2004: 138). The projects, which were to be completed in three stages[47], had objectives beyond fighting Chávez's war against "hunger, misery, and corruption" (Hughes: 29 September 1999). By mobilizing the armed forces (Gott 2005: 178), and widening their range of domestic duties (Trinkunas in McCoy & Myers 2004: 52), Chávez was able to present the military as an aide to the civilian population rather than its repressor (Norden in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 44). It was not a coincidence that Chávez announced the re-branding of the military ten years to the day following the *Caracazo* massacre (Del Naranco: 28 February 1999). Despite the historical tension between the population and the military and prevalent news stories regarding corruption[48] within the

47 The first stage of the Plan Bolívar 2000 was dedicated to the provision of social services to the most impoverished citizens, stage two involved the organization of self-sufficient and endogenous programs, and stage three examined the long-term development endeavours (Le Monde: 24 February 1999).

48 Along with accusations of the rampant corruption of Plan Bolívar's funds (Fox News: 26 December 2002; Adams & Gunson 2002; Ibarz: 14 February 2000; Europa Press: 6 May 2001) the media reported various military complaints. Chief among the military's criticisms was resentment of its new responsibilities, which many officers felt to be demeaning (Gunson: 29 July 2000; NOTIMEX: 10 May 2002; Webb-Vidal: 29 June 2000; Hughes: 29 September 1999; Norden in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 106). Plan Bolívar also forced the military to run a deficit in order

Plan, Plan Bolívar's military-civic collaboration improved the standing of the armed forces in the eyes of the citizenry (Rohter: 13 April 1999; Roth: 20 October 2000).

3.1.1.5.2 Socialism and Nationalizations

One of the most noteworthy characteristics of the Chávez administration is its devotion to socialist ideology. According to a seminar presented by the government of Venezuela to soldiers and brigadiers, one must base socialism on 'cooperation, equitable and fair distribution of riches, solidarity, and state support for an organized citizenry[49]' (Reyes: 16 September 2007). Chávez's need to move closer and closer towards true socialism (El Nuevo Herald: 9 March 2009) stems largely from his sympathy for Venezuela's poor (Norden in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 95). Seeing that financial hardships are inextricably linked to other challenges, such as inadequate health care and substandard education, he created a progressive collection of social policies named the *Agenda Alternativa Bolivariana* (Alternative Bolivarian Agenda) (Parker 2005: 46).

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to finance the mission's goals (Rojas Jiménez: 26 November 2002). As the military was working hand in hand with civilian workers, there was an increase in civilian-military friction (Trinkunas in McCoy & Myers 2004: 52). Additionally, officers raised questions concerning the military's readiness as the federal government diverted money and resources away from the precarious Colombian border (Trinkunas in McCoy & Myers 2004: 70; Rohter: 16 April 1999). Plan Bolívar faced further criticism from members of AD and COPEI. They argued that Chávez wanted to militarize the country in order to implement a socialist agenda (Buxton in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 126; Zagorski 2003: 96; Rohter: 13 April 1999; Noticen: 12 March 1999). The opposition also insisted that the Plan politicized the military (Norden in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 106; Hughes: 29 September 1999). According to Chávez, however, the Plan civilized the military (Wilpert 2007: 49-50) and restored the true role of the armed forces as servants of the people (Guevara 2005: 25).

[49] President Chávez expands the implications of socialism into the day-to-day lives of Venezuelans by persuading them to share their worldly possessions "Anyone owning a refrigerator he does not use should take it to Bolívar Square. Anyone owning a truck he does not need, a fan, a stove, anything, should give it away. Do not be selfish, I am demanding this! Prove you are genuine socialists!" (El Universal: 16 July 2007; CNN: 11 June 2007)

Chávez underscored his commitment to the socialist revolution via a change in the country's coat of arms and national flag[50].

Notwithstanding that some critics condemned these polices as merely a means to further a socialist agenda (Kraul: 8 July 2007), the president began to expand social services in Venezuela (BBC News: 9 February 2007). As Chávez's predecessors had underfunded social services[51], the president took drastic action, and increased social spending [52]. To date, the Venezuelan government spends approximately $7 billion annually on health and education programs (USA Today: 28 March 2007).

To fight the war on poverty, Chávez enacted several *misiones* (missions) that provided literacy and mathematics skills, employment advice, guaranteed price controls on food, and basic healthcare (Castañeda: 7 March 2007). For example, *Misión Robinson*[53] is a literacy campaign, which, according to Chávez, all but eliminated illiteracy in Venezuela (The Economist: 28 February 2008). Chávez has also initiated a cultural revolution by distributing free copies of socialist-themed books (Carroll: 29 May 2009). *Misión Vuelvan Caras* (About Face Mission[54]) provides courses in agriculture, tourism, and construction, while also familiarizing Venezuelans with

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[50] Chávez changed the direction of the horse found on the country's coat of arms (from right to left) and added a bow & arrow (to represent the indigenous people) and a machete (to embody the labour of workers) (CNN: 12 March 2006).

[51] The 1990-1991 United Nations Economic Commission on Latin America (ECLA) determined that the proportion of GDP dedicated by the Venezuelan government to social expenditures was below the average for Latin America (9 per cent versus 10.1 per cent). The 1996-1997 the ECLA estimated that figure to be 8.4 per cent versus 12.4 per cent respectively (Parker 2005: 47-48).

[52] The Chávez government increased social spending from 8.4 per cent of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in 1998 to 11.3 per cent in 2001 while education allocations grew from 1.6 per cent GDP to 11.3 per cent during the same years (Parker 2005: 48).

[53] *Misión Robinson* got its name from the pseudonym used by Simón Rodriguez. Rodriguez, who was a teacher of Simón Bolívar, was a great admirer of Robinson Crusoe (Gott 2005: 258).

[54] 'Vuelvan caras' or 'About Face' was a term used during the war of independence from Spain, which encouraged Venezuelans to turn around and directly face their enemy (Wagner: 8 July 2005).

Bolivarian economic projects. This mission was quite successful, as over 670,000 citizens completed the program (Albert: 25 July 2008). With respect to other education initiatives, the Chávez administration provides free schooling to poor children (Ali 2006: 22) and has built 50 new universities[55] (Romero: 4 January 2007). Healthcare in Venezuela is also improving as Chávez enacted the *Misión Barrio Adentro* (Inside the Barrio Mission). This mission oversees the the remodeling of existing hospitals, the construction of fifteen new hospitals (Carlson: 30 July 2007), the procurement of free vaccinations for 30 million citizens (Prensa Latina: 27 January 2007), and the employment of 10,000 Cuban doctors to treat poor Venezuelans (Otis: 16 June 2007). *Misión Milagro* (Miracle Mission) has flown hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans to Cuba to receive free eye surgery (Munckton: 1 March 2006). *Misión Mercal* (Food Market Mission) distributes 4,000 tons of subsidized food to more than 15 million Venezuelans on a daily basis (Prensa Latina: 26 February 2007). The food subsidy offers Venezuelans the ability to purchase food at a discount of up to 40 per cent (The Economist: 18 June 2009). Other socialist reforms include a substantial increase to the minimum wage (Hossne: 30 April 2007; Reuters: 1 May 2008), improvements to workers' rights (Tejero-Puntes: 25 July 2007), and the granting of micro-credits to small business entrepreneurs (Guevara 2005: 38).

In 2002, Chávez began one of the more controversial projects of his socialist revolution (Ingham: 21 June 2007). Agrarian reform, a method by which farmland is redistributed from wealthy landowners to the poor, sought to compensate for the fact that 5 per cent of the population owned 75 per cent of the land (Wilpert 2003). As the

[55] Entitled the "Bolivarian Education System," the education provided at the post-secondary institutions is profoundly socialist in nature (Dudley: 23 March 2007; The Economist: 11 October 2007).

most comprehensive forced land redistribution project in Venezuelan history (Romero: 17 May 2007), the government has seized more than 330,000 hectares of land (BBC News: 26 March 2007).

To generate the funds needed to finance Chávez's social programs, the Venezuelan government is encouraging the growth of social production companies (mixed public-private firms) and, most importantly, multiplying the number of state-owned enterprises (Forero: 6 August 2007). From 2007-2008, Chávez nationalized eleven strategic sectors of the economy (Fuentes: 3 September 2008). Among the most noteworthy of the nationalizations, are the Electricity Company of Venezuela (Prensa Latina: 23 April 2007; Prensa Latina: 11 May 2007), various telecommunications companies (Romero: 8 January 2007), and the country's largest steelmaker, Ternium Sidor (Reuters: 9 April 2008; Agence France Presse: 12 May 2008). To advance the construction of 50,000 housing units for the poor, the government took over the local unit of the Mexican cement giant, Cemex (International Herald Tribune: 8 April 2008; Agence France Presse: 19 August 2008).

When members of the food industry refused to comply with Chávez's demands for price controls (El Nuevo Herald: 30 October 2007), the president called for their nationalization. Chávez focused his efforts on butcher shops, grocery stores (Parra-Bernal: 26 February 2007), dairies (Walters: 20 January 2008), rice processing mills (Cancel: 1 March 2009), the nation's largest beer producer (Ellsworth: 16 March 2009), and then, the entire food industry (The Economist: 12 April 2007). Threats of nationalization were levied against farmers who attempted to make more money by avoiding the price controls (BBC News: 21 January 2008), sugar plantation owners who did not utilize their land effectively (Kraul: 10 April 2008), and meat packers who refused to sell products that could stem the shortage of food staples in the country (International Herald Tribune:

15 March 2008). Chávez has also made in-roads in the nationalization of the oil industry by demanding majority shares in projects managed by Exxon-Mobil, Chevron, and Conoco-Phillips (Lynch: 4 April 2007) and by wielding control over the Orinoco Oil Strip (Los Angeles Times: 2 May 2007; Prensa Latina: 26 June 2007). Private hospitals also risk nationalization, if they continue to raise prices (CNN: 2 April 2007). Private schools face the same future if they refuse socialist oversight into their curricula (Sierra: 18 September 2007).

Finally, the private banking sector was not immune from Chávez's threats, as they also feared nationalization and the loss of autonomy (BBC News: 3 May 2007). The Venezuelan president views the nationalization of this industry as essential, maintaining that the *Banco de Venezuela* (Bank of Venezuela) should be wholly in the service of Venezuelans[56] (CNN: 31 July 2008). Although these investments in social services have yielded a notable decline in poverty, critics of the Chávez administration continue to accuse the president of accomplishing little given the billions of petro-dollars flowing into the country (International Herald Tribune: 10 June 2007).

3.1.1.5.3 The 1999 Constitution

At the beginning of Chávez's first presidential administration, the economic conditions in Venezuela were generally determined by the health (or weakness) of the oil economy. In fact, during his administration's first cabinet meeting, the price of oil was $7 per barrel, which was 50 per cent less than the necessary amount required for funding essential social services (Guevara 2005: 24). It

[56] In the face of the 2008-2009 worldwide economic crisis, the director of the *Banco Central de Venezuela* (Central Bank of Venezuela), Armado León stated that the worst business decision for the Venezuelan state would be to invest in a bank that has weak international connections (El Nuevo Herald: 26 January 2009).

is important to note that Chávez's long-termed goals were greater than merely subsidizing basic social services; rather he aspired to decrease poverty and ensure that those services were available for the country's low and no-income population (Golinger 2006: 5).

This desire was costly and would have been impossible if the value of oil remained stagnant. The price of petroleum was low due to OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) policies[57], which, as per Chávez, were counter-productive to the needs of its participating nations (Guevara 2005: 24). With the purpose of increasing the price of oil, Chávez began to travel to OPEC nations and encourage the members to cut back on production. His visits were beneficial as OPEC began to function as a unified block. It implemented fixed export quotas that increased the price of oil to $16/barrel by December 1999 (Guevara 2005: 36 & 165). This increase in oil income thereby permitted Chávez to eliminate enrollment charges for public schools, which, in turn, allowed a deluge of poor students to return to the classroom (Guevara 2005: 36).

In order to facilitate even greater control over Venezuela's oil industry, Chávez decided to draft a new constitution. On 25 April 1999, he posed a national referendum asking whether the government should organize a constitutional assembly to create a Bolivarian constitution. An overwhelming majority of 92 per cent supported the creation of the constitutional assembly and following four months of debate, the group proposed several reforms to the constitution (Wilpert 2007: 21). Among the proposals were a new country name (The *Bolivarian* Republic of Venezuela), an extension to

57 According to Janicke (19 November 2007) the international oil crisis of 1973 led American president Ronald Reagan to seek to bring OPEC "to its knees"; high quotas and over-production by OPEC nations thereby flooded the market and brought oil profits to a staggering low. Indeed, in 1999, the cost to extract oil in Venezuela was higher than the profits made from its sale (Guevara 2005: 24).

the presidential term from five to six years, the possibility of revoking the jobs of elected officials (including that of the president) (Marcano & Tyszka 2004: 132), and article 302 which forbade the privatization of PDVSA[58] (Gott 2005: 251).

On 15 December 1999, 72 per cent of the population voted to approve the new constitution. Chávez stated that the new constitution not only presented the country with new laws, but also was a method to encourage public enthusiasm for his revolutionary project (Marcano & Tyszka 2006: 172). An important part of this mission was strengthening public control over oil. Under the new directorship of Chávez appointee Alí Rodríguez Araque, Venezuela made great strides in re-establishing power over the invaluable natural resource (Mommer in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 144). Unfortunately, the new President's interventions in the petroleum industry led to resentment and hostility among PDVSA's previous management and employees. This resentment would eventually boil over and lead to military intervention.

3.1.1.5.4 The 2002 Coup

In addition to the enactment of the new constitution, PDVSA executives encountered further scrutiny when the government passed the Hydrocarbons Law in November 2001 (Wilpert 2003). This Law was part of Chávez's 49 'enabling laws', or laws that he may pass by presidential decree (Wilpert 2004). Chávez argued that the Hydrocarbons Law was a "law of the poor" as poverty in Venezuela is

58 Article 302: The State reserves to itself, through the pertinent organic law, and for reasons of national expediency, the petroleum industry and other industries, operations and goods and services which are in the public interest and of a strategic nature. The State shall promote the domestic manufacture of raw materials deriving from the exploitation of nonrenewable natural resources, with a view to assimilating, creating and inventing technologies, generating employment and economic growth and creating wealth and wellbeing for the people. (http://www.constitucion.ve/constitucion_view_en/view/lista_busqueda.pag?id_art=330&busqueda=petroleum).

invariably linked to PDVSA's mismanagement (BBC News: 1 December 2001). In order to gain control over and increase the profitability of PDVSA, the Hydrocarbons Law included several stipulations regarding the administration of the oil company (Wilpert 2007: 24; BBC News: 5 December 2001)[59].

Reaction to the Hydrocarbons Law from the business community and organized labour was negative. Overwhelmingly, both business and labour resented the fact that Chávez did not consult with them about the proposed changes to PDVSA (New York Times: 23 November 2001; Easton: 11 December 2001). Unlike in North America and Europe, Venezuelan trade unions are overwhelmingly politically conservative and are historically tied to the AD (Adelman 2002: 45). They considered the Hydrocarbons Law both "anti-business" and "hostile to private investment" (BBC News: 5 December 2001). Business and labour confederations subsequently ordered a work stoppage in December 2001 and the relationship between the public and private sectors continued to sour through the early months of 2002 (Kozloff 2007: 26).

A situational crossroads was met when PDVSA executives joined the work stoppage. Their involvement forced Chávez's hand and in response, he fired PDVSA's president Guaicaipuro Lameda and replaced five out of ten board members (Hellinger in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 50; Forero: 9 April 2002; BBC News: 11 April 2002; Easton: 7 April 2002; BBC News: 12 April 2002a; BBC News: 12 April 2002b; Bellos: 15 April 2002; Guardian Unlimited: 12 April 2002). In response, on 9 April 2002 Carlos Ortega, leader of the *Confederación*

59 The following are some of the stipulations enforced by the 2001 Hydrocarbons Law: private petroleum corporations operating on state-owned land would increase their royalties paid to the government from 16.6 per cent to 30 per cent (BBC News: 14 November 2001); royalty payments for companies who produce heavy crude also rose from 20 per cent to 30 per cent (Forero: 4 December 2001); and PDVSA alone would own no less than a majority 51 per cent of all future oil production and exploration (Kozloff 2007: 25; BBC News: 1 December 2001).

de Trabajadores de Venezuela or Venezuelan Workers' Confederation (CTV), called for a general strike. Although those groups designed the strike to challenge Chavez's reforms, the president did not alter his plans for PDVSA. This led Ortega to extend the strike "indefinitely" on 10 April 2002 (Trinkunas 2005: 218).

On the morning of 11 April 2002, thousands of anti-government protesters formed a demonstration at PDVSA headquarters (Hellinger in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 51). With the purpose of removing Chávez from power, at mid-day they marched to the presidential palace (BBC Mundo: 11 April 2002) where members of the *Círculos Bolivarianos*[60] (Bolivarian Circles) were demonstrating in support of Chávez (Trinkunas 2005: 218). Media accounts of the encounter between the opposing sides vary greatly. Some news agencies reported that Chávez supporters opened fire on the PDVSA demonstrators (Forero: 12 April 2002, 13 April 2002 & 14 April 2002; BBC Mundo: 12 April 2002a) while others asserted that it was anti-Chávez demonstrators who initially fired on the *Círculos* members (Ali 2006: 63; Forero: 15 April 2002). During the uprising, at least eleven people were killed (BBC News: 12 April 2002a) and one hundred were wounded (Forero: 29 April 2002).

In response to the violence and sensing his vulnerability, Chávez activated Plan Ávila, which gave orders for tanks and soldiers to enter Caracas and protect the presidential palace[61] (Marcano & Tyszka 2004: 173). At 19:00[62], ten high-ranking military officers gained entrance to Miraflores and formally denied Chávez's governing authority (Kozloff 2007: 29). At 1:10AM[63] on 12 April, the

60 The Bolivarian Circles were registered Chávez-supporters from varied social backgrounds whose aim was to revitalize the Bolivarian Revolutionary Movement. (Marcano & Tyszka 2004: 145; Rohter: 20 April 2002)
61 Those orders were subsequently disobeyed by military members loyal to the opposition (Rohter: 20 April 2002).
62 http://www.chavezthefilm.com/html/backgrd/coup.htm
63 IBID

soldiers announced to the media that the president had turned himself over to the military and had tendered his resignation[64] (Hellinger in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 51; BBC News: 12 April 2002a; BBC Mundo: 12 April 2002b). Three hours later, members of the military transported Chávez to Fort Tiuna, a military base located near Caracas. He was arrested on charges related to the massacre that took place outside Miraflores on the previous day[65] (Forero: 29 April 2002). The military then transferred Chávez to the Maracay military base located on the island of La Orchila (Golinger 2006: 77).

On 12 April, Pedro Carmona[66], the president of *Fedecámaras*, the main business association in Venezuela (BBC News: 27 May 2002), was named as Chávez's successor (Rodríguez Villouta: 12 April 2002). Upon his swearing-in as interim president, Carmona read a list of decrees proclaiming sweeping changes[67] to the administration of the republic including the dissolution of the constitution (Marcano & Tyszka 2004: 181). Carmona also assured the public that the National Armed Forces had expressed their support for the new administration (BBC Mundo: 13 April 2002).

Although most Latin American diplomatic missions refused to recognize the new government (Hellinger in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 51), the United States, firmly endorsed Pedro Carmona and condemned 'ex-President' Chávez for provoking violence and

64 Chávez's resignation has been steadfastly denied by many Chávez insiders and scholars. It is documented that Chávez's daughter smuggled a message to President Castro of Cuba clarifying that her father had never resigned his post (Ali 2006: 62).
65 http://www.chavezthefilm.com/html/backgrd/coup.htm
66 An influential corporate figure in Venezuela, Carmona managed several petrochemical companies during the 1980s and 1990s (Kozloff 2007: 28).
67 These changes included: the elected National Assembly was dissolved (BBC News: 12 April 2002a); elections were to take place within 365 days (Forero: 13 April 2002); the 1999 constitution was voided (Bellos 2002); each of the recently passed 49 'habilitating' laws were repealed (Rodríguze Villouta: 12 April 2002); Guaicaipuro Lameda was reinstated as president of PDVSA (BBC News: 13 April 2002); the Supreme Court was dissolved (BBC Mundo: 13 April 2002); a new Minister of Defence was appointed (Trinkunas 2005: 220) and the adjective 'Bolivarian' was removed from the official name of the republic (Marcano & Tyszka 2004: 181).

bloodshed (Golinger 2006: 73; Romero in McCoy & Myers 2004: 145). A swift and deliberate statement by Ari Fleischer[68], White House Press Secretary for President George W. Bush, led many to speculate that the United States was involved in both the planning and execution of the April 2002 coup[69].

Notwithstanding the Carmona government-imposed media blackout, on 13 April the poor in Caracas descended *en masse* to the presidential palace to affirm their support of President Chávez (Hellinger in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 51; Thompson & Forero: 14 April 2002). Members of the armed forces who chose not to comply with the coup were able to sustain the demonstration (Ali 2006: 62). An important aspect of the coup was the newly established relationship between Venezuela's poor and the military. According to Gott (2005: 240), the protesting Venezuelans stood firmly alongside the *Chavista* soldiers because of the bond that they had forged through the Plan Bolívar 2000. No longer was the military resented as many rank-and-file soldiers, along with some high-ranking officers, allied themselves with the civilian population.

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68 Fleischer's statement: "We know that the action encouraged by the Chávez government provoked this crisis. The Chávez government suppressed a peaceful demonstration and fired on unarmed protesters." (Forero: 13 April 2002)

69 The attempted coup of 2002 bore many marks of American handiwork (Golinger 2006: viii; Padgett: 30 April 2006). For example, during the coup, three American warships entered Venezuelan waters without authorization and dropped anchor near La Orchila Island, near the coast of Venezuela (Ali 2006: 61). According to The Observer, the government of the United States had previous knowledge that the coup was immanent and sanctioned it (Vulliamy: 21 April 2002). The American ambassador to Venezuela was in constant contact with the coup's leader, Pedro Carmona, throughout the day of 12 April 2002, which lends to the impression that Washington was guiding the execution of the coup in stages (BBC Mundo: 17 April 2002). Immediately following the insurrection, the White House did not publicly condemn the attempted coup of the democratically elected Chávez; rather they recognized Pedro Carmona as the legitimate president of Venezuela (The Economist: 5 October 2006; Jackson: 26 September 2006; The Economist: 28 September 2006). According to Forero (3 December 2004), the CIA had knowledge of the coup's immanence and did little to forewarn the Venezuelan president. Chávez thereby openly maintains that Washington endorsed and financed the 2002 coup (Dudley: 26 November 2006).

Chávez benefited greatly from the loyalty of the presidential guard. From the Maracay army base, as the guard rescued the president and alerted staff at Miraflores that Chávez had never resigned (Rohter: 20 April 2002). Facing great public outcry, and internal squabbling regarding Carmona's decrees, at 22:12[70], Pedro Carmona announced his resignation and recognized Chávez's vice president, Diosdado Cabello as the reigning leader. After only 48 hours, Hugo Chávez returned to Miraflores and re-assumed his presidency (Hellinger in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 51).

The 2002 coup demonstrated the changing attitude of the Venezuelan military in two ways. First, the bulk of the officer corps was sympathetic to Chávez (Ali 2006: 19) and was, thereby less willing to follow coup orders. Along with their personal loyalty to the president, many soldiers demonstrated a commitment to the democratic structures of the Bolivarian constitution (Gott 2005: 240; Trinkunas 2005: 220; Guevara 2005: 58). Aided by Plan Bolívar, the military was also increasingly aligned with the aspirations of the public. Second, and perhaps most importantly, at no time during the April coup did the military fire on civilians (Guevara 2005: 57; McCaughan 2004: 128). In comparison to the *Caracazo*, the military in 2002 did not inspire fear in the civilian population. Rather, it was able to secure the trust of the Venezuelan citizenry because of the initiatives instituted by Chavez in 1999 and 2000. In tandem, these factors greatly increased the public's approval of the armed forces.

3.1.1.6 The Venezuelan Armed Forces

In order to analyze current military websites accurately, it is necessary to provide a detailed account of the conditions in which the military exists. The following section will provide information regarding the size of the Venezuelan military and the circumstances

70 http://www.chavezthefilm.com/html/backgrd/coup.htm.

surrounding conscription. With respect to the military as led by Hugo Chávez, the thesis will also examine the military's loyalty, the implementation of Chávez's agenda, the political nature of the Venezuelan military, suffrage, promotions, and the placement of soldiers in civilian posts within the Chávez government. Finally, the conflict between Venezuela and the United States will be a precursor to details regarding the recent expansion of the reserve force in Venezuela.

Including all branches of service, the Venezuelan military is 80,000 strong (Morsbach: 4 March 2006). Military service in Venezuela is not strictly obligatory. The *Ley de conscripción y alistamiento militar* (Military Conscription and Enlistment Law) law requires male citizens aged 18-50 to register with conscription boards no longer than 60 days following their 18th birthday. Citizens who are exempt from military service are those who have criminal records, or suffer from physical disabilities, or mental illness. Men may also defer their military duty during the period in which they are pursuing their education or if they are the sole provider to their family (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada). Unregistered citizens may be fined 752,000 bolivars (approximately $400 Canadian dollars) (Bradley: 24 April 2007).

3.1.1.6.1 Military Loyalty in Venezuela

A military's loyalty is primarily to the constitution, the document that articulates the role of the armed forces. There are only two lawful functions for a military: the defense of the nation from external aggression[71] and the preservation of internal order (Lieuwen 1964: 95; Burggraff 1972: 2). Therefore, it is unlikely for a military to change its course of action to satisfy the wants of the person sitting in

[71] Lieuwen argues that historically, South American armies have never fought abroad and have relied on the protection of the United States (1964: 95).

the president's chair. Ocando (18 November 2007) qualifies that members of the armed forces are willing to die in the defense of their country, but not in the name of a politician. In fact, the military is more likely to defend an opposition party and oust an elected leader, in order to maintain law and order and to ensure the greater public good[72] (Lieuwen 1964: 95).

To assure its loyalty, some governments have attempted to placate the military by implementing appeasement strategies. This entails agreeing to substantial military budgets (Zagorski 2003: 93), high officer salaries, benefits, modern equipment, and vetoes over state policies (Trinkunas 2005: 10-11). Petroleum wealth in Venezuela assured military cooperation during the democratic period of its history (Norden 1998: 152). However, even when the economy was floundering during the 1980s, the military budget tripled to 3.6 per cent of GDP (Hellinger in Hellinger & Ellner 2003: 41). With respect to the management of the military under President Chávez, the leader remains popular amongst soldiers largely due to his increased spending on equipment (Daniel: 12 September 2008). Chávez also retains the armed forces' trust via the extension of suffrage, the placement of military officers in civilian posts, and his personal regulation of the promotions process (Ellner 2001: 13).

Hugo Chávez's vision for civic-military relations is one in which civil society benefits extensively from the labor and expertise of the armed forces. Due to Chávez's continued utilization of Plan Andrés Bello, the armed forces are educated, possess civic-consciousness (Guevara 2005: 27), and have a social function (Gott 2005: 272). Of

[72] According to Lieuwen (1964: 98), the 'greater good' for the public would entail a situation that deviates from what the military sees as 'normal'. For example, if public order were sacrificed due to opposition to governmental policy, the armed forces would see their intervention as a constitutional duty. A 'perversion of governing function' is Lieuwen's description of what warrants, in the eyes of the armed forces, an armed insurrection. Zagorski (2003: 88) also argues that it is unlikely that military officers would indefinitely obey the orders of a civilian government that they deemed illegitimate.

utmost importance to the president is increasing the prestige of the armed forces. As an institution that lost the public's trust and respect after the *Caracazo*, public opinion has gradually risen as the armed forces have taken on practical tasks (Wilpert 2007: 53). The president's vision also includes retaining the military as a partner in his socialist revolution. For example, the president has expanded the role of the military[73] to include defending its citizens not only from external threats, but also from the social hazards of poverty, hunger, and injustice (Wilpert 2007: 40-41, 51). The president also indicated that the military would defend the people and their revolution (Trinkunas 2005: 223-224). Chávez stated in 2007 that the military must promote socialism and the Bolivarian revolution (Bradley: 24 June 2007) and declare itself anti-imperialist and revolutionary (Prensa Latina: 12 April 2007).

3.1.1.6.2 The Politicization of the Military in Venezuela

Chávez's unrestrained politicization of the military is an anomaly in Venezuelan history. During the 1930s, for example, the presidential administration of López Contreras (1935-1941) dubbed the military as an institution that was outside the realm of partisan politics. In his view, to gain professionalism, soldiers had to serve out of duty and responsibility, and avoid a personal connection to the person occupying the president's office. Essentially, an apolitical army would be immune to the interests of opposition parties that sought

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[73] The 2002 Organic Law of the Armed Force (*Ley Orgánica de la Fuerza Armada*) recognized eighteen military functions, while the number of functions prior to Chávez's presidency was six (Trinkunas 2005: 214-215). Among these sections include the duties to: ensure the development of social, political, cultural, geographical, environmental, military and economic areas; participate in alliances with the armed forces of other countries for the purpose of integration; forming part of peacekeeping missions; contribute to preserve internal order, facing sever social disruption, following the decision of the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Commander in Chief of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces; and participate in the protection of the public in any form of demonstration (Venezuelan Ministry of Communication and Information: 4 August 2008).

armed assistance (Burggraff 1972: 43). The Venezuelan army grew to accept an apolitical identity and both the 1947 and 1961[74] constitutions defined that role explicitly. The documents defined the armed forces as "apolitical, obedient, and non-deliberative," thus prohibiting service members from voting, holding elected office (Norden 1998: 150), or joining a political party (Burggraff 1972: 92). However, the 1999 constitution drafted by President Chávez modified the political nature of the armed forces by granting suffrage[75] and requiring that soldiers be only *sin militancia política* (without political militancy or affiliation) (McCaughan 2004: 95).

The vagueness of a military being 'without political militancy' (Norden in Ellner & Hellinger 2004: 100) allowed Chávez to insist that military members salute using the slogan *¡Patria, socialismo, o muerte!* (Homeland, socialism, or death!) (Castillo: 13 April 2007). Chávez views this phrase as a means to boost XXI century socialism (El Universal: 25 June 2007). Some members of the press, however, view the compulsory use of the slogan as controversial, stating that article 330 of the Venezuelan constitution prohibits the military from engaging in "acts of propaganda, militancy, or political proselytism" (Gunson: 18 May 2007). In response to the slogan, the Venezuelan opposition party, the Democratic Parliamentary Forum, filed a case against President Chávez accusing him of violating the constitution 'systematically and tenaciously' (Carlson: 16 May 2007). The International Herald Tribune (28 June 2008) reported that those officers who refused to repeat the slogan were consigned to their homes and did not receive active duty assignments.

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[74] Article 132 of the 1961 constitution stated, "[T]he National Armed Forces form an apolitical, obedient, an non-deliberating institution, organized by the State to ensure national defense, the stability of democratic institutions and respect for the Constitution and the laws" (Norden in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 99).

[75] The intension behind the extension of the right to vote to the military was to promote individual participation in politics, rather than jointly becoming involved as an armed group (Trinkunas 2005: 211).

Another facet of Chávez's attempt to draw on the armed forces to advance his socialist revolution is via the supervision of military promotions. Prior to the election of Chávez, congress, an organization tainted by corruption charges, chose which military personnel received promotions. Bearing in mind that while the legislature may not be supportive of the executive branch**,** a purely civilian group maintained control over advancement (Hellinger in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 41). Article 331 of the 1999 constitution altered the promotions process by assigning the task to the armed forces themselves. Article 157, further slants the promotions process by requiring that the military submit a promotions list to the president for his approval (Trinkunas 2004: 63). Criticism of this constitutional change includes the notions that the opinions of minority parties in the National Assembly would be silenced (Alvarez in Ellner & Hellinger 2003: 158) and that Chávez, the Commander in Chief of the armed forces, would only bestow promotions on supporters of his socialist agenda (Trinkunas 2005: 210 & 221-222; Wilpert 2007: 30; Ellsworth & Oliver: 9 January 2007). Chávez supporters countered that the president must be able to control advancement because soldiers may be tempted to conspire against the presidency (Wilpert 2007: 53).

The widespread placement of military personnel in civilian governmental posts is the final example of Chávez's goal to permeate Venezuelan society (specifically the public service) with socialist supporters. Active-duty and retired military officers held approximately one-third of the presidential cabinet and 150 senior ministerial/ administrative public service positions[76] (Trinkunas in

76 These posts include: the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Infrastructure, the governorship of the federal district, the President's chief of staff, the President's personal secretary, the head of the agency responsible for public housing, the President and Vice President of PDVSA, the CEO of PDVSA subsidiary, CITGO, and the head of the political and judicial police forces (Trinkunas in McCoy & Myers

McCoy & Myers 2004: 58-59). Trinkunas raises several important reservations regarding the placement of military personnel in civilian posts. One of those concerns is whether a reduced civilian presence within the public service would lead to a deviation from democratic principles. He also argues that civilian control over the armed services is essential, but not attainable if the armed forces themselves allocate military resources, preside over administration, and determine their own role (Trinkunas 2005: 6). The dual-identity assumed by an active-duty soldier performing a civilian placement may also pose problems if s/he encounters chain-of-command issues. Furthermore, the wants and needs of the military are likely to become over-represented if members of the armed forces take on posts throughout the public service (Forero: 1 December 2006). To counter accusations that the military was taking control over the government, Chávez appointed Vicente Rangel, a civilian, to the position of Minister of Defense (Wilpert 2007: 41).

3.1.1.7 Venezuela & the United States

As the fifth largest exporter of oil in the world, Venezuela follows only Canada, Mexico, and Saudi Arabia as the leading purveyors of oil to the United States (Kozloff 2007: 7). Venezuela has sold half of its oil and oil products to the USA[77], a transaction valued at $11.4 billion dollars in 1999 (Romero in McCoy & Myers 2004: 137). The relationship, therefore, between the governments of those two states is one based primarily on petroleum. Prior to 1998, Venezuelan oil policies toward the United States were submissive in nature, allowing the US almost unimpeded access to the privatized industry (Golinger 2006: 4). However, following Chávez's election in 1998, the goals of

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2004: 58-59). In October 2000, 29 active duty soldiers held senior ministerial/administrative positions in the Venezuelan federal government (Trinkunas 2005: 213).

77 Venezuela sends more than one million barrels of crude oil to the American market daily (BBC Mundo: 18 February 2006; Chirinos: 13 September 2008).

the new Venezuelan administration (including poverty reduction[78] and the promotion of democracy) contradicted those of American economists who sought only to maintain a monopoly on Venezuelan oil (Golinger 2006: 6). Unwilling to forfeit socialist objectives for American petro-dollars (Golinger 2006: 35) the relationship between the American and Venezuelan governments began to sour. This strain on American-Venezuelan relations resurfaced in the years and months prior to the Iraq war when it would have been beneficial for the US to reduce its dependence on Middle Eastern oil and import oil from a less politically volatile and more geographically advantageous location: Venezuela.

In order to create conditions that furthered such an arrangement, agents working on behalf of the American government began to interfere overtly and covertly in the management of the South American nation. In fact, the rabid extent to which the United States wanted uninterrupted access to Venezuelan oil was documented by the Vice President of the *Parlatino* (Latin American Parliament), Carlos Wimmer, who stated that Washington's intention was "the occupation and domination, via the use of military force, of the world's largest oil fields" (Prensa Latina: 14 March 2008). The following section will document evidence of American interference and subsequent reactions by Hugo Chávez. The relationship between the US and Venezuela is relevant to the thesis because past incursions and current threats of American interference have prompted Chávez to dramatically increase funding to the active-duty military and establish a substantial reserve force.

[78] Interestingly, Chávez's aspiration to aid the plight of the poor was not limited to poverty found in his own country. One international program includes the sale of heating oil at deep discounts to poor American families living in the eastern United States (Ali 2006: 75; Romero: 5 January 2008). Chávez has continued this program, despite the falling price of oil and a 2008/2009 worldwide economic recession (James: 8 January 2009).

The Chávez government has repeatedly accused the United States of planning subversive actions (Prensa Latina: 12 April 2007), spying on his country[79], orchestrating destabilization plans (Prensa Latina: 19 June 2007), committing threats of military aggression[80], lobbying false drug accusations against Chávez[81], accusing the

[79] Chávez designated military attaché to the American embassy in Caracas, John Correa, to be a 'persona non grata' and expelled him from the country on the suspicion that he was committing espionage (Morsbach: 3 February 2006).

[80] Recent threats of aggression carried out by the United States against Venezuela include the increased presence of American military in South America. In fact, the amount of American service personnel found on that continent has reached levels unseen since the Cold War. Specifically, American soldiers are stationed throughout the Caribbean, on the island of Curaçao (60 kilometres north of Venezuela), in the international waters of the Atlantic Ocean near the coast of Venezuela, and in the border regions between Colombia and Venezuela (Telesur: 30 November 2006). The United States justifies its presence in South America as a function of its war on drugs (New York Times: 21 December 2006). Chávez has also alleged that the United States government is spying on him (CNN: 19 January 2007; BBC Mundo: 21 January 2006) and that the Americans are trying to infiltrate his military in order to turn it against him (International Herald Tribune: 19 August 2007; Rueda: 4 October 2007). The United States did indeed violate Venezuelan airspace in May 2008 prompting Chávez to summon the American ambassador for an account and explanation of the incident (Romero: 20 May 2008; Cancel: 21 May 2008). By far the most egregious accusation is that the US government (perhaps working in tandem with the Colombian government) is planning to assassinate President Chávez (CNN: 4 March 2007; El Nuevo Herald: 10 June 2008).

[81] Aside from reports that, on occasion, Chávez chews coca–a legal and common custom across most of South America (Ocando: 20 January 2008)-, the United States has also engaged the media in speculating on Chávez's role in the illegal drug trade. Once the unlucky bumper crop and clandestine industry of neighbouring Colombia, the burden of blame for Europe and America's hunger for cocaine has been squarely set on the shoulders of Chávez's Venezuela (El Universal: 17 December 2007a). A Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation in the United States testified that drug traffickers routinely export cocaine produced in Colombia to Venezuela and then fly the drugs to North America and Europe (Subcommitte on International Terrorism: 13 July 2006; James: 23 August 2008). With respect to the approximate quantity of drugs in question, while the BBC estimated that up to 200 tons of cocaine enter and exit Venezuela annually (BBC News: 20 January 2008). The American ambassador to Colombia, William Brownfield, assessed that figure to be 300 tons per year (El Nuevo Herald: 30 June 2008). For those who accept the theory that Venezuela is a vital transit stop for Colombian cocaine, it is their argument that various loopholes and corrupt agencies are to blame. For example, according to El Universal (2 March 2007), Venezuela has a weak judiciary system, a corrupt bureaucracy, and a disorganized and underfunded counter narcotics program. A journalist for Reuters UK attested that Venezuelan military cooperates fully with drug cartels and even facilitates drug dissemination (Oliver: 19 July 2007). To underscore the severity of the Venezuelan government's alleged role in narcotics, in 2007 the United States added Venezuela to the black list of countries that had expressly severed their cooperation in the war against drugs (Heredia: 17 September 2007). In response to

Venezuelan President of having close ties with Colombia's FARC[82] and executing a movement to derail the Chávez government (Toothtaker: 25 June 2007). Such acts of subversion and destabilization require financial support, which allegedly originates in several prominent American agencies[83] (Ali 2006: 66; Kozloff

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the myriad drug-related accusations, the Venezuelan government requested only respect and independence from the United States, stating that it is and always will be Venezuela's intention to fight the proliferation of illegal drugs (El Nacional: 2 March 2007). Chávez repudiated American claims that the drug trade was raging on Venezuelan soil unabated and provided evidence of destroyed dirt airstrips used by drug cartels (BBC News: 31 March 2008), improved satellite monitoring of Venezuelan airspace (Forero: 7 April 2008), and noteworthy drug seizures (Prensa Latina: 28 January 2008; Prensa Latina: 8 July 2009).

[82] The link between Hugo Chávez and the Colombian leftist guerrilla group, FARC (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Colombianas* –Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), has generated much controversy in recent years. For example, in 2006 and 2007, allegations surfaced that the Venezuelan government was deliberately ignoring Colombian terrorist presence on its soil (Venezuela: Terrorism Hub of South America: 2006), giving FARC access to weapons (El Universal: 17 December 2007b), such as Russian missiles (International Herald Tribune: 11 May 2008). Although President Chávez publicly stated in 2007 that he would punish anyone with ties to the insurgents (El Universal: 11 June 2007), the Bush administration relied on the media to inculcate nefarious connections between the Venezuelan head of state and the FARC. News agencies have accused the Chávez administration of extending legal immunity to FARC members operating on Venezuelan soil (Guardian Unlimited: 3 February 2008), offering military protection and identification documents (Semana: 2 February 2008) along with food, medical treatment, and drug smuggling routes (Sanchez: 26 February 2008). The United States acknowledged the situation by including Venezuela on a list of countries that support terrorists (Bachelet: 11 March 2008). On 1 March 2008, police found a laptop in the jungles of Ecuador during a drug raid. American investigative teams seized the computer with the purpose of exposing the inner-workings of that organization (Barrionuevo: 14 March 2008). The computer files elicited questions about the relationship between President Chávez and the FARC (Altaner: 9 May 2008; The Economist: 22 May 2008); in particular claims that Chávez armed and funded the group (Glüsing: 7 April 2008) with upwards of $300 million (Brocks: 3 March 3008.) Nevertheless, the International Police Organization concluded that the laptop was not a reliable source of evidence (Suggett: 12 June 2008). Following the laptop debacle, President Chávez held a press conference in which he warned that the Colombian government's efforts to link Venezuela with the FARC could lead to war (Orozoco & Walter: 11 May 2008). Eva Golinger supports this claim, stating that allegations linking Chávez to FARC were simply part of a scare tactic used to isolate Venezuela in the international community and validate an intervention (2006: 113).

[83] These institutions include (among others): the Department of State, the Agency for International Development, the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Endowment for Democracy, the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute, the Center for International Private Enterprise, the US Chamber of Commerce, the American Center for International Labor Solidarity and the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations.

2007: 2). President Chávez perceives the threat of American subversion to be genuine. Upon many occasions, the President has publicly stated that the United States is ready to attack his country (Wilpert 2007; Ingham: 27 June 2008) and assassinate him (New York Times: 25 February 2006).

The response from the Chávez camp to American incursions varies in its focus. Firstly, it has been Chávez's prerogative to establish a unified Latin America. A Latin America that shares an economic, political, and social agenda is less likely to be an easy target for American subversion (Wilpert 2007: 153). Likewise, Venezuelan sovereignty from the United States is inextricably linked to a broader Latin American independence from the United States. President Chávez has openly called for Latin America to be *una sola nación* (one nation) (El Universal: 21 February 2007) and a world force to be reckoned with (Telesur: 6 August 2007). To encourage continental unity, Venezuela allocated 10 per cent of its 2006 budget to foreign expenditures related to Latin American assistance (Marcano & Barrera 2004: 223). The media described that quantity as an *ocean* of petrodollars when compared to the *drop of water* bestowed on South America by the G.W. Bush administration (Rutenberg & Rohter: 9 March 2007). Venezuelan aid has far exceeded US endowments to the region (Obiko: 15 March 2007), a fact that may indicate the irrelevance of President Bush on the South American continent.

With respect to specific investments in neighboring countries, the Venezuelan government has built roads in Bolivia and constructed electricity plants in Nigaragua (Althaus et al: 4 March 2007). To assist in Argentina's economic recovery, Chávez bought one billion dollars of their debt (Carroll: 9 August 2007). The Venezuelan president has also provided aid money to Ecuador and Nicaragua (Castañeda: 7 March 2007). The Venezuelan government

sponsors special relief projects such as providing scholastic scholarships to poor Nicaraguan students (Prensa Latina: 27 March 2007) and dispatching Venezuelan ophthalmologists across the region to perform eye surgery (Otis: 16 June 2007; Romero: 26 February 2008).

However, the most valuable commodity that Chávez has shared with his allies on the South American continent and in the Caribbean is oil. Essentially, Chávez has guaranteed the energy requirements of his neighbors (BBC News: 8 August 2007). For example, in 2008, Chávez pledged to provide petroleum-starved Paraguay with as much oil as necessary and sold cheap oil to Ecuador and Bolivia (Cristaldo: 16 August 2008). The Venezuelan government plans to further reduce dependence on American oil and subsequently improve South American access to Venezuelan oil by constructing a 5000-mile natural gas pipeline that would reach the far limits of the continent (Gould: 2 December 2006). He is also building oil refineries in Nicaragua, Haiti, Ecuador, Bolivia, and the Dominican Republic (Mazoch: 30 April 2007).

The Bush administration responded to Chávez's continental generosity with apprehension. To counter the healthcare options made possible by Venezuela's rich oil deposits, in 2007, the United States government shipped the US Naval Ship Comfort to Latin America. The medical corps on board performed 180,000 free surgeries and medical exams between the months of June and September of that year. While the program was popular and successful, it is difficult to compare the free health services provided briefly by the United States to those supplied to Latin America by Venezuela and Cuba (for example, the above-mentioned *Misión Barrio Adentro*). Furthermore, the American efforts therefore pale in comparison to the full-scale and permanent missions such as *Misión Milagro* (Faries: 19 September 2007).

The second way that the Chávez government is encouraging independence from American political and economic influence (International Herald Tribune: 3 July 2007) is insisting on Venezuelan membership in *Mercosur*[84] (or *Mercado del Sur* –the Common Market of the South). *Mercosur*, whose headquarters is to be located in Venezuela (Wilpert 2007: 154), will play a pivotal role in "the financial architecture of the region" (Ingham: 9 October 2007). President Chávez sees *Mercosur* as a feasible alternative to the IMF and World Bank for Latin Americans (The Economist: 10 May 2007a). According to former Argentinean president Nestor Kirchner, Venezuela's *Mercosur* membership is 'a milestone' and former Brazilian president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva deemed the event as a 'new chapter in our integration' (Chomsky: 15 March 2006). With respect to the thesis, a noteworthy aspect of *Mercosur* is the potential for continent-wide military coordination and the formation of a common Latin American military force (Ellner 2001: 21; BBC Mundo: 7 December 2006; Walters: 28 January 2008).

The third tactic used by Chávez to counter American influence has been to foster strong ties with countries such as Iran, Syria, Russia, China, and Cuba; nations which the United States views as a threat to international security (Subcommittee on International Terrorism: 13 July 2006). By flooding media publications with pictures of President Chávez embracing Iranian leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (Leyne: 3 July 2007), Venezuela has cemented an economic alliance with the Middle Eastern nation (CNN: 28 September 2007; Romero: 14 January 2007), despite American sanctions against Iran. With respect to collaborative projects, the

84 Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay founded *Mercosur* in 1991. Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru are 'associate members' of the trade organization. *Mercosur* officially accepted Venezuela as a member in 2006. (Rohter: 19 January 2007).

countries plan to produce oil and build cars and tractors (Romero: 3 March 2007).

The Chávez government has also sought a closer political relationship with Russia in order to curtail American influence in the world (Murphy: 27 June 2007). To accomplish that goal, Venezuela has built the Simón Bolívar Latin American Integration Center in Moscow (Prensa Latina: 28 June 2007), spent billions of dollars on Russian-made weapons (CNN: 22 July 2008), and invited Russian warships to sail in the Caribbean and conduct joint exercises with the Venezuelan navy (Daniel: 9 September 2008; The Economist: 11 September 2008). Chávez is also permitting Russia to open an airbase on La Orchila Island; a decision meant to snub the United States (Parfitt: 16 March 2009).

In addition, Chávez has bolstered relations with China by purchasing their combat

and training aircraft, and agreeing to the construction of a refinery for Venezuelan petroleum on Chinese soil (Agence France-Presse: 21 September 2008). Chávez has also commissioned the Chinese to build a communications satellite for Venezuela (Kraul: 12 January 2009) and established a joint oil venture for the two countries (Agence France-Presse: 7 April 2009). To illustrate the burgeoning trade relationship between Venezuela and China, trade between the two nations grew from $742 million in 2003 to $10 billion in 2008 (El Universal: 18 June 2009).

Venezuela's strong political relationship with communist Cuba, when combined with Chávez's personal friendship with Fidel Castro, is a thorn in the side of American foreign policy. Economically, many energy contracts and *misiones* bind the two countries, such as the Caracas Agreement (a Venezuelan contract guaranteeing discounted

oil to Cuba[85]) (Guevara 2005: 60) and the *ALBA* pact (Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas) (Snow: 12 June 2007). Venezuela and Cuba also share agricultural, commercial, and educational resources. For instance, nearly 40,000 Cubans work in Venezuela providing healthcare, education, and social services to those living in Venezuela's low-income neighborhoods (Ocando: 5 March 2009).

The fourth method by which President Chávez has responded to the threat of American incursions is by publicly acknowledging the threat and replying with his own threats. In 2007, the Venezuelan president warned other countries not to try to attack his nation (BBC Mundo: 17 June 2007). He has also threatened to bring to a halt all international oil sales if any agency tries to destabilize his oil industry (Toothtaker: 4 November 2006) or to attack his country (Scotsman.com: 18 February 2006; Kozloff 2007: 36; Sanchez: 14 April 2007). In 2008, Chávez warned President Bush "if there's a coup, the countercoup would be overwhelming" (Allan: 18 September 2008). President Chávez also engaged in a war of words with American President George W Bush. One notable example occurred in 2006 during Chavez's address to the United Nations. He referred to President Bush as the devil and accused the United States of seeking world domination (Ho: 21 September 2006). During a radio broadcast in 2007, Chávez told US officials to 'go to hell' (CNN: 21 January 2007).

With respect to the thesis, the fifth and most notable way in which the Chávez administration has responded to the threat of American interference is by increasing the size and scope of the Venezuelan military. In preparation for an American invasion of Venezuela (BBC News: 16 February 2006; Castillo: 13 April 2007), which may lead to a war (Marquez: 23 November 2006), the Chávez

[85] In 2007, Venezuela sent upwards of 100,000 barrels of subsidized oil per day to Cuba (Romero: 28 February 2007).

government has increased the military budget by 46.04 per cent from 2004 to 2006 (Rivero & Sánchez: 18 September 2008) thereby allowing Chávez to purchase a significant amount of arms[86]. According to the United States, as Venezuela has become the leading international purchaser of arms and military equipment (Montaner: 17 October 2006), the South American nation is at risk of becoming a bad example for the rest of Latin America (Heredia: 17 October 2007). Faced with this criticism, President Chávez responded that he is always open to the idea of buying more arms and military equipment (Telesur: 25 June 2007). Moreover, according to the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, other Latin American countries spend significantly more than Venezuela on their militaries[87] (Political Affairs: 3 March 2007). In 2009, the Chávez government came under fire from American General Douglas Fraser, who articulated concerns over the South American nation's arms purchases. The General argued that Venezuela does not need to arm itself, as there is no "conventional military threat in the region." President Chávez responded: "General, you're the threat!" (Associated Press: 29 June 2009).

Chávez has also invested greatly in the expansion of the military reserve and the creation of civilian militias that are intended

[86] Arms purchases by the Venezuelan government include: Russian AK-47 rifles (BBC Mundo: 11 February 2006), one hundred thousand AK-103 Russian assault rifles (Romero: 24 February 2007), Russian Dragunov sniper rifles (Chivers: 16 August 2007), a Russian anti-aircraft defense system (El Universal: 30 January 2007), forty Russian helicopters (Zamora: 27 June 2007), Russian MI-35 helicopter gunships (The Economist: 31 August 2006), Russian refueling aircraft (Associated Press: 5 December 2007), Russian tanker aircraft (El Universal: 28 January 2009), Russian fighter jets (El Nacional: 27 February 2007), Russian submarines (Harding: 15 June 2007), Russian corvettes for coastal patrol (Inter Press Service News Agency: 18 February 2006), and Spanish speedboats (Sanchez: 31 May 2006). The Chávez government also plans to build a Kalashnikov rifle factory in Venezuela (Reuters: 26 August 2007).

[87] The study conducted by the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation estimated that Argentina spends twice as much as Venezuela; Colombia spends three times as much; Brazil spends 12 times more; and the United States' military budget is 500 times the size of Venezuela's.

to fight a 'people's war' (Sanchez: 20 April 2006). The actual size of the Venezuelan military reserve varies across publications from a meager 'thousands of citizens[88]' (Marquez: 23 November 2006) to 200,000 citizens (Daniels: 22 April 2007), or one million (El Nuevo Herald: 6 August 2007) and two million, or one fifth of the Venezuelan population (Sanchez: 20 April 2006). Reserve Commander, General Rangel Briceño imparted the grandest estimation of the size of the civilian force; in which all Venezuelans who are not part of the active-duty military are enlisted members of the reserve (Gunson & Dudley: 25 July 2007).

The military reserves are well trained, well structured, well equipped, and well armed (Castillo: 13 April 2007) and, most importantly, are loyal to Chávez (Gunson & Bachelet: 23 March 2008). The civilian militias, also known as communal groups (Daniels: 22 April 2007), the citizens' militia (Subcommittee on International Terrorism: 13 July 2006), popular defense units (Wilpert 2007: 51), the territorial guard (Sanchez: 20 April 2006), and Bolivarian militias (Prensa Latina: 14 December 2007), are under the direct control of President Chávez (Wilpert 2007: 51). The citizens are paid to receive training (Sanchez: 20 April 2006), but are largely a volunteer force that is prepared to respond to an attack by American forces (Gunson & Bachelet: 23 March 2008). The Chávez government has also equipped the militia with approximately two million guns for street-to-street resistance if it should come under attack (Rivero & Sánchez: 18 September 2008). Criticism of the growing reserve force and creation of civilian guerrilla groups includes that Chávez is threatening democracy because citizens will be apt to seek a military solution to all problems (Gunson & Dudley: 25 July 2007).

[88] The reserve force's *Misión Miranda* (Miranda Mission) is comprised of 93,000 men and women, of which 85,000 are army reservists (Wilpert 2007: 51).

3.1.1.8 Thematic Checklist for Venezuelan Website Analyses

- the *Caracazo* and the ruptured relationship between the Venezuelan Military and the *pueblo*
- Socialism
    - an improvement in social programs (*misiones*, *Plan Bolívar 2000*) under the leadership of President Chávez
    - the inclusion of the poor in the political process
    - the nationalizations of key industries (with special attention to PDVSA)
- Constitutional referenda in 2007 and 2009
- Hugo Chávez versus the media
- The politicization of the Venzuelan Military
- Venezuela versus the United States
    - Drug accusations levied against President Chávez
    - FARC accusations levied against President Chávez
    - Preparation for an American-led/sponsored invasion of Venezuela

3.1.2 Homepage of the Venezuelan Army



Figure 3

Ejercito.mil.ve on 14 July 2008.

3.1.2.1 Zones of Ejercito.mil.ve

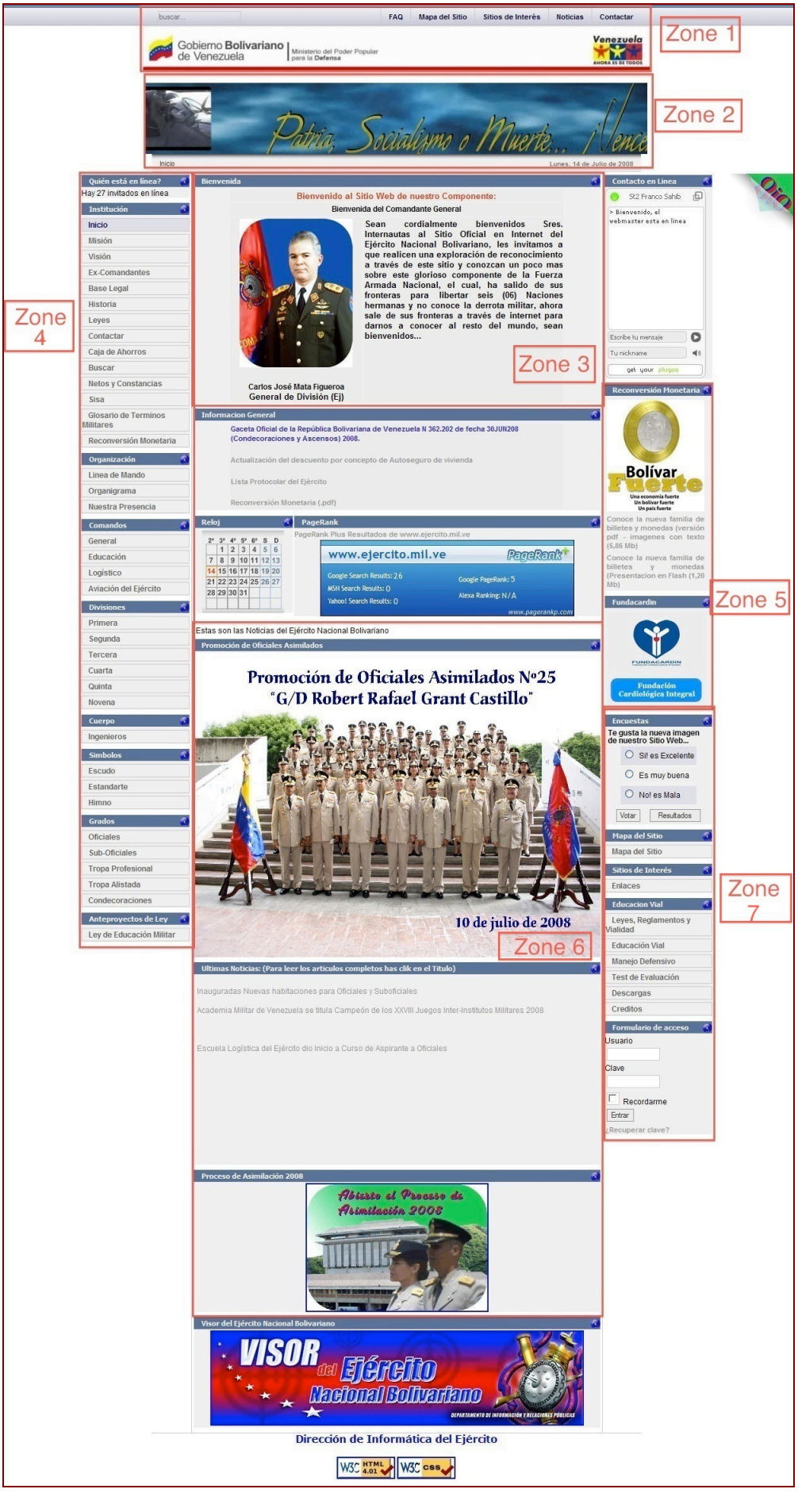

buscar...
FAQ
Mapa del Sitio
Sitios de Interés
Noticias
Contactar
Gobierno Bolivariano de Venezuela
Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Defensa
Venezuela
AHORA ES DE TODOS
Zone 1
Patria, Socialismo o Muerte... ¡Venceremos!
Inicio
Lunes, 14 de Julio de 2008
Zone 2
Zone 4
Quién está en línea?
Hay 27 invitados en línea
Institución
Inicio
Misión
Visión
Ex-Comandantes
Base Legal
Historia
Leyes
Contactar
Caja de Ahorros
Buscar
Netos y Constancias
Sisa
Glosario de Terminos Militares
Reconversión Monetaria
Organización
Linea de Mando
Organigrama
Nuestra Presencia
Comandos
General
Educación
Logístico
Aviación del Ejército
Divisiones
Primera
Segunda
Tercera
Cuarta
Quinta
Novena
Cuerpo
Ingenieros
Simbolos
Escudo
Estandarte
Himno
Grados
Oficiales
Sub-Oficiales
Tropa Profesional
Tropa Alistada
Condecoraciones
Anteproyectos de Ley
Ley de Educación Militar
Bienvenida
Bienvenido al Sitio Web de nuestro Componente:
Bienvenida del Comandante General
Sean cordialmente bienvenidos Sres. Internautas al Sitio Oficial en Internet del Ejército Nacional Bolivariano, les invitamos a que realicen una exploración de reconocimiento a través de este sitio y conozcan un poco mas sobre este glorioso componente de la Fuerza Armada Nacional, el cual, ha salido de sus fronteras para libertar seis (06) Naciones hermanas y no conoce la derrota militar, ahora sale de sus fronteras a través de internet para darnos a conocer al resto del mundo, sean bienvenidos...
Carlos José Mata Figueroa
General de División (EJ)
Zone 3
Informacion General
Gaceta Oficial de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela N 362.202 de fecha 30JUN208 (Condecoraciones y Ascensos) 2008.
Actualización del descuento por concepto de Autoseguro de vivienda
Lista Protocolar del Ejército
Reconversión Monetaria (.pdf)
Reloj
PageRank
PageRank Plus Resultados de www.ejercito.mil.ve
www.ejercito.mil.ve
PageRank
Google Search Results: 2.6
MSN Search Results: 0
Yahoo! Search Results: 0
Google PageRank: 5
Alexa Ranking: N/A
www.pagerankp.com
Estas son las Noticias del Ejército Nacional Bolivariano
Promoción de Oficiales Asimilados
Promoción de Oficiales Asimilados Nº25
"G/D Robert Rafael Grant Castillo"
10 de julio de 2008
Zone 6
Ultimas Noticias: (Para leer los articulos completos has clik en el Titulo)
Inauguradas Nuevas habitaciones para Oficiales y Suboficiales
Academia Militar de Venezuela se titula Campeón de los XXVIII Juegos Inter-Institutos Militares 2008
Escuela Logística del Ejército dio Inicio a Curso de Aspirante a Oficiales
Proceso de Asimilación 2008
Abierto el Proceso de Asimilación 2008
Visor del Ejército Nacional Bolivariano
VISOR del Ejército Nacional Bolivariano
DEPARTAMENTO DE INFORMACION Y RELACIONES PUBLICAS
Contacto en Linea
St2 Franco Sahib
> Bienvenido, el webmaster esta en linea
Escribe tu mensaje
Tu nickname
get your plugoo
Reconversión Monetaria
Bolívar Fuerte
Una economía fuerte
Un bolívar fuerte
Un país fuerte
Conoce la nueva familia de billetes y monedas (versión pdf - imagenes con texto (5,86 Mb)
Conoce la nueva familia de billetes y monedas (Presentacion en Flash (1,20 Mb)
Fundacardin
Zone 5
FUNDACARDIN
Fundación Cardiológica Integral
Encuestas
Te gusta la nueva imagen de nuestro Sitio Web...
Si! es Excelente
Es muy buena
No! es Mala
Votar
Resultados
Mapa del Sitio
Mapa del Sitio
Sitios de Interés
Enlaces
Educacion Vial
Leyes, Reglamentos y Vialidad
Educación Vial
Manejo Defensivo
Test de Evaluación
Descargas
Creditos
Formulario de acceso
Usuario
Clave
Recordarme
Entrar
¿Recuperar clave?
Zone 7
Dirección de Informática del Ejército
W3C HTML 4.01
W3C CSS

Figure 4

Zones of ejercito.mil.ve.

Zone one: **Banner I**

This zone is located in the upper-central region of the webpage and displays a banner. The left side of the banner includes the image of a waving Venezuelan flag and the name of the webpage's overseeing government agency (the Bolivarian Government of Venezuela, Ministry of People's Power for Defense). On the right, one can find a logo of three human-like illustrations in shades of yellow, blue, and red along with the words *Venezuela Ahora es de todos* (Venezuela Now [Belongs to] Everyone).

Zone two: Banner II

Located directly below zone one is the webpage's second banner. Against the background of a stormy sky are the words *Patria, Socialismo o Muerte ¡Venceremos!* (Homeland, Socialism, or Death…We will triumph!).

Zone three: Welcome Message

This zone contains Army Division General's welcome message and a photo of Division General Carlos José Mata Figueroa.

Zone four: Menu I

The fourth zone includes all menu items located in the column on the left-hand side of the webpage. The menu headings are Who is on-line?, Institution, Organization, Commands, Divisions, Body, Symbols, Grades, and Drafts.

Zone five: Advertisements

In this zone are two government-sponsored advertisements. The ads are located in the column on the right-hand side of the webpage. The advertisements include a notice regarding the induction of the new currency, the *Bolívar Fuerte*, and a poster for *Fundacardín*, the Integral Heart Foundation, a South American research and development agency for cardiology studies.

Zone six: News

This zone, which is located in the lower-middle section of the centre column, contains military news articles and their accompanying photographs.

Zone seven: Menu II

Zone seven is comprised of a menu that is positioned on lower right side of the webpage. The menu headings are Website Map, Websites of Interest, and Driver Education.

3.1.2.2 Images & Texts to be examined

1. Banner I
2. Banner II
3. Welcome message
4. *Bolívar Fuerte* advertisement
5. Page rank
6. Assimilation process news item
7. Multimodal analysis of assimilated officers promotion news item
8. Links

3.1.2.2.1 Banner I

In the far left corner and against the white background of Banner I (figure 5), are the names of the primary overseeing bodies of the army (and of the website): (the) Bolivarian Government of Venezuela and The People's Ministry for Defense.



Figure 5

Ejercito.mil.ve banner I: *Gobierno Bolivariano de Venezuela, Ministerio de Poder Popular para la Defensa* (Bolivarian Government of Venezuela, Ministry of the People's Power for Defense) & *Venezuela Ahora es de Todos* Icon.

The Spanish words for *Bolivarian Government of Venezuela* are written in a large font, while the *People's Ministry for Defense* are displayed in a smaller font. The adjective *Bolivarian* is bold-faced, as is the word *Defense*. Next to the institutional identification is the image of a waving Venezuelan flag. On the far right of the banner is an icon. The *Venezuela Ahora es de Todos* icon combines three star-shaped human-like illustrations in shades of yellow, blue, and red (combining the stars and colours found on the Venezuelan flag). The word *Venezuela* is written in large bold letters above the icon and the words *Ahora es de todo*s can be found in smaller capital letters below. All of the words in the banner are written in dark grey/black lettering. The banner is framed horizontally from above by a small grey-toned menu containing a search engine box and several links (frequently asked questions; a map of the website; other websites of interest; news; and a method for contact.) The lower horizontal frame is a bright red line, which is approximately $1/10^{th}$ the thickness of the entire banner.

According to the XVII Transitional Provision of the 1999 Venezuelan Constitution (Venezuelan Supreme Court), the name of the republic is to be known as the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The significance of the name change is demonstrated by the emboldened lettering of the word Bolivarian. It is interesting that the

word Bolivarian is written in bold letters, while the words *Poder Popular* are not. This is a surprising facet of the design, as a prominent feature of the Chávez regime is the expansion of power and wealth to all Venezuelans, including the *pueblo*. With respect to the icon on the left side of Banner I, the placement of the motto 'Venezuela now belongs to everyone' in a salient position signals the importance of the ideologically laden slogan. Signifying a break from the past by way of the adverb *ahora* (now), the slogan suggests that the state (and it's resources) is now to be shared amongst all Venezuelans.

The placement of the constituent elements of Banner I is consistent with Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006: 177) theory of information value (see section 2.2.1.3.5). As the author's assign a 'given' or known quality to information that is found on the left side of an image, the identity of the Bolivarian Government as the overseeing body of the website is in its rightful place. The *Ahora es de Todos* motto and icon on the right side of the screen is also compatible with the information value quadrant because the intention behind that phrase is somewhat new to Venezuelans. *Ahora es de Todos* counters the actions of Venezuela's *ancien regime* (as described above in section 3.1.1.1), and articulates the governing United Socialist Party's vision (and that of its leader, President Chávez). The slogan thereby sets the tone for the rest of the homepage. Similarly, the depiction of three human-like stars that are holding hands reinforces the government's vision, as it is the visual equivalent to the icon's verbal motto. The icon is further supported by the image and text that are located below in zone two.

3.1.2.2.2 Banner II

Zone two is the location of the second banner on the Venezuelan Army's homepage.



Figure 6

Ejercito.mil.ve banner II: *Patria, Socialiso o Muerte…¡Venceremos!* (Homeland, Socialism or Death…We will triumph!).

Against the background of a stormy sky, in a handwritten script of bold yellow lettering are the words *Patria, Socialismo o Muerte ¡Venceremos!* (Homeland, Socialism or Death! We will triumph!). The cold war era phrase (Vaca: 18 March 2010), a call to arms originally coined by Ernesto 'Che' Guevara was popularized in 1960 by former Cuban president Fidel Castro following the explosion of the La Coubre freighter near the bay of Havana. The blast, which killed hundreds of Cubans, was suspected to be the work of the Central Intelligence Agency (López: 7 March 2007). According to historian Louis A Pérez, rather than denoting a fatalist quality, the phrase is a reminder of both the benefits and sacrifices made possible by the revolution (Pérez 2007: 338-339).

It is important to note that this banner is the location of the only moving images on the website. The banner displays multiple images in a repeated loop; figures 7-11 demonstrate the order in which the banner components appear. Specifically, banner II's images include photographs of soldiers performing a variety of duties, including marching in uniform with weapons drawn and loading a helicopter with bags of relief supplies for distribution (figure 7); the words *Ejército Nacional Bolivariano* (National Bolivarian Army) written in white cursive lettering on a blue and red background (figure 8); the emblem of the Venezuelan Army centred on the same blue and red background (figure 9); and, a waving Venezuelan flag (figure 10).

The image captured on 10 August 2008 (figure 11), illustrates the transformation from one banner into another.

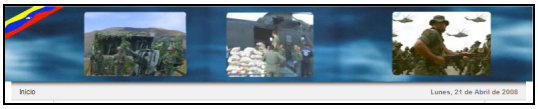


Figure 7

Ejercito.mil.ve banner II on 21 April 2008.



Figure 8

Ejercito.mil.ve banner II on 26 May 2008.



Figure 9

Ejercito.mil.ve banner II on 1 June 2008.



Figure 10

Ejercito.mil.ve banner II on 29 June 2008.



Figure 11

Ejercito.mil.ve banner II on 10 August 2008.

As stated by Thurston (2004: 65), the website visitor's eyes are first attracted to moving images and will only then move on to take note of

the still images and text. Therefore, the website first exposes the visitor to an interplay of recognizable symbols (the flag and army's emblem), photographs of soldiers at work, and, finally, a declaration of the Chávez government's ideological stance.

The most striking verbal text on the military's homepage is found in Banner II. As stated above in section 3.1.1.6.2, President Chávez insisted that members of the military salute using the slogan *Patria, Socialismo o Muerte ¡Venceremos!* This campaign was met with criticism by the national and international media as it was seen to be a strategy to politicize the armed forces (Carlson: 16 May 2007; Castillo: 13 April 2007; Gunson: 18 May 2007; International Herald Tribune: 28 June 2008; El Universal: 25 June 2007). Interestingly, rather than paying heed to the controversy in 2007, the army's website designers emphasize the phrase and assign it a highly prominent upper-central location in the banner's moving image slideshow.

Throughout the ejercito.mil.ve website, the fonts vary greatly. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 221) view graphology as a remnant of the artist's temperament. For example, the phrase *Patria, Socialismo o Muerte ¡Venceremos!* is written in a handwritten script. In place of the standard computer generated Times New Roman or Arial font, the handwritten letters (in addition to the use of exclamation marks and an ellipsis, both of which are common in handwritten documents) can be interpreted as the work of an individual, rather than that of an institution. While the identity of that individual is unknown, one may surmise that President Chávez himself frequently uses that phrase. The placement of this banner on the Venezuelan military's homepage is also noteworthy as coverage of that country's military acquisitions appeared regularly in the international press (Castillo: 13 April 2007; Carlson: 16 May 2007; Gunson: 18 May 2007). It is possible that the international media and/or government

agencies consulted, or at least visited, ejercito.mil.ve during 2008. Consequently, as it was visible to anyone with an internet connection, the *Patria* statement bolsters the presumed strength of the Chávez military in the face of threats.

3.1.2.2.3 Welcome Message

Division General Carlos José Mata Figueroa's welcome message (figure 12), which is located in zone three, near the top of the webpage in the centre, greets the Internet visitor, invites him/her to explore the entire website and become acquainted with this 'glorious component of the National Armed Force' which successfully liberated six sister nations.



Figure 12

Army Division General's Welcome Message on 14 July 2008.

The notion of 'welcome' can be found in five separate locations in zone three. The first is the word *Bienvenida* (Welcome) written in white lettering against a blue background near the upper left corner of the message. The second are the words *Bienvenido al Sitio Web de nuestro Componente* (Welcome to our Component's Web Site) centred above the welcome message and written in red lettering below the word *Bienvenida*. The third is the title *Bienvenida del Comandante General* (Commander General's Welcome). Fourth, the first sentence of the message states *Sean cordialmente bienvenidos* (You are

cordially welcomed). Finally, the last words of the final sentence of the welcome message state *sean bienvenidos* (you are welcomed). The welcome message paragraph is written in black lettering and is located to the right of a photograph of the Commander General, Carlos José Mata Figueroa.

The welcome message's salient position on the website, bold lettering, and the repetition of the Commander General's salutation and amenable reception of web visitors work in tandem to increase the visitor's expectations regarding the content of both that zone and the entire website. In the same way, the message's ceremonial tone and the formality of the accompanying photograph impress upon the visitor the importance of the General's rank and of his discourse. For example, the visitor's interpretation of the welcome message would have been very different had the message been written using the Spanish informal pronouns and verbal conjugations.

However, the message in itself, does not impart critical information regarding the military's mission in Venezuela, recruitment obligations, or other service requirements. Rather, it supplies a wordy and vague history of the military and multiple references to advances in modern technology (references to readers as *internautas* or, internet-astronauts), and a remark regarding the capacity to learn more about the institution via the internet. According to Nielsen and Tahir (2002: 95), there is no need for a generic welcome message on an institutional webpage. Rather, those authors state that the prime real estate location of a welcome message would be put to better use with simple and meaningful information about the website. Furthermore, what significantly diminishes the sincerity and consequence of the General's message is that it had not changed since April 2007 when Pedro Antonio Azuaje Apítz held the same post (figure 13).



Figure 13

Army Division General's Welcome Message on 7 January 2007.

The only modifications made to Mata Figueroa's welcome message are the image and name of the acting Division General. Interestingly, the accompanying photos to the welcome messages are nearly identical as both generals are dressed in uniform, face the camera at roughly the same frontal angle, and are posed in the foreground of a Venezuelan flag against the same deep blue background.

3.1.2.2.4 Bolívar Fuerte

Another salient image on the webpage is an advertisement for the rebranded currency, the *Bolívar Fuerte* (strong Bolívar) (figure 14).



Figure 14

The *Bolívar Fuerte* (Strong Bolívar) Currency Conversion.

This advertisement is located in zone five, on the middle-right hand side of the webpage. Above the advertisement is the title *Reconversión Monetaria* (Monetary Restructuring) written in white lettering against a blue background. Within the advertisement, the large gold and silver coin is a salient image, as is the emboldened golden lettering of the word *fuerte* (strong). In addition to the written motto *Una economía fuerte. Un bolívar fuerte. Un país fuerte*. (A strong economy. A strong Bolívar. A strong country) the accompanying verbal text provides links to a pdf document and a flash presentation.

As eye catching as the *Bolívar Fuerte* advertisement is, it does not supply the visitor with any concrete data regarding the introduction of the new currency. S/he is not informed about exchange rates or how and when to exchange the former *Bolívar* currency for the *fuerte*. The new currency's motto does not clarify any monetary issues and only provides nonspecific and unsubstantiated claims. The most elusive detail regarding the *fuerte*'s inauguration is the logic behind the rebranding. To access further information, the visitor will have to click on the pdf or flash presentation buttons, which are not underlined in the text, a common method by which web designers indicate the presence of a hotlink (Nielsen: 10 May 2004). Furthermore, the pdf and flash presentation buttons are written in a medium grey typeset against a light grey background. The difficulty in legibility associated with that design choice undermines the importance of seeking out the practical details about the *fuerte*. One can then conclude that, according to this government-sponsored advertisement, the most important aspects of the conversion are not to curb inflation and facilitate transactions (The Economist: 3 January 2008), measures that will positively impact the life of the average Venezuelan, but to merely to accentuate the idea of 'strength'.

While the word *fuerte* is repeated four times in the monetary conversion advertisement, it's meaning varies slightly according to the noun that it modifies. For example, the personification of a *strong* economy reminds the visitor of Venezuela's battle with international debt repayment (Bloomberg.com: 14 April 2007) and subsequent independence from American-backed lending agencies. The application of the adjective *strong* to the word *bolívar* can yield two more interpretations that are possible. At first glance, the bolívar in question is the name of the currency. However, as the legal tender bears the same name as the famed military leader, Simón Bolívar, this *fuerte* may allude to that man's personal and political might. A reference to the South American liberator's triumphs over the grasp of imperial Spain reinforces Venezuela's economic gains. Finally, *un país fuerte* asserts the strength of the country in the face of external threats.

The pdf/flash buttons' text states *Conoce la nueva familia de billetes y monedas* (Meet the new family of bills and coins). The informal use of the word 'family' detracts from the economical gravity of a monetary modification. As two core elements of the Venezuelan government, the military and the economy, the *Patria* message in Banner II and the *Bolivar Fuerte* advertisement persuade the visitor to acknowledge the nation's might and capacity for resistance.

3.1.2.2.5 Page Rank

Located to the left of zone five is an area devoted to the Page Rank for ejercito.mil.ve (figure 15).



Figure 15

PageRank (sic).

The majority of the page rank content is written in white lettering against a medium blue background of vertically ascending saturation. Akin to the multiple expressions of welcome found in zone three, there are four separate appearances of the words 'pagerank'. The first pagerank is written in white lettering against a blue background near the upper left corner of the message. Below the first title the words *PageRank Plus Resultados de www.ejercito.mil.ve* (PageRank Plus Results for ejercito.mil.ve) are written in medium-grey lettering against a light grey background. Just below that title, on the right side of the blue box is the logo for PageRank. Finally, at the bottom of the blue box one can find PageRank's homepage address www.pagerankp.com. The content of the PageRank section includes the following statistics for ejercito.mil.ve:

Google search results (26), Google pagerank (5), MSN search results (0), Yahoo search results (0), and an Alexa Ranking (n/a).

Similar to the Welcome Message, the PageRank section's prominent position, salient colour, and title repetition imbue this portion of the website with probable importance. However, the search engine results do not reflect well on the popularity and consequential utility of the website. Furthermore, the rationale for including a third-party web page ranking in a prime-viewing location is unclear. While one positive aspect of the PageRank is transparency, this space could have been put to better use with pertinent military information. Finally, for a webpage to attract and maintain the attention of its visitor, it seems counterintuitive to provide a link to an unrelated private web service (especially one which provides an unimpressive rank to the military's homepage).

3.1.2.2.6 Assimilation Process Commencement

Located below zone six, under the heading *Proceso de Asimilación 2008* (Assimilation Process[89] 2008) is the image of a formally dressed male and female soldier (figure 16).



Figure 16

Assimilation Process Begins.

The soldiers are positioned (or superimposed) underneath a green sky and are in the foreground of an unidentified building. Above the soldiers in fuchsia handwritten lettering are the words *Abierto el Proceso de Asimilación 2008* (Opening of the 2008 Assimilation Process).

In similar fashion to the rest of the website, a description of the assimilation process cannot be found on the homepage. To obtain that information, the visitor must either click on the photograph (a hotlink that is not readily identified) or research the title by other means. It is also unclear how the photographed soldiers are associated with the assimilation process. One can only presume that the soldiers photographed have assimilated or are joining the process in 2008. The importance of the assimilation process may have been illustrated more clearly had the photograph featured doctors attending to soldiers in a military hospital. The intentions behind the photograph are thereby ambiguous.

[89] The goal of the assimilation process is to increase the number of medical practitioners in the military. (www.ejercito.mil.ve/expediente.doc).

The soldiers photographed are facing away from the eye of the camera, casting vectors towards the left corner of the image, in the direction of an unknown objective. This eye-line disconnects the soldiers from the visitor. While the quality of the image does not allow for speculation regarding the soldiers' ranks (providing a basis for a taxonomical relationship between the man and woman), one can comment on the soldiers' neutral facial expressions. Their detached appearances do not convey the expected contentment one might expect of the beginning of the 2008 Assimilation Process. The image captured is an eye-level close shot of the soldiers, which typically encourages a feeling of social familiarity. However, their oblique angle diminishes any possible intimacy between the soldiers and the image visitor.

The most conspicuous element of this image is the manipulation of background colour. As stated above in section 2.1.1.2.5, the credibility of an image is directly proportionate to the image's modality markers (Kress and Van Leeuwen cited in Van Leeuwen 2005: 167). If what is seen in a photograph is akin to what one can normally observe with the naked eye, the image bears high modality and veracity (Jewitt and Oyama in Van Leeuwen and Jewitt 2001: 151). For that reason, the depiction of soldiers in front of a green sky significantly lowers the modality and believability of the image, and, thereby that of the assimilation process. The green sky also lowers the emotive temperature of the image, from the familiar blue to a peculiar and unsettling green. Furthermore, the pronounced tone of the green sky detracts the visitor's attention away from the soldiers. This effect is intensified by the paleness of both the soldiers' uniforms and the backgrounded building. It is interesting that the sky colour also reduces the visual impact of the trees that frame the background of the image.

3.1.2.2.7 A Multimodal Analysis of: Assimilated Officers Promotion

Near the lower-middle section of the page in zone six is the largest photograph found on the webpage. The image (figure 17) depicts 64 male and female soldiers formally dressed in beige uniforms.



Figure 17

Promotion of Assimilated Officers.

The Venezuelan flag on the right and the Venezuelan military's flag on the left flank the soldiers. Above the image are three titles. The first title is *Estas son las Noticias del Ejército Nacional Bolivariano* (This is the Bolivarian National Army's News). The second title is *Promoción de Oficiales Asimilados* (Promotion of Assimilated Officers). The third title states *Promoción de Oficiales Asimilados N°25 "G/D Robert Rafael Grant Castillo*" (Promotion of Assimilated Officers Number 25 'Division General Robert Rafael Grant Castillo'). Below the soldiers, one can find the ceremony's date, *10 de Julio de 2008* (10 July 2008). While there are multiple titles provided for this photograph, none clearly indicates why the soldiers were promoted or what the assimilation process entails.

3.1.2.2.7.1 The Ideational Metafunction

3.1.2.2.7.1.1 Vectors

The majority of the vectors join the eyes of the soldiers with the centre of the camera, and thereby, with the eye of the visitor. A handful of the soldiers are looking away from the camera. As the photograph was taken from a distance, it is difficult to discern the exact eye-line of each soldier. There is evidence of a direct address of the participant and the image's visitor. As the individual eye-lines are difficult to distinguish, the actor in this situation is the collective group of soldiers.

3.1.2.2.7.1.2 Roles, Processes, and Circumstances

The processes depicted are mixed; while seven of the soldiers are expressing a clearly recognisable behavioural process (smiling), the remaining soldiers either convey no discernable facial expression or have expressions that are indistinguishable due to their distance from the photographer. As the majority of the soldiers are not noticeably smiling, they project a level of seriousness. It is difficult to determine a circumstance of location, as there are no obvious buildings or points of reference in the background of the image. The circumstances of manner include the two flags located on each side of the group. There do not appear to be any circumstances of accompaniment.

3.1.2.2.7.1.3 Classificational, Analytical, and Symbolic Structures

There is a taxonomical relationship between the represented participants. Even without the aid of subtitled names and ranks, the soldiers standing in the foreground of the photograph bear multiple medals on their uniforms. Their age, when compared to the soldiers in the background, also distinguishes them from the soldiers positioned in the final five rows. It is also noticeable that these

decorated soldiers are all men, whereas the soldiers behind them are of both genders. The foregrounded soldiers are separated from the rest of the group by two steps, while the others are standing closer to each other and are distanced by only one step. These distinguishing factors yield an overtly super-ordinate relationship between the soldiers in the first row and those in the backgrounded rows.

Regarding the analytical structures in this image, the carrier is the entire group of soldiers, which is posing in an organized and premeditated manner. The possessive attributes are other elements in the photograph, most notably the flags. The topographic relationship between the carrier and the participants is accurate insofar as the flags do not appear to have been added digitally in the photograph's post-production. The topological connection between the assemblage of the soldiers and the flags is one of figurative institutional protection. This is because the flags are intentionally placed in front of the soldiers, thereby conveying a sense of security, ceremony, and approval of the photograph's purpose. The temporal limitation of this image is indicated by the words located at the bottom of the photograph in blue typeset (*10 de julio de 2008*). With respect to the symbolic structures, the sheer size of the flags is striking when contrasted with that of even the tallest soldier. Not only are the flags the most salient objects in the photograph due to their vivid coloring (as compared to that of the soldiers' beige uniforms), they are also taller and are located closer to the eye of the camera. The carrier, in this case, depends on the symbolic attributes for authentication and ceremony.

3.1.2.2.7.2 The Interpersonal Metafunction

3.1.2.2.7.2.1 Perspective

3.1.2.2.7.2.1.1 Shot Type

Regarding the perspective, the photograph of the promoted soldiers can be categorized as a long shot as one can view the entire human figure of at least the foregrounded soldiers. The significant distance between the camera and the closest soldiers designates a business or impersonal social relationship between the image's visitor and the represented participants. Indeed, the distance between the camera and the third, forth, fifth, and sixth row of soldiers is so great that the facial features of the most distant soldiers are barely visible. This lack of discernible characteristics, coupled with the soldiers' anonymity (their names are not visible on their uniforms, nor are they listed below the photograph in a caption) further dissociates the photograph visitor from the photographed subjects. It is interesting that while the image purports to congratulate the soldiers on their promotion, their names are kept just as secret, for the most part, as their physical appearances.

3.1.2.2.7.2.1.2 Vertical and Horizontal Angles

With respect to the image's vertical angle, the image is taken at the eye level of the soldiers standing in the first row. The image's horizontal angle is frontal as each soldier is directly facing the camera and thus is objective in its portrayal of the soldiers. In the same way, the recognizable icons found on the flags are also frontally facing the camera notwithstanding the fact that they are not entirely visible. The hanging appearance of the flags is an interesting design feature of the webpage. In essence, ejercito.mil.ve expects a degree of symbolic familiarity from its visitor. Even though the flags are not entirely visible, they will be recognizable to a Venezuelan, just as a

hanging Canadian flag is likely to be identifiable by a Canadian viewer (figure 18).



Figure 18

Prime Minister Harper commemorates Canadian and Allied soldiers who served during the Korean War[90].

3.1.2.2.7.2.2 Modality

The modality of an image is the measurement of its truth-value and is dependent on various markers.

3.1.2.2.7.2.2.1 Depth & Detail

The first modality marker is depth. In the Assimilated Officer's Promotion photograph, where the perspective is central, the image displays high modality. The measure of detail, however, lowers the image's modality insofar as the distance between the camera and the soldiers is great. The level of detail, vis-à-vis the most prominently located soldiers, is also low. The credibility of the image would have been enhanced had the visitor been able to distinguish details on the soldiers' uniforms, which would reveal the ranks of at least the foregrounded soldiers. This lack of detail, which may also be attributed to a low-resolution photograph, furthers the notion that upon joining the military, one sacrifices individuality for the cause of brotherhood (or sisterhood) and the resulting strength found in

[90] http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/media_gallery.asp?media_category_id=1241&media_category_typ_id=3&pageId=0&featureId=0 (captured 10 February 2011)

trusting one's life into the hands of any fellow combatant, regardless of their name or rank.

3.1.2.2.7.2.2.2 Colour

A crucial element in the appraisal of an image's modality is the use of colour. The most salient colours in this image are those of the flags and of the leaves on the backgrounded trees. When examining the soldiers' clothing, the blandness of the beige uniforms is slightly contrasted by their black ties/bowties and the black/gold details found on their hats. The matching nature of their uniforms also advances the expected uniformity of a military corps. For example, had one of the soldiers worn a completely different uniform, s/he would have been the most salient individual, thereby drawing attention away from the promoted group.

It is difficult to delimit the scope of colour in this image because there are two distinct components present: the soldiers and those elements that are not the soldiers (including the flags, the trees, the ground, the stairs, and the sky). The need to discern between those two components is important, as what can be said of the soldiers may not correspond to a description of the other elements. For example, the purity of the colours present in the photograph is mixed. While the colours on the flags (red, blue, yellow, and white) and the colour of the trees are pure, the beige of the soldiers' uniforms is a hybrid yellow-grey tone. Similarly, the stones located on the ground that is closest to the camera are a pink tone and the stones closest to the soldiers' feet are grey.

In the same way, the image's colour modulation is varied. The soldiers' uniforms are one shade, while the other elements are of multiple shades. An evaluation of the modality, as a range between black & white to naturalistic colouring, is not concrete due to the background colour. While the colours associated with the soldiers,

flags, and trees are naturalistic, the colour of the sky vastly decreases the photograph's modality as it appears to be either abnormally overcast or the photograph's background was artificially modified to lighten the colour of the sky. Indeed, there is no difference between the colour of the sky as depicted in the photograph and the webpage's white background colour found just above the *Promoción de Oficiales Asimilados* title. However, one must note that the superimposed title *Promoción de Oficiales Asimilados N°25 "G/D Robert Rafael Grant Castillo*"' becomes more salient against the nearly white sky background.

The coordination and differentiation of colours is also divided between the soldiers and the other elements. The colour of the uniforms is consistent, while the colours of the other elements are varied. In conjunction with the absence of colour in the backgrounded sky, the beige toned uniforms lack the brilliance and prominence that one might expect from a celebratory image. To relate the colour beige to meaning potential, it's lack of colour and variation amongst the soldiers yields the impression of seriousness.

3.1.2.2.7.2.2.3 Lighting, Illumination, and Clarity

The lighting in this image is uniform, as the majority of the represented participants are well lit. In fact, the only shadows present are found under the flag apparatus. The brightest components of the image are the vivid, white cement handrails that frame the staircase. Although it is unclear if the handrails are bright due to the lighting or their reflective paint colour, the brightness of the handrails acts as a visual guide and framing device that focuses the visitor's attention on the framed soldiers.

The lighting is naturalistic, as the sky appears overcast (there isn't any direct sunlight visible). In effect, the dullness of the lighting harmonizes well with the soldiers' beige uniforms. If the image had

included a noticeably artificial spotlight on some of the soldiers, the focal point of the photograph would have deviated from the promotion of group of officers to specifically illuminated individuals.

3.1.2.2.7.2.2.4 Contextualization

The image's contextualization is limited, as the background does not contain any recognizable buildings or landmarks. Akin to the nondescript lighting, the unadorned background also sustains the visitor's attention on the soldiers and their accomplishment. The only component of the image's background that categorically places the soldiers outside are the marginalized trees found in the outer edges of the photograph.

3.1.2.2.7.3 The Textual Metafunction

3.1.2.2.7.3.1 Coherence and Cohesion

The image is coherent in the concurrent, logical, and stylistic interaction of the modes present. The deliberate posing of the soldiers (rather than a candid photograph the soldiers in action), the purposeful placement of the flags, and the adherence to an austere background work together to manufacture a consistent message of ceremony and accomplishment. The presence of soldiers in matching dress uniforms and the flags provide evidence of external coherence.

The image is cohesive insofar as the represented participants share the same vector line with the camera and the beige colour of the uniforms and pale background are coordinated. The mirror-like layout of the image also contributes to cohesion. For instance, on each side of the image, a flag, stairs, a white cement handrail, and trees border the soldiers. The mirroring is slightly ineffective, as the soldiers found in the last rows are not standing in as precise a fashion as those in the front rows. Typography's role in the cohesion is minimal, but it ought to be mentioned that the font style and colour

used for the image's title is the same as that used for the image's date. However, the location and font size for the verbal material is different. While the title is centred over the image, the date is tabbed to the right. The title's font size is roughly double the size of the date.

3.1.2.2.7.3.2 Framing

Framing, a measure of which elements are connected/disconnected and the extent to which those elements are severed or conjoined, plays a significant role in the overall appearance of this image. As the backgrounded soldiers are dressed in the same or very similar uniforms and the distance between the individuals is negligible, each member is undeniably connected to the group as a whole. In contrast, the two vacant steps behind the foregrounded soldiers frame those officers to some extent from their backgrounded subordinates. The assembly of officers is framed as a group by the two flags, the handrails, the trees, and the sky.

3.1.2.2.7.3.3 Salience

While salience may reflect the hierarchical importance of particular elements on a webpage, it does not necessarily provide a measure of the amount of time a visitor spends examining a particular element. The reason for this is that the factors within the umbrella term *salience* can compete for the visitor's attention. For example, with respect to the image in question, the group of soldiers is automatically the most salient component because of its size. However, the low level of detail and bland colours of the soldiers' uniforms collectively undermine the visual appeal of the group. After first viewing the soldiers, the visitor's attention is likely to be seized by the flags. In complete contrast to the pale beige of the uniforms, the flags are vibrantly coloured in pure shades of red, blue, and yellow. Their prominent position, size, and cultural significance also increase salience.

However, the flags' visual appeal also creates distance between the visitor and the image. Rather than being drawn into an emotive scene, the visitor is exposed to a series of emblems. Following the flags, I argue that the title *Promoción de Oficiales Asimilados N. 25 "G/D Robert Rafael Grant Castillo"* is the second-most salient element in the image. By situating the dark blue verbal text against the nearly white sky background, the text cannot be ignored, even if it's meaning is somewhat unclear.

3.1.2.2.7.3.4 Information Value

The final textual quality to be discussed is the information value. Figure 19 distinguishes the different value zones:



Figure 19

Promotion of Assimilated Officers (information value).

On the left side of the image, areas one and three contain information that is given or known. On the right side, areas two and four communicate new or not yet known details. The most noticeable distinction between the details found on the left and right is the type of flag. Specifically, the flag found on the left (given) is that of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, a cultural icon that is highly recognizable within and outside the borders of the country. In contrast, on the right (new) side of the photograph, we find the flag of

the Venezuelan Army. In all probability, that flag is less recognizable, and may be 'not yet known' to the visitor. The distinction between real and ideal is evinced by the main title found in the upper (ideal) section of the image (areas one and two) and the date found in the lower (real) section (areas three and four). While the upper title demonstrates the essence of the message, the concept of promotion, the lower text provides the practical and specific detail of the image's date. The final distinction in information value is the differentiation between items found in the centre of the image, as opposed to those found at the margins. In the central or nucleic area (number five), we find the promoted officers. However, as the officers are positioned a sizable distance from the eye of the camera, the most central officer is the soldier found in the centre of the first row. As previously discussed above, the central placement of the older, more experienced officers is not accidental. The soldiers who are situated outside of the group's centre are further marginalized by the lack of detail in their depiction.

3.1.2.2.8 Links

The majority of the links on ejercito.mil.ve can be found in zone four (menu I) and zone seven (menu II), however there are four links located above banner I. As discussed in section 2.3.2, the links on a homepage are intended to assist in the visitor's navigation of the website and offer a sample of what the connected webpages have to offer. According to Nielsen and Tahir (2002: 14 & 81), user-friendly homepages avoid redundant content and do not overwhelm their visitor with too many link choices. Ejercito.mil.ve violates Nielsen and Tahir's user-friendly directives. For example, as stated in the above descriptions of the welcome message and the assimilated officer's promotion news piece, there are various examples of

repeated content and redundant links. Figures 20-29 demonstrate the repeated links.

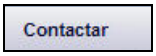


Figure 20

Contactar (Contact) link located above banner I.



Figure 21

Contactar (Contact) link located in menu I.



Figure 22

Buscar (Search) link located above banner I.



Figure 23

Buscar (Search) link located in menu I.

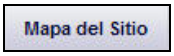


Figure 24

Mapa del Sitio (Website Map) link located above banner I.

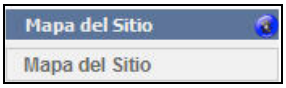


Figure 25

Mapa del Sitio (Website Map) link located in menu II.

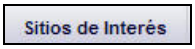


Figure 26

Sitios de Interés (Websites of interest) link above banner I.



Figure 27

Sitios de Interés, *Enlaces* (Websites of Interest, Links) link in menu II.



Figure 28

Reconversión Monetaria (Money Restructuring) link in menu I.



Figure 29

Reconversión Monetaria (Money Restructuring) pdf and flash presentation links found in zone five.

According to Crowston and Williams (1999: 4), most homepages offer their visitor approximately 40 links. As the number of links on ejercito.mil.ve totals 77 (including the repeated links), the visitor may feel overwhelmed by the quantity of choices. In addition to exposing the visitor to a deluge of linked webpages, the extensive menu choices clutter the visual space and lessen the importance of valuable links. For example, as argued by Nielsen (25 August 2003), a homepage must clearly communicate its purpose. To clarify the ejercito.mil.ve's purpose the website designer could have emphasized or elaborated on the *Misión* (Mission) link found near the top of menu I.

Additionally, to encourage the visitor to continue his or her visit on Venezuelan Military's website, s/he should be able to follow an "information scent" (Nielsen: 9 June 2008) and predict where a homepage link will lead. However, figures 30-34 exemplify links that are vague in their meaning. Their ambiguity may discourage the

visitor from clicking the link and continuing his/her voyage through the website.

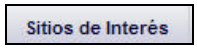


Figure 30

Sitios de Interés (Websites of interest) link above banner I.



Figure 31

Logístico (Logistics) link in menu I.



Figure 32

Descargas (Downloads) link in menu II.



Figure 33

Caja de Ahorros (Savings Box) in menu I.



Figure 34

SISA (undefined acronym) in menu I.

3.1.2.3 Conclusions

3.1.2.3.1 General Conclusions

At first glance, the placement of salient images throughout the webpage and a lack of lengthy verbal text allow ejercito.mil.ve to attract the attention of the visitor. Additionally, the repeated usage of Venezuela's national colours (red, blue, and yellow) provides a sense of nationalism and the comfort of familiarity to a Venezuelan visitor.

The repetitive employment of those colours also unites the website, creates cohesion, and imparts a uniformity across disparate zones. However, several aspects of the webpage's design jeopardize this homogeneity.

On ejercito.mil.ve, a visual estimation indicates that the visual and verbal content occupy about half of the visual space. The other half of the space is unutilized. While a website designer would not want to overwhelm the visitor with an overabundance of text and images, this elevated quantity of unused portions of the page suggest that the website may be inefficient in its exploitation of space and its communication of useful content.

Ejercito.mil.ve's inefficiencies are further accentuated by an asymmetrical design. The website's design is asymmetrical in three ways (figure 35).

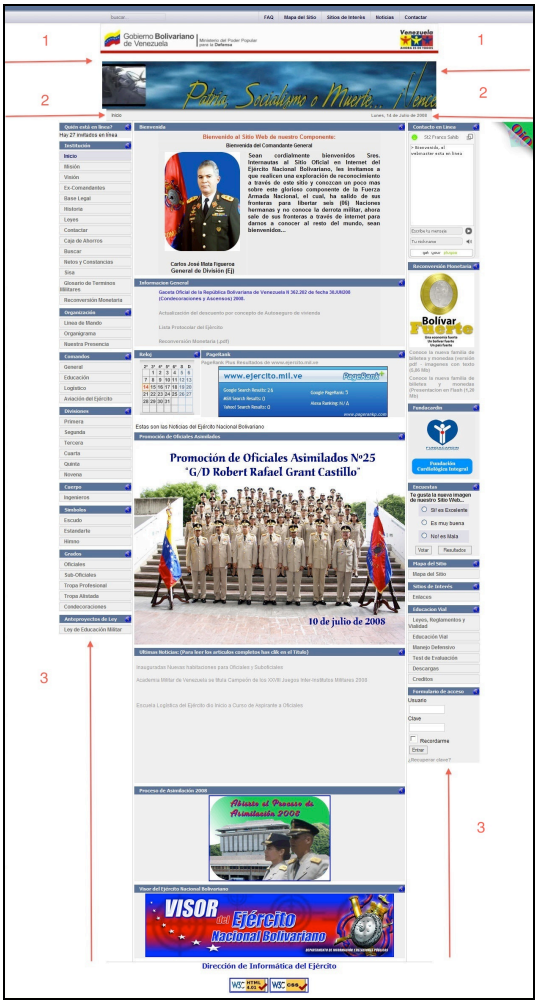


Figure 35

Asymmetrical design of ejercito.mil.ve.

Firstly, above zone one is a small menu offering a search button and links to frequently asked questions, a website map, interesting websites, news, and a means of contact (see figure 36 for an enlargement of this menu).



Figure 36

Upper menu above zone one.

The upper menu extends across the entire width of the webpage. However, the right and left edges of zones one and two do not reach the edge of the webpage. Secondly, between zones two and three is another small menu (figure 37). This menu presents the visitor with a link to the *Inicio* (home) and the date, *lunes el 14 de julio de 2008* (Monday, 14 July 2008). This menu meets neither the edge of zone two nor zone three.



Figure 37

Lower menu below zone two.

Thirdly, the lower vertical limit of zone four does not correspond with the lower vertical limit of zone seven (figure 38).



Figure 38

Lower limits of zones four and seven.

These discrepancies in design reflect negatively on the website as a whole as they create a jagged frame and convey a haphazard and

disorganized impression. This impression reflects negatively on the institution as a whole.

Visitor confidence in the institution is further undermined by the inconsistent use of font types. For example, see figures 39-44 below.



Figure 39

Font of *Gobierno Bolivariano de Venezuela* in zone one.



Figure 40

Font of *Patria, Socialismo o Muerte…¡Venceremos!* in zone two.



Figure 41

Font of *PageRank* in zone five.



Figure 42

Font of *Promoción de Oficiales Asimilados No. 25* in zone six.



Figure 43

Font of *Abierto el Proceso de Asimilación* in zone six.



Figure 44

Font of *Visor del Ejército Nacional Bolivariano* in zone six.

As figures 39-44 demonstrate, the uniformity of design that one might expect of an institutional website is absent. While a drastic change in font (style or size) may attract the eye of the visitor, the presence of multiple fonts implies an organizational irregularity.

With respect to the content found on ejercito.mil.ve, the amount of verbal material is limited and the text that is present lacks substance. For example, both the welcome message and the *Bolívar Fuerte* texts provide little practical information for the visitor and the repetition of titles in the welcome message and assimilated officer's promotion news piece further lessen the impact of the written text. The text accompanying the images is also insufficient. For example, the verbal material that accompanies the images of the assimilated officers' promotion, the commencement of the assimilation process, and the introduction of the *Bolívar Fuerte* do not add sufficient detail, nor do they clarify the events illustrated. The website, therefore relies on the visitor's resourcefulness in seeking further clarification. The verbal material present in these instances also tends to lack action words (figures 45-47).



Figure 45

'Assimilated Officer's Promotion'.



Figure 46

'*Bolívar Fuerte*. A strong economy. A strong bolívar. A strong country.'



Figure 47

'Opened Assimilation Process 2008'.

None of the texts denoted in figures 45-47 contains the active verbs that would assist the visitor in understanding and connecting with the content.

The above-mentioned inconsistencies in the design and content of Venezuelan military's homepage reflect poorly on the institution and adversely affect the visitor's overall experience. However, some of these negative features may be inconsequential when one examines their rank in the visitor's probable reading path.

3.1.2.3.2 The probable reading path

By way of a reading path, a website creator can organize the visual space in a hierarchical and sequential manner to expose the visitor to certain elements while simultaneously minimizing (or denying) access to other facets of the website. Therefore, a critical aspect of the conclusion includes a probable reading path for a website visitor.

According to Danesi (2002: 158), Duguay (in DeWitt and Strasma 1999: 15-16), and Knox (2007: 47) a visitor's reading path through a webpage is guided by the links present, whereas other authors (for example, Van Leeuwen in Norris and Jones 2005:82; and Chiew in O'Halloran 2004: 14) posit that salience steers the visitor toward critical elements.

As stated above in section 2.1.1.3.4 Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 210) argue that salience is the manner in which a component captures a visitor's attention. By and large, the size of images present (in contrast to the size of the webpage as a whole), the repeated use of Venezuela's national colours, and the inclusion of culturally significant messages (e.g./ the use of *¡Patria, socialismo o muerte!* and the repetition of the adjective *fuerte*) suggest that the visitor's most

plausible path is dictated by salience. Additionally, the diminished effectiveness of the links (as described above in section 2.3.2) also supports a salience-guided reading path.

The following proposed reading path is further limited by what can be physically viewed upon first opening the website. Indeed, the webpage is too vertically long to be seen in its entirety without scrolling. Figure 48 illustrates the visitor's most likely reading path. However, it should be noted that this sequence is by no means compulsory as the visitor is free to scroll up and down on the website to suit his or her own preference and interest.

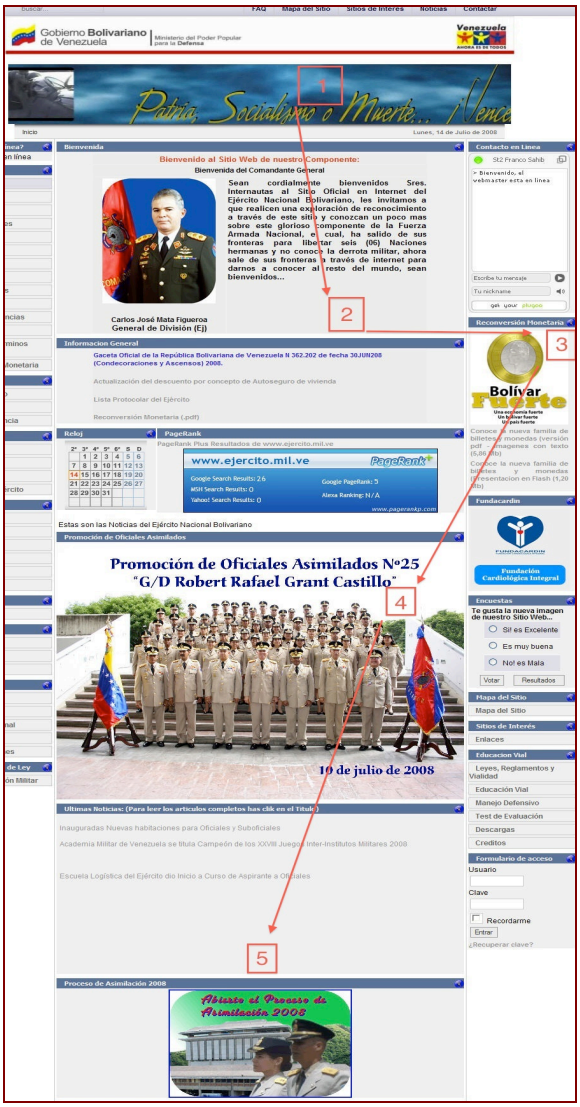


Figure 48

Reading path on ejercito.mil.ve.

Proposed reading path on ejercito.mil.ve:

1. Banner II
2. Welcome Message
3. *Bolívar Fuerte* advertisement
4. Assimilated Officers Promotion picture
5. Commencement of 2008 Assimilation Process

Finally, it is after viewing these images that the visitor may read the verbal text.

The above reading path capitalizes on the concept of rhythm in visual material. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 201), visual rhythm depends on the fusion of salient and non-salient features. Had the website only included highly noticeable and visually attractive components (and even less text), the visitors' eyes would have been overwhelmed and s/he would have been likely to exit the site entirely. However, by incorporating verbal text (of various levels of importance), the visitor's reading path becomes more apparent. Moreover, the notion of movement within a text is also present as salient texts and images encourage the visitor's eyes to sweep downwards from banner II at the top/centre of the webpage toward the welcome message and then to the *Bolívar Fuerte* advertisement. This directional movement follows a hierarchical pattern. Not only is the most emotive content found above-the-fold (the region first seen by the visitor upon opening the website) but the stirring impression yielded by banner II stimulates enough interest in the website to encourage the visitor to continue reading. Even though the *Ahora es de todos* icon in zone one is poignant, its size relative to the webpage as a whole reduces its impact. The most striking content not included

in the probable reading path is verbal material. With the exception of skimming through the welcome message, the lack of substantial verbal material and alternations in font type discourage the visitor from examining the written material.

This assessment concurs with that of Thurston (2004: 65), insofar as the eye of the reader is first attracted to the moving images of banner II and then to the still images of zones three, five, and six. The design of this webpage conflicts with Nielsen's (17 April 2006) prediction of an 'F' shaped reading path because the majority of the eye catching visual images are located in the centre or on the right side of the page (rather than the prototypical location on the left). A reverse 'F' shape, however, does coincide with the reading of this website. The reader's avoidance of engaging with verbose textual material also agrees with Nielsen's prediction. At this point, it is necessary to respond to Nielsen and Tahir's (2002: 19) claim that experienced website users acquire a 'banner blindness' and would ignore the visual images and verbal text included in banner II. While I agree with the theory of banner blindness, in reality, the content included in a banner may be too significant to ignore. For example, the inclusion of the phrase *Patria, Socialismo o Muerte ¡Venceremos!* is likely to elicit a response that is engaging enough to suppress banner blindness.

The above-mentioned reading path immediately exposes the visitor to a crucial feature of the Chávez government: the importance of socialism. Had the content of banner II been placed at the bottom of the webpage, below zone six, its impact would have gone unnoticed and been lost. The placement of General Mata Figueroa's photograph and welcome message directly below banner II's evocative content quickly satisfies the visitor's expectations of institutional conventionality. This sentiment is further supported by the stern quality of the assimilated officer's promotion photograph.

In so doing, one can interpret the design as stating 'Yes, the military is politicized, but it is still a serious institution, worthy of your respect.' Conspicuously absent from this website's homepage is any reference to President Chávez. Interestingly, this quality is atypical of the other Venezuelan websites to be examined in this thesis.

3.1.3 Homepage of the Venezuelan Government



Figure 49

Gobiernoenlinea.ve on 4 November 2007.

3.1.3.1 Zones



Figure 50

Zones of gobiernoenlinea.ve.

Zone one: Banner I

This zone is located in the upper-middle region of the webpage and displays a banner. The left side of the banner includes the image of a waving Venezuelan flag and the name of the webpage's overseeing government agency (the Bolivarian Government of Venezuela). On the right, one can find a logo of three human-like illustrations in shades of yellow, blue, and red along with the words *Venezuela Ahora es de todos* (Venezuela Now [Belongs to] Everyone). This banner is very similar to banner I on ejercito.mil.ve (see section 3.1.2.2.1).

Zone two: Banner II

Located directly below zone one is the webpage's second banner. On the left side of this banner is the image of the Venezuelan flag. Against the backgrounded flag is the name of the website, *Gobierno en Línea* (Government On Line), in underlined capital letters and the website address www.gob.ve. The website address letters *gob* are written in a bold font. To the right of the website name and address is a photograph of a stonewall fortification along a mountainous background. A thick red line frames the upper portion of banner II, separating it from banner I.

Zone three: Horizontal Menu

Zone three's horizontal menu can be found below zone two. The far left side of the menu contains a search box (*Buscar*). The word *Buscar* is written in capital letters and is tabbed to the right. *Buscar*'s lettering is white and it is written against a dark blue background.

To the right of the search box are several options. The uppermost portion of zone three contains financial news, including the current conversion rate from the Venezuelan *Bolívar* currency into American dollars and euros. The currency statistics are written in black typeset against a white background. Below the currency information are four links: *Regístrese* (Register), *Sugerencias* (Suggestions), *Enlaces*

(Links), and *Mapa del Sitio* (Website Map). The links are written in white capital letters against a dark blue background. Below those links is a large link to *Pensamientos de el Libertador Simón Bolívar* (The Liberator Simón Bolívar's Thoughts). Accompanying the link is an image of Simón Bolívar. The final features of this zone are two drop-down menus. As captured on 4 November 2007, the first option in the menu is *Efemérides* (Dates) and the second option heading is *Ir directo a* (Go directly to). *Efemérides* is written in black lettering against a pale yellow background, while the background of *Ir directo a* is pale blue.

Zone four: Vertical Menu

The fourth zone includes all menu items located in the column on the left side of the webpage. The menu headings are *Venezuela*, *Gobierno al Día* (Government By Day), *Alocuciones Presidenciales* (Presidential Discourse), *Noticias* (News), *Trámites* (Procedures), *Oficinas Virtuales* (Virtual Offices), and *Servicios* (Services). The News category (and its contents) is repeated 23 times.

Zone five: Featured News Item

In this zone is a featured news article. This section contains the article title *Gran marcha por SI toma Caracas este domingo* (Great March for YES takes Caracas this Sunday), the first sentence of the article, a link to further information, and an accompanying image. The photograph presents the image of a man wearing a red t-shirt that states *Chávez estamos contigo* (Chávez we're with you).

Zone six: News Titles

This zone contains links to 50 news articles that are categorized under the following headings: *Agrario* (Agriculture), *Ciencia y Tecnología* (Science and Technology), *Cultura* (Culture), *Derecho o*

Legislación (Rights or Legislation), *Economía* (Economy), *Infraestructura* (Infrastructure), *Internacional* (International), *Judicial* (Judicial), *Lluvias* (Rainfall), *Medios de Comunicación* (Communication Media), *Nacionales* (National), *Petróleo* (Petroleum), *Política* (Politics), *Seguridad* (Security), *Telecomunicaciones* (Telecommunications), *Trabajo* (Work), *Transporte* (Transport), and *Turismo* (Tourism).

Zone seven: Advertisements

The final zone is comprised of nine government-sponsored advertisements that are positioned along the right side of the webpage below zone three. The advertisements include: *Reforma Constitucional* (Constitutional Reform), *Debate Constitucional* (Constitutional Debate), *Constitución Ilustrada* (Illustrated Constitution), *Bolívar Fuerte –Conoce los nuevos billetes y monedas* (Bolívar Fuerte –Meet the new dollars and cents), *CNE -Poder Electoral* (National Election Council –Electoral Power), *Contra la Rubéola y Sindrome de Rubéola Congénita* (Fighting German Measles and the Congenital German Measles Syndrome), *Plan de desarrollo Económico y Social de la Nación 2007-2013* (Economic and Social Growth Plan 2007-2013), *III Feria Internacional del Libro de Venezuela* (3rd International Venezuelan Book Fair), and *Biblioteca Ayacucho Digital* (Ayacucho Digital Library).

3.1.3.2 Images & Texts to be reviewed

1. Banner II
2. Multimodal analysis of featured news item
3. Links

3.1.3.2.1 Banner II

The second banner (figure 51) contains the name of the website and an alternate website address.



Figure 51

Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II on 4 November 2007.

According to Nielsen and Tahir (2002: 15 & 91), the combination of capitalized and lowercased letters can yield a confusing effect on the visitor. Rather, the authors suggest that website designers use capitalization consistently. Additionally, the usage of white lettering against a backdrop that also contains the colour white may make the text less legible.

It warrants mentioning that in 2011, the second banner remained very similar to the version found in figure 51 insofar as the www.gob.ve address retains its prominent location in banner II. However, the address www.gob.ve currently transports the visitor to the website for the Peoples' Ministry for Science, Technology, and Inter-media Industries (rather than back to the government on-line website). The stonewall fortification found on the right of the banner is just one of many photographs of Venezuela that accompany the *GOBIERNO EN LINEA* website name and address (figures 52-67).

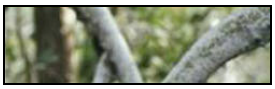


Figure 52

Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 28 January 2007.



Figure 53

Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 4 March 2007.



Figure 54

Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 11 March 2007.



Figure 55

Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 25 March 2007.



Figure 56

Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 14 April 2007.



Figure 57

Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 22 April 2007.



Figure 58

Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 6 May 2007.



Figure 59

Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 13 May 2007.



Figure 60

Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 19 May 2007.



Figure 61

Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 13 January 2008.



Figure 62

Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 10 February 2008.



Figure 63

Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 10 August 2008.



Figure 64

Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 16 November 2008.



Figure 65

Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 28 April 2008.



Figure 66

Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 11 May 2008.

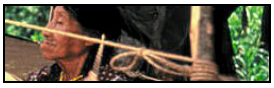


Figure 67

Gobiernoenlinea.ve banner II photograph section on 15 February 2009.

It is notable that none of the images found in figures 52-67 bears a title or description of the object(s) portrayed. Only the image of Angel Falls (figure 65) is potentially recognizable to an international visitor. The other photographs, on the other hand, are likely to be only familiar to Venezuelans. The inclusion of images of both the rural and urban, of local flora and fauna, and of the Venezuela's aboriginal heritage (figure 67) encourage a sense of belonging and a symbolic familiarity between the visitor and the webpage. The government (and its on-line resources), in this case, signifies not only a resource for the rich and urban, but also for the poor and rural, a common focus of the Chávez government (see sections 3.1.1.5.1 and 3.1.1.5.2 for a description of the president's measures to improve the lives of the poor). The inclusion of those who had historically been excluded from political activity (Ali 2006: 26) is also demonstrated in zone five which features a man of colour in its accompanying photograph.

3.1.3.2.2 A Multimodal Analysis of the Featured News Item

The featured news article section warrants a multimodal analysis as it contains both the largest photograph and lengthiest verbal text on gobiernoenlinea.ve (figure 68).



Figure 68

Featured news item *Gran marcha por el SI toma Caracas este domingo* (Great March for YES takes Caracas this Sunday).

On the left side of zone five is a photograph of the torso of a man wearing a red t-shirt. In white lettering and capital letters, the t-shirt states *CHAVEZ ESTAMOS CONTIGO* (Chávez [we] are with you). Other men are visible in the background of the picture, but none is clearly visible. To the right of the image is the article title *Gran marcha por el SI toma Caracas este domingo*. The first sentence of the article is also visible. It states *Este domingo desde las 09:00 de la mañana, se realizará la Gran Marcha por el SI, que partirá desde el Parque del Este hasta la avenida Bolívar, en el centro de la ciudad de Caracas* (This Sunday at 9:00am, the Great YES March will take place, [the march] will depart from the East Park toward Bolívar Avenue, in downtown Caracas). Below the article's extract is a link to *+ información* (more information). The featured news article explains neither the objective of the YES March nor the reasons for which 'we are with Chávez'. The *sí* is in reference to an upcoming constitutional reform vote to take place on 2 December 2007 that would, amongst other

proposed changes, increase the presidential term from six to seven years and remove presidential term limits (Prensa Latina: 16 July 2007 and 2 September 2007; El Nuevo Herald: 23 October 2007; The Economist: 1 November 2007).

3.1.3.2.2.1 The Ideational Metafunction

3.1.3.2.2.1.1 Vectors

While eye-lines are the most common purveyors of vectors and Chouliaraki (2006: 268-269) argued that moving objects could also create vectors, it is difficult to establish that a sedentary object, such as the t-shirt, can create a vector. However, the salience of the t-shirt (and its message) creates a nearly tangible connection between the image and the image viewer.

While the lack of clearly identifiable vectors in the photograph severs connections between the visitor and the represented participant, the emotive quality of the t-shirt's message mitigates that detachment. With respect to the image at hand, it is difficult to determine if there is evidence of a direct address between the participant and the image visitor. However, again, the t-shirt's verbal message establishes unity between the t-shirt wearer and the image visitor.

3.1.3.2.2.1.2 Roles, Processes, and Circumstances

It is impossible to determine the types of processes depicted as the faces of the activists are either absent from the picture or are too blurry to decipher. The circumstance of location appears to be outdoors, possibly in a street. This setting coincides well with the objective of the article. It is tempting to state that the photograph was taken along the march's route; but one must note that the image appeared before the march took place. Therefore, it is difficult to determine both the exact location and the time at which the

photograph was captured. With the exception of the t-shirt, there do not appear to be any circumstances of manner, such as signs or demonstration placards. The circumstances of accompaniment include the figures of four other marchers in the background.

3.1.3.2.2.1.3 Classificational, Analytical, and Symbolic Structures

The taxonomical relationship between the represented participant and the visitor is one of equality. In addition to the first-person-plural conjugation of the verb *estar*, the informal pronoun *contigo* (with you) indicates a casual relationship between the t-shirt wearer (and by extension the photograph viewer) and the intended message receiver, President Chávez.

With respect to the analytical structures, the carrier is the man wearing the red t-shirt and the possessive attributes are the colour of the shirt and the shirt's verbal message. The temporal structure of the image is puzzling, as the march had yet to occur, yet it already featured a photograph.

Regarding the symbolic structures, the colour of the t-shirt is significant. A facet of President Chávez's 'red revolution' (Bravo: 22 August 2008), the use of the colour red is a recognizable and important aspect of the burgeoning political movement (The Economist: 11 October 2007; Otis: 16 June 2007; BBC Mundo: 27 November 2006; Forero: 1 December 2006; Telesurtv.net: 4 December 2006).

3.1.3.2.2.2 The Interpersonal Metafunction

3.1.3.2.2.2.1 Perspective

3.1.3.2.2.2.1.1 Shot Type

With respect to the perspective, the image is a close shot as only the torso of the t-shirt wearer is visible. The nearness of the camera to the represented participant suggests a close social familiarity.

However, it is notable that this bond is abated by the absence of the represented participant's head. The backgrounded location of the other activists also lessens the image's degree of intimacy. However, their presence confirms that the t-shirt wearer is not alone in his convictions and thereby contributes a degree of authenticity and importance to the march.

3.1.3.2.2.2.1.2 Vertical and Horizontal Angles

The level of affinity established by the closeness of the shot is enhanced by the nearly eye-level vertical angle. While it is likely that the photographer had to lower the camera and shoot from a slightly higher angle in order to maintain the represented participant's anonymity, the shot retains the sense of equality common to eye-level images. It is interesting that while the t-shirt's message purports a unified approach, it is impossible to determine the identity of the 'we' in question. The march's message may have been more transparently illustrated by a panoramic image of a large group of activists dressed in red.

However, an alternate interpretation of the image yields the notion that the exact identity of the t-shirt wearer is inconsequential. The masked details of his face and the absence of his name symbolically allow the website visitor to imagine his or her face in the photograph, thereby extending the understanding of 'we' and including the visitor in the purpose and success of the march.

As the main activist is standing directly in front of the camera, the horizontal angle is frontal and the image retains an objective approach. Additionally the slight angle of the activist's shoulders lend a feeling of movement to the image, thereby giving the image an 'action shot' quality.

3.1.3.2.2.2.2 Modality

3.1.3.2.2.2.2.1 Detail

The first facet of the image's modality to be assessed is the level of detail. The amount of detail visible (and by extension the image's modality) in this image is mixed. The torso of the activist is highly detailed as one can discern his skin colour and even detect veins in his arms. However, his face and the rest of his body are outside the margins of the photograph. The background of the image is also a fusion of details (three men are visible) and obscurity as the identities of the men and the location of the image are unidentifiable. The variation in detail generates an image that is salient but does not encourage the visitor to spend time viewing the information that is outside the t-shirt's verbal message.

3.1.3.2.2.2.2.2 Colour

An assessment of modality also includes a description of the colours present. As was mentioned above, the presence of the colour red is not accidental. In addition to the political significance of the colour red, according to Kandinsky (2006: 79) the use of red can be very striking in that it can instill feelings of "strength, vigor, determination, and triumph." Kandinsky equates the use of red to the inclusion of a trumpet in a musical composition insofar as its sound can be "strong, harsh, and ringing." With respect to the image in question, the red colour of the activist's t-shirt attracts and maintains the eyes of the visitor. Furthermore, as the backgrounded elements are unfocused and the second-most prevalent colour in the image is the grey-tone of the cement street, the red t-shirt has no competition for salience. If, for example, the background included brightly colored placards or signs, those items would have tempted the visitor's eyes away from the t-shirt.

The purity of the colour red is high, indicating a clear choice or obviousness with respect to the political message. However, the purity and saturation of the backgrounded colours are low. This lack of discernable colour again focuses the eyes of the visitor on the *Chávez estamos contigo* message. The combination of a culturally recognizable hue and the generalized emotive effect of the colour red increase the modality of the image.

3.1.3.2.2.2.3 Lighting, Illumination, and Clarity

The lighting in the image is uniform and it appears to be naturalistic. While there is an absence of verifiable sunshine, the scene is lit sufficiently to emphasize the words on the activist's t-shirt. Indeed, the message is so bright it almost appears to radiate against its red background. The lack of focused lighting outside of the t-shirt indicates that the focal point of the image is the t-shirt's colour and message. The elements in the surrounding area are intentionally backgrounded so as not to distract the visitor from the t-shirt.

3.1.3.2.2.2.4 Contextualization

With the exception of perhaps taking place on a busy street, the image's contextualization is indefinite. The decontextualized nature does not detract from the zone's objectives as the exact location of the march is delineated by the article's brief introduction. Furthermore, the unspecific background allows visitors from any part of Venezuela to feel included in the march's purpose.

3.1.3.2.2.3 The Textual Metafunction

3.1.3.2.2.3.1 Coherence and Cohesion

As the photograph acts as an illustration for the verbal text of the featured news item, it is necessary to examine the coherence of the two parallel modes. The pro-Chávez implication found on the t-shirt mirrors particular elements of the article excerpt. For example, the

title's placement of the adjective *gran* before the modified noun *marcha* alters the most common meaning of *gran* (or *grande*), or 'big'. By moving the adjective from its prototypical location after the noun to a position in front of the verb, it translates into 'great'. A 'great' march is indeed distinct from a 'big' march insofar as a 'great' march denotes a sense of fervent support, while also acknowledging the degree of attendance. Similarly, it is difficult to imagine a 'great march' that is attended by only a small handful of activists. Without viewing the photograph, the usage of the adjective *gran* elucidates the article's (and by extension the website's, the government's, and the public's) positive position on the issue of constitutional reform. The capitalization of the word *sí* (yes) emphasizes the magnitude of the reform movement. The capitalization also underscores the government's dedication to reform.

Another facet of the title that coheres with the image's contents is the verb *tomar*. Meaning 'to take', the march is essentially 'taking Caracas' (or taking over Caracas). The title would have lost some of its vigor had it simply stated *Gran marcha por el SÍ pasa en Caracas este domingo* (Great march *occurs* in Caracas this Sunday). While the information contained in the article's title and excerpt cohere with the image, the sheer size and salience of the t-shirt (and its verbal message) visually overshadow the accompanying verbal text.

A coherent message is one that provides a link between wording (or design) and the surrounding social and/or cultural environment. An aspect of the featured news item at least superficially violates coherence is the lack of detail regarding to what one should be saying *sí* to**.** Precise instructions for the visitor to vote 'yes' in the upcoming constitutional referendum are demonstrably absent from the website. This lack of detail indicates a degree of familiarity and shared knowledge between the visitor and the

website producer. Essentially, the Venezuelan national would not need any further explanation.

Similarly, it is left unsaid why the photographed man is 'with' Chávez. Moreover, information regarding the implications of a majority *sí* vote are also missing from the homepage. For the visitor to access such details, s/he would have to click on the *Reforma Constitucional* (Constitutional Reform) or *Debate Constitucional* (Constitutional Debate) advertisements that are located to the right of zone five. Essentially, this lack of detail can be interpreted in two ways. First, as the vote was a well-publicized event, it may be assumed that the visitor had previous knowledge regarding the upcoming referendum and that the inclusion of extra details would be redundant. Second, one can view the scarcity of information as a strategy to undermine the opposition by neglecting to acknowledge the merits of the no-campaign.

Cohesive aspects within the featured news section include typography as the *Chávez estamos contigo* text shares a font type with that of the accompanying article. By the same token, the capitalization of *sí* connects that 'yes' to the t-shirt's capitalized statement. Additionally, the trail of red hyphens leading from the left side of the image to the *+ información* link (figure 69), which is written in the same red tone, visually connect the image to the article.



Figure 69

+ información (more information) link below featured news article.

3.1.3.2.2.3.2 Framing

Framing in zone five is tripartite: the framing of the image, the framing of the title/article excerpt, and the framing of the entire zone. The framing of the photograph is limited to the edges of the image, as

there does not appear to be an imposed border around the photo. Within the photo, the bright red t-shirt frames the verbal message. Similarly, the material of the t-shirt effectively frames the main activist from the backgrounded activists. However, due to the ordinary nature of their clothing, the presence of the other activists does not significantly disconnect the t-shirt from the background. For example, had police dressed in riot gear framed the t-shit wearer, the message would have garnered a different interpretation.

The article's title is framed from the article excerpt by white space. Zone six is separated from the article excerpt by two frames. The first division is the line of red hyphens and the word *+ información*. The second division is a vast area of unutilized white space. Zone five is framed from the surrounding zones on the left, right, and upper areas by a slim white border. As stated above, the bottom of the picture and featured article excerpt are separated from the rest of the news headlines by a large white space. A thin blue line that surrounds all of zone six further frames the article headings in that zone. While zone five is framed from the rest of the webpage, the colour of the t-shirt and the colour of the article title and excerpt are mirrored throughout gobiernoenlinea.ve. The coherent use of colour and font style/colour allows the image and text to be well integrated into the webpage.

3.1.3.2.2.3.3 Salience

With respect to salience, the most striking element in the featured news items area is the red t-shirt and its message. As discussed by Nielsen (6 May 2008), internet users tend to scan webpages rather than read texts thoroughly. This habit implies that visitors to this webpage are more likely to notice and thereby be impacted by the t-shirt's concise and eye-catching message than by the details regarding the march's location and schedule.

3.1.3.2.2.3.4. Information Value

It is possible to divide the featured news article area into the following information value zones (figure 70):



Figure 70

Information value of feature news item.

It is interesting that the photograph is found on the left side of the featured news section, the area that commonly denotes given or known information. As such, the sentiment behind the t-shirt's message may be interpreted as something that is ubiquitously understood, as though solidarity with the president is a *fait accompli*. Conversely, the details found on the right side communicate new information. This assessment is logical, as the location and time of the march can be found in this quadrant. The boundary between ideal details (in the upper areas) and real details (in the lower areas) can most distinctly be drawn between zones two and four. For example, the 'ideal' is expressed by the use of the adjective *gran*, the capitalization of *SÍ* and the emphatic use of the verb *tomar*. Alternatively, the article excerpt includes only the repetition of event's name, *Gran Marcha por el Sí* (the word 'yes' is not capitalized in this instance), the location, and the departure time. It is difficult to discern a distinction between central (zone five) and the surrounding peripheral information. However, in this case, the most salient information is found on the left.

3.1.3.2.3 Links

The majority of the links on gobiernoenlinea.ve can be found in zones four and seven, however each of the article titles in zone six is a link to the corresponding complete version of the article. As stated above in section 2.3.2, according to Nielsen and Tahir (2002: 14 & 81), redundant content and an overwhelming amount of links reflect poorly on the website (and its represented institution) and limit the visitors' enjoyment and utilization of the page. Reminiscent of ejercito.mil.ve, the Venezuelan government's on-line information webpage violates Nielsen and Tahir's instructions, as there is a significant amount of unnecessarily repeated material (figure 71).



Figure 71

Repetition of *Noticias* (News), *Actualidad* (Current Events), and *Giras Presidenciales*

(Presidential Tours) links.

Furthermore, the sheer quantity of links available on the homepage, 135, is far beyond the ideal maximum of 40 links per page (Crowston and Williams 1999: 4). Again, similar to the vast number of links on ejercito.mil.ve, too many links distract the visitor and draw attention away from items of significance. For example, the *Noticias* and *Actualidad* links are repeated 24 times along the vertical link menu in zone four. The *Giras Presidenciales* link is repeated 23 times in the same zone. While this repetition is likely to be caused by a technical error, its presence reflects poorly on the website. A similar repetition can be found on the opposing side of the webpage in zone seven (figure 72).

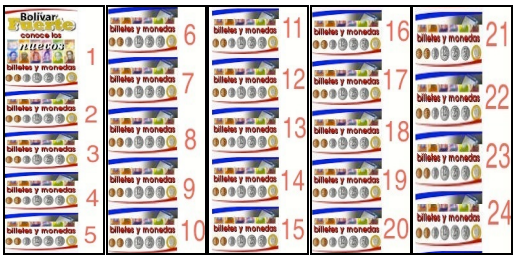


Figure 72

Repetition of *billetes y monedas* (bills and coins) link.

The advertisement regarding the induction of the new currency, the *Bolívar Fuerte* appears 24 times on the left side of the webpage. Again, while a technical glitch is the likely source of the advertisement's repetition, the visitor is likely to have not only noticed the error, but to have been confused by or frustrated in response. Including the repeated *Noticias* and *billetes y monedas*, there are 230 links available to the visitor on gobiernoenlinea.ve.

While they are certainly less obvious than the repeated links found in figures 71 and 72, there are other redundancies on the

webpage that reduce the page's impact. For example, near the top of zone four one can find a link to *Turismo* (Tourism) (figure 73):



Figure 73

Link to *Turismo* (tourism) in zone four.

A link to tourism can also be found at the bottom of zone six (figure 74).



Figure 74

Link to *Turismo* (tourism) in zone six.

By clicking on that link, the visitor is transported to a webpage that describes in some detail general information regarding tourism in Venezuela. Similarly, at the bottom of zone seven is a link to the *Ministro del Poder Popular para el Turismo* (People's Ministry for Tourism). This link is a moving image slide show featuring photographs of Venezuela. On 4 November 2007 (at the time of the website capture) the image was of a large bridge at sunset (figure 75).



Figure 75

Ministry of Tourism link (bridge at sunset).

Every four seconds the image changes and following the loop of four images, the emblem of the Ministry appears (figure 76).



Figure 76

Ministry of Tourism logo.

It is puzzling why the rather plain tourism link in zone four is positioned in a highly noticeable location, while the more eye-catching moving image display is located near the bottom of the webpage, an area that is unlikely to be seen by the visitor.

Other redundancies include the *Plan de Desarrollo* (Growth Plan) link in zone four (figure 77) and the *Plan de Desarrollo Económico y Social de la Nación 2007-2013* (Economic and Social Growth Plan for 2007-2013) in zone seven (figure 78).



Figure 77

Plan de Desarrollo (Growth Plan) link.



Figure 78

Plan de Desarrollo Económico y Social de la Nación 2007-2013 (Economic and Social Growth Plan for 2007-2013) link.

While the *Plan de Desarrollo* link takes the visitor to a webpage that presents bullet-point objectives and sub-objectives of the growth plan, the *Plan de Desarrollo Económico y Social de la Nación 2007-2013* advertisement links the visitor to a 52 page document that describes the growth plan at length. As a link to the lengthier document is not present on the bullet-pointed webpage, it is unclear whether that page does justice to the exhaustive plan.

The final example of redundant links on gobiernoenlinea.ve appears in zones four and seven. In zone four, the visitor can find a link to *Noticias* (News), as stated above, this link appears 24 times along the left side of the page (figure 79). Clicking on that link takes the visitor to a page that displays multiple news headlines (and their related links).



Figure 79

Noticias (News) link.

In the same zone, the visitor can also click on the *Resumen del día* (Day's Summary) link (figure 80). Clicking on that link provides the visitor with access to even more news items. These items are organized under headings that are similar to those in zone six.



Figure 80

Resumen del día (Day's Summary) link.

Finally, in zone six (figure 81) the visitor is inundated with links to 19 news headings (that also transport the visitor to their related news stories), which contain 50 news stories.



Figure 81

News headings and article titles in zone six.

The news headings that appear in this section relate information about various topics. Indeed, the physical size of zone six indicates that the majority of the gobiernoenlinea.ve homepage is devoted to communicating the news.

Other link issues on this homepage include the links whose names do not indicate what the visitor will find post-click. For example, figures 82-95 illustrate links whose objectives are vague. Similarly, figures 91-94 illustrate links whose names are undefined acronyms. According to Nielsen and Tahir (2002: 15), all abbreviations and acronyms should be avoided unless they are spelled out for clarification. In the cases below, none of the acronyms had previously been clarified. Lastly, it should be noted that the link entitled *regístrese* (figure 95) does not articulate the purpose or

benefit of registering with the website. As Nielsen (2001) argues, the value of registering must be made clear by the website. Finally, according to Nielsen and Tahir (2002: 77) there is no need for a clickable home tab (figure 96) on the homepage, as it will only serve to re-load the page. If the visitor hopes to find updated information, s/he is more likely to use the browser's re-load button.



Figure 82

Análisis (Analysis) link in zone four.



Figure 83

Estadísticas (Statistics) link in zone four.

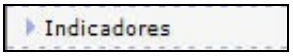


Figure 84

Indicadores (Indicators) link in zone four.



Figure 85

Eventos (Events) link in zone four.



Figure 86

Documentos (Documents) link in zone four.



Figure 87

Trámites (Procedures) link in zone four.



Figure 88

Videos (Videos) link in zone four.



Figure 89

Visitas Virtuales (Virtual Visits) link in zone four.



Figure 90

Enlaces (Links) link in zone three.



Figure 91

Cadivi-Divisas (Administrative Commission for Currency) link in zone four.



Figure 92

IVSS (Venezuelan Institute for Social Security) link in zone four.



Figure 93

Onidex (National Office for Identification and Immigration) link in zone four.



Figure 94

Seniat (Integrated National Service of Administration, Customs and Taxes) link in zone four.



Figure 95

Regístrese (Register Yourself) link in zone three.



Figure 96

Clickable homepage banner in zone two.

It is also interesting to note that a number of links on the homepage publicize information that is useful only to those who live in the Venezuelan capital. For example, in zone four the link to *Electricidad* (Electricity) conveys information regarding the acquisition of electricity services in Caracas; *Hidrocapital* in the same zone provides details about water utilities in the capital city. Similarly, five news articles[91] in zone six describe events in the capital. The focus on Caracas contrasts with the assumption that a generalized government website should provide information that is useful to citizens across the nation. Furthermore, the urban focus also diverges from the images found in figures 52-67 that illustrate scenes from both urban and rural regions.

[91] The articles that specifically detail events taking place in Caracas are: *Gran Marcha por SI toma Caracas este domingo* (Great March for YES takes Caracas this Sunday); *Funvisis desarrolla microzonificación sísmica en el Distrito Capital* (Venezuelan Foundation for Seismic Investigations develops seismic microzonification [plan]); *Reestablecidas estaciones Sabana Grande y Chacaito del Metro de Caracas* (Caracas Metro stations Sabana Grande and Chacaito reopen). The latter article title is repeated in both the *Infraestructura* (Infrastructure) and *Transporte* (Transport) sections of zone six.

3.1.3.3 Conclusions

3.1.3.3.1 General Conclusions

It is necessary to approach an evaluation of the Venezuelan government's information website by primarily focusing on the content that is above-the-fold. This is because the details that appear below-the-fold are less likely to attract the attention of the visitor. Figure 97 divides the page into what is above and below-the-fold:



Figure 97

Gobiernoenlinea.ve: Content Above-the-Fold and Below-the-Fold.

The details found in the lower portion of the webpage are limited to repeated information (including the multiple *Noticias*, *Actualidad*, *Giras Presidenciales*, and *Bolívar Fuerte* links), 18 news headings, and 50 news article titles. The most significant details found above the fold include the *Venezuela Ahora es de Todos* (Venezuela now [belongs] to everyone) icon found in zone one on the far right (see section 3.1.2.2.1 for a description of this icon); the *Chávez Estamos Contigo* photograph and the textual segment of the featured news article in zone five; the photograph of President Chávez in the *Reforma Constitucional* (Constitutional Reform) advertisement at the top of zone seven; the *Pensamientos de El* Libertador (The Liberator's Thoughts) link in zone three; and the links to *Motores Constituyentes* (Constituent Motors).

As an unveiled demonstration of the president's political allegiance, the featured news articles that appeared in zone five in 2007 consistently contained socialist and revolutionary content (figures 98-108). To enrich the visual impact of the photographs, many images (figures 98, 99, and 103-108) feature the colour red, a known reference to the socialist revolution. Additionally, the nearly obligatory presence of President Chávez in the photograph and/or his name within the accompanying article excerpt emphasizes his pivotal role in the revolutionary process. The content in zone five is, therefore, the first indication that gobiernoenlinea.ve's purpose is not limited to simply providing the citizenry with access to government forms and contact information.



Figure 98

Featured news article on 1 February 2007.

This article describes President Chávez's signing of a decree that promotes the Habilitating Law. Within the article's excerpt, the text reads: "With a red inked pen Hugo Chávez Frías signs…."



Figure 99

Featured news article on 4 March 2007.

The article excerpt states: “The swearing in of brigadiers took place in the Teresa Carreño Cultural Theatre Complex, under the motto “In the direction of the third motor’s consolidation: Education with Socialist Values”.



Figure 100

Featured news article on 18 March 2007.

Article title is “President Chávez: Our socialism is democracy”



Figure 101

Featured news article on 20 March 2007.

This article comments on improvements made to the Caracas metro system. The text of the article states ‘President Chávez shows that the revolutionary government is emphasizing the use of mass transit due to the lower cost and decrease in environmental contamination “With this we are constructing socialism”….



Figure 102

Featured news article on 25 March 2007.

Article title is “President Chávez urges Venezuelan women to announce [their] socialist morals”



Figure 103

Featured news article on 28 March 2007.

The article title is “President Chávez: We are going to fill the country with ideas, with intelligence, with capacity and culture.” The article excerpt states ‘In edition 279 of *Aló Presidente*, the national leader also warned of attacks, that in his opinion have raged in the last few days against Venezuela and especially against the Bolviarian Revolution…’



Figure 104

Featured news article on 22 April 2007.

The article is “Communal Councils are the fundamental building block of revolutionary democracy and truth.” The article excerpt states “State institutions must connect themselves with the fifth motor.

Communal Councils must perform complete diagnoses. They must transform from capitalism to socialism…'



Figure 105

Featured news article on 6 May 2007.

The article title is "Productive companies are the basis of socialist construction in the twenty-first century".



Figure 106

Featured news article on 17 June 2007.

The article's title is 'President Hugo Chávez inaugurated the Florentino Productive Socialist Centre in Barinas'.



Figure 107

Featured news article on 13 September 2007.

This article honours youth who were given certificates for their roles in the *Misión Vuelvan Caras Jóvenes* and *Misión Robinson*. The article excerpt describes the young people as "ready to work in the strengthening of the socio-productive and socialist vision"



Figure 108

Featured news article on 24 November 2007.

The article title is "Approval of the reform that guarantees the irreversibility of the Bolivarian Revolution." The article excerpt states "The president of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez Frías assures that the approval of the Constitutional Reform project will guarantee the 'irreversibility of the changes and advances reached by the Bolivarian revolutionary process."

To the immediate right of the featured news article and photograph in zone five is an advertisement/link entitled *Reforma Constitucional* (figure 109).



Figure 109

Reforma Constitucional (Constitutional Reform) advertisement in zone seven.

The placement of this advertisement is logical, as it complements the featured news article. Within the image, one can see a formally

dressed President Chávez draped in Venezuela's tricoloured sash speaking at a microphone. On the left side of the image is a copy of the Venezuelan constitution. By way of the president's facial expression and the placement of the constitution, one can interpret that Chávez was reading the constitution or citing a segment of the document during a speech. The national colours red, yellow, and blue are repeated on the constitution's cover page. The colour blue can also be found in the background behind the book. The colour red is repeated in the image's borders. While the text on the constitution's cover page is too blurry to read, the words *Reforma Constitucional* (Constitutional Reform) are superimposed in bold white lettering over part of the constitution and Chávez's chest. The inclusion of the President's image is significant as it is not entirely essential. His presence begs one to question why the president's photograph is pivotal in the *Reforma Constitucional* advertisement, but is conspicuously absent in the neighbouring *Debate Constitucional* (Constitutional Debate) advertisement (figure 110).



Figure 110

Reforma Constitucional (Constitutional Reform) and *Debate Constitucional* (Constitutional Debate) advertisements in zone seven.

Semantically, it is peculiar for the reform to be personified by the president, while the debate's image lacks an illustration of the debaters. However, their prominent location, the use of national colours, and the presence of the Venezuelan constitution in both

images imbue coherence and emphasize the importance of the impending constitutional change. The gravity of the constitutional reform is further emphasized by an advert for the *Constitución Ilustrada* (Illustrated Constitution) (figure 111).



Figure 111

Constitución Ilustrada (Illustrated Constitution) advertisement in zone seven.

As the fourth reference to the upcoming constitutional reform, the illustrated constitution, which features a drawing of Simón Bolívar, foreseeably provides a means for adults to demonstrate to children the document's importance. Providing access to this link could act as a catalyst for discussing the upcoming reform with the next generation of voters.

The size, prominent location, use of national colours, and capital letters instill the *Pensamientos de El Libertador* link (figure 112) with great importance.



Figure 112

Pensamientos de El Libertador Simón Bolívar (Thoughts of The Liberator
Simón Bolívar) link in zone three.

However, upon clicking on that link, the visitor is provided with only a pop-up window that contains a quotation by Bolívar. Grammatically, the use of *de El* is distinct as the words *de* (of) and *el*

(the) are contracted in standard Spanish into *del* (of the) to facilitate pronunciation. However, the separation of the *de* and *el* (which is further distinguished by the capitalization of the *El*) elevates the importance of the definite article and thereby distinguishes Bolívar from being *any* liberator into being *the* liberator. Furthermore, the capitalization imbues Bolívar with an official title or nomenclature. The placement of this link in the upper-central area of the webpage underscores the magnitude of this man's actions on the history and future of the nation.

In addition to the Thoughts of The Liberator, the presence of Bolívar in both name and physical likeness is repeated seven more times on the gobiernoenlinea.ve website (figures 113-119).



Figure 113

Banner I in zone one designates the *Gobierno Bolivariano de Venezuela* (Bolivarian Government of Venezuela) as the administrative body that oversees this webpage.



Figure 114

A link in zone four's menu encourages the visitor to learn more about the government's *Logros Bolivarianos* (Bolivarian achievements).

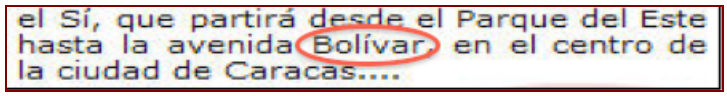


Figure 115

The article excerpt from the featured news article in zone five communicates that the *Sí* march will head towards *avenida Bolívar* (Bolívar Avenue) in downtown

Caracas.

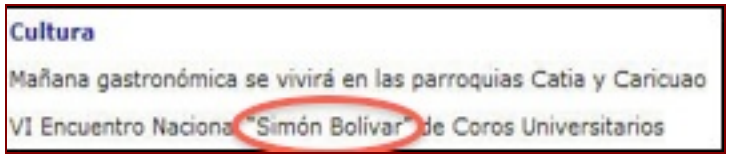


Figure 116

An article title in zone six names the sixth national gathering of the university choirs as the "Simón Bolívar" meeting.

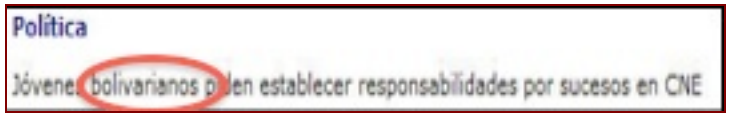


Figure 117

A second article in zone six states that Bolivarian youth are asking for responsibility to be taken for events that transpired at the National Electoral Council.



Figure 118

A hand drawn image of Bolívar illustrates an advertisement for a link to the

Constitución Ilustrada (Illustrated Constitution) in zone seven.



Figure 119

An advertisement for the new currency, the *Bolívar Fuerte* (Strong Bolívar) appears in zone three.

Six out of the eight appearances of Bolívar on gobiernoenlinea.ve can be seen above the fold.

The salient location of the *Motores Constituyentes* link (figure 120) encourages the website visitor to continue his/her journey through the website and to view a crucial part of the Chávez socialist revolution.



Figure 120

Motores Constituyentes (Constitutional Motors) link at the top of zone four.

If the visitor clicked on that link in November 2007, s/he was taken to a webpage hosted by the People's Ministry of Communication and Information. That webpage displayed the image found below in figure 121:



Figure 121

Motores Constituyentes (Constitutional Motors) webpage.

The five motors, which are uniformly arranged around the points of a star[92], denote the methods[93] by which Venezuela is moving in the direction of socialist governance. It is interesting that the order of the motors and the direction of the star's internal arrows are counter-clockwise, moving the visitors' eyes to the left, rather than to the right. Beneath the star image is a citation by Hugo Chávez which states "The National Simón Bolívar project's great transformative lines in the political, social, economic, military, territorial, international and ethic [realms]: five great motors [we will use] to transport [us towards] locomotive victories." While the *Motores Constituyentes* link is less visually noticeable than the *Rumbo al Socialismo Bolivariano* advertisement (figure 122) that was present in zone seven on the gobiernoenlinea.ve website on 13 September 2007, it's upper-left location lends credibility and importance to the link and to the five motors.



Figure 122

Rumbo al Socialismo Bolivariano (Moving towards Bolivarian Socialism) advertisement present on gobiernonelinea.ve (13 September 2007).

[92] The symbol of the star is itself an ideologically significant icon that is commonly used as a symbol of communism (Liungman 1995: 326).

[93] The first motor, entitled 'Habilitating Law' and states '[A] direct means towards socialism'; the second motor, 'Constitutional Reform' is the state of socialist rights; the third motor, 'Moral and Lights' is education with socialist values; the fourth is 'The New Geometry of Power', a socialist reordering of the nation's geopolitics; finally, the fifth motor is the 'Explosion of Communal Power', a leading revolutionary socialist democracy!'

It is interesting to note that the majority of the space used on gobiernoenlinea.ve is not dedicated to generalized government information and documents, but to news items. The expansiveness of zones five and six indicates that this website is predominantly a means of communicating governmental news. Out of the 51 news articles posted on the homepage, 23 (45%) communicate information that can be considered to be outside the realm of what is the responsibility of the Venezuelan Federal Government. For example, articles regarding the opening of an art exposition, fatalities resulting from Hurricane Noel (which did not impact Venezuela), and opinion pieces regarding the behaviour of the opposition party do not fall under the purview of that branch of the government. The presence of such articles lowers the usefulness of the webpage and may be seen as confusing to the visitor. Likewise, throughout the website, only 40 links [94] (30%) lead the visitor to information that is

[94] Links that communicate vital federal government information: *Venezuela*; *Estados*; (States) *Estructura del Estado* (State Structure); *Directorio al Gobierno Electrónico* (Electronic Government Directory); *Legislación* (Legislation); *Metas del Milenio* (Millenium Goals); *Plan de Desarrollo* (Growth Plan); *Motores Constituyentes* (Constitutional Motors); *Logros Bolivarianos* (Bolivarian Achievements); *Giras Presidenciales* (Presidential Turns); *Estadísticas* (Statistics); *Indicadores* (Indicators); *Eventos* (Events); *Trámites* (Procedures); *Asistencia Jurídica* (Legal Help); *Becas y Créditos* (Scholarships and Credits); *Cadivi-Divisa* (Governmental Currency Agency); *Defensa al Consumidor* (Consumer Protection); *Instituciones Crediticas* (Credit Agencies); *IVSS* (Social Security Agency); *Onidex* (Passport Agency); *Seniat* (Customs Agency); *Solvencia Laboral* (Labour Solvency); *Teléfonos de Emergencia* (Emergency Telephone Numbers); *Preguntas Frecuentes* (Frequently Asked Questions); *Glosario de Términos* (Glossary of Terms); *Sugerencias* (Suggestions); *Reformal Constitucional* (Constitutional Reform); *Bolívar Fuerte* (Strong Bolívar); *CNE* (Elections Council); *Contra la Rubéola y Sindrome de Rubéola Congénita* (Fighting German Measles and Congenital Measles Syndrome); *Plan de desarrollo Económico y Social de la Nación* (National Social and Economic Growth Plan); *Funvisis desarrolla microzonificación sísmica en el Distrito Capital* (Venezuelan Seismologic Investigations Foundation develops seismic microzonification [plan]; *IVIC crea espacio virtual sobre infecciones provocadas por hongos* (Venezuelan Institute for Scientific Investigations creates virtual space for [studying] infections caused by fungus); *Plan para prevenir desastres por las lluvias es articulado por diversos entes* (Diverse firms articulate plan to prevent disasters caused by rain); *La Constitución permite la division en dos bloques* (The Constitution permits division in two blocks); *Fecha del referendo se mantiene intacta* (Referedum

unequivocally under the purview of the federal government. Many of the remaining links, such as those that describe cultural events or information about museums could have been made accessible on a related website.

Furthermore, the accidental repetition of the *Noticias*, *Actualidad*, and *Giras Presidenciales* (figure 71) links in zone four and the *Billetes y Monedas* advertisements (figure 72) in zone seven reflect poorly on the design and utility of the homepage as a whole. Unmistakably, the space utilized by the repeated links and advertisements could have been used to facilitate the visitor's access to governmental information and documentation.

3.1.3.3.2 The probable reading path

In terms of what can physically be viewed upon opening the website and the attractiveness of salient visual images, I posit that figure 123 illustrates the visitor's most likely reading path.



Figure 123

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date remains intact); *AN entrega este viernes proyecto de reforma constitucional al CNE* (National Assembly submits constitutional reform project to National Elections Council this Friday); *Apure se integra al Plan de prevención integral antidrogas* (Apure State integrates itself with integral anti-drugs prevention Plan).

Reading path on gobiernoenlinea.ve.

Probable reading path for gobienoenlinea.ve:

1. Banner II
2. Photograph in featured news section and the accompanying text
3. *Reforma Constitucional* advertisement
4. *Debate Constitucional* advertisement
5. *Constitución Ilustrada* advertisement
6. *Bolívar Fuerte* advertisement

Finally, it is after viewing those areas of the website that the visitor may read the menu options in zone four and the news article headings and titles in zone six. This assessment concurs with that of Thurston (2004: 65), insofar as the eye of the reader is first attracted to the moving images of banner II and then to the still images of zones five and seven. The design of this webpage conflicts with Nielsen's (17 April 2006) prediction of an 'F' shaped reading path because the majority of the eye catching visual images are located in the centre or right-hand side of the page (rather than the prototypical location on the left). A reverse 'F' shape, however, does coincide with the reading of this website. The reader's avoidance of engaging with verbose textual material also corresponds with Nielsen's prediction insofar as the lengthy list of article headings and titles in zone six are most likely avoided by the visitor.

The movement of the visitor's eyes from banner II at the top/centre of the webpage downwards in the direction of the featured news article certainly abides by a hierarchical pattern. Not only is the most emotive content found above-the-fold, but the stirring impression yielded by the photograph in zone five stimulates enough interest in the website to encourage the visitor to continue reading. Even though the *Ahora es de todos* icon in zone one is

poignant, its size relative the webpage as a whole reduces its impact. None of the other images on gobiernoenlinea.ve compete with or even approximate the emotive quality of the *Chávez estamos contigo* t-shirt.

The most striking content not included in the probable reading path is verbal material. The sheer volume of news headings and article titles and their plain appearance do not lend salience to zone six. Similarly, the repetition of links in both zones four and seven counteract the visitor's inclination to read the menu and remaining advertisements along the right and left sides of the homepage.

The above-described reading path underscores the objectives of gobiernoenlinea.ve. To decipher the objectives, it is necessary to describe what information cannot be found or can only be found with difficulty on the webpage. For example, one might expect that a visit to a government on-line webpage would provide an effortless means by which to access federal government documents, information regarding government services, and the contact information for one's elected federal representative. However, such data is not easily found. For example, while access to passports is typically a federal issue, there is not a link titled *Pasaportes* on gobiernoenlinea.ve. Furthermore, if the visitor were to type *pasaporte* into the search engine in zone three, he would be taken to the following results page (figure 124).



Figure 124

Results page for *pasaporte* search on 30 March 2011.

Rather than immediately providing a link to *the Oficina Nacional de Identificación y Extranjería* (the National Office for Identification and Immigration), the visitor is transported to a results page that provides a dizzying amount links (and more news articles) to other Venezuelan government websites.

A search for *gobernador de Amazonas* (the governor of the Amazonas state) yielded a similar result (figure 125).

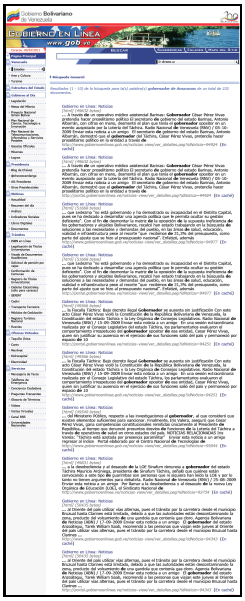


Figure 125

Results page for *gobernador de Amazonas* (governor of Amazonas) search on 30 March 2011.

The lack of straightforward access to government documents and contact information signifies that the objectives of this website are not what one might expect. To approach the objectives of the webpage from an alternative angle, what information *can* be found easily? Indeed, the identity (and physical likeness) of the political leader, the name (and physical likeness) of the nation's hero, and the achievements of the ruling party (by way of the links provided and the news articles' contents) are all plainly visible on gobiernoenlinea.ve. In other words, the ideological perspective of Hugo Chávez's government could not be more perceptible on this webpage. Rather than providing specific details regarding one's access to the elected government, the homepage is articulating the government's message (for its citizens and for its international visitors alike) and is affirming its place on the political spectrum. As the text on the red t-shirt proclaims, *Chávez estamos contigo*, the website acts as a virtual megaphone, proclaiming the government's

accomplishments and boasting the widespread support for the president.

3.1.4 Homepage of the Venezuelan Ministry of Defense



Figure 126

Mindefensa.gov.ve on 23 September 2007.

3.1.4.1 Zones



Figure 127

Zones of mindefensa.gov.ve.

Zone one: **Banner I**

This zone is located in the upper-middle region of the webpage and displays a banner. The left side of the banner includes the image of a waving Venezuelan flag and the name of the webpage's overseeing government agency (the Bolivarian Government of Venezuela, Ministry of People's Power for Defence). On the right, one can find a logo of three human-like illustrations in shades of yellow, blue, and red along with the words *Venezuela Ahora es de todos* (Venezuela Now [Belongs to] Everyone).

Zone two: Banner II

Located directly below zone one is the webpage's second banner. Centred against the background of the Venezuelan flag is the following quotation in white capital letters: *"TAMBIÉN EN LA FUERZA ARMADA HAY QUE HACER CAMBIOS PROFUNDOS, QUE NO SE HAN HECHO. EL GENERAL RANGEL ES EL PRIMER PORTADOR DE ESA BANDERA."* (Even in the Armed Force (sic) one must make profound changes that have not been done. General Rangel is the first bearer of this flag.) On the far left side of the banner is the image of President Chávez speaking at a microphone with his left hand raised. On the far right side of the banner is a photograph of General Rangel. The General is looking to his right in the image. Under the banner are three brief texts. The first text states: "DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE LA PLANIFICACIÓN Y PRESUPUESTO DEL MINISTRO DEL PODER POPULAR PARA LA DEFENSA" (General Address for the Planning and Budget of the People's Power for Defence). The second text states the publication city's name (Caracas), the date, and *Discurso ante la Asamblea Nacional* (Discourse to the National Assembly). It is very difficult to read the third text that is located the far right corner of the banner. The first words are *Hugo Chávez*. Unfortunately, the remaining words are illegible.

Zone three: Military clock and name of website

This zone can be divided into two sections. On the left are a military clock and a *buscar* (search) link. On the right are the name of the government institution, *Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Defensa* (Ministry of the People's Power for Defence) and two photographs of the military in action (tanks crossing a field and soldiers dressed in camouflage).

Zone four: Institutional Greeting

The fourth zone contains a *Saludo Institucional* (Institutional Greeting). This message is comprised of a photograph of General-In-Chief Gustavo R. Rangel B. and a welcome message text written by the General.

Zone five: menu

This zone contains the main menu for the Ministry of Defence website. The menu categories are *Venezuela*, *Organización* (Organization), *Información General* (General Information), *Servicios* (Services), *Prensa Mindefensa* (Ministry of Defence Press), *Atención Mindefensa* (Attention Ministry of Defence), *Otros* (Other), *Tráfico* (Traffic), and *Sindicación* (Sindication). Within zone five there are 42 links.

Zone six: Advertisements

This zone, which is located on the far right side of the webpage, contains 12 government-sponsored advertisements. The advertisements include: *Reforma Constitucional* (Constitutional Reform), *Alistamiento Militar* (Military Enlistment), *Ética y Moral Militar* (Military Morals and Ethics), *Vicepresidencia* (Vice Presidency), *Presidencia* (Presidency), *Fundasmin* (Foundation for Maternal and Infant Health), *Comisión de Licitaciones* (Currency Commission), *TIUNA FM* (Military radio station), *Censo Económico 2007* (Economic Census 2007), *IPSFA Relanzamiento* (Re-launching of the Institute for the Armed Force's Social Services), *Bolívar Fuerte* (Strong Bolívar), and *Get Adobe Reader*. This zone also contains a *Formulario de Acceso* (login screen), the *¿Quién está en línea?* (Who is on-line?) tally of how many people are currently viewing the website, and various website *Estadísticas* (statistics).

Zone seven: *Panorama Castrense*

This zone includes images of four editions of the *Panorama Castrense* (Military Panorama) digital newspaper ranging in dates from July 2007-September 2007.

Zone eight: Banner III

The third banner on this webpage is located at the very bottom and resembles banner II. Using the same flag background and photographs of the president and General Rangel, the citation states "*Habrá la fusión de la Fuerza Armada porque todavía, todavía estamos en el Ejército por un lado, la Marina por otro, la aviación por otro y la Guardería Nacional por otro y la Reserva allá, CADA UNO CON AUTONOMÍA ADMINISTRATIVA, OPERATIVA, ESO TIENE QUE ACABARSE DEFINITIVAMENTE.*" (There will be a fusion of the Armed Force (sic) because still, still we have the Army on one side, the Navy on another, the Air Force on another, and the National Guard on another and the Reserve over there. EACH ONE WITH ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIVE AUTONOMY, THAT HAS TO DEFINITIVELY STOP.").

3.1.4.2 Images & Texts to be reviewed

1. Institutional greeting
2. Simón Bolívar background wallpaper
3. Multimodal analysis of banners II and III
4. Links

3.1.4.2.1 Institutional Greeting

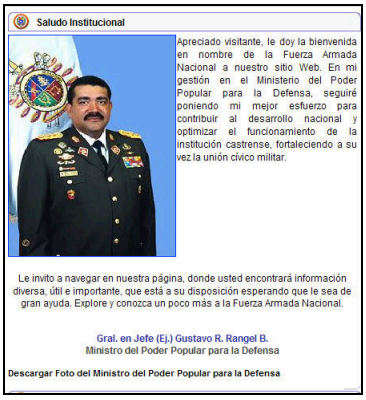


Figure 128

Institutional Greeting on 23 September 2007.

General-In-Chief Gustavo R. Rangel's welcome message (figure 128)[95] is located in a highly prominent above-the-fold location in zone four. The first paragraph of the welcome message functions as the general's mission statement insofar as he recognizes his role in contributing to national growth and optimizing the inner workings of the military while also strengthening the civic-military union. The second paragraph communicates the level of openness from which the general hopes to encourage the visitor's curiosity and interest in seeking out 'information that is diverse, useful, and important.' The general's reference to strengthening the civic-military union is significant as it is a transparent contradiction to the *ancien régime*'s approach to the relationship between the military and the public (see section 3.1.1.2 for a description of the *Caracazo* and its effect on the Venezuelan public's conception of the military). As the second

[95] An English translation of the welcome message: Dear visitor, I welcome you in the name of the National Armed Force to our web site. In my management of the Ministry of the People's Power for Defence, I will continue to put forth my best effort to contribute to national growth and optimize the military institution's functioning while also strengthening the civic-military union. I invite you to our page, where you will find important, useful, and diverse information, that is at your disposal. I hope it is helpful to you. Explore and get to know the National Armed Force better."

paragraph is located below the general's photograph, the first paragraph is more noticeable and thereby attracts more of the visitor's attention.

Throughout the welcome message, the verbs are conjugated in the first person singular: *doy* (I give), *seguiré* (I will continue), and *invito* (I invite). The possessive adjective *mi* (my) similarly follows this trend. The 'I' conjugation yields a sentiment of personalization and honesty to the message, as though by writing these words, the general is committing himself to the above-mentioned challenges. The personalized nature of the welcome message is also supported by the presence of the general's photograph. In the image, against the backdrop of the military's flag, General Rangel is dressed in a formal uniform and exhibits a serious facial expression. Within the photograph, the most salient elements are the general and the military flag, as the blue background colour does not distract the visitor.

However, the authentic nature of the message is impugned when one realizes that the same message was articulated by General Raúl Isaías Baduel earlier in 2007, as was captured on 18 March (figure 129).



Figure 129

Institutional Greeting on 18 March 2007.

The impact of the greeting is also diminished when one considers that the general's message is supplanted by a Christmas greeting

(figure 130). On the 20 January 2007 version of this website, the general's mission and vows are replaced by wishes for peace, harmony, and prosperity.



Figure 130

Institutional Greeting on 20 January 2007.

3.1.4.2.2 Simón Bolívar Background Wallpaper

Just as the name and physical likeness of Bolívar are apparent on the gobiernoenlinea.ve website, a black and white illustration of Simón Bolívar and his horse Palomo is used as a background wallpaper for the entire website (figure 131).



Figure 131

Mindefensa.gov.ve background wallpaper.

The image is repeated 45 times in the background of the asymmetrically positioned website (figure 132). The drawing also includes a rounded vertical line of stars, echoing the stars found on the Venezuelan flag.



Figure 132

Asymmetrical positioning of mindefensa.gov.ve website over Simón Bolívar/Palomo wallpaper.

While the wallpaper fuses Bolívar's values and accomplishments with those of the Ministry of Defence, it also distracts the visitor from the website's content. As the website can no longer stretch across the entire horizontal frame of the visitor's computer screen, it is squeezed into a smaller area and has to resort to smaller print and smaller images. As stated by Nielsen and Tahir (2002: preface), a homepage is "the most valuable real estate in the world (in which) millions of dollars are funnelled through a space that's not even a square foot in size." One then has to ponder whether the Bolívar wallpaper was the most effective use of space, as the allegiance to the national hero is also made apparent by the institution's name.

The value accrued by the Bolívar wallpaper is diminished when one considers that the wallpaper changed into Christmas trees and stars in late December 2007 and early January 2008 (figure 133).

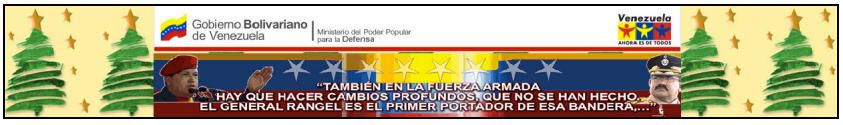


Figure 133

Christmas themed wallpaper on Ministry of Defence website on 16 December

2007.

Should one interpret that the Bolívar background was a valued communicative asset of the Ministry of Defence's website, how might one assess the merits of the Christmas-themed backdrop?

3.1.4.2.3 A Multimodal Analysis of Banners II and III

With the exception of the banner that is located in zone one (which is present in some form on each of the Venezuelan websites in this thesis), the website is vertically framed by two banners that feature quotations and photographs of President Chávez and General-In-Chief Rangel (figures 134 and 135).



Figure 134

Mindefensa.gov.ve banner II.



Figure 135

Mindefensa.gov.ve banner III.

The Chávez/Rangel banners first appeared on the mindefensa.gov.ve website in September 2007. Before that date, banner II had various forms. For example, in early 2006, banner II included the name of the institution (which at the time did not contain the term 'people's power'), the image of Simón Bolívar and his horse Palomo (the same image as can be found in the wallpaper of the 23 September 2007

version of the website), the Venezuelan Coat of Arms, and stained glass images of Bolívar (figure 136).



Figure 136

Mindefensa.gov.ve banner II on 5 January 2006.

In 2007, the banner was amended to include various coats of arms horizontally framed by images of the military in action (figures 137 and 138).



Figure 137

Mindefensa.gov.ve banner II on 14 January 2007.



Figure 138

Mindefensa.gov.ve banner II on 20 January 2007.

In the versions proceeding 23 September 2007, banner III was either entirely absent or contained only copyright information, as evidenced by figure 139 below.

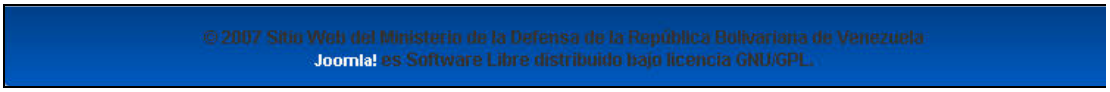


Figure 139

Mindefensa.gov.ve banner III on 20 January 2007.

Banners II and III first appeared in late September 2007 and remained on the website (with some small modifications) until 2009. In February 2009, the entire website was revamped and the changes included significant amendments to banners II and III (figure 140).



Figure 140

Mindefensa.gov.ve 22 February 2009.

As the two banners are identical (with the exception of the verbal text citations), the following multimodal analysis will account for the content and design of both banners II and III.

The above description of mindefensa.gov.ve's zones (see section 3.1.4.1) specifies that banners II and III consist of photographs (of President Chávez and General Rangel), a detailed background, and verbal texts. Beginning with the background of the banners, the upper portion is framed by, in descending order: a narrow red line, a thicker yellow line, a very thick blue line, a moderately thick dark red line, and a third lighter red line. Similar to the vertical order of colour on the Venezuelan flag (yellow, blue, and red), the backdrop to the banners emulates the design of the nation's tri-colour standard. A

further similarity to the Venezuelan flag can be found in the centre of the banners. Centred in the upper region of the banners are eight pale white stars. Eight stars can also be found in the centre of the national flag. Also within the middle of the banner is the shape of a waving Venezuelan flag.

In the far left corner of the banners is a photograph of President Chávez. In the image, the president is facing left and is gesticulating with his left hand. Chávez is wearing a red beret and appears to be dressed in an informal military jacket and a yellow and red cravat. The clothing choice for Chávez is significant as academics and journalists frequently commented on the contradictory nature of a civilian political leader who recurrently dressed in a military uniform (Trinkunas 2002: 65; Webb-Vidal: 29 June 2000; Romero 1 January 2007; El Universal 25 June 2007).

In the far right corner of the banners is a photograph of General Rangel who is wearing a formal uniform and hat. President Chávez articulated the quotations located in banners II and III at a special session of the National Assembly on 15 August 2007[96]. The source speech for the texts was more than three hours in duration and communicated various aspects of the constitutional reform. A principal theme of the speech was the integration and synthesis of government agencies for constructing a Bolivarian and socialist nation. As this nation is under imperialist threat, changes have to be made to the organization of the military (thus yielding the citation found in banner II). Furthermore, it is Chávez's vision that the military be a professional corps comprised of patriotic, populist, and anti-imperialist members whose chief occupation is serving the *pueblo* and defending the *pueblo*'s sacred interests. Such tasks can

[96] A verbatim account of Chávez's 15 August 2007 speech to the National Assembly can be found at http://www.aporrea.org/actualidad/n99758.html.

only be accomplished by a united military (this segment of the discourse generated the citation found in banner III).

3.1.4.2.3.1 The Ideational Metafunction

3.1.4.2.3.1.1 Vectors

As both participants are looking in the same direction, the primary vector in the banner is bidirectional and is formed by the gazes of President Chávez and General Rangel. While the president and general are not physically connected in the photographs, their shared vector links the two government officials. Evidence of a direct address emanates from President Chávez as he is photographed speaking at a microphone. The citations in both banners II and III are surrounded by quotation marks, which reinforce evidence of a direct address. As General Rangel is not speaking in his photograph, it may be concluded that he is listening to Chávez's verbal discourse.

3.1.4.2.3.1.2 Roles, Processes, and Circumstances

The actor in banners II and III is the president and he is the producer of the vector. The process involved is non-transactional, as the eyeline does not point at another participant. One may speculate that the target of the vector is the people of Venezuela, the *pueblo*. The process depicted by Hugo Chávez is verbal as he is the sayer and the verbiage is written in the centre of the banners. The process depicted by Rangel is relational, as he appears to be listening. The circumstance of location includes the microphone, which places the president at a political event. The military uniforms worn by the president and general can be considered circumstances of manner. Elements from the Venezuelan flag envelop the president and general, thereby creating circumstances of accompaniment.

3.1.4.2.3.1.3 Classificational, Analytical, and Symbolic Structures

Despite Chávez's informal clothing, the perceived role of the president supersedes the status of the Minister of Defence. Therefore, Chávez consequentially garners an overt and superordinate taxonomical relationship with General Rangel. Regarding the analytical structures in this image, the carrier is the speaking president and the possessive attribute is the cited discourse. General Rangel is also a possessive attribute, as he is the only identifiable audience member. As an indication of the president's political leanings, the topographic structures in this image are limited to the placement of Chávez's likeness on the left side of the banners. General Rangel and the cited text can be connected topologically as his name is present within banner II's text. The general and the written text can also be connected temporally, as his tasks are catalogued as what 'has to be done' in the future. With respect to the symbolic structures, the national colours, stars, and the citations are the largest elements within the banners. In both banners, this combination yields a feeling of patriotism and change. The carrier, President Chávez, is an essential participant, as the citation does not clarify its source. Additionally, the citation is a symbolic attribute that is mandatory in order to elucidate the president's message.

3.1.4.2.3.2 The Interpersonal Metafunction

3.1.4.2.3.2.1 Perspective

3.1.4.2.3.2.1.1 Shot Type

Regarding the perspective, the president and the general's faces and shoulders appear in the photographs, which denote a close shot. However, the president's action (speaking at a microphone) and the

general's clothing (dress uniform) negate the increased social familiarity commonly associated with this frame size.

3.1.4.2.3.2.1.2 Vertical and Horizontal Angles

The formality of the president's actions and the general's clothes also counteract the equality assumed by the photograph's eye-level vertical angle. However, the slightly oblique horizontal angle of both participants contributes to the banners' ceremonial aura.

3.1.4.2.3.2.2 Modality

3.1.4.2.3.2.2.1 Depth and Detail

As a measurement of modality, the level of details in the banners is low. For example, it is very difficult to discern the details present on the general's hat thereby lowering that image's modality. Had the image of the general been larger (at the expense of reducing the impact of the Bolívar wallpaper), and were the viewer able to discern details found on his hat or uniform, his credibility may have increased. As General Rangel had only recently been promoted to the position of Minister of Defence in July of 2007 (Gunson & Dudley: 25 July 2007), it may have been beneficial to echo the level of detail present in the photograph found in zone four.

3.1.4.2.3.2.2.2 Colour

The use of colour in banners II and III is significant as the national colours are repeated throughout the banners and can be found in the wardrobe of the two officials. The repeated usage of the colour red reaffirms the importance of that colour to Chávez's political party (Otis: 16 June 2007). The use of white for the citations' lettering enables the texts to be read easily.

3.1.4.2.3.2.2.3 Lighting, Illumination, and Clarity

The brightness within banners II and III varies. For example, the subdued brightness of the eight white stars captures the visitor's

attention, but does not distract from the message's objectives. The images of the president and general do portray a disparity in brightness. While the president's photograph is quite dark, the general's image is bright (figure 141). This disparity shifts the visitor's attention from the president (the source of the cited text) to the general (the subject of the cited text).



Figure 141

Brightness differential: President Chávez versus General Rangel.

3.1.4.2.3.2.2.3.4 Contextualization

Both images are decontextualized, as they do not include a setting. The lack of backdrop reduces the modality of banners II and III.

3.1.4.2.3.3 The Textual Metafunction

3.1.4.2.3.3.1 Coherence and Cohesion

The design of banners II and III is coherent in the concurrent, logical, and stylistic interaction of the modes present. As President Chávez is speaking at a microphone in his photograph, the placement of the cited text to his left is internally coherent. Similarly, the location of General Rangel's image is also logical, as he is directly mentioned in the text of banner II. The image of President Chávez coheres with the affixed Bolívar wallpaper as both subjects are facing their left (figure 142).



Figure 142

Leftward facing Bolívar and Chávez.

The usage of patriotic colours in the banners coordinates with the other colours on the Ministry of Defense's webpage (see the use of national colours in figures 143-148) and contributes to cohesion.



Figure 143

Use of national colours on mindefensa.gov.co: flag in zone one.



Figure 144

Use of national colours on mindefensa.gov.co: logo in zone one.



Figure 145

Use of national colours on mindefensa.gov.co: constitutional reform advertisement in zone six.



Figure 146

Use of national colours on mindefensa.gov.co: enlistment advertisement in zone six.



Figure 147

Use of national colours on mindefensa.gov.co: president's website advertisement in zone six.



Figure 148

Use of national colours on mindefensa.gov.co: Fundasmin advertisement in zone six.

The layout of the banners is also cohesive as it is framed within a rectangle in a similar manner to other segments of the webpage (figures 149-150).



Figure 149

Rectangular shape of zone one.



Figure 150

Rectangular shape of zone three.

The typography used in banners II and III (white lettering, capital letters, bold font) is similar to the typography present in other parts of the webpage (figures 151-156).



Figure 151

Typography in constitutional reform advertisement in zone six.



Figure 152

Typography in enlistment advertisement in zone six.



Figure 153

Typography in military ethics and morals advertisement in zone six.



Figure 154

Typography in launching of National Armed Forces Social Welfare Institute in zone six.



Figure 155

Typography in Panorama Castrense newspaper advertisement in zone seven.



Figure 156

Typography in PageRank advertisement in zone five.

Finally, the placement of banner II at the top of the webpage and of banner III at the bottom provide a rhythmic beginning and end to the visual space, which also contributes to the cohesive nature of the webpage as a whole.

3.1.4.2.3.3.2 Framing

Even though President Chávez and General Rangel are separated from each other within banner II, they are undoubtedly connected by the quotation. In addition, the two officials are figuratively joined by the components of the Venezuelan flag. While banners II and III are both framed by colourful borders, as stated above they also function as borders themselves within the website, demarcating and organizing content on the page. By framing the webpage with the Chávez/Rangel banners, the webpage is essentially thematically limited by the content of the president's speech. His promise of profound changes within and beyond the limitations of the military cannot be ignored.

3.1.4.2.3.3.3 Salience

The most salient part of banner II is the quotation. The text overshadows the images of the president and the general because it is written in white capital letters, bold font, and is centred within the space underneath eight stars. The salience of the citation differs slightly in banner III as the final line of text is capitalized. The second-most salient components of the banners are the images of the president and general. The brightness of the general's picture makes his image slightly more noticeable than that of the president, even though Chávez is the more recognizable cultural figure. The backgrounded national colours are the least salient aspects of the banners.

3.1.4.2.3.3.4 Information Value

Finally, with respect to information value, figures 157 and 158 delineate the different zones of banners II and III. While the size of the text and use of capital letters vary in banners II and III, those discrepancies do not greatly impact the division of information value.



Figure 157

Mindefensa.gov.ve banner II: Information value.



Figure 158

Mindefensa.gov.ve banner III: Information Value.

On the left side of figures 157 and 158, areas one and three contain information that is given or known. On the right side, areas two and four communicate new or not yet known details. The most noticeable distinction between the details found on the left and right is the identity of the government official. Specifically, the placement of President Chávez on the left (given) is consistent with being a nationally recognizable cultural icon. In contrast, on the right (new) side of the banners, we find General Rangel. It is probable that the general's likeness is less familiar to Venezuelans and is likely to be unidentifiable to visitors from outside the country. The distinction between real and ideal is evinced by the flag components found in the upper (ideal) section of the banner (areas one and two) and the citation, speech date, and location in the lower (real) section (areas three and four). While the upper segment of the banner

communicates a patriotic message, the details found within the citation divert the visitor's attention towards the impending changes to take place within the Venezuelan Armed Forces. It is logical for the speech's date and location to be written in the bottom segment of the banners. The central location of the quotations in area number five further stresses the importance of Chávez's messages. Indeed, the design and salient locations of the banners underscore the imminent changes to take place within the Ministry of Defence with General Rangel at the helm.

3.1.4.2.4 Links

The majority of the links on mindefensa.gov.ve can be found in zones five and six; however there are also a limited number of links located in zones four and seven. As stated in the previous website analyses, it is vital for a homepage to avoid both redundant content and an overwhelming amount of link choices. While 67 links are not wildly distracting to the visitor, in addition to links that lead the visitor to inactive webpages or to unpredictable destinations, several links seem to be incongruous and inessential for a Ministry of Defence homepage.

The following four links (figures 159-162) appear under the heading *Prensa Mindefensa* (Ministry of Defence Press) and lead the visitor to webpages that, at the time of capture, were under construction, thereby not communicating any valuable information.



Figure 159

Resumen de Noticias (News Summary) link.



Figure 160

Comunicados de Prensa (Press Releases) link.



Figure 161

Correo Prensa MPPD (Ministry of Defence Press Mail) link.



Figure 162

Obituarios (Obituaries) link.

The following links encourage the visitor to visit websites that do not directly pertain to the business of the military (figures 163-172). For example, neither the Economic Census (figure 169) nor the induction of the new currency (figure 172) appears to be related to the business of the Ministry of Defence. The danger of including links that are not relevant to the website at hand is that they can confuse the visitor. As argued by Nielsen (2001), a website that is unable to plainly communicate its purpose to its visitor is as disorienting as it is to enter a store and not be able to instantly identify what goods or services are for sale.



Figure 163

Datos Oficiales (Official Facts) link.



Figure 164

Símbolos Patrios (Home Symbols) link.



Figure 165

Símbolos Nacionales (National Symbols) link.



Figure 166

Efemérides (Events) link.



Figure 167

Resumen de Noticias (News Summary) link.



Figure 168

PageRank link.



Figure 169

Censo Económico 2007 (2007 Economic Census) link.



Figure 170

Vicepresidencia (Vice President's website) link.



Figure 171

Presidencia (President's website) link.



Figure 172

Bolívar Fuerte (Strong Bolívar currency) link.

The following links (figures 173-179) can be considered inessential for the homepage insofar as the space utilized for these links may have been put to better use. For example, as it has been stated in previous website analyses, under the heading of *Tráfico*, the PageRank link (figure 175) seems to be unnecessary and does not provide data that encourages the visitor to continue visiting the mindefensa.gov.ve website. The *Subir* link under zone six (figure 176) can also be found in a parallel position under zone five. Similarly, the visitor can both click on the photo of General Rangel (figure 177) or the *Descargar Foto del Ministro del Poder Popular para la Defensa* (Download the Photo of the Minister of the People's Power for Defence) (figure 178) link to download a copy of the image. The rationale for providing a downloadable photograph of the general is puzzling, a sentiment that is only intensified by the existence of its duplicated pathway. Finally, while it is considerate to provide a means by which the visitor can download Adobe Reader (which would then allow him/her to read many of the linked documents), the space used for the advertisement (figure 179) in zone six may have been put to better use. An alternative approach would have been to intercept those visitors lacking Adobe Reader once they have already clicked on a link. While the linked page provides download details in Spanish, the use of the English ad further contributes to the link's futility on the website.

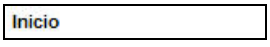


Figure 173

Inicio (home) link.



Figure 174

Webmaster link.



Figure 175

PageRank link.



Figure 176

Subir (Up) link.



Figure 177

Photo of General Rangel.



Figure 178

Descargar Foto del Ministro del Poder Popular para la Defensa (Download the Photo of the Minister of the People's Power for Defence) link.



Figure 179

Get Adobe Reader link.

There are several links (figures 180-186) on the Ministry of Defence website that attempt to transport the visitor to vaguely entitled destinations. As the visitor is unlikely to risk becoming lost amongst links of unknown use, s/he may be unwilling to click on those links. This possibility makes the presence of such links ineffectual. Nielsen (2001) equates a link named 'links' to labeling a category of information as 'words', therefore the link '*Enlaces*' (figure 182) is inadequate in encouraging the visitor to predict what content may be found on the related webpage. To the many visitors that do not have extensive technological experience, the five links to RSS feeds (figure 184) may result in visitor frustration. Finally, by not overtly providing the purpose or benefits attributed to signing-in to the website (figure 186), mindefensa.gov.ve should not expect the visitor to reveal his or her personal information.

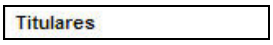


Figure 180

Titulares (Titles) link.



Figure 181

Obituarios (Obituaries) link.

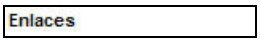


Figure 182

Enlaces (Links) link.

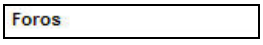


Figure 183

Foros (Forums) link.



Figure 184

RSS feeds.



Figure 185

Actividades Institucionales (Institutional Activities) link.

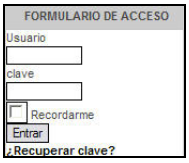


Figure 186

Formulario de Acceso link (Access Form).

It should be noted that links are most effective when they are recognizable. Nielsen (10 May 2004) advises that website designers capitalize on the visitor's common knowledge by displaying links as blue underlined words. However, none of the links on this homepage is underlined and the only text written in blue is the general's name under the institutional greeting (figure 187) in zone four. Interestingly, the general's name is not a link.



Figure 187

General's name written in blue in zone four.

The usage of the colour blue and underlining simplify the visitor's task in navigating a website. By eschewing those norms, the Ministry of Defence homepage resorted to alternative approaches to website navigation. For example, to clarify the visitor's access to the *Panorama Castrense* newspaper, the following text (figure 188) can be found in zone seven.

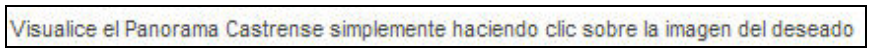


Figure 188

Visualice el Panorama Castrense simplemente haciendo clic sobre la imagen del deseado (To view the *Panorama Castrense* simply click on the image of the desired text).

Inefficient use of space is a considerable problem on the mindefensa.gov.ve website. While the following sections (figures 189-191) of the homepage cannot be considered links per se, they appear in similar locations as links and are comparably designed.

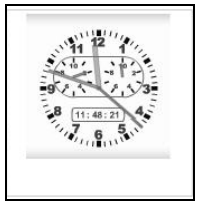


Figure 189

Military clock in zone three.



Figure 190

¿Quién está en línea? (Who is on-line?).



Figure 191

Estadísticas (Statistics).

These sections occupy salient positions on the website, yet do not offer the visitor pertinent information regarding the Ministry of Defence. The most notable example is the clock that is located in zone three (figure 189). While the clock's design and precision do reflect the professional atmosphere expected of the military, the clock's large size and above-the-fold location could have been put to better use. Similarly, at the bottom of the homepage are two quadrants of information that occupy a large section of zone six, but do not communicate pertinent data. The first section is entitled *¿Quién está en línea?* (Who is on-line?) and states *Hay 26 invitados en línea* (There are 26 invitees on-line) (figure 190). The unimpressive quantity of users is further emphasized by the information provided in figure 191. The *Estadísticas* (statistics) supplied denote that there are two users (*usuarios*), 83 items of news (*noticias*), 114 links (*enlaces*), and 569,092 visitors (*visitantes*). The utility of such figures is unclear, as is the difference between 'invitees', 'users', and 'visitors'.

A related fault in the homepage's design is the quantity of unused and underused space. As indicated by the red x shapes in figure 192, there is a significant amount of space on the homepage that is either devoid of content or is underused.



Figure 192

Unused and underused space on mindefensa.gov.ve.

The lack of visual and verbal material in this section of the homepage may be interpreted as faulty organization or an unclear message on behalf of the institution.

3.1.4.3 Mindefensa.gov.ve Conclusions

3.1.4.3.1 General Conclusions

At first glance, framing the website with patriotic images of President Chávez and General Rangel and the repeated presence of the national hero in the background infuse mindefensa.gov.ve with emotive material. Moreover, the repeated messages of 'change' promoted in banners II, III, and in the institutional greeting effectively put an end to the objectives of previous Venezuelan governments and emphasize the revolutionary aspirations of the current president. These undertakings are reinforced by the recurrent usage of the national colours, a tactic common to all of the Venezuelan websites analyzed. However, these design techniques are threatened by aspects of the website that impede the visitor's interest in the Ministry.

On mindefensa.gov.ve, a visual estimation indicates that the Simón Bolívar background occupies more than half of the visual space. As stated above, the asymmetrical positioning of the website against the Bolívar background negatively impacts on the overall impact of the verbal and visual content. Mindefensa.gov.ve's inefficiencies are further accentuated by a slightly asymmetrical design. The website is asymmetrical in the following ways (figure 193):

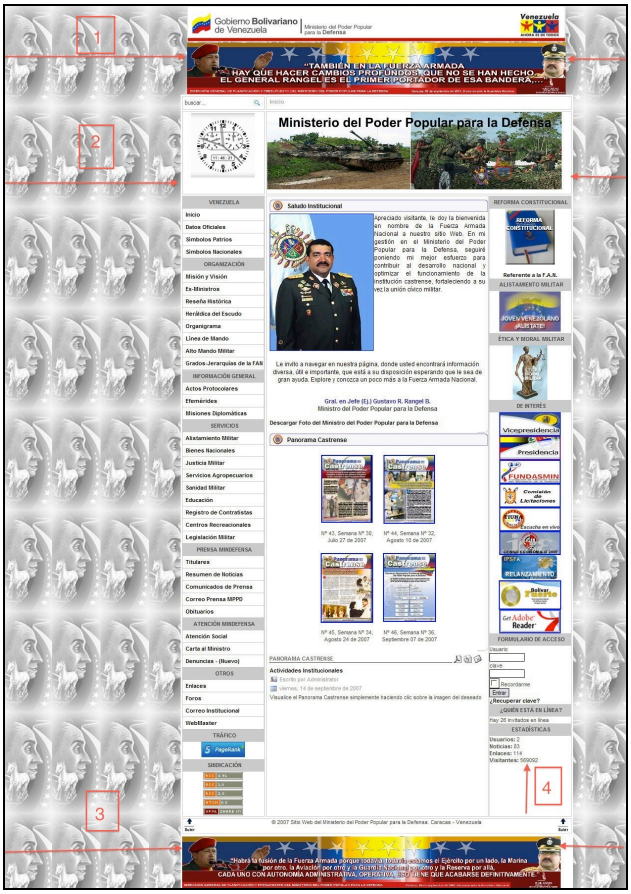


Figure 193

Asymmetrical design of mindefensa.gov.ve.

As stated in the commentary above regarding figure 131, the website content appears to be posted asymmetrically against the Bolívar wallpaper (labeled 2 in figure 193). While there are nearly four

horizontal images on the left side of the website, there is a slightly more than one on the right. This layout is obvious to the visitor and reduces the overall impact of the website. Other irregularities include the indentation of zones one and two (labeled 1 in figure 193), the distorted placement of banner III in zone eight (labeled 3 in figure 193), and the dissimilar use of space at the bottoms of zones five and six (labeled 4 in figure 193).

3.1.4.3.2 The probable reading path

As has been stated in previous analyses, as a reflection of salience or links, the reading path indicates the order in which components of the visual space attract the visitor's attention. As the links on mindefensa.gov.ve have many imperfections, I argue that salience guides the reader on his path through the homepage. Figure 194 indicates a probable reading path for the webpage.



Figure 194

Reading Path of mindefensa.gov.ve.

1. Banner II
2. Photographs in zone three
3. Institutional greeting
4. Banner III

It warrants mentioning that three out of the four likely destinations along the reading path are located above-the-fold (figure 195).



Figure 195

Mindefensa.gov.ve: Content Above-the-Fold and Below-the-Fold.

As a culturally recognizable individual positioned against the backdrop of patriotic colours, President Chávez's presence in banner II confirms its primary location along the reading path. Following banner II, the photographs in zone three are sufficiently eye-catching to justify the visitor's second stop. The pale blue background of the general's photograph in the institutional greeting is likely to be the next visual material to acquire the visitor's attention. As the remaining images in zone six mirror the national colours present throughout the website, I do not expect them to be included along the reading path. Should the visitor physically scroll down the website to view the material located below-the-fold, the final stop along the reading path is likely to be banner III. In this case, however, the blending of lowercased and capital letters would detract the visitor's attention from the banner's verbal content. Additionally, as the

design of banners II and III is identical, a recognizable frame for the website is generated, thereby contributing to the two banners' first and final positions along the reading path. I would argue against Nielsen and Tahir's (2002: 19) contention that banner blindness would inhibit the visitor's interest. This is because the content included in the banners' verbal text is emotive and salient.

The above-mentioned reading path immediately exposes the visitor to the concepts of change and patriotism. These themes are juxtaposed by way of the Bolívar horizontal frame, the use of banners II and III along the vertical axis, and the verbal content found in the institutional greeting.

3.1.5 Homepage of the President of Venezuela



Figure 196

Venezuela.gob.ve on 28 January 2007.

3.1.5.1 Zones



Figure 197

Zones of venezuela.gob.ve.

Zone one: **Banner I**

This zone is located in the upper-middle region of the webpage and displays a banner. The left side of the banner includes the image of a waving Venezuelan flag and the name of the webpage's overseeing government agency (the Bolivarian Government of Venezuela, Ministry of the Office of the Presidency). On the right, one can find a logo of three human-like illustrations in shades of yellow, blue, and red along with the words *Venezuela Ahora es de todos* (Venezuela Now [Belongs to] Everyone).

Zone two: Banner II

Located directly below zone one is the webpage's second banner. The banner contains moving images in which a geometric pattern of

red and white squares, photographs, and the text *Hacia el socialismo del siglo XXI* (Towards XXI Century Socialism) move against a pale grey background.

Zone three: Menu

The third zone includes all menu items located in the column on the left-hand side of the webpage. The main column is divided into two vertical columns. The content in the first column is written in grey and white lettering against a red background. This area contains the headings *BIOGRAFÍAS* (biographies), *INSTITUCIÓN* (institution), and *SECCIONES* (sections). Under those headings, there are twelve links. The second column is written in black lettering against a grey background and is entitled *OTROS SITIOS* (other sites). Without scrolling down, there are 12 links under that column. All of the text within zone four is written in uppercased letters.

Zone four: News

This zone contains a featured news story title and caption along with a related photograph. The image associated with the news article is the largest photograph on the homepage. The title of the featured news item is *El tercer motor constituyente es vital para el arranque de la nueva era revolucionaria* (The third constituent motor is vital for starting the new revolutionary era). The accompanying image illustrates President Chávez speaking at a microphone while gesticulating with his arms. In the background of the image is a large painting of Simón Bolívar's face. The article excerpt below the image states *El presidente Chávez pidió a todos los venezolanos sumarse a esta gran campaña, porque no habrá Revolución sin ideología revolucionaria, ni socialismo sin conciencia revolucionaria* (President Chávez asks Venezuelans to join this great campaign because there

will be no Revolution without revolutionary ideology, nor [will there be] socialism without revolutionary consciousness).

Zone five: News

This section contains four additional news titles along with their accompanying photographs. Each news story includes a publication date and an invitation for the visitor to *Ver más* (See more).

Zone six: Advertisements I

In this zone are four government-sponsored advertisements listed vertically. The advertisements include a reminder to public servants regarding the *Seniat* (*Servicio Nacional Integrado de Administración Aduanera y Tributaria*) or National Integrated Service for the Administration of Customs, Duties, and Taxes, a Simón Bolívar quotation, a link to download speeches made by President Chávez, and a link to information regarding the government's Orinoco petroleum project.

Zone seven: Menu II

The final zone is comprised of a link menu that is vertically positioned on the far right side of the webpage. The links in this section include: *La Agencia Bolivariana de Noticias* (the Bolivarian News Agency); *VTV* (Venezuelan Television); *ViVe* (a government owned Venezuelan television network); *RNV* (Venezuelan National Radio); *YVKE Mundial* (government sponsored radio station); *Aló Presidente en Internet* (President Chávez's weekly address); *Gobierno en Línea* (Government on Line); and the *Constitución Ilustrada* (Illustrated Constitution).

3.1.5.2 Images & Texts to be reviewed

1. Banner II

2. News

3. Multimodal analysis of featured news article and photograph

4. Links

3.1.5.2.1 Banner II

Zone two is the location of the second banner on the president's homepage. This looped moving image banner is composed of geometric shapes, photographs, and the verbal text *Hacia el Socialismo del siglo XXI*. The banner's background colour is pale grey and the geometric pattern is comprised of small red, white, and dark grey squares. The first part of the text is written in block white letters and the second part is in lowercased red lettering. The banner's colours harmonize well with the rest of the website. As the verbal text appears and then moves across the right side of the banner, 10 photographs appear and disappear on the left. Figures 198-203 illustrate the various appearances of banner II.

In figure 198, only the geometric shapes are visible.

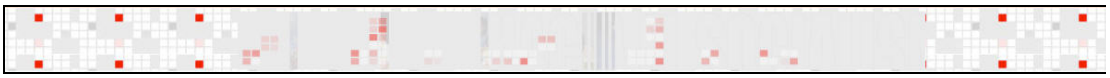


Figure 198

Venezuela.gob.ve banner II on 1 April 2007.

The verbal text is the next content to appear (figure 199).



Figure 199

Venezuela.gob.ve banner II on 4 March 2007.

The first five photographs enter the banner as sliding rectangles (figure 200).



Figure 200

Venezuela.gob.ve banner II on 25 March 2007.

Those five photographs then become visible in their entirety (figure 201) and subsequently disappear.



Figure 201

Venezuela.gob.ve banner II on 4 February 2007.

Finally, the second set of five photographs begins to appear (figure 202) and is then visible in its entirety (figure 203).



Figure 202

Venezuela.gob.ve banner II on 21 January 2007.



Figure 203

Venezuela.gob.ve banner II on 25 February 2007.

As the photographs featured in banner II are small, figures 204 and 205 clarify the content.



Figure 204

First set of photographs on 4 February 2007.



Figure 205

Second set of photographs on 21 January 2007.

'Towards 21st Century Socialism' was a phrase originally coined by Professor Heinz Dieterich (2000) and was published in 2000. Hugo Chávez cited the slogan during a speech made at the Fifth World Social Forum in 2005 (Wilpert: 2006). Adapted to the Venezuelan socialist model, XXI century socialism aims to counter capitalist principles and expand social programs. For example, Wilpert (2006) states that the Chávez government aspires to achieve these goals by supporting non-private forms of ownership such as co-operatives, expropriating idle factories with the intention of encouraging the workers to gain control over production, and creating state-owned enterprises.

The placement of the slogan as a focal point within the moving image banner immediately emphasizes the Chávez government's ideological stance. As many of the photographs depict the benefits of social spending (for example, children in a classroom, teenagers studying at school, construction projects, and children eating), the 10 images visually reinforce the slogan. Mindful of the emotive *Patria, Socialismo o Muerte* slogan found on the ejercito.mil.ve website (see a description in section 3.1.2.2.2), a foreign visitor to the presidency's website is very likely to not only notice the slideshow, but to understand at least the word *socialismo* if s/he spoke English.

The venezuela.gob.ve website changed dramatically in mid-April 2007. Following that date, banner II disappeared entirely (figure 206).



Figure 206

Venezuela.gob.ve banner II on 14 April 2007.

The updated version of banner II featured a photograph of Miraflores Palace, the president's workplace and residence, and remained on the presidential website until June 2010. The banner, seen in figure 207, has subsequently replaced the Miraflores banner.



Figure 207

Venezuela.gob.ve banner II from 2010-present.

The appearance of President Chávez in photographs (he appears in four of banner II's ten images) is a recurrent theme throughout the presidential website. Further evidence of this theme can be found in zone five.

3.1.5.2.2 News



Figure 208

News stories on venezuela.gov.ve on 28 January 2007.

The news stories featured in zone five of the presidency's homepage (figure 208) are: *Leyes Habilitantes serán instrumentos de la revolución socialista* (Habilitating Laws will be instruments of the socialist revolution)*; Presidente Chávez juramentó Consejo Presidencial Moral y Luces* (President Chávez swears in Presidential Council for Morals and Lights); *Arranca el tercer motor constituyente de la Revolución Bolivariana* (Starting the third constituent motor of the Bolivarian Revolution); and *Embajador Brownfield podría ser declarado persona "non grata" si continua injerencia en asuntos internos* (Ambassador Brownfield could be declared "persona non grata" if he continues to interfere in internal affairs). The titles of the news articles appear in small red lettering while the publication date and the *Ver más* (See more) links are written in black. The sequence of the articles seems somewhat haphazard, as the titles bear the same publication date (26 January 2007) and are not alphabetically ordered. One must then presume that the articles are arranged in order of national importance. Likewise, the featured news article in zone four shall be understood to be the most significant.

The title of the first article (figure 209) includes two key terms: *revolución* (revolution) and *socialista* (socialist).

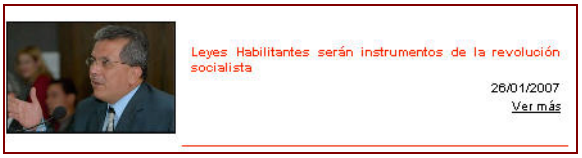


Figure 209

First news story in zone five.

A fundamental legislative tool in Chávez's political agenda is the passing of the Habilitating Laws (*Leyes Habilitantes*). These Laws enabled the president to enact a socialist legislative agenda that simultaneously sidesteps congressional approval and evades referenda. As one might have expected President Chávez to be the face of the *Leyes Habilitantes*, his absence in the corresponding visual image is noteworthy. In the president's place is the Minister of Finance, Rodrigo Cabezas. The inclusion of the minister's image indicates that key members of the Venezuelan bureaucracy support the socialist objectives. Additionally, collaboration with the Ministry of Finance helps to refute the opposition's criticism that Chávez was in the process of encouraging censorship (BBC News: 20 January 2007) by constructing an 'authoritarian regime' with powers concentrated in Miraflores Palace (BBC News: 19 January 2007). Furthermore, the presence of the minister of finance and his formal appearance in a business suit whilst speaking into a microphone counterbalance the well-publicized 'Go to hell, gringos!' statement uttered by Chávez on 21 January 2007 during his weekly radio show (CNN: 21 January 2007).

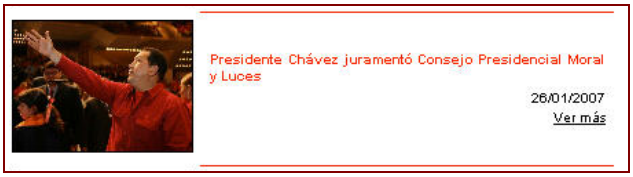


Figure 210

Second news story in zone five.

The *Motores Constituyentes* (Constituent Motors) are the means by which Venezuela is moving toward socialist governance. The third motor, *Moral y Luces* (Morals and Lights) endeavours to imbue socialist values in the education[97] system. Steered by the *Consejo Presidencial Morales y Luces* (Presidential Council [on] Morals and Lights), twenty *brigadistas* (brigades) are invited to Caracas to attend a three-day educational retreat. Upon completion of the course, the attendees receive a compendium of literature, including a copy of the Venezuelan constitution[98].

The verb used in the title of the article indicates that the members of the Council do not merely join the "ethical revolution[99]," but are required to take an oath of allegiance. In the corresponding image (figure 210), Chávez's presence, red shirt, and broad gesticulation reinforce the importance of the Council's role. The backdrop of multiple lights simultaneously illustrates the 'lights' and echoes the lofty ambitions of the *Morales y Luces* campaign.

The third news story shares the same theme as both the featured news item and the second news story in zone five, the swearing-in of the Presidential Council [on] Morals and Lights (figure 211).

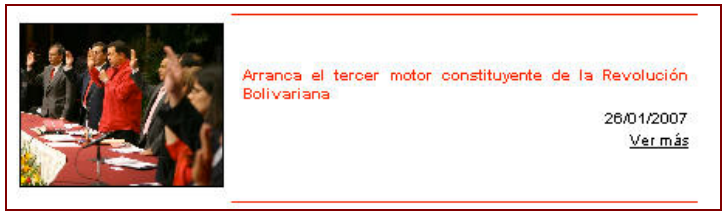


Figure 211

[97] http://www.minci.gob.ve/regionales/1/12473/el_tercer_motor.html
[98] http://www.minci.gob.ve/entrevistas/3/12632/motor_moral_y.html
[99] http://www.bibliotecayacucho.gob.ve/fba/index.php?id=102

Third news story in zone five.

The usage of the verb *arrancar* (to start, as in an engine) in the article title is significant as it equates the simple act of starting a motor with the launching of a revolutionary political movement. President Chávez's appearance in the centre of the image underscores his pivotal role in the ceremony as the oath administrator. The president is visually connected to the forthcoming council members by both their physical stances (holding up their right hands) and the repetition of the colour red in the tablecloth, matching neckties, and clothing.

The final news story in zone five introduces the concept of foreign intervention in Venezuelan internal affairs (figure 212).

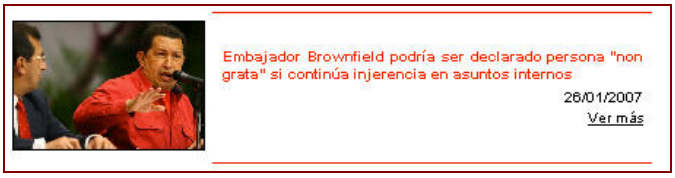


Figure 212

Fourth news story in zone five.

It is interesting that the nationality of Ambassador Brownfield is not explicitly stated in the article's title. It is thereby assumed that the website's visitors would either already know that William Brownfield is an American gubernatorial representative or would be able to infer his nationality from the title's content. By clicking on this news story's *Ver más* (See more) link, the visitor learns that the threat of expulsion was declared during the same *Moral y Luces* inauguration ceremony described in the other news stories, thereby creating a thematic link in the news section. Elements of the visual image such

as Chávez's facial expression and 'stop' hand gesture confirm the gravity of the diplomatic situation.

3.1.5.2.3 A Multimodal Analysis of the Featured News Section

Under the headline *Noticias* (News), in the centre of the page in zone four is the largest photograph found on the webpage (figure 213).



Figure 213

Featured news article in zone four.

The image depicts President Chávez speaking at a microphone. The backdrop of the image is a large painting of Simón Bolívar. The title of the article is *El tercer motor constituyente es vital para el arranque de la nueva era revolucionaria* (The third constituent motor is vital for starting the new revolutionary era). Under the photograph is the caption *El president Chávez pidió a todos los venezolanos sumarse a esta gran campaña, porque no habrá Revolución sin ideología revolucionaria, ni socialismo sin conciencia revolucionaria. (*President Chávez asked all Venezuelans to join in this great campaign, because there will be no Revolution without revolutionary ideology, nor [will there be] socialism without revolutionary consciousness).

3.1.5.2.3.1 The Ideational Metafunction

3.1.5.2.3.1.1 Vectors

There are two main vectors cast in the image. The first is unidirectional and radiates from President Chávez toward his audience. The president's hand gesture further focuses the vectors and creates a direct address with the attendees of the Morals and Lights swearing in ceremony. The second vector is non-transactional and emanates from Bolívar's eyes in the direction of the website visitor.

3.1.5.2.3.1.2 Roles, Processes, and Circumstances

The principle actor in the image is President Chávez. As the audience is not visible in the photograph, one can only assume its presence as the interactor.

The two represented participants in the image require that there also be two processes. The process associated with President Chávez is verbal. The verbiage involved cannot be deduced by solely examining the photograph. The accompanying caption clarifies the verbal content. The process emitted by Bolívar is mental and his expression is pensive and serious. The circumstances include the microphone and a book. The circumstance of location is not obvious, but it can be inferred that the president is speaking in an indoor facility because paintings are not normally found outdoors. One may also presume that the surrounding room is large, requiring the use of a microphone.

3.1.5.2.3.1.3 Classificational, Analytical, and Symbolic Structures

There is a taxonomical relationship between the represented participants. Even though the presence of Bolívar in the image is merely an artistic conception, his notoriety elevates him to an overtly superordinate relationship with the current president. An even

deeper taxonomic separation exists between Bolívar and the non-photographed audience. It is worth noting that the image of Bolívar in zone four is not the only example of his presence on venezuela.gob.ve. There are seven additional examples of his name and physical likeness on this webpage (figures 214-220).



Figure 214

The adjective *Bolivariano* (Bolivarian) in zone one.



Figure 215

The adjective *Bolivarianos* (Bolivarian) in zone three.



Figure 216

Title of third news story in zone five contains the adjective *Bolivariana* (Bolivarian).



Figure 217

An advertisement in zone six contains the adjective *Bolivariana* (Bolivarian).



Figure 218

A Bolívar citation and artistic drawing in zone six.



Figure 219

The adjective *Bolivariana* in an advertisement in zone seven.



Figure 220

The physical likeness of Bolívar in an advertisement in zone seven.

The repetition of Bolívar's name and physical likeness is difficult to ignore and is indicative of his importance to national identity.

Regarding the analytical structures in this image, it is difficult to discern whether the carrier is President Chávez or Simón Bolívar. While Chávez is the current president who wields great political power, Bolívar's accomplishments and notoriety are known around the world. However, as Chávez is alive and his likeness is more clearly depicted, I will argue that he is the carrier. The possessive attributes are the other elements in the photograph, namely the painting of Bolívar, the microphone, and the book. The topographic relationship between the carrier and the participants is accurate, but also slightly unsettling, as Bolívar's face is very large and appears to hover behind Chávez. The topological connection between Chávez and the microphone is sensible as the president is addressing a large group. While it is possible to presume that the book is a copy of the Venezuelan Constitution, the book's title is not visible to the internet visitor, and consequently, it's association with Chávez is left unclear. The interconnectedness between the current president and the

painting of the former president is interesting. As Bolívar's face is substantially larger than that of Chávez, his presence overshadows the rest of the photograph. The temporal limitation of this image is indicated by the date found under the title (*26/01/2007*). With regard to the symbolic structures, Bolívar's portrait shapes the significance of the image. Any conclusions made about this image are contingent on the presence of the former president. Not only does Bolívar's face encompass the largest segment of the image; it is also located in the epicenter of the photograph.

3.1.5.2.3.2 The Interpersonal Metafunction

3.1.5.2.3.2.1 Perspective

3.1.5.2.3.2.1.1 Shot Type

With respect to the perspective, the photograph can be categorized in two ways. Firstly, the photograph is a medium-shot as one can view President Chávez's head, shoulders, and the top of his torso. This frame size coupled with Chávez's informal clothing indicates a social familiarity between the visitor and the represented participant. However, if one views Bolívar to be the photograph's principal entity, it is then reasonable to qualify the shot type as a close up. This frame size is typically symptomatic of a very close relationship between the visitor and the represented participant. A close relationship is refuted by the seriousness of Bolívar's facial expression and the formality of the top of his military uniform that is visible in the painting.

3.1.5.2.3.2.1.2 Vertical and Horizontal Angles

The image's vertical angle is low, as Chávez is likely to have been located on a stage and the audience members would have been seated below him during the speech. With respect to the Bolívar painting, its location in the image is also captured from a low angle.

The low angle lends a feeling of superiority to both Chávez and Bolívar.

An account of the horizontal angle is also two-fold. President Chávez faces the camera from an oblique angle. Whereas obliqueness is often associated with detachment, in this case I would argue that Chávez is maximally involved with his audience. Even though his frontal plane diverges from the eye of the camera, he is engaged with his spectators, a detail that is supported by his animated gesture. Simón Bolívar's horizontal angle is frontal, offering an objective stance to the visitor.

3.1.5.2.3.2.2 Modality

3.1.5.2.3.2.2.1 Depth and Detail

As measurements of modality, depth and detail are inextricably linked in this image. In comparison to the somewhat grainy Bolívar painting, Chávez's face and body are captured with absolute clarity, which when placed in front of the portrait, lends a nearly three-dimensional quality to the current president.

3.1.5.2.3.2.2.2 Colour

The saturation of colour is a marked characteristic of the Chávez/Bolívar image. The colouring of Bolívar's face is unsaturated and blurry, which lowers his modality. In contrast, Chávez's face and shirt are highly saturated, affording him high modality. The deep saturation of Chávez's shirt emphasizes his overall importance, while the subdued colouring of the backgrounded Bolívar portrait is indicative of that leader's place in Venezuela's revolutionary history. As a recognizable facet of Chavez's socialist revolution, the red hue of Chávez's shirt is repeated many times on venezuela.gob.ve (figures 221-226).

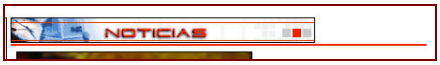


Figure 221

Red hue in title and borders of zone four.



Figure 222

Red hue in background of zone three.



Figure 223

Red hue on Chávez's hat, shirt, and in the background of advertisement in zone six.



Figure 224

Red hue in background of advertisement in zone six.



Figure 225

Red hue in advertisement in zone six.



Figure 226

Red hue in advertisement in zone seven.

3.1.5.2.3.2.2.3 Lighting, Illumination, and Clarity

The lighting in this image casts a noticeable glow on President Chávez and a slight shadow over the Bolívar portrait. This differentiation, along with the variations in detail and colour saturation, increases the current president's modality and lowers that of Bolívar. However, I would argue that Bolívar's reduced truth-value is not necessarily a negative characteristic because one would not expect a portrait to bear higher modality than a living being (nor would one expect to see Bolívar the man standing behind Chávez). Symbolically, Bolívar's lowered modality allows the painting to take on a largely thematic role in the revolution.

3.1.5.2.3.2.2.4 Contextualization

With respect to contextualization, the image is decontextualized. As Bolívar's face is the only visible backdrop, the overall modality is lowered. Nevertheless, the striking appearance of the portrait background mitigates the loss of truth-value by decontextualization.

3.1.5.2.3.3 The Textual Metafunction

3.1.5.2.3.3.1 Coherence and Cohesion

Coherence, which evaluates the link between the image or text and its social environment, is a distinctive quality in the Chávez/Bolívar image. The placement of Chávez in front of Bolívar inevitably instills the photograph with a revolutionary ambiance. Additionally, Chávez's red shirt, serious facial expression, and spirited gesticulation further cement this ideological perspective. The verbal text that accompanies the photograph contains many references to the revolution (figures 227 and 228):



Figure 227

Reference to the *nueva era revolucionaria* (new revolutionary era) in zone four's article title.

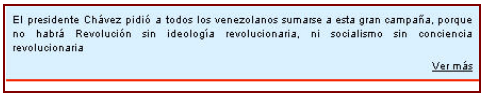


Figure 228

Reference to the *Revolución* (Revolution), ideología revolucionaria (revolutionary ideology), and *conciencia revolucionaria* (revolutionary consciousness) in zone four's image caption.

The image is also coherently linked to the rest of the webpage by employing the likenesses of Chávez and Bolívar. On 21 January 2007 (when the images in zone two were captured), President Chávez was visible in three of the five photographs in zone two (figure 205). Figure 229 below demonstrates the ubiquitous presence of the words *presidencia* (presidency), *presidente* (president), Bolívar, *bolivariano* (Bolivarian), and images of Bolívar and Chávez.



Figure 229

Venezuela.gob.ve on 28 January 2007, circles indicating the verbal or visual presence of President Chávez and Simón Bolívar.

With respect to cohesion, the use of the national colours is consistent, as is the repetitive employment of the colour red (figures 221-226). The recurrence of geometrical shapes, especially squares and rectangles, creates a unified design (figures 230-233).



Figure 230

Use of square shapes in zone two.



Figure 231

Use of square shapes in zone three.



Figure 232

Use of square shapes in zone six.



Figure 233

Use of square shapes in zone seven.

The nearly exclusive use of square shapes is unique to venezuela.gov.ve. For example, the website capture of gobiernoenlinea.gob.ve on 4 November 2007 yielded the round-edged design found throughout webpage's zone seven (figure 234).



Figure 234

Round-edged design of advertisements on gobiernoenlinea.gob.ve on 4 November 2007.

Curiously, the only visual images that violate the straight-edged design of venezuela.gov.ve are the waving flags (figures 235-237).



Figure 235

Waving flag in zone one.



Figure 236

Waving flag in zone six.



Figure 237

Waving flag in zone seven.

The colour of the typography employed in the article title (figure 227) is replicated in the background colour of the image's caption (figure 228). The usage of light blue can also be found in zone seven, in the advertisement for the *Constitución Ilustrada* (Illustrated Constitution) (figure 238). The repetition of the light blue colour creates a visual connection between the featured news item and the advertisement featuring a drawing of Simón Bolívar.



Figure 238

Light blue background colour in zone seven advertisement.

The light blue background disconnects the image's caption from the nearby website menu in zone three (figure 239)



Figure 239

Shaded background differentiation in zones three and four.

The typography used in the title of the featured news item is also consistent with the rest of the homepage. For example, the style of the *Noticias* heading (figure 240) is repeated four times in zone three (figures 241-244).



Figure 240

Noticias (News) heading in zone four.



Figure 241

Biografías (Biographies) heading in zone three.



Figure 242

Institución (Institution) heading in zone three.



Figure 243

Secciones (Sections) heading in zone three.



Figure 244

Otros Sitios (Other Sites) heading in zone three.

Similarly, while their colour and font size are different, the font style utilized in the article caption (figure 228) matches the article titles in zone five (figure 245).



Figure 245

Article title in zone five.

3.1.5.2.3.3.2. Framing

The *Noticias* heading and a thick red line frame the featured news item from above. However, it is peculiar that the red line is longer than the *Noticias* heading (figure 246).



Figure 246

Noticias (News) heading in zone four.

The featured news section is framed to the right by a large blank space. Zone four is bordered to the left by a small blank space (figure 247).



Figure 247

Framing of zone four.

The image caption and a horizontal red line frame zone four from below. The horizontal red line also divides zones one and two (figure

248) and the articles within zone five (figure 249). The repetition of the horizontal red line as a method for partitioning zones and zone content bestows a sense of consistency to the webpage.

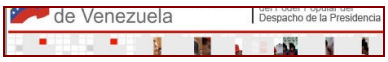


Figure 248

Horizontal red line dividing zones one and two.

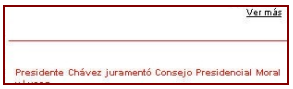


Figure 249

Horizontal red line dividing the article headings in zone five.

3.1.5.2.3.3.3 Salience

President Chávez and the painting of Simón Bolívar compete for salience in zone four. Nevertheless, in spite of the sheer size of Bolívar's face and his international fame, President Chávez acquires greater salience. Chávez's image is more eye-catching than that of his predecessor because he is photographed more clearly. The clarity of Chávez's appearance increases the saturation of his red shirt and emphasizes his gesticulation. Bolívar's position is backgrounded not only by his spatial location behind Chávez, but also by the blurriness of his portrait.

3.1.5.2.3.3.4 Information Value

The last textual element to be analysed is the information value. Within the image of Chávez and Bolívar, there does not appear to be a strong distinction between the information on the left (given) and on the right (new) (figure 250).



Figure 250

Information zones (visual material).

However, if one were to include the verbal material in the quadrant of spatial meaning (figure 251), there is a clear border between the given and the new information.



Figure 251

Information zones (visual and verbal material).

On the right of figure 251, the article's title announces the introduction of the third constituent motor. The title also contains the word 'new' (*nueva*) in reference to the 'new revolutionary era'. On the left, there are two highly recognizable individuals, whose revolutionary goals are internationally known. There is also substantial division between that which is located in the upper area (ideal) and lower area (real). The presence of Bolívar, the national revolutionary hero is logically located in the 'ideal' area of the zone. Conversely, the (real) current president and details regarding his socialist revolution are located below. The application of information

value is not without exceptions. In this case, while the majority of the article title is found in the centre of the zone, that verbal information does not bear the majority of the visual weight in the zone. The Chávez/Bolívar image is more salient and thereby marginalizes the written information.

3.1.5.2.4 Links

The majority of the links on venezuela.gov.ve can be found in zones three, six, and seven. The links found in the centre of the homepage are primarily virtual connections to news articles. In total, there are 49 links on venezuela.gov.ve's homepage. While that quantity of links is not overwhelming, it may have been useful to eliminate links that lacked Nielsen's "information scent" (9 June 2008). For example, whereas it is normally helpful to organize links under headings, the vagueness of the headings illustrated in figures 252-254 is not beneficial to the visitor.



Figure 252

Institución (Institution) heading in zone three.



Figure 253

Secciones (Sections) heading in zone three.



Figure 254

Otros Sitios (Other Sites) heading in zone three.

By the same token, the following links (figures 255-58) do not allow the visitor to easily predict where he will be transported. For

instance, the link captured in figure 255 does not indicate what structure is to be described on the linked page. Nor does *Visita Virtual* (figure 257) clarify what virtual world will be visited. Finally, a general link to *Alocuciones* is puzzling insofar as the visitor is left to guess as to whose formal speeches will be found on that page.



Figure 255

Estructura (Structure) link in zone three.



Figure 256

Conv. Cuba-Venezuela (Conversation Cuba-Venezuela) link in zone three.



Figure 257

Visita Virtual (Virtual Visit) link in zone three.



Figure 258

Alocuciones (Allocutions) link in zone three.

Figure 259 below exemplifies a link design that may be confusing to the visitor:



Figure 259

Links to *Misión y Reglamento* (Mission and Regulation) and *Misiones* (Missions) in zone three.

A link to *Misión* lies under the heading *Institución*. A second link to *Misiones* can be found below the heading *Secciones*. Is the visitor to understand the first link to be the institutional mission and the second to be the 'sectional' missions? While it is likely that the *Misiones* link transports the visitor to information regarding the Chávez administration's social missions, the design in this case is misleading.

3.1.5.3 Venezuela.gov.ve Conclusions

3.5.3.1 General Conclusions

At first glance, the brightness of the red tone that is used throughout the presidency's homepage is eye catching and visually appealing. The salience of the Chávez/Bolívar image in zone four immediately attracts the attention of the visitor. The allure of that photograph sets the tone for the rest of the webpage. Furthermore, President Chávez's ubiquitous presence creates a sense of cohesion, uniting the disparate zones and communicating a common message. However, a number of features compromise the effectiveness of the website's message.

Similar to the design of ejercito.mil.ve, there is a great deal of unutilized space on venezuela.gob.ve (indicated by a red x in figure 260). A lack of visual and/or verbal material may be interpreted as a lack of content that is meant for public consumption. Is the president hiding information or does he just have little to say?



Figure 260

Unutilized space on venezuela.gob.ve.

The visitor's impression of the presidency's homepage is influenced negatively by asymmetrical qualities of the design. As noted by area one in figure 261, the title *Noticias* does not extend for the length of either the photograph or the article's caption. However, the red line below the *Noticias* title does extend to the width of the article's caption. Area two in figure 261 notes that the lower border of menu in zone three is not aligned with the lowest portion of zone four. Area three emphasizes the disproportionate nature of the lower limits of zones three, four, six, and seven. To maintain a well-structured appearance, the website may have benefited from the zones starting and ending in a symmetrical fashion.



Figure 261

Asymmetrical design.

Finally, there is a great deal of variation in text alignment, font type, size, and style on the presidency's homepage. For example, the menu items in zone three are aligned to the left (figure 259). However, the verbal material in the *Proyecto Orinoco Magna Reserva* (figure 262) advertisement in zone six and the *Constitución Ilustrada* advertisement (figure 238) in zone seven are aligned to the right

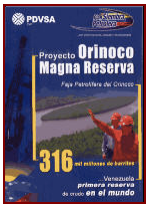


Figure 262

Right-alignment in zone six advertisement.

Likewise, the verbal material in other advertisements is centered (figures 263-267). This irregular alignment jumbles the appearance of the webpage.



Figure 263

Centre-alignment in zone six advertisement for SENIAT.



Figure 264

Centre-alignment in Bolívar citation in zone six.



Figure 265

Centre-alignment in zone six advertisement for presidential videos.



Figure 266

Centre-alignment in zone seven advertisement for RNV (*Radio Nacional de Venezuela* –Venezuelan National Radio).



Figure 267

Centre-alignment in zone seven advertisement for *Aló Presidente.*

The use of uppercased lettering (see figures 259, 265, and 268) decreases the readability of the website (Nielsen and Tahir 2002: 91).



Figure 268

Use of uppercased lettering in *Buscar Últimas Noticias* link under zone five.

Indeed, the mixed use of uppercased and lowercased lettering also lowers the effectiveness of the verbal material (Nielsen and Tahir 2002: 98). Nielsen and Tahir argue that the erratic use of capitalization undermines a professional appearance and reduces visitor trust because the website is seen as sloppy. As uppercased lettering is inevitably larger than its lower case counterpart, it takes up more space on the website and, in some cases, is too large for the space provided. For example, figure 269 illustrates part of zone three's lower menu in which many words are incomplete due to the size of the lettering:

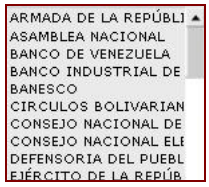


Figure 269

Incomplete wording in zone three menu.

The font size on venezuela.gov.ve is also inconsistent. While some of the verbal text appears in large font (figures 203 and 227), other material, such as the acronym YVKE above *Mundial* in an advertisement in zone seven (figure 270) is so small that it is nearly illegible.



Figure 270

Nearly illegible font size in zone six advertisement for YVKE Mundial.

It is unfortunate that the font size used for the news article titles in zone five is small, as the decreased legibility coincidentally lessens the effectiveness of words like *revolución* (revolution) and *socialismo* (socialism).

With regard to the content found on venezuela.gov.ve, there appears to be an imbalance between verbal and visual material. When one includes logos (such as those found in the advertisements of zone seven) under the umbrella of visual images, the majority of the visual space is comprised of images rather than text. This unevenness is not necessarily a design flaw if one contemplates the webpage's overarching purpose: to reiterate the cardinal role of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela's socialist revolution. That objective is reinforced by the homepage's probable reading path.

3.5.3.2 The probable reading path

A reading path guided by salience would yield the following sequence of interest (figure 271):

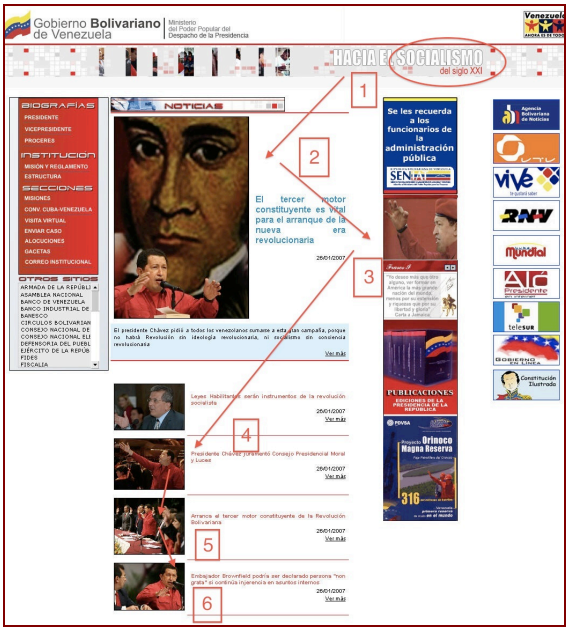


Figure 271

Probable Reading Path on venezuela.gob.ve.

1. Banner II's verbal text
2. Featured news article's image and title
3. Image of President Chávez in zone six advertisement
4-6. Images of President Chávez in zone four news article images

It is likely that the visitor's eyes would first be drawn to the word *socialismo* in banner II. Not only is the word noticeable, but also the moving image quality of the banner further emphasizes the 'towards socialism' message. The placement of the banner at the top of the page cements its position as first stop on the reading path. Following the *socialismo* verbal content of banner II, the visitor is apt to view the image of Hugo Chávez and Simón Bolívar. The sheer size and artistic appeal of that image make it the most salient component of the webpage. After viewing the image, the visitor may also stop to read the title of the news article. Following the Chávez/Bolívar image, the visitor's eyes may be drawn to another photograph of President Chávez located in zone six. The President's bold facial expression, vibrant gesticulation, and red hat/shirt are visual draws for the visitor. From a similar approach, the visitor may then seek out more images of the president. His eyes are likely to focus on the images accompanying the news articles in zone five. Finally, it is after viewing those items that the visitor may engage with the menu in zone three and the advertisements in zones six and seven.

Disregarding the inconsistencies of the webpage, venezuela.gov.ve is not merely a general interest site for biographical and contact information for the head of state. Rather, it is a crucial platform in the dissemination of President Chávez's revolutionary ambition. Venezuela.gov.ve accomplishes this task in three manners. Firstly, the likeness of the current president is repeated multiple

times on the homepage. Additionally, not only is Chávez's image present in many places, he is also dressed in the same red clothing in each image. As described above, the colour red is a visual trigger for the socialist cause. Secondly, the recurrent employment of both Bolívar's likeness and name (as both noun and adjective) provide historical support for the revolution. One may view Bolívar's presence as posthumous endorsement of Chávez's cause. Thirdly, the website makes repetitive use of provocative terminology such as revolution and socialism (figure 272).



Figure 272

Provocative terminology on venezuela.gob.ve.

3.1.6 Conclusions regarding Venezuelan websites

While anti-Americanism had a very limited presence [100], the Venezuelan websites analysed present evidence of an improved

[100] The sole quasi-reference to anti-Americanism can be found in the news article on venezuela.gob.ve in which President Chávez threatens to deem American Ambassador Brownfield a *persona non grata* (fig 212).

relationship between the citizenry and military and of a burgeoning socialist revolution. Examples of the improved alliance between the *pueblo* and the military include the *Ahora es de todos* logo found in the upper areas of each website and the use of the preposition *hacia* (toward) in the banner on venezuela.gob.ve (figure 199). The most transparent articulation of an improved relationship between the military and the Venezuelan populace can be found in the Minister of Defense, General-in-Chief Rangel's, institutional greeting on mindefensa.gov.ve (figure 128). The Minister's serious expression in the official photograph coupled with his verbal aspiration to continue strengthening "the civic-military union" effectively disseminates this premise across the Venezuelan Army, Navy, Air Force, and National Guard.

Evidence of the socialist revolution pervades each of the four Venezuelan homepages. Socialist content can be divided into the following disparate yet complementary categories: instances of visual/verbal references to Simón Bolívar, the use of slogans, and the infusion of the colour red. Table 4 delineates the distribution of socialist content across the four governmental homepages:

Homepage	**Bolívar (verbal[101])**	**Bolívar (visual)**	**Slogans[102]**	**The colour red[103]**	**Total**
Army ejercito.mil.ve	6	0	4	2	**12**
Government-	7	3	1	4	**15**

[101] Verbal references to *Bolívar* included his proper name along with the adjectival forms of *bolivariano* (Bolivarian).
[102] Examples of common slogans include phrases such as *Poder Popular* (people's power); *¡Patria, Socialismo, o Muerte!* (Fatherland, Socialism, or Death!); *Ahora es de todos* (Now is for everyone); *Chávez estamos contigo* (Chávez we are with you); *Hacia el socialismo* (towards socialism); and variants of the words *socialismo* (socialism) and *revolución* (revolution).
[103] Examples of the colour red were counted in this chart when they were not specifically tied to the Venezuelan flag.

on-Line gobiernoenlinea.ve					
Ministry of Defense mindefensa.gov.ve	2	1*	2**	2	**7**
President venezuela.gov.ve	6	3	9	5	**23**
Total	**21**	**7**	**16**	**13**	**57**

Table 4

Socialist content on Venezuelan websites

* If the repeated presence of Simón Bolívar within the homepage wallpaper were included, this number would total 46.

** Six instances of the term *Poder Popular* (people's power) were converged into one example.

With respect to overtly socialist content, it is interesting that the military-focused websites portray the fewest detectable political references. This measurement does not support the media allegations that the Venezuelan military is dangerously politicized. Conversely, as one might expect, the president's website is replete with both manifestations of Simón Bolívar, provocative terminology, and the colour red, content that effectively buttress the purpose of venezuela.gov.ve.

In accordance with the calculations in table 4, as the vanguard of the socialist movement in Venezuela, it is necessary to measure the appearance of President Chávez on the websites. Table 5 quantifies the number of times Hugo Chávez appeared verbally or visually.

Homepage	**President (verbal[104])**	**President (visual)**	**Total**

[104] Verbal references to President Chávez included the President's name and the variants of the word *presidente* (president).

Army ejercito.mil.ve	0	0	0
Government- on-Line gobiernoenlinea.ve	7	1	8
Ministry of Defense mindefensa.gov.ve	2	1	3
President venezuela.gov.ve	5	6	11
Total	**14**	**8**	**22**

Table 5

Verbal and visual presence of President Chávez on Venezuelan websites.

The most conspicuous figures within table 5 are those for the army's and the president's homepages. The absolute absence of President Chávez on ejercito.mil.ve further counters the military politicization allegations. Akin to the findings in table 4, it is not surprising to find a profusion of verbal and visual representations of the president on his homepage. By and large, President Chávez is the revolution's modern-day pioneer and his website reflects his objectives. Ultimately, while the Venezuelan websites in question are generally reflective of the contemporary political climate, they are also respectful of military prowess.

3.2 The Republic of Colombia

3.2.1 Contemporary History of the Republic of Colombia

In this chapter, I will argue that the Colombian military, recruitment, and presidential websites did not merely communicate general information, but rather served to champion the Uribe government's relentless pursuit of international aid money. Specifically, during

2007 (the year in which the images of the homepages to be analyzed were captured) the Colombian government faced harsh criticism regarding the *Para-Política* Scandal, the nation's human rights record, army massacres, and the minimal achievements realized in the war on drugs. In tandem, these issues threatened the influx of monetary aid and thereby jeopardized both the domestic popularity of the Uribe government and the longstanding diplomatic relationship between Colombia and the United States**.**

In order to provide appropriate context for the homepage analyses, the following topics will be addressed in this section: a brief contemporary political history of the nation (1930-present); the evolution and prowess of FARC, the country's largest guerrilla group; the impact of the narcotics industry; the growth of paramilitary groups, the tacit alliance between the paramilitaries and the Colombian government and military; the reputation of the Colombian military; and the South American nation's special relationship and bilateral agreements with the United States, including the war on drugs.

3.2.1.1 Colombia 1930-1960

In the case of twentieth century Colombia, the partisan division between Liberals and Conservatives originated in clashes between poverty-stricken peasants and the land-owning oligarchy. The rich landowners eventually formed the Conservative Party and the reformist peasantry became members of the Liberal Party (Molano 2000: 23). In the 1930s, this political division became more acute because of pressure placed on the Colombian coffee market. As the proprietors of the nation's primary agricultural export, coffee landowners sought to increase production by imposing severe working and living conditions on the impoverished plantation

workers and by appropriating the acreage held by small farmers (Meza: 1998).

In search of political assistance during the 1940s, the poor found an effective voice in Liberal Party organizer, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán. In spite of being labeled a communist and 'agitator'[105], Gaitán's popularity as a political figure amongst the poor grew steadily. However, on 9 April 1948, Juan Roa Sierra, an 'unknown madman' (Dudley 2004: 6), assassinated the aspiring presidential candidate. Anger triggered by Gaitán's murder provoked spontaneous riots known as the *Bogotazo* (breaking up of Bogotá) in which protesters set fire to businesses and looted. Within the Colombian capital, the mob destroyed various Conservative buildings including its political headquarters, newspaper publication houses, and the residences of prominent Conservative bureaucrats (Bailey 1967: 566-567). The rebellion quickly spread beyond the limits of Bogotá and seized other urban centres in Colombia (Chaouch 2009: 252). The Gaitán assassination is widely considered a watershed moment in contemporary Colombian history (Chaouch 2009: 251), as during the decade that followed the murder the country was plunged in a gruesome civil war known as *La Violencia* (The Violence).

From 1948-1958, approximately 200,000 lives were lost during the *La Violencia* conflict. Indeed the naming of the era was befitting when one takes into consideration the brutality of the killings (Bailey 1967: 562). In his article describing the origins of *La Violencia*, Bailey describes in profound detail the raping, mass slaughtering, maiming, and dismembering that took place across all social strata and geographical areas of Colombia.

A military coup in 1953 put General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla in power as president and put an end to the most egregious acts of

[105] These labels were utilized in a 1946 communiqué sent from the American Embassy in Bogotá to Washington D.C. (Dudley 2004: 6).

violence. In 1958, the military dictatorship was replaced with an interim government agreement entitled *El Frente Nacional* (The National Front). A political coalition between the Liberal and Conservative parties, the National Front alternated power between the two parties, giving each the opportunity to lead the Executive Branch[106] (Banks 2009: 147). In response to the corrupt nature of the National Front, Colombian guerrilla groups began to organize and gain momentum (Banks 2009: 147). Specifically, the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), most commonly known by its Spanish acronym, FARC, originated during the mid-1960s when the administration of President Guillermo León suppressed the Communist Party and deliberately excluded the left from gaining access to political representation (Lee 2011: 30).

3.2.1.2 The FARC

The FARC began as a political movement in response to the Colombian government's inability to enforce land reform and legislate an equitable division of wealth (Lee 2011: 30; Rochlin 2011: 719). To finance the rogue group's political and social objectives, the FARC imposes taxes[107] (known in Spanish as *gramaje*) on the illicit economic activities that take place in areas under their control (Molano 2000: 27). According to Raúl Reyes, a former FARC leader and chief negotiator with the Colombian government, the taxes fund FARC protection for coca farms (the crop that is the agricultural

[106] It is important to note that notwithstanding the cessation of hostilities resulting from the creation of the National Front, this political concession led to many abuses of power. Banks (2009: 146-147) calls attention to the rampant "packed courts, key appointments, [and] election tampering" and Meza (1998) notes that the new arrangement was at its core undemocratic and exclusionary. Furthermore, Molano (2000: 26) argues that the alternating governments neither addressed nor resolved the violence that continued unimpeded in the countryside.

[107] During the 1980s and 1990s the FARC earned $100-500 million in taxes (LeoGrande & Sharpe 2000: 4).

source for cocaine and heroin), laboratories (used for the production of the contraband substances), and airplane landing strips (required for the transportation of raw and refined drug material). Should the drug barons refuse payment, the FARC responds with violence[108] and kidnaps[109] key members of the drug cartels and/or their family members in exchange for ransom money (Robinson 2000: 69). While the armed group has largely ignored the international community's repudiation of kidnapping (including the human rights violations commonly associated with abductions and the extortion of ransom) (Tate 2009: 58) the FARC views its actions as the inevitable consequence of a war declared by wealthy narco-barons (Rochlin 2011: 736).

It is important to note that the FARC's endeavors were not always limited to unlawful activities. In the mid-1980s, when the FARC's membership totaled approximately 9,000 combatants (LeoGrande & Sharpe 2000: 4), then President Belisario Betancur successfully negotiated a ceasefire. The armistice included a renouncement of kidnapping and the conversion of FARC's military force into a political party named the *Unión Patriótica* (Patriotic Union or UP) (Molano 2000: 27). According to Meza (1998), President Betancur believed that social conditions were the cause of guerrilla violence and that the only successful solution would involve extending legitimate electoral representation to the group.

The FARC's political ambitions were threatened on 6 November 1985 when the fringe M-19 guerrilla group commandeered the Palace of Justice (the seat of the Colombian

[108] For a sample of violent acts carried out by the FARC see: BBC Mundo: 22 January 2007 and El Tiempo: 27 February 2007.

[109] For a sample of news coverage regarding FARC kidnappings see: Europe Intelligence Wire: 7 May 2003; Dudley: 23 February 2006; The Economist: 26 August 2006; El Tiempo: 23 January 2007; Reuters: 28 February 2007; CNN: 14 March 2007; Romero: 3 June 2007; Lapper & Schipani: 4 February 2008; Xinhua News Agency: 18 July 2008;

Supreme Court) and murdered over 100 persons, including twelve high-court judges (Molano 2000: 27; New York Times: 9 November 1985). In 1986, while the newly strained peace talks with the FARC continued, the UP managed to win fourteen congressional seats in the national legislature, numerous municipal elections, and amassed nearly 350,000 votes in the presidential election (Rochlin 2011: 720). However, during the same plebiscite in which FARC garnered substantial political success, the Colombian people elected President Virgilio Barco. Upon taking office, Barco immediately reversed Betancur's ceasefire efforts and enacted an absolute war on all guerrilla groups (Meza: 2000).

Between the years 1986 and 1992, paramilitary (private civilian militia) forces murdered upwards of 4,000 UP members, officials, and supporters (Lee 2011: 31; Rochlin 2011: 721). Included amongst the dead were UP mayors, municipal council members, and senators (Meza: 1998). The violent annihilation of the UP spurned FARC's political aspirations and forced the group to resume its criminal path (LeoGrande & Sharpe 2000: 4). By the end of the decade, the FARC's membership consisted of 15,000-17,000 troops who were fighting on more than 60 fronts across the country (Rochlin 2011: 722). According to the most recent data released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (27 January 2012), the current FARC population is between 12,000-18,000 members.

With respect to the FARC's role in the narcotics trade, the literature is divided. While most authors agree that the FARC levies taxes on aspects of cocaine production, it is the group's classification as 'narco-trafficker' that is contentious. In the face of myriad accusations of FARC's primary role[110] in the procurement and

[110] For a sampling of articles naming the FARC as a significant player in the narcotics production and distribution process, see: El Pueblo: 24 October 2006; BBC News: 12 February 2007; BBC Mundo: 12 February 2007; Ejercito.mil.co: 3

cultivation of coca leaves, chemical production of cocaine, and distribution of illegal substances to domestic and international markets, many authors argue that FARC's role can more accurately be described as merely peripheral. For example, the armed group has itself refuted substantial ties to narco-trafficking (Lee 2011: 34) and claims that its success is due to in large part to seeking support amongst an impoverished but likeminded population, including, but not limited to, the poor *cocaleros* (coca farmers) (Molano 2000: 27).

3.2.1.3 The Cocaine Trade

To deny that the FARC is the primary producer of illicit drugs in Colombia implies that some other body or group is the responsible party. With respect to cocaine, among other South American nations (Seelke-Ribando et al: 30 April 2010), Colombia is the world's largest producer insofar as the country produces 960 tons per year, 90 per cent of which is transported to and is consumed in the United States (Bronstein: 14 August 2007; Romero: 27 July 2008). In fact, 98 per cent of the world's coca is grown in the valleys and jungle regions of the Andes Mountains where Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia share a border (Dion & Russler 2008: 399). Notwithstanding the fact that most drug profits remain in the hands of the on-site dealers in the United States, the amount of money that returns to Colombia ranges from $2.5 billion to $5 billion per year, the equivalent of 2-4% of the country's GDP (The Economist: 21 April 2001).

As the war on drugs is the cornerstone of Colombia's relationship with the United States, it is necessary to clarify why Colombia is the world's cocaine manufacturing hub. According to the literature, there are geographical, agricultural, political, commercial, and economic explanations for this country's nefarious specialization.

March 2007, 7 May 2007, 9 May 2007, 10 June 2007, 26 June 2007, 17 July 2007, 25 July 2007a, 25 July 2007b, 7 August 2007, and 1 September 2007); Robinson 2000: 63; Lee 2011: 35, and Hoskin & Murillo 2001: 33.

Geographically, the coca-producing areas of the South American nation are located along convenient air and sea routes to the United States[111] and Europe (Dion & Russler 2008: 402). With respect to the vegetation of coca, the crop is hardy, allowing it to be grown in poor-quality soil and on the sloped terrain that is typical of the Colombian countryside. Furthermore, the tenacious nature of the coca plant makes it a relatively easy crop to grow, as it is insusceptible to both pests and an inconsistent climate. Finally, coca can be harvested three to six times per year, which provides year-round income to the farmer (Dion & Russler 2008: 405). From a political standpoint, the Colombian government has a very weak presence in the coca-growing zones, which nullifies legal limitations on cocaine production (Dion & Russler 2008: 410). Commercially speaking, there is steady market demand for coca products and a fixed minimum price for the goods (Molano 2000: 27). With respect to the *cocaleros'* economic needs[112], as coca is more profitable to grow than any other crop there is little motivation to grow legitimate products (The Economist: 21 April 2001; CNN: 29 January 2007). Furthermore, government programs that encourage alternatives to coca farming are severely underfunded (Gould: 11 March 2007). These advantageous circumstances contribute to Colombia's dominance of the cocaine industry, an informal enterprise that flourishes (Otis: 20 May 2007)

[111] While recent data indicates that upwards of 90% of opiates enter the United States over land via Mexico, Colombia remains the world's largest producer of coca leaf and cocaine (Seeley et al: 30 April 2010). Combined, illegal drug trade organizations in Mexico and Colombia "generate, remove, and launder" between $18-39 billion in wholesale drug proceeds per year (National Drug Intelligence Centre: December 2008)

[112] It is important to note that the financial allure of coca vegetation is inextricably linked to the issue of poverty in Colombia. Current estimates indicate that the average income of the top 10 per cent of the Colombian population is 37 times greater than that of the lowest 10 per cent (Palacios 2006: 218). Within the last ten years, the richest tenth of the population earned 51 per cent of all income (Hoskin & Murillo 2001: 40) thereby relegating approximately half of the population (approximately 18 million) to subsist under the poverty line (Knoester 1998: 85; Palacios 2006: 215).

and is protected from interference from guerrilla groups by the paramilitary armies.

3.2.1.4 The Paramilitaries

Paramilitaries are private civilian militias hired by wealthy coca farm landowners and powerful drug lords. The principle task of the armed groups is to protect land and property from the threat of guerrillas. As the paramilitaries operate with relative impunity in Colombia (Forero: 22 May 2007), they are able to accomplish their objectives by executing indiscriminate acts of violence upon guerrillas (or suspected guerrillas) and the civilian supporters of guerrillas (or suspected civilian supporters of guerrillas). The violent nature of the paramilitaries has caused severe turmoil in Colombia. Over one million Colombians have been displaced (Robinson 2000: 67), causing an influx of 'internal refugees' (Dion & Russler 2008: 403-404; Hoskin & Murillo 2001: 37).

In spite of President Uribe's statement that he has successfully rid the country of illegal paramilitaries (Telesur: 11 March 2007; International Herald Tribune: 20 July 2007), other sources[113] report that private civilian-led militaries are thriving in Colombia. Indeed, according to Knoester (1998) the acts carried out by the paramilitaries are the most egregious assaults on human rights committed by any organized group in the country. The author states that in 1986, of the extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances committed in Colombia, 59 per cent were perpetrated by the paramilitaries.

3.2.1.4.1 The Para-Política Scandal

The alleged relationship between the Colombian government and the paramilitaries is one that is fraught with controversy. While it has

[113] For a sampling of literature that indicates that the paramilitaries are still powerful, see: Prensa Latina: 4 January 2007a & 12 February 2007.

been widely suspected that paramilitary groups work in collusion with the Colombian Armed Forces (Knoester: 1998), incontrovertible evidence had yet to come to light. However, in 2007 the so-called *Para-Política* (Paramilitary-Political) scandal reaped domestic and international attention. In early 2007, accusations began to circulate regarding alleged meetings that took place between government officials and paramilitary groups. The first lawmakers to be implicated were two congressional representatives and six parliamentarians (Telesur: 16 January 2007). The accused group of politicians then grew to twelve congressional representatives (Prensa Latina: 25 January 2007), then sixty lawmakers (El Espectador: 2 February 2007). Amongst the implicated persons, all of who were supporters of the Uribe administration was the brother of President Uribe's Foreign Minister[114] (Gonzalez: 16 February 2007; Salazar: 16 February 2007).

The tension provoked by the scandal was exacerbated when President Uribe's former campaign manager and head of Colombia's secret police was arrested by the attorney general (Lakshmanan: 25 February 2007). Other eminent officials who were arrested include the former head of Colombia's security agency (Brodzinsky: 23 February 2007), former Minister of Agriculture, Álvaro Araújo Noguera (BBC Mundo: 2 March 2007), the governor of Magdalena province, Trino Luna (CNN: 13 March 2007), five additional congressmen (Reuters: 21 March 2007), five ex-mayors, and two ex-governors of the Costa Caribe province (Salazar: 21 March 2007). By the end of March 2007, more than one-third of Colombia's Members of Congress had been indicted in the scandal (Moloney & Lapper: 28 March 2007). Interestingly, it was during March 2007 that President George W. Bush first visited President Uribe. The growing scandal

[114] The Foreign Minister, María Consuelo Araújo, resigned her office shortly following the accusations (Muse: 19 February 2007).

overshadowed much of the Bush visit (Brodzinsky: 20 February 2007; Markey: 5 March 2007).

In April 2007, Vice President Santos admitted to having conducted meetings with members of the paramilitary group AUC (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* –Self-Defense Units of Colombia) (Telesur: 1 April 2007). In May 2007, five lawmakers, 15 former politicians, two top ministers in Uribe's cabinet (New York Times: 15 May 2007; Acosta: 16 May 2007), and the governor of Cesar department (Salazar: 17 May 2007) were arrested. The Minister of the Treasury Department was implicated in August 2007 (Semana: 6 August 2007), as was President Uribe's senator cousin in October 2007 (BBC News: 5 October 2007). The scandal continued into 2008 when additional congressional representatives (Semana: 31 March 2008), a former senator (CNN: 22 April 2008; The Economist: 24 April 2008), and the head of a Colombian governing party (Bajak: 25 July 2008) fell to the scandal. In total, the Colombian Supreme Court levied accusations against 29 current and former lawmakers and continued investigating another 39 (The Economist: 28 August 2008).

President Uribe was not immune to conjecture regarding his alleged relationship with the paramilitaries. While the president flatly denied any linkage with the armed groups (Telesur: 5 February 2007; Reuters: 19 February 2007), Senator Gustavo Petro stated that paramilitaries had used the Uribe family farms to conduct meetings when the president was the governor of North Western department from 1995-1997 (The Economist: 19 April 2007; Murphy: 31 July 2007). Further evidence of Uribe's unethical relationship with right wing militias came in the form of a 2001 campaign video in which the then-presidential candidate was filmed shaking hands with a known paramilitary leader (Arizona Daily News: 18 June 2007). Uribe was also accused of having sought and received campaign financing from

narco-traffickers and paramilitaries (Telesur: 18 June 2007; Semana: 20 June 2007); an allegation that Uribe denied vehemently (BBC Mundo: 20 June 2007). In June 2007, allegations also surfaced that President Uribe attended meetings with paramilitary commanders in 2001 (El Nuevo Herald: 20 June 2007). The Colombian leader deflected the negative attention by heralding his administration's advancements in the protection of democratic institutions and accomplishments regarding economic growth (Romero: 23 April 2008).

Speculation regarding collusion between the Colombian military and the paramilitary organizations (LeoGrande & Sharpe 2000: 5) was also enveloped into the *Para-Política* scandal. The controversy touched the armed forces when the army suspended an active-duty colonel in January 2007 (Markey: 26 January 2007; BBC Mundo: 27 January 2007). In March 2007, the CIA publicized that General Mario Montoya, the head of Colombia's US-sanctioned army, met frequently with paramilitaries (Reuters: 25 March 2007; Peña: 26 March 2007). General Montoya repudiated all such allegations (El Nuevo Herald: 13 August 2008).

In addition to increasing President Uribe's disapproval rating to a career-high of 27 per cent (Bronstein: 14 July 2007), the *Para-Política* scandal jeopardized the Colombian government's procurement of international aid[115] and financial assistance from it's closest political ally, the United States.

3.2.1.5 Colombia & The United States

To measure the potential impact of the *Para-Política* scandal's damage to American-Colombian relations, it is necessary to summarize the countries' bilateral agreements. In 1973, the Nixon

[115] To offset the cost of the war on drugs, the Colombian government solicited $9 billion in aid money from Europe and Asia (The Economist: 22 February 2007).

administration officially declared a war on drugs and paved the way for military support and training in Colombia (Banks 2009: 147). President George H.W. Bush continued the investment in drugs interdiction and eradication via the Andean Drug War[116] effort. As the next phase in the war on drugs, President Clinton introduced the $1.3 billion Plan Colombia in 1993 (Banks 2009: 148). Plan Colombia's objectives were to reduce the cultivation, refining, and distribution of coca by 50 per cent (Presidencia de la República 2000: 20). From 2000 until 2005 the United States spent approximately $3 billion on Plan Colombia, of which the focal point was police/military assistance and the eradication of coca[117] (Shields: 5 July 2005; Sanchez: 16 March 2007; Dion & Russler 2008: 403). Other

[116] In 1991, the Andean Drug War granted $104 million in military aid to Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. That amount increased to $147 million the following year (Rochlin 2011: 721).

[117] The act of coca eradication is as politically contentious as it is physically challenging. Manual eradication is time consuming. Forero (7 July 2007) describes the process of using hoes and other common gardening tools to rip out coca bushes as armed police guards search for land mines whilst tapping into guerrilla radio conversations. Chemical eradication (also known as aerial fumigation/eradication) involves the mass spraying of herbicides, such as glyphosate, over coca farms (The Economist: 21 April 2001). It should be noted that the effectiveness of this method is minimal (Rojas 2007: 25). Furthermore, the related social, environmental, and health consequences are severe (Dion & Russler 2008: 402). Fumigation is also imprecise, as the spraying destroys nearby licit vegetation (Dion & Russler 2008: 418). Aerial fumigation can also incite political disputes. For example, after the controlled elimination of 50,000 hectares of coca (Prensa Latina: 4 January 2007b), it came to light that President Uribe ordered coca eradication to take place near the Ecuadorian border so that the fumigation would be completed before the newly elected Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa was inaugurated. The fumigation was time-sensitive and thereby allowed Uribe to avoid a diplomatic scuffle with the anti-fumigation Correa (El Tiempo: 6 January 2007b). As coca production is profitable to farmers, eradication tends to only temporarily hamper their efforts. Following fumigation, farmers will either grow their crops in dispersed plots or move their farms further away from potential intervention. These responses are known as the 'balloon effect' in which air is squeezed from one part of a balloon, only to move to another (Dion & Russler 2008: 403-404). According to a report on Bloomberg.com (Jaramillo: 3 December 2007), from 2003-2006 the area of land used for coca cultivation in Colombia rose by 38 per cent. Furthermore, organized eradication has not increased the cost of cocaine within the United States (the price has dropped from $50-100 per gram in 1999 to $30-50 in 2005 (Saunders: 13 June 2007)) and the purity has increased (Goodman: 27 April 2007). These statistics indicate that even with the support of Plan Colombia, there is an abundance of cocaine available for purchase (Dion & Russler: 2008: 400).

objectives of the $600-700 million received per annum by the Uribe administration included mobilizing the armed forces and encouraging the demobilization of paramilitaries[118] and guerrillas (Walters: 19 January 2007; Mills & White: 22 January 2007).

The goal of 'pushing into' the FARC stronghold of southern Colombia accounted for 75 per cent of Plan Colombia (LeoGrande & Sharpe 2000: 6). To evince Colombia's commitment to the Plan, the Uribe administration extradited several suspected drug traffickers[119] and human rights violators to the United States. The second phase of Plan Colombia, the aptly named Plan Colombia II, was subject to congressional authorization in 2007.

While lobbying for the approval of Plan Colombia II, the Colombian government was also seeking to finalize a free trade agreement with the United States. Supporters of the Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA), such as former Spanish president José María Aznar, touted that in addition to improvements in security and economic development, the agreement would strengthen democratic capitalism (Aznar: 16 July 2007). The key objective of the trade accord was to equalize the two countries' trade relationship, which had favoured Colombia in previous agreements. The new FTA would extend to American businesses the permanent ability to export their goods to the South American nation (The Houston Chronicle: 13 November 2008; The Economist: 10 April 2008). Trade negotiations in 2007 and 2008 underwent intense scrutiny as the Democrat-led Congress, under the leadership of Representative Nancy Pelosi, expressed grave concern over the *Para Política* scandal, the

[118] Interestingly, the CIA (as part of the American anti-drugs team) allegedly colluded with extralegal paramilitary groups on many occasions (Richter and Miller: 25 March 2007; Simon and Reynolds: 3 May 2007)

[119] For a sampling of drug related extraditions, see: Presidencia.gov.co: 23 January 2007; CNN: 17 March 2007; BBC News: 20 July 2007; Muse: 15 September 2007; The Economist: 15 May 2008; and Rojas 2007: 24.

vulnerability of union workers in Colombia, and flagrant violations of human rights.

As the *Para-Política* scandal grew, news of the infamous relationship between the Colombian government, military, and paramilitaries garnered much negative attention in the American press (Dudley: 31 March 2007; Moloney: 2 May 2007). Indeed, the future of the FTA was on the brink of collapse as the Democratic Party condemned the collusion with right-wing paramilitary groups. For example, Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy, Chairperson of the Subcommittee for Foreign Assistance Programs, suspended military aid to Colombia in the wake of the scandal (Telesur: 27 April 2007). Face-to-face meetings between Presidents Bush and Uribe did little to extinguish the scandal in Washington (BBC Mundo: 2 May 2007) as Representative Pelosi publicly expressed reservations about supporting the bilateral agreement (El Espectador: 3 May 2007). The Congressional Chairperson also stated that the Democratic Party sought proof of investigations into the scandal (Gutiérrez: 3 May 2007).

The Democratic Party also publicized its apprehension regarding the threats to union leaders and activists in Colombia (CNN: 8 March 2007; Reuters: 16 March 2007; The Economist: 17 May 2007; Nova Colombia: 22 May 2007; New York Times: 29 May 2007; Los Angeles Times: 1 February 2008). Dubbed a 'unionist genocide' (Moloney: 7 August 2007), between 1990 and 1995 more union activists were killed in Colombia than in any other country (Knoester: 1998). Specifically, between 2001-2007 more than 800 union organizers were murdered (CNN: 8 March 2007) making Colombia the most dangerous country in the world for trade unionists and union activists (The Economist: 17 May 2007; BBC News: 3 July 2007). The impact of unionist murders is intensified

when it is well known that the consequential murder investigations typically remain unsolved (Forero: 10 April 2007).

Elected members of the Democratic Party also expressed disapproval of Colombia's human rights' records (CNN: 2 May 2007; Bachelet: 4 May 2007). In spite of Secretary of State Rice's declaration that the Colombian government and military were meeting American human rights conditions (Green: 11 April 2007), violence against human rights activists continued to occur (Bronstein: 23 April 2007).

In July 2007, the American Congress decided that it would not consider the agreement with Colombia at that time; this was a massive setback to the Uribe government (The Economist: 18 July 2007). President Uribe was thereby compelled to return to the United States in August 2007 to discuss Congress' difficulties with the FTA (El Espectador: 29 August 2007). The controversy regarding the FTA became so heated that President Bush warned Congress that any further delays could galvanize Hugo Chávez's anti-American campaign (El Espectador: 23 October 2007). As will be discussed in the Colombian website analyses section, the *Para-Política* scandal, and its consequential threats to American aid, may have played an important role in the design and content of the homepages.

3.2.1.6 The Colombian Armed Forces

The third highest spender on national defence in South America (Rojas 2007: 20), the Colombian military totals 178,000 soldiers (Reuters: 5 March 2008). Even though military service is obligatory to Colombian males, myriad loopholes and possible deferments limit the number of enlistees (Silva Cano: 17 August 2009). For example, men who are wealthy enough (or whose families are wealthy enough) to attend (or merely register for) university are able to

defer[120] military obligations. By taking advantage of technicalities such as university studies, there is a disproportionate amount of poor soldiers[121] in the Colombian military (Silva Cano: 17 August 2009). As a result, the military is deemed a weakly motivated, under-prepared, and ineffective institution (LeoGrande & Sharpe 2000: 6-7; Robinson 2000: 67). In spite of these criticisms of the Colombian Armed Forces, several news reports surfaced in 2007 that documented the military's accomplishments in the war on drugs[122] and against guerrillas[123]. The military enjoyed further acclaim by successfully rescuing kidnapped people from FARC captivity[124]. The most notable rescue was that of former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancour in 2008 (Globe and Mail: 2 July 2008; McDermott: 4 July 2008; Romero & Cave: 4 July 2008).

However, the Colombian military is also accused of shocking human rights violations against unarmed civilians (Meza: 1998). In 2007 and 2008, extra-judicial massacres of civilians[125] received wide attention in the media. The accusations become more appalling when it was revealed that members of the Colombian military dressed up the corpses of murdered civilians in FARC uniforms in order to claim

[120] The deferment for university study requires that students pay a tax of 1% of their family's wealth (Silva Cano: 17 August 2009).
[121] The Colombian government exploited the impoverished nature of the enlisted soldiers by offering promotions and cash bonuses to the soldiers who kill rebels (Caesar: 22 February 2009).
[122] For a sampling of such news articles see: Ejercito.mil.co: 7 January 2007a, 9 April 2007, 5 September 2007; Gonzalez: 30 April 2007; Kraul: 2 August 2007; BBC News: 2 May 2007a, and Forero: 11 September 2007.
[123] For a sampling of articles related to the military successes in battles versus the FARC see: Ejercito.mil.co: 17 January 2007, 21 February 2007, 27 February 2007, 11 March 2007; El Espectador: 31 January 2007, 5 March 2007; BBC News: 5 March 2007a, and El Tiempo: 13 March 2007.
[124] For a sampling of articles related to successful rescue missions see: Ejercito.mil.co: 7 January 2007b and International Herald Tribune: 31 January 2007.
[125] For a sampling of articles related to military massacres see: El Espectador: 15 January 2007; Muse: 1 March 2007; Bronstein: 27 March 2008 & 1 November 2008; Bonello: 22 August 2008; Los Angeles Times: 6 September 2008; Knoester: 1998: 85, and Lee: 2011: 37.

cash bonuses or in an effort to conceal the extra-judicial killings[126]. The Colombian military is also the subject of intense scrutiny with respect to its relationship and cooperation with drug traffickers[127]. According to LeoGrande and Sharpe (2000: 3), this type of corruption is a consequence of the low salaries paid to the soldiers.

3.2.1.7 The War on Drugs

The public face of the Colombian government devotes much political capital to solving the problems associated with its role in the international drug trade. It was President Uribe's opinion that his government was winning the war on drugs (BBC Mundo: 3 February 2007). Similarly, Colombia's closest political ally, the United States (under the administration of George W. Bush), also argued that the war on drugs was progressing well and was working (BBC News: 12 March 2007; Kraul, 9 November 2007; Eilperin, 2 July 2008). However, according to LeoGrande and Sharpe (2000: 1-2), the American government's solution to the drugs problem erroneously focused on the production process in Colombia, rather than the social and medical symptoms of drug abuse and addiction. By eradicating crops, destroying labs, and interrupting drug traffic in Colombia, the American government hoped to limit the amount of cocaine that enters the United States. The reduced volume should then theoretically have increased the street price of cocaine, making it largely unaffordable, thereby reducing demand. While this approach may be effective, it has yet to be successful. According to Gould (11 March 2007), the efforts spearheaded by Plan Colombia have "neither

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[126] For a sampling of such events see: Bronstein: 15 March 2007 & 29 April 2008; Telesurtv.net: 25 March 2007; Guardian Unlimited: 30 October 2008; Kraul: 21 August 2008, and Guillen & Reyes: 29 June 2009.

[127] For a sampling of articles that document the alleged dealings between the Colombian military and the drug industry see: Bronstein: 30 July 2007; BBC News: 31 July 2007; Prensa Latina: 14 August 2007; Reuters: 17 August 2007; Forero: 8 September 2007; Kraul: 18 January 2008, and Knoester: 1998.

reduced the country's coca crop nor the availability of cocaine in the United States."

Indeed, the confluence of a war on drugs and guerrillas is evident in the country's crime statistics. While the murder rate in Colombia has dropped steadily since the 1990s (The Economist: 7 July 2011), an average of 25,000[128] people continue to be killed per year in the South American nation (Dudley: 1998). On the ground, violence is felt most sharply in in the countryside where coca is grown (Romero: 27 July 2008) and in the port cities, where cocaine is set for transportation (Romero: 22 May 2007). Essentially, the Colombian government is trying to fight a war with the guerrilla groups while simultaneously trying to satisfy the American war on drugs, both of which are unlikely to be won by injecting financial aid into Colombia. According to LeoGrande and Sharpe (2000: 10), the implementation of American money into the Colombian conflict "will expand the war, leading to more casualties and the displacement of more civilians, harden animosities on all sides, and prolong a conflict that must ultimately be settled at the bargaining table."[129]

3.2.1.8 Thematic Checklist for Colombian Website Analyses

- the FARC conflict
- the extra-legal role and actions of the paramilitaries
    - the *Para-Política* Scandal
- the cocaine trade and the war on drugs

[128] According to Dudley (1998) 25,000 murders per year "is 10 times greater than that of the per capita homicide rate in the US."

[129] In October 2012, peace talks began between FARC and the Colombian government in Oslo, Norway (BBC News: 18 October 2012). Issues at the table in Oslo included the demobilization of both Farc members and Colombian soldiers (in response to the reduced threat from the rogue group) (McColl: 24 October 2012). As a token of good faith, the FARC declared a two-month long unilateral ceasefire (Franks: 19 November 2012). At the time of completing this thesis, the FARC ceasefire had expired and peace talks continued in Cuba (BBC News: 14 January 2013).

- Colombia's relationship with the United States
  - Free Trade Agreement
    - implications of the Colombian Army's human rights record and the plight of trade union activists

3.2.2 Homepage of the Colombian Army



Figure 273

Ejercito.mil.co on 6 May 2007.

3.2.2.1 Zones



Figure 274

Zones of ejercito.mil.co.

Zone one: **Banner and Menu I**

This zone is located in the upper-middle region of the webpage and displays a banner. Against a red camouflaged background, the left side of the banner includes the emblem of the Colombian Military and the words *EJÉRCITO NACIONAL. República de Colombia. Patria. Honor. Lealtad!* (National Army. Republic of Colombia. Country. Honour. Loyalty!).

On the right side of the banner is the image of a soldier wearing a dress uniform shaking the hand of another soldier dressed in camouflage fatigues. The two men are standing in front of a group of soldiers. To the left of the image is the text: *Somos un Ejército disciplinado, victorioso y respetuoso de los Derechos Humanos* (We are a disciplined and victorious Army [that is] respectful of Human Rights). The words *Derechos Humanos* are written in a larger text than the rest of the sentence. The human rights image/text is backgrounded by a lighter and checkered red pattern that is distinct from the rest of zone one.

Above and to the left of the human rights' image is menu I. Menu I contains links to *Inicio* (Home), *Buscar* (Search), *Mapa* (Map), *Contacto* (Contact), *Registro* (Register), *Mi Portal* (My Portal), *Login*, *Enlaces* (Links), *English, Français* (French).

Zone two: Featured news, ESMIC advertisement, and Menu II

Located directly below zone one is the featured news item and ESMIC or *General José María Córdova Escuela Militar de Cadetes* (José María Córdova Military School for Cadets) advertisement in zone two. Between the left and right sides of zone two is a shaded grey rectangle.

Located on the left side of the zone is the featured image. The photograph is of two soldiers dressed in camouflage uniforms performing a medical exam on a crying child. The accompanying news headline states *2.000 personas se benefician en Jornada Interinstitucional en Puerto Rico, Meta* (2000 people benefit from the Inter-institutional Day in Puerto Rico, Meta). The article excerpt located to the right of the image states *La Cuarta División con apoyo del Centro de Coordinación de Acción Integal* (The Fourth Division with the help of the Centre of Integral Action Coordination [sic]). To

read the rest of the excerpt sentence the visitor has to click on the yellow *[Más]* (More) link located below the excerpt.

On the right side of the zone is an advertisement for the *ESMIC 1907-2007*. The advertisement is an image of the postage stamp that commemorates the school's centenary. Within the stamp is a portrait of the school's namesake, General José María Córdova[130], the *Arco de Triunfo* (Arc of Triumph) that is located on-site at the school in Bogotá, the school's emblem, and images of two cadets dressed in formal uniforms.

Below the image/text and ESMIC advertisement is the second menu on ejercito.mil.co. Menu II contains links to *Código de Honor* (Code of Honour), *Red de Cooperates*[131] (Co-operator's Network) *Galería de Imagenes* [sic] *Denuncie Aquí*[132] (Denounce Here). There is a yellow star above each link in menu II.

Zone three: Menu III

The listings in menus I and II are complemented by the third menu that can be found under zone one on the left side of the webpage. Under the date (*domingo 06 de mayo de 2007* –Sunday, 6 May 2007) is the title *Menú Institucional* (Institutional Menu). The menu includes links to *Conózcanos* (Get to know us), *Medios Institucionales* (Institutional Media), *Derechos Humanos y DIH* (Human Rights and International Human Rights), *Contratación* (Recruitment),

[130] Widely accepted to be a Colombian military hero, General José María Córdova is deemed "the best soldier in Colombian history." (http://www.clublancita.mil.co/index.php?idcategoria=247010)

[131] Similar to a countrywide neighbourhood watch program, the co-operator's network is a means by which Colombian citizens can contact a security agency in the event of suspected terrorism (http://www.ejercito.mil.co/index.php?idcategoria=435).

[132] The *Denuncie Aquí* link transports visitors to a website where they are encouraged to report information regarding the locations of kidnapped citizens. (http://www.ejercito.mil.co/?idcategoria=436)

Trámites[133] (Procedures), *Planeación y Normatividad*[134] (Plans and Regulations), *Divisiones del Ejército*[135] (Military Divisions), *Escuelas de Formación y Entrenamiento*[136] (Education and Training Schools), and *Hojas de Vida Aspirantes Cargos Públicos* (Resumés of candidates for public office).

Zone four: News articles

With the exception of the featured news article in zone three, zone four contains the remaining eight news headlines and news excerpts found on ejercito.mil.co. On 6 May 2007, the news articles were divided into three categories. The first category is labelled as *Noticias* (News) and is sub-categorized as *Operaciones contra el Narcotráfico* (Anti-Narcotics Operations). In this section are the following four articles: *Importantes decomisos de insumos en Norte de Santander y Arauca* (Important [drugs] materials seizure in Norte de Santander and Arauca), *Siete presuntos narcotraficantes capturados en La Guajira* (Seven suspected drug dealers captured in La Guajira),

[133] The *trámites* link transports the visitor to the *Trámites* portion of the army's website in which one can find links to *Incorporaciones* (Incorporations –how one can join the army in order to become an officer or professional soldier), *Información sobre Trámites* (Information for Procedures –service requirements, military health benefits, wages, and military documentation), *Quejas y Reclamos* (Complaints and Demands –an on-line form in which one can register an official complaint with the army), and *Requisitos para el reintegro* (Requirements for withdrawal from the military).

[134] Clicking on the *Planeación y Normatividad* link takes the visitor to the *Planes* webpage in which s/he can find details regarding the *Plan de Acción* (Plan of Action –the objectives, strategies, and parties responsible for realizing the army's objectives), *Plan de Desarrollo* (Growth Plan –a document that the details the investment plans in the army during the current presidential administration), and the *Plan de Acción Administrativo* (Administrative Action Plan –Designed by the Department of Public Administration, this plan determines the army's proposed goals, in accordance with previously designed policies).

[135] The *Divisiones del Ejército* page allows visitors to learn more about the seven-army divisions, the *Brigada de Apoyo Logístico* (Logistical Aid Brigade), *Brigada de Aviación* (Aviation Brigade), *Brigada Contra el Narcotráfico* (Anti-Narcotics Brigade), and *Encuesta* (Polling).

[136] The linked training & education schools are the *Escuela Militar de Suboficiales* (Military School for Non-Commissioned Officers), *Centro de Educación Militar* (Military Education Centre), and the *Centro Nacional de Entrenamiento* (National Centre for Training).

Terrorista muere en combates contra el Ejército (Terrorist dies in combat with Army), *Las Farc huyen del cerco militar dispuesto por el Ejército en el Meta* (The FARC flees from Army siege in Meta).

The second category in zone four is titled *Informes Especiales y Recomendados* (Special and Recommended Reports). The three articles in this section are: *FARC hiere y asesina, empleado artefactos prohibidos por Derecho Internacional Humanitario, a soldados de Ejército* (FARC injures and kills using devices prohibited by International Humanitarian Law, [according to] Army soldiers), *El Ejército recibe en Bogotá a niños de La Gabarra, Norte de Santander* (The Army receives children from La Gabarra and Norte de Santander), and *Farc asesina a tres soldados con minas antipersona* (FARC kills three soldiers with landmines). The second article under this category is accompanied by an image of approximately twenty individuals (civilians and uniformed soldiers) posing for a photograph.

The third and final news category is labelled *Política Institucional – Derechos Humanos* (Institutional Policy –Human Rights). The lone article under this heading is *Oficiales y suboficiales del Ejército son capacitados en Derechos Humanos* (Army Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers are trained in Human Rights).

Zone five: Menu IV

The fifth zone is located on the far right side of the webpage and consists of the fourth menu. Below an advertisement for the *Ejército Nacional Radio en Vivo* (a link to listen to the army's radio station), are seven numbered links that are headlined by the term *Destacados* (Featured). Each link in this zone is accompanied by a visual image. The first link is named *Incorporación y Trámites* (Information and Procedures) and is accompanied by the image of a soldier dressed in fatigues holding a rifle. The second link is to *Contratación*

(Recruitment) and is illustrated by the image of a fountain pen resting on a piece of paper. The third link is to *Nuestros Héroes* (Our Heroes) and includes a photograph of a solider standing in front of a sunset with his rifle drawn. The fourth link is to *Sinaí: Misión de Paz* (Sinai: Peace Mission). This link provides information regarding Colombia's role in the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) mission in the Middle East. The associated image is of the MFO emblem against the background of a desert sunset. The fifth link is *Preservación de la Fuerza*[137] (Preservation of the Force). This link is illustrated by the image of a camouflaged soldier holding a rifle while standing in front of a helicopter. The sixth link leads to the *Divisones Ejército Nal.* (National Army Divisions) and is accompanied by the army's emblem. The seventh and final link in zone five is to the *Club Lancita*[138] (Lancita Club). This link is illustrated by the image of Club 'reporter' Francisco and *Club Lancita* canine mascot.

Zone six: Menu V (Government links)

In this final zone of army's homepage one can find the fifth and final menu, a horizontal listing of six government-related links. The links in this section include: *Presidencia de la República* (Presidency of the Republic), *Ministerio de la Defensa* (Ministery of Defence), *Nacional Comando General Fuerzas Militares de Colombia* (General Command of National Armed Forces of Colombia), *Gobierno en Línea*

[137] The *Preservación de la Fuerza* link details the army's plan to root out extra-legal soldier behaviour. By way of campaigns and self-control programs, the army hopes to prove that *Todos somos responsables de mantener nuestro potentical humano. "En marcha por un ejército más seguro y professional"* (We are responsible for keeping our human potential. Forward March [toward] a more secure and professional army). (http://www.ejercito.mil.co/?idcategoria=73827).

[138] According to the 2007 *Club Lanzita*, or 'Little Lance Club' webpage, the club is *un proyecto que busca brindar a los niños y jóvenes entre 5 y 16 años, un lugar de entretenamiento y formación, creado y diseñado exclusivamente para ello sin contenidos violentos, discriminatorios, groseros o de doble sentido* (a project that seeks to provide to children and youth from 5-16 years of age a place for entertainment and education, that is created and designed exclusively for them without violent, discriminatory, vulgar, or questionable content).

(Government On Line), *Corporación Matamoros*[139] (Matamoros Corporation) *Shared Responsibility*[140]. At the bottom of zone six one can find contact information for the army, including postal address, telephone number, and the webmaster's email address.

3.2.2.2 Images & Texts to be reviewed

1. Featured article and advertisement
2. Multiple menus and links
3. News articles
4. Multimodal analysis of the banner image & text

3.2.2.2.1 Featured article and advertisement

The salient location of the featured article and advertisement (figure 275) in the upper central area lends increased importance to zone two. The content found in this area thereby sets the tone for the rest of the homepage.



Figure 275

Ejercito.mil.co featured article and advertisement.

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[139] Established in 1986, the *Corporación Matamoros* is a private non-profit corporation whose objective is to support soldiers, marines, and policemen who have been wounded in battle, the widows and orphans of fallen soldiers and the families of abducted or missing citizens (http://www.corporacionmatamoros.org.co/Contenido/Default.aspx?id=14&detectflash=false).

[140] The *Shared Responsibility* link transports the visitor to an English-language website entitled 'Cocaine for Europeans: Pain for Colombians'. This webpage provides facts regarding drug consumption in Europe, personal accounts written by those involved in the coca procurement process, and means by which visitors to the website can help. It is interesting to note that the United States and its consumption of cocaine are not mentioned on the Shared Responsibility website. (http://www.sharedresponsibility.gov.co/).

On 6 May 2007, while the featured article reinforces the positive impact that soldiers have on a daily basis within the Colombian community, the ESMIC advertisement heralds the centenary of the General José María Córdova Cadet Military School. The featured article and advertisement work together to saturate zone two with institutional pride and invite visitors to learn more about the cadet training school and imagine military life post-graduation. By promulgating humanitarian campaigns, such as the health services provided to the child pictured in figure 275, the military is able to raise its public profile.

News articles that document soldiers' benevolent nature or other positive attributes of the Colombian military are known as *positivos*[141] (positive awareness campaigns). As the focal point for the military's homepage, the inclusion of *positivos* is rampant in zone two. For example, the featured article on 4 March 2007 (figure 276) demonstrates that the Colombian army provides medical care to captured FARC soldiers. The corresponding advertisement illustrates that the military is comprised of junior and senior members who promise to uphold core values such as sustaining democracy.



Figure 276

[141] Journalist Liliana Segura describes *positivos* as a central tool in President Uribe's "results-oriented doctrine of "seguridad democrática," positivos are the successful missions — often measured in guerrilla corpses — that yield money and professional advancement for those involved. Recently, positivos have led to some gross displays of military pageantry, like a staged "rescue" operation last summer in which six innocent "kidnappers" were murdered and then dressed as FARC guerrillas." (CBS News: 10 March 2007).

Ejercito.mil.co featured article and advertisement on 4 March 2007.

Article text states: *Farc, emplean menores indigenas. Herido un integrante de las farc, que al ser atendido por los enfermeros de combate del Ejército, se estableció que se trataba de un menor indígena de 14 años de edad.* (Farc uses indigenous children. Army combat nurses treat a wounded Farc member who is an aboriginal 14-year-old child.

Advertisement text states: *Seré siempre un Militar, defensor y sosten de la Democracia.* (I will always be a Military defender and supporter of Democracy).

In figure 277, army protection during the holiday season is matched with an eye-catching advertisement regarding the military's commitment to human rights.

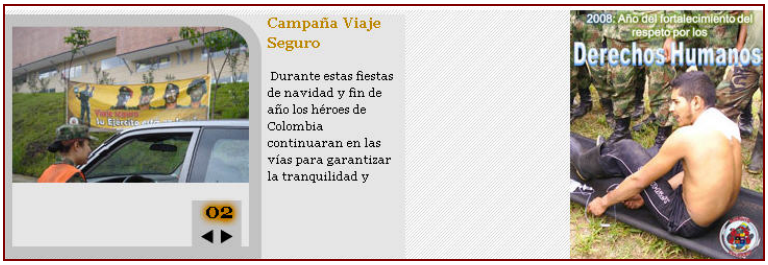


Figure 277

Ejercito.mil.co featured article and advertisement on 13 January 2008.

Article text states: *Campaña Viaje Seguro. Durante estas fiestas de navidad y fin de año los héroes de Colombia continuaran* [sic] *en las vías para garantizar la tranquilidad y...* (Safe Travel Campaign. During the Christmas holiday and New Year the Colombian heroes will continue to ensure tranquillity and…)

Advertisement text states: *2008: Año del fortalecimiento del respecto por los Derechos Humanos.* (2008: Year of strengthening respect for Human Rights).

On 10 February 2008 (figure 278), humanitarian campaigns, similar to those described on 6 May 2007, are united with proclamations regarding rules of engagement and respect for human rights.

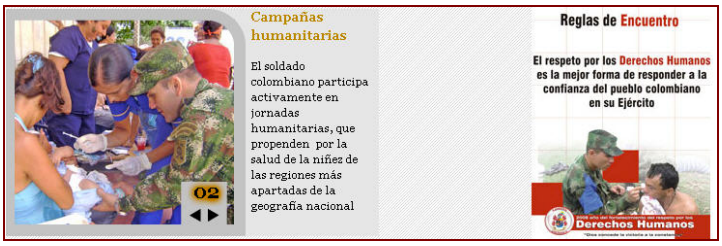


Figure 278

Ejercito.mil.co featured article and advertisement on 10 February 2008.

Article text states: *Campañas Humanitarias. El soldado colombiano participa activamente en jornadas humanitarias, que propenden por la salud de la niñez de las regiones más apartadas de la geografía nacional.* (Humanitarian Campaigns. The Colombian soldier is actively involved in humanitarian days, which promote children's health in the most remote regions of the country).

Advertisement text states: *Reglas de Encuentro. El respecto por los Derechos Humanos es la mejor forma de responder a la confianza del pueblo colombiano en su Ejército* (Rules of Engagement. Respect for Human Rights is the best way to respond to the Colombian people's confidence in its military).

On 21 July 2008, the successful rescue of hostages (including, most notably, former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt) is coupled with an advertisement for the victorious Operation Checkmate (figure 279).

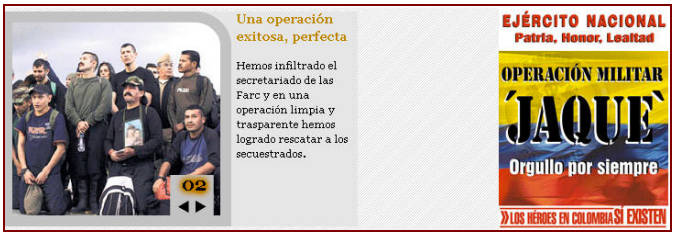


Figure 279

Ejercito.mil.co featured article and advertisement on 21 July 2008. Article text states: *Una operación exitosa, perfecta. Hemos infiltrado el secretariado de las Farc y en una operación limpia y transparente hemos logrado rescatar a los secuestrados.* (A successful and pefect operation. We infiltrated the FARC secretariat and in a clean and transparent operation we have managed to rescue the hostages.) Advertisement text states: *Ejército Nacional. Patria. Honor. Lealtad. Operación Military 'Jaque' Orgullo por siempre. Los Héroes En Colombia Sí Existen.* (National Army. Country. Honour. Loyalty. Military Operation 'Checkmate'. Pride forever. Heroes in Colombia do exist.)

During a time when the Colombian military received significant bad press regarding its extra-legal practices (see section 3.2.1.6 for a description), the abundance of *positivos* is balanced only by an unassuming link in zone five to *Preservación de la Fuerza* (figure 280).



Figure 280

Preservación de la Fuerza (Preservation of the Force) link in zone five.

The presence of *positivos* throughout ejercito.mil.co (in the featured article and advertisement in zone two, the human rights banner in zone one, and the multiple news stories published in zone four) considerably overshadows the inconspicuous admission of responsibility demonstrated in figure 280.

3.2.2.2.2 Multiple Menus and Links

The majority of the verbal information on the military's homepage can be divided into the article headings and excerpts in zone four and the links found in the multiple menus (circled items in figure 281).



Figure 281

Multiple menu locations.

One may interpret this division as an invitation for the visitor not only to visit the military's homepage, but also to use the website primarily as a starting point from which to visit other institutional

websites. The balance of verbal material shifts farther towards menu content in July 2007, when menu III grants greater detail to the *Nos Escriben* (Write to us) link and adds a *Resumen Subportales* (Subportals Summary) that offers links to ten additional news stories (figure 282).



Figure 282

Additional menu items on 1 July 2007.

On 6 May 2007, the 41 links found on ejercito.mil.co, of which three[142] are repeated, transport the visitor to various military, government, and general knowledge websites. The five menus compete against one another for visual salience as each utilizes a different method to attract the eye of the visitor. For example, menu I (figure 283) is located at the top of the website in an area that is above-the-fold. However, compared to the other items in zone one, the small size of the menu's text diminishes its overall salience.

[142] The three repeated links are: *Buscar* (Search) which is found in both menu I and III; *Contratación* (Recruitment) which is found in menus III and IV; and *Trámites* (Procedures) also found in menus III and IV.



Figure 283

Menu I on 6 May 2007.

By selecting the second last link in this menu, *English*, the visitor is transported to a pared-down English-language version of ejercito.mil.co. It is not surprising, given the close relationship between the Colombian and American governments, to find an English translation link. Similarly, the final link in menu I is to a French version of the homepage (*Français*). One may explain the presence of that link as a reflection of the important trade and investment agreements signed by Colombia and the European Union[143]. The linguistic translations continue to grow in 2008, as Portuguese (figure 284) and German (figure 285) are added to the menu, perhaps being indicative of a dialogue with an international audience.

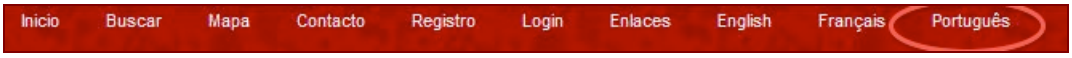


Figure 284

Portuguese (*Portugués*) translation included in Menu I on 13 April 2008.

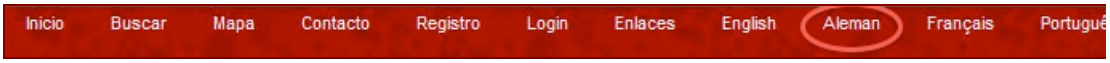


Figure 285

German (*Alemán*) translation included in Menu I on 1 June 2008.

[143] *Delegación de la Unión Europea en Colombia* (http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/colombia/eu_colombia/political_relations/index_es.htm)

Menu II (figure 286), located in the middle of the upper section of the website, is written in capital letters, and is emphasized by four yellow stars.



Figure 286

Menu II on 6 May 2007.

Ironically, the visual impact of menu two is reduced by its asymmetrical placement. When one examines this menu within zone two (figure 287), it is the only element that is justified to the right whereas the featured news article and advertisement are centred in the visual space.



Figure 287

Menu II within zone two.

Notwithstanding the right-hand justification of the news categories in zone four, menu II appears to float adrift and consequentially blends into the background. Menu III garners appropriate attention from the website as it is located in the prototypical menu location. Menu IV (figure 288) is salient, but is also heavily embellished.

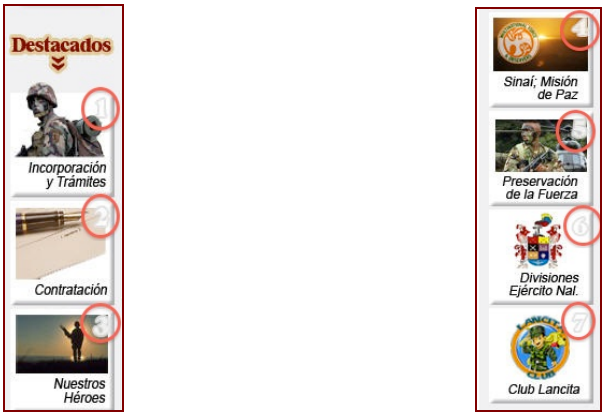


Figure 288

Menu IV in zone five.

The inclusion of the title *Destacados* (Highlights), along with the heading's double arrows (which are not found below the *Menú Institucional* in zone three), images and titles for each link, and link numbers (circled in figure 288) contribute to fussiness on the military's homepage and detract from the menu's contents. While the location of menu IV had changed since 2006 (figure 289), the contents did not vary widely.



Figure 289

Menu IV on 17 August 2006.

Throughout 2007 and 2008, menu IV only changed slightly from the version seen on 6 May 2007 as a link to *Testimonios Desmovilizados* (Demobilized [Soldiers'] Testimonies) appeared in March 2008 (figure 290).



Figure 290

Menu IV on 17 March 2008.

The impact and noticeability of the fifth menu is hindered by its peripheral location at the bottom of the website. However, this menu contains two interesting links. The first notable link (labelled '1' in figure 291) is that to the presidency of the republic.



Figure 291

Menu V.

This link is distinct, as neither President Uribe's name nor likeness can be found on this homepage. Furthermore, the name and likeness of the military's leader, General Montoya, is also not mentioned. This lack of a unifying figure is notable when one observes that none of the soldiers pictured on ejercito.mil.co is identified.

Link two in figure 291, the second of two English links on the Colombian military's homepage, is entitled 'Shared Responsibility'. As described in the footnotes on page 258, this link transports visitors to an English-language website regarding cocaine production. The inclusion of this link as part of the government links in menu V underlines the importance of Colombia's diplomatic relationship with the United States.

3.2.2.2.3 News Articles

The news articles (enumerated in figure 292) in zones two and four can be classified under three thematic headings: community service, anti-terrorist effort, and human rights.



Figure 292

News articles.

With respect to the first category, the featured news article in zone two and article seven in zone four (*El Ejército recibe en Bogotá a niños de La Gabarra, Norte de Santander*) describe the humanitarian efforts put forth by the military. Its engagement with the surrounding communities, especially those that are poverty stricken, demonstrates the army's commitment to service beyond anti-terrorist and drug missions. However, it is worthwhile noting that zone two's featured news article area is not solely devoted to

publicizing humanitarian missions; rather this section of the homepage is the site for various *positivos*. For example, the featured articles illustrated in figures 293, 294, and 295 publicize the killing of a FARC leader, the destruction of a terrorist complex, and advancements made against narco trafficking, respectively. As the most prominent news article on the homepage, zone two's featured news piece acquaints the visitor with the most recent actions taken by the people's military.



Figure 293

Featured news article on 22 April 2007.

Article text states: *Cae cabecilla de la cuadrilla 28 de las Farc en Casanare. En la vereda Santo Domingo, Támara, tropas del Batallón de Contraguerrillas No. 29 "Héroes del Alto Llano", dieron de baja a Cabecilla de la cuadrilla 29.* (Ringleader of FARC's Gang 28 falls. In the village of Santo Domingo, Tamará, Counterinsurgency Battalion Number 29 "Heroes of the High Plains" discharged the Leader of the Gan 29).



Figure 294

Featured news article on 29 April 2007.

Article text states: *Localizados complejos de organizaciones terroristas. Cuatro laboratorios para el procesamiento de alcaloides y dos campamentos de las Farc fueron ocupados y destruidos por tropas del Ejército.* (Terrorist Organization Complexes Located. Four

laboratories for the production of alkaloids and two FARC camps were occupied and destroyed by army troops).



Figure 295

Featured news article on 4 March 2008.

Article text states: *Avanza lucha contra el narcotráfico. El Comandantes del Ejército supervisa erradicación manual de cultivos ilicitos en Putumayo. Área donde se han intensificado las operaciones contra el narcotráfico*. (Advance against drug trafficking. Army commanders oversee the manual erradication of ilegal crops in Putumayo. (The army) has intensified its operations against drug trafficking in this area.

The anti-terrorist message can be found in four of the nine article headlines. Articles two-five, classified under the headings *Noticias* (News) and *Operaciones contra el Narcotráfico* (Anti-Narcotics Operations), describe successful missions to dismantle a terrorist complex, capture of narco traffickers, eradicate of terrorists, and seize explosives. The central placement of these four articles indicates the importance of the anti-narcotics missions conducted by the military.

Concern for human rights is a central element on the 6 May 2007 version of the military's website. In addition to a presence in zones one, three, and five, references to human rights can be found in articles six, eight, and nine in zone four (references to human rights are circled in figure 296).

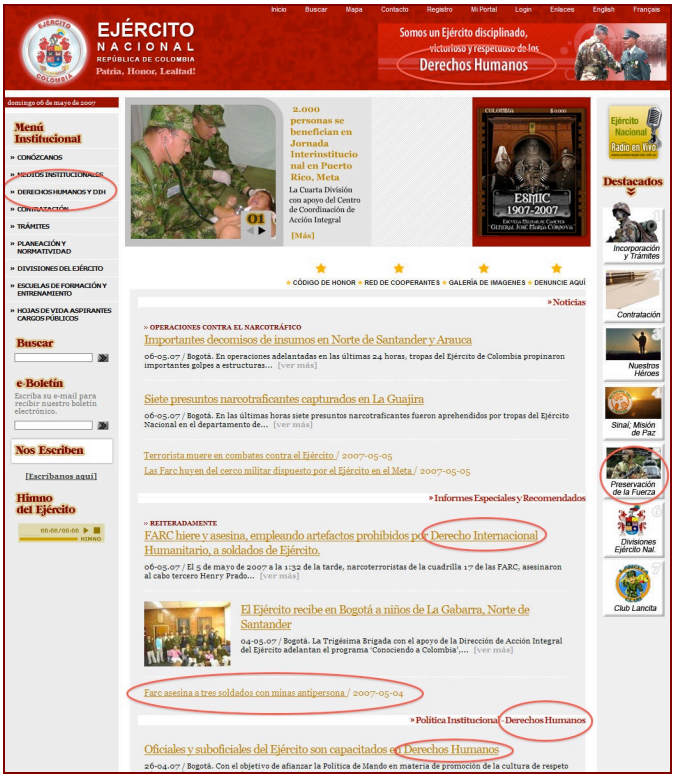


Figure 296

Overt and covert presence of human rights content.

Articles six and eight describe FARC's flagrant violations of human rights. Article nine, however, does not allude to military indiscretions, but rather states that both commissioned and non-commissioned officers are trained in human rights for the purpose of establishing institutional legitimacy. As described above, at the time of this homepage's capture, the media had publicized many accusations regarding the human rights encroachments and transgressions committed by the military. The presence of human rights commentary in one third of this zone's articles demonstrates the topical nature of this theme.

3.2.2.2.4 A Multimodal Analysis of the Banner Image & Text

The above description of ejercito.mil.co's zones (section 3.2.2.2) specifies that the banner image consists of a photograph of two soldiers shaking hands while standing in front of a military audience (figure 297).



Figure 297

Ejercito.mil.co banner image and text.

The soldier located on the left (soldier 'A') is dressed in a camouflaged uniform and the soldier on the right (soldier 'B') is wearing a formal dress uniform. The image is visually separated from the surrounding text by a pale red background. The background also includes four faint circles or watermarks (indicated by arrows in figure 298), pale lines, and one thin dark line below the words *Derechos Humanos* (circled in figure 298).



Figure 298

Backgrounded watermarks and lines.

When one examines the image closely, the most salient element in the background of the image is the circular watermark behind soldier A and the thick line in the background of the words *Derechos Humanos.* The watermark ensures that soldier A garners more emphasis than

his colleague. The words *Derechos Humanos* also acquire more attention than the other verbal text as they are written in a larger font, are placed on top of the pale line, and are underlined. These characteristics act as a virtual highlighter for *Human Rights*. It is noteworthy that neither soldier B nor the physical space behind him contains any watermarks. Soldier B is likely to be military personnel of inferior class, and as a consequence, his presence does not require further emphasis.

Circular watermarks and lines were not present in other banners that were featured in zone one. For example, on 19 August 2007, the featured banner included multiple rows of soldiers, none of which is emphasized by a watermark (figure 299).

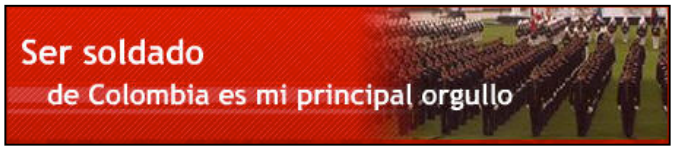


Figure 299

Banner image and text on 19 August 2007.

3.2.2.2.4.1 The Ideational Metafunction

3.2.2.2.4.1.1 Vectors

Soldiers A and B are looking at each other, thereby creating a unidirectional transactional vector.

3.2.2.2.4.1.2 Roles, Processes, and Circumstances

As soldier A appears older than his formally dressed colleague, I would argue that soldier A is the actor. The actor is doing the action of initiating the handshake. Consequentially, the goal or receiver of the action is soldier B. The behavioural process that is taking place in the image is handshaking. Soldier B's neutral expression does not exhibit any behavioural processes, such as smiling. The formal

attitude toward the represented participants is echoed in the relational process, as the soldiers are dressed in uniforms. There are no identifiable circumstances of location or manner, except for the possibility of the image being captured outside in daylight. The image's blurry background limits the possibility of the audience members to emit vectors and thereby does not permit them to be considered represented participants, but rather are more legitimately circumstances of accompaniment.

3.2.2.2.4.1.3 Classificational, Analytical, and Symbolic Structures

The taxonomical relationship is one of an overtly superordinate participant shaking the hand of an overtly subordinate participant. While at first one might classify soldier A as being subordinate due to his less formal uniform, that soldier's age (visible grey hair) is indicative of a superior military post. It is quite likely that the identity of soldier A is General Mario Montoya, as he was the Commander of the Colombian National Army from March 2006 until November 2008[144]. It is worthwhile to mention that his informal uniform does not signify that the surrounding event is informal. This is because General Montoya was frequently photographed wearing a camouflage style uniform (figures 300 and 301).



Figure 300

General Mario Montoya in camouflage uniform at a press briefing on 24 February 2008[145].

[144] http://www.ejercito.mil.co/?idcategoria=207827
[145] http://www.ejercito.mil.co/?idcategoria=199008



Figure 301

General Mario Montoya in camouflage uniform on 21 July 2011[146].

As a reflection of the featured advertisement in zone two, one may also speculate that the handshake took place during the graduation ceremony at ESMIC.

With respect to the analytical structures, the carrier is the handshake shared by soldiers A and B. Following that, the possessive attributes are the distinct uniforms and the backgrounded military audience members. The topographic and topological structures appear to be accurate. Temporal structures are absent with the exception of possible sunshine focused on the back of soldier A.

Regarding symbolic structures, the image alone signifies the ceremonial aspects of military life. However, if one considers the image to be an accompaniment to the adjoining verbal text and to the ESMIC advertisement, the handshake can be an asseveration of human rights as an integral part of military education. In this image, the carrier includes both soldiers, as one cannot shake hands alone. The symbolic attribute is the military audience that, while optional, lends a sense of solemnity and ceremony to the occasion. The backgrounded haziness can be considered a symbolic suggestive process. The vague background allows for the camera's focus to centre on the handshake.

[146] Semana (21 July 2011).

3.2.2.2.4.2 The Interpersonal Metafunction

3.2.2.2.4.2.1 Perspective

3.2.2.2.4.2.1.1 Shot Type

With respect to the perspective, the image is medium-close as the participants are visible from above the hips. This perspective is appropriate for a ceremonial handshake.

3.2.2.2.4.2.1.2 Vertical and Horizontal Angles

The vertical angle is slightly low, as the camera points upwards towards the soldiers. This angle is also apt, given the superiority of soldier A. The image's horizontal angle is oblique as the frontal planes of soldiers A and B diverge from the image producer. Even though this angle contributes to audience detachment, this separation is not offensive as the handshake is an event shared by the represented participants, and should not require the participation of an audience.

3.2.2.2.4.2.2 Modality

3.2.2.2.4.2.2.1 Depth and Detail

The post-production adjustments made to this image reduce its overall modality. For example, the image's depth, which can be measured as the discernable distance between soldiers A and B and their military audience, is compromised by the purposefully faded nature of the background. Furthermore, the background haziness imbues those soldiers with a ghostly appearance, which also reduces the image's modality.

3.2.2.2.4.2.2.2 Colour

Issues regarding colour purity and modulation are evoked by the multiple shades of red. The nearly pinkish hue present in the sky

reduces modality, when compared to the naturalistic sky colour depicted in the banner on 21 July 2008 (figure 302).

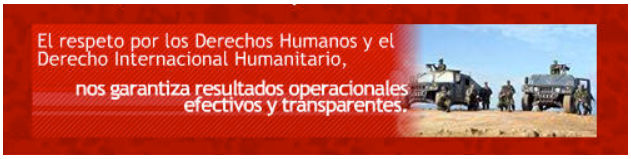


Figure 302

Banner image on 21 July 2008.

On 6 May 2007, the variance in the backgrounded red from bright, to muted pink, to nearly white diminish modality, as such colouring does not exist in real life.

3.2.2.2.4.2.2.3 Lighting, Illumination, and Clarity

With respect to lighting and illumination, the brightest element of the image is soldier A's back and neck. Using the pale watermark as a guide, the image of soldier A can be segmented into four quadrants. At the centre of the circle we can find the brightest spot in the image (figure 303).



Figure 303

Watermark focus on soldier A.

The brightness of soldier A elevates his overall importance within the banner. While this brightness is a noticeable aspect of the image, it raises the modality, as it can be attributable to sunshine.

3.2.2.2.4.2.2.4 Contextualization

The image in zone one is decontextualized as the setting is unidentifiable. The nameless foregrounded and backgrounded soldiers, and ambiguous spatial/ temporal markers contribute to a reduced modality. The only structure within this area that identifies the soldiers is the verbal text that specifies that 'we' are part of the army.

3.2.2.2.4.3 The Textual Metafunction

3.2.2.2.4.3.1 Coherence and Cohesion

Organizationally, the image is internally coherent as the represented participants and the backgrounded soldiers are all dressed in typical military clothing. External cohesion is accomplished by the nearby placement of the verbal text and the ESMIC advertisement in zone two. The adjectives *disciplinado*, *victorioso*, and *respetuoso* are of a serious nature and that sentiment is echoed in the ceremonial handshake illustrated in the image.

3.2.2.2.4.3.2 Framing

The image and text are framed from the other elements in zone one by dissonant backgrounds. Behind the *Ejército Nacional* emblem and menu I, the background is a dark red camouflage. However, the banner's text is backgrounded by a lighter checkered backdrop that is limited by a rectangular frame (figure 304).



Figure 304

Background frames in zone one.

The framing in this instance is somewhat muted, when contrasted with other banner images that have appeared on ejercito.mil.co. Figure 305 demonstrates a banner image that is starkly segregated by the surrounding zone.



Figure 305

Banner image on 26 February 2008.

Indeed, the frame between the banner's image and the written message is porous as the watermarks and horizontal lines connect the verbal and the visual material.

3.2.2.2.4.3.3 Salience

With respect to salience, by segmenting the banner into the verbal and visual content, the weight of particular items becomes more apparent (figure 306).



Figure 306

Banner divided into visual and verbal content.

For example, on the left, the verbal text contains eleven words, nine of which are located in the upper area, and two, *Derechos Humanos*,

are located below. The placement and text size of the words 'Human Rights' make that topic conspicuous and noticeable. On the right, soldier A gains visual prominence due to lighting and his size within the visual image. Soldier B, however, shares his space with many backgrounded colleagues.

3.2.2.2.4.3.4 Information Value

Regarding information value (figure 307), the banner's verbal material occupies the given information –that which is already known.



Figure 307

Banner's Information Value.

The image, then, can be classified as 'new' if we consider the military's values to be public knowledge. The hidden identity of soldier B, who may be a newly graduated officer, justifies the 'newness'. The centre-periphery distinction is not clearly identifiable in the banner, but it is worth noting that the lettering for 'Human Rights' is the largest piece of the partially centralized (indented) content.

3.2.2.3 Ejercito.mil.co Conclusions

3.2.2.3.1 General Conclusions

At first glance, the Colombian military's homepage seems replete with news articles and useful links to government websites. The

webpage makes use of many visual images and includes the country's national colours, which would be familiar to the Colombian visitor. However, there are multiple inconsistencies on this website that distract the visitor from the published military information. For example, in zone one, the motto *Patria, Honor, Lealtad!* is missing the pre-emptive ¡ (upside-down exclamation mark) that is required by Spanish grammar (figure 308).



Figure 308

Patria, Honor, Lealtad! Motto.

Other grammatical inaccuracies include the haphazard capitalization in zone one's banner (figure 309).



Figure 309

Capitalization in banner.

The first word of the sentence, *Somos*, is rightfully capitalized. However, *Ejército* (Army) and *Derechos Humanos* (Human Rights) are unnecessarily capitalized. In zone two, menu II bears inconsistent accentuation. While *código*, *galería,* and *aquí* are accurately accented, the word *imágenes* is unaccented (figure 310).



Figure 310

Menu II accentuation.

Furthermore in zone two, the excerpt posted next to the featured article is an incomplete thought and is therefore ungrammatical. Additionally, the quality of care demonstrated in the featured article's image is questionable as one of the soldiers is photographed not wearing surgical gloves while performing the medical examination.

The website in general is visually disadvantaged by an asymmetrical appearance and plenty of underutilized space (figure 311).



Figure 311

Asymmetrical appearance and underutilized space.

The areas on ejercito.mil.co indicated by the number 1 in figure 311 can be found at the bottom of zones three and five. A symmetrical frame for zones two and four would have been created had the lower limits of the *Himno del Ejército* and *Club Lancita* terminated at the same physical point. The number 2 in figure 311, signals further examples of vertical asymmetry. For example, the lower limit of *Menú Institucional* does not coincide with the lower limit of the *Radio en*

Vivo advertisement. Similarly, the bottom of the *Nos Escriben* link in zone three does not correspond with *Preservación de la Fuerza* in zone five. The asymmetrical quality of this webpage detracts the visitor from the content because it is indicative of a disorganized institution. The three areas in figure 311 that are enumerated by the number 3 signal regions that are underutilized. The empty space between the featured article and advertisement in zone two may have been put to better use. For example, this space could have contained the following words that would made the article excerpt coherent: "…*de la Presidencia de la República y la Dirección de Acción Integral del Ejército, realizaron una jornada interinstitucional médico - quirurgica en el municipio de Puerto Rico (Meta) los días 20, 21 y 22 de Abril, beneficiando a 2.000 personas.*" (of the Presidency of the Republic and the Office of the Comprehensive Action Army, conducted a medical-surgical integration day in the municipality of Puerto Rico (Meta) on the 20th, 21st, and 22nd of April, benefitting 2,000 people). Other examples of underutilized space can be found below zones three and five. As zone five is also significantly narrower than the corresponding zone three, there is a considerable amount of unutilized space to the right of that zone.

3.2.2.3.2 The probable reading path

The reading path on ejercito.mil.co is guided by the most salient elements of the visual space. Figure 312 demonstrates a probable reading path:



Figure 312

Probable reading path on ejercito.mil.co

As annotated above, the probable reading path for the Colombian military's homepage is:

1. Banner (including image and verbal text)
2. Featured article and advertisement
3. Some article titles

It is necessary to note that all of the likely targets on the reading path are located in the upper area of the webpage and would be visible to the visitor upon opening the website.

Zone one's bright red background and emphatic verbal text would immediately attract the visitor's attention. Following zone one, the visitor's eyes are likely to notice the large photograph in zone two's featured article. The dramatic image of the crying child's medical examination would secure the visitor's attention. However, the incomplete nature of the article's excerpt would dissuade the visitor from remaining in this zone. In comparison to the featured advertisements found in figures 277 and 279 above, the sombre colouring of the featured advertisement is unlikely to garner significant consideration from the visitor. Finally, the visitor may then read the article titles found in zone four. While the images in

zone five are visually interesting, their size diminishes their overall effect on the reading path.

On the 6 May 2007 edition of this website there are two thematic concepts that are ubiquitous. The first is the *positivo*. While facing negative international attention regarding the *Para-Política* scandal, the Colombian military uses its homepage to proclaim its good deeds and tales of success. Do the articles in zones two and four capture the hearts and minds of the Colombian people? Do such self-publications pass muster with an international audience (that speaks English or French)?

One may attempt to answer those questions by recognizing the second theme, human rights. As circled in figure 296 above, there are seven overt and covert references to human rights on ejercito.mil.co. At the time of publication in 2007, Colombia was soliciting the United States for increased monetary aid. It is interesting that while the American Congress was carefully scrutinizing Colombia's human rights reputation, the Colombian military's homepage became a beacon of civil liberties and bastion for humanitarian law. The combination of *positivos* and human rights content broaden the purpose of this homepage beyond the limits of being a repository for military information, but rather a sophisticated lobbying tool for international aid that is conveniently available in Spanish, French and, most importantly, English.

3.2.3 Homepage of the President of Colombia



Figure 313

Presidencia.gov.co on 11 March 2007.

3.2.3.1 Zones



Figure 314

Zones of presidencia.gov.co.

Zone one: **Banner**

This zone is located in the upper-middle region of the webpage and displays a banner. Against the background of the colours of the Colombian flag, the left side of the banner includes the image of the Colombian coat of arms, which bears the motto *Libertad y Orden* (Liberty and Order). In capital lettering, the centre of the banner states *Visita del Presidente Bush a Colombia* (President Bush's visit to Colombia). On the far right are the words *Casa de Nariño* (Nariño House, the residence and workplace of the President of the Republic of Colombia). Along the bottom of the zone, one can find the publication city (*Bogotá*), the date *11 de marzo de 2007* (11 March

2007), the publication time (06:35pm), a search (*Buscar*) box, and a search button (*Buscar*).

Zone two: Featured news images

Located directly below zone one are the featured news images of zone two. The featured image in this zone is a photograph of Colombian President Álvaro Uribe, his wife, Lina Moreno de Uribe, and sons Tomás and Jerónimo along with President George W. Bush and his wife, Laura. Below the image is the following caption: *En el Salón Luis XV de la Casa de Nariño, fue tomada la fotografía oficial del décimo primer encuentro entre los presidentes de Colombia y Estados Unidos, álvaro* [sic] *Uribe Vélez y George W. Bush, respectivamente. En la foto están (de izquierda a derecha) Tomás Uribe, hijo del mandatorio colombiano; Laura Bush, Primera Dama de Estados Unidos; George W. Bush, Álvaro Uribe Vélez, Lina Moreno de Uribe, Primera Dama de la Nación y Jerónimo Uribe, hijo del mandatorio colombiano."* (In Casa Nariño's Luis XV Salon the official photograph was taken of the eleventh meeting of the presidents of Colombia and the United States, álvaro [sic] Uribe and George W. Bush, respectively. In the photo are (from left to right), Tomás Uribe, son of the Colombian leader, Laura Bush, First Lady of the United States, George W. Bush, Álvaro Uribe Vélez, Lina Moreno de Uribe, First Lady of Colombia and Jerónimo Uribe, son of the Colombian leader.). While it is certainly typographical error to spell Colombian President's first name with a lower-cased letter 'a', this mistake is symbolically repeated throughout the president's homepage.

Below the official photograph are five small photographs showcasing events from the Bush visit to Colombia; including the American president's arrival by airplane, greetings shared between the leaders, images of the presidents involved in animated discussions, and a

photograph of President Bush conversing with Tomás and Jerónimo Uribe.

Zone three: News articles

Zone three contains all news headlines and news excerpts found on presidencia.mil.co. On 11 March 2007, the featured news article title was "*Apoyo total a la justicia para que Colombia supere totalmente el terrorismo"* (Complete support for justice for Colombia to totally defeat terrorism). The second article heading in this zone states: *"Voy a trabajar muchísimo para lograr la aprobación del TLC," dice Bush*" ("I am going to work very hard in order to achieve the approval of the FTA," says Bush). The lower segment of zone three contains seven news articles that are displayed in two vertical columns. The column on the right contains the following news headlines: *Bush promete trabajar por ley de reforma migratoria* (Bush promises to work for migratory reform law)*; Palabras del President de Estados Unidos en el almuerzo ofrecido por el President Uribe en su honor* (American President's remarks during breakfast offered by President Uribe in his honour)*; A US$717 millones asciende ayuda de EE. UU. para programas sociales de Colombia* (American help for Colombian social programs increases to US $717 million)*; TLC de Colombia y EE.UU. será generador de empleo y desarrollo económico* (Colombian Free Trade Agreement and the United States will be an employment generator and will grow the economy). The column on the left contains the following three headlines: *Palabras del Presidente durante el almuerzo ofrecido en honor al Presidente de Estados Unidos (*President's remarks during breakfast offered in honour of the President of the United States)*; Los encuentros Uribe-Bush* (The Uribe-Bush meetings)*; "Recibimos al Presidente Bush con amistad, con afecto, con gratitude"* (We receive President Bush with friendship, with fondness and with gratitude).

Zone four: Advertisements

The final zone on presidencia.gov.co includes the advertisements found at the bottom of the webpage. These advertisements are for the *Boletín Agrometeorológico* (Agro-Meteorological Bulletin)*; Gobierno en Línea* (Government On Line)*;* and *Aspirantes* (Candidates). The Candidates advertisement transports the visitor to a website in which candidates for high-ranking government employment post their candidacy and curriculum vitae for public consumption. Visitors to the *Aspirantes* website are encouraged to read the information regarding the job seekers and present their observations. Below the advertisements are links to the *Quejas y Reclamos* (Complaints and Advertisements) and the Webmaster. The website also provides a telephone number for the public to lodge a complaint regarding public services in Colombia.

3.2.3.2 Image & Texts to be reviewed

1. Banner
2. News
3. Multimodal analysis of featured news image
4. Links

3.2.3.2.1 Banner

What is most interesting about the banner on 11 March 2007 (figure 315) is the conspicuous departure from it's past (and future) appearance on the website.



Figure 315

Presidencia.gov.co banner.

For example, the official title of the website, *Presidencia de la República de Colombia* (Presidency of the Republic of Colombia) has either been pre-empted or has been temporarily changed to *Visita del Presidente Bush a Colombia* (Visit of President Bush to Colombia). This modification is significant because a visitor to presidencia.gov.co would expect to find the webpage's title at the top of the page. The 11 March 2007 title inadvertently dwarfs the importance of the Colombian president's role both on this webpage and within the Republic.

Other elements of the banner are absent on 11 March 2007. For example, links found in zone one are present on 4 March 2007 and 18 March 2007, but are missing on 11 March 2007 (see the circled areas in figures 316 and 317).



Figure 316

Presidencia.gov.co on 4 March 2007.



Figure 317

Presidencia.gov.co on 18 March 2007.

The links that appear in the weeks prior and subsequent to 11 March 2007 include connections to news, photos, videos, radio, email, press,

norms, government, state, other sites, RSS feeds to the presidency, and a podcast.

The lack of links not only in zone one, but also throughout the presidencia.gov.co webpage, limits the visitor's capacity to learn more about the role and political positions of the South American nation's leader. Indeed, the only information the website visitor would be able to access on 11 March 2007 would be details regarding the American diplomatic visit.

Given the drastic changes to this zone during the 2007 Bush visit, one might presume that the president's website is used as an official welcoming tool meant to acknowledge the presence of any foreign head of state. However, as figures 318 and 319 demonstrate, visits by the King of Spain in 2007 and the Chancellor of Germany in 2008 did not alter the appearance of zone one.



Figure 318

Presidencia.gov.co on 25 March 2007 (during visit of King Juan Carlos of Spain).



Figure 319

Presidencia.gov.co on 19 May 2008 (during visit of German Chancellor Angela Merkel).

Indeed, the subsumption of the president's website by the American diplomatic visit promotes President Bush to a superordinate position and diminishes the importance (and assumed power) of President Uribe.

3.2.3.2.2 News

There are nine news headlines in zone three. One should consider the article headlines and excerpts located next to zone two to be more salient than those located below zone two, as they are 'above the fold' and are framed from the remaining articles by a white space (as indicated by a red 'x' in figure 320).



Figure 320

News headlines and news excerpts in zone three.

The themes present in headlines one and two denote two cardinal issues in Colombia: terrorism (article one) and free trade with the United States (article two).

When compared to articles two-nine, article one bears the most visual weight for two reasons. Firstly, it is located slightly above the featured image in zone two. Secondly, this headline is distinct as it is written in red lettering and is not underlined. It is interesting that while both headlines one and two are citations, only the second headline clearly identifies the speaker (President Bush).

Indeed, the intention behind headline one can be attributed to either Bush or Uribe. It is only when the visitor clicks on the article title (that is not underlined, a mechanism normally required in order to identify a link), that s/he can determine that the speaker is President Uribe. The repetition of the word *total* in the headline contributes an alliterative quality of the citation (…***t*****o****t***a*l*…***t*****o****t***a*lmente el* ***t****errorismo*).

The remaining articles located below-the-fold detail other aspects of the Bush visit to Colombia. Headings four and five do not reveal significant details regarding article content. Upon clicking on the link for article four, President Uribe thanks President Bush for his support in Colombia's fight for democratic security. In article five, President Bush describes President Uribe as his friend. Bush also appreciates Uribe's strong leadership. The content of article five is the only place on the president's homepage that possibly alludes to the *Para-Política* crisis. In that article President Bush states "*Hemos llegado a su país en un momento donde ya han atravesado momentos difíciles y ahora ven un futuro halagüeño*." (We have arrived in your country when you have already passed through a difficult time and now you have a rosy future.). Even though the Bush visit took place in March 2007, when the *Para-Política* scandal had already touched dozens of congressmen, high-ranking military officers, President Uribe's campaign manager, a governor, and a former cabinet minister, it is surprising that the president's website does not make any tangible reference to this crisis. The American president's vague acknowledgement of 'difficult moments' does not recognize the extent to which the scandal had already engulfed Colombia. Indeed, it is possible that his statement did not refer to the scandal at all, but rather was a vague recognition of Colombia's drug and guerrilla dilemmas.

The functions of articles six-nine are to reaffirm the significant relationship between Colombia and the United States and to provide

information regarding the FTA. Article six describes in detail the previous ten meetings that have taken place between the two diplomatic leaders. That article also lists the agreements that are to be discussed during the March 2007 visit, most notably, the FTA, the Consolidation of Democratic Security, and Plan Colombia II.

The title of article seven refers to American funding for Colombian social programs. Of the $717 million investment, funds will be assigned to four specific areas of social concern: democratic governability, the promotion of economic and social alternatives to the production of illicit goods, support for the displaced and other vulnerable members of the population, and assistance in procuring the peace process in Colombia.

While article eight imparts the view that the FTA affirms President Bush's interest in South America, article nine delineates the positive attributes of the commercial treaty. In addition to those qualities outlined in the article's title (a generator of employment and economic growth), the FTA will encourage foreign investment, fight poverty, raise salaries, and lower the prices, increase the variety, and improve the quality of domestic goods and services.

As the majority of verbal material on the president's homepage is found in the article headings and excerpts, it is worth looking at the thematic focus of zone three's language. With respect to the verbs and nominal structures[147] found in this zone, the bulk of the language can be divided into either diplomatic agreement

[147] In alphabetical order, the following verbs (in infinitival form) and nominalizations can be found in zone three: *apoyar* (to support), *la aprobación* (the approval), *ascender* (to ascend), *asignar* (to assign), *brindar* (to offer), *comprometer* (to compromise), *la decisión* (the decisión), *la declaración* (the declaration), *encontrar* (to meet), *esperar* (to hope), *finalizar* (to finalize), *firmar* (to sign), *girar* (to centre on), *incluir* (to include), *la integración* (the integration), *invertir* (to invest), *lograr* (to attain), *la negociación* (the negotiation), *ofrecer* (to offer), *prometer* (to promise), *realizar* (to realize), *recibir* (to receive), *la recuperación* (the recuperation), la *revisión* (the revision), *superar* (to overcome), and *trabajar* (to work).

terminology or vocabulary that describes America's positive role in Colombia. The most marked diplomatic jargon includes the Spanish versions of 'to attain the approval of', 'to have ratified', 'to sign', 'the negotiation', and 'the revision'.

With respect to the positive outcome of American intervention, it is difficult to ignore terms such as 'to overcome terrorism', 'to offer help', 'integration in the fight against terrorism, drugs and poverty', and 'to support Colombia'. While this website demonstrates that the Uribe administration highly values the American presence in Colombia, this characteristic is trumpeted most obviously in the title and excerpt[148] of article eight. The repetition of the verb *recibimos* (we receive) and of the term *amigo/amistad* (friend/friendship) not only articulates that the American representative is welcomed warmly, but also clarifies that President Uribe is not speaking on his own behalf, but on the behalf of all Colombians.

3.2.3.2.3 A Multimodal Analysis of the Featured Image

The above description of presidencia.gov.co's zones (section 3.2.3.1) specifies that zone two consists of a photograph of Presidents Bush and Uribe along with members of their families (figure 321).

[148] The text excerpt of article eight states "*Recibimos al presidente Bush con amistad, con afecto, con gratitud. Recibimos al Mandatorio de un país amigo. Y recibimos el Presidente amigo, quien ha tenido toda la decisión de apoyar a Colombia en el proceso de superar el terrorismo y de superar las drogas*." (We receive President Bush with friendship, with fondness, with gratitude. We receive the head of state of a friendly country. We receive the president as a friend, who has made the decision to support Colombia in the process of overcoming terrorism and overcoming drugs.).



En el Salón Luis XV de la Casa de Nariño fue tomada la fotografía oficial del décimo primer encuentro entre los presidentes de Colombia y Estados Unidos, álvaro Uribe Vélez y George W. Bush, respectivamente. En la foto están (de izquierda a derecha), Tomás Uribe, hijo del mandatario colombiano; Laura Bush, Primera Dama de Estados Unidos; George W. Bush, Álvaro Uribe Vélez, Lina Moreno de Uribe, Primera Dama de la Nación y Jerónimo Uribe, hijo del mandatario colombiano.
Foto: Fernando Ruiz Nieto - SNE

Figure 321

Official photograph of President Bush's 11th meeting with President Uribe.

The image is visually separated from the surrounding text by a light grey background. Within the image, the participants are flanked on the left and right by windows. The background of the image contains dark grey curtains and grey wallpaper. The most salient aspect of the background is the golden picture frame located directly behind President Bush. The framed painting is a portrait of former Colombian president Rafael Reyes[149] de Pietro by artist Ricardo Acevedo Bernal (see figures 322 and 323 for clearer images of the portrait).

[149] A former army general, President Reyes was recognized as the brilliant administrator and diplomat who managed to procure reparations from the United States as a result of the creation of the Panama Canal. His portrait is one of two located in the Luis XV Salon in Casa Nariño, an antechamber in the Casa de Nariño that is typically used as the backdrop for official photographs. (http://www.presidencia.gov.co/prensa_new/historia/rafareyes.htm).



Figure 322

Portrait of President Rafael Reyes in background of Presidents Uribe and Horst Köhler of Germany on 13 March 2007[150].



Figure 323

Portrait of President Rafael Reyes in background of President Uribe and Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany on 17 May 2008[151].

As the American president is standing squarely in front of the Reyes portrait, the round internal frame provides a symbolic halo[152] around George W. Bush's head. The picture frame also centres the image thereby making President Bush the de facto focal point of the official photograph. With the exception of the first lady (figure 324), it is unusual for an official photograph to include other members of the first families.

[150] http://www.presidencia.gov.co/prensa_new/fotos/2007/marzo/13/foto8.htm
[151] http://www.tribunalatina.com/es/visitor.php?IDN=11421
[152] I was unable to find another image of a visiting dignitary whose head appeared within the picture frame's halo.



Figure 324

Official photograph of Presidents Uribe and Calderón of Mexico. The Presidents are accompanied by first ladies Margarita Zavala of Mexico and Lina Moreno of Colombia.

One might then wonder why the official photograph of the 2007 Bush visit included Tomás and Jerónimo Uribe. A possible explanation is to surmise that the Bushes and Uribes have an especially close relationship (further evidenced by the Colombian president's references to President Bush as his friend). The inclusion of the Uribe sons denotes a congenial atmosphere and consequently contributes to an assumed amicability.

3.2.3.2.3.1 The Ideational Metafunction

3.2.3.2.3.1.1 Vectors

As all of the participants are looking in the same direction (towards the photographer), the primary vector in the image is bidirectional and is formed by the gazes of each participant. There is no evidence of a direct address as none of the participants is speaking.

3.2.3.2.3.1.2 Roles, Processes, and Circumstances

The actors in the image are all of the participants, but Presidents Bush and Uribe may be considered the principle actors, as the diplomatic visit primarily concerns their interests. Each actor produces a non-transactional vector as their eye-lines do not meet,

but rather all point towards the photographer. President Bush, Mrs. Bush, and Jerónimo Uribe each denote the behavioural process of smiling. Interestingly, President Uribe, Lina Moreno, and Tomás Uribe bear no identifiable facial expression. The formal attitude toward the represented participants is echoed in the relational process, as both first families are dressed in an official manner in business suits. Circumstances of location in the photograph include the drapes, wall covering, and the Rafael Reyes portrait. These backgrounded elements provide proof that the photograph was taken in the *Salón Luis XV*. Aside from the drapes, there are no other circumstances of manner or accompaniment. It is interesting that there are no flags in the background of the official photograph. Official photographs in the United States are seldom captured without the presence of multiple flags (figures 325 and 326).



Figure 325

American flag in background of President Barack Obama and Argentinian Ambassador Jorge Argüello on 20 January 2012 (Mercopress: 20 January 2012).



Figure 326

American flag in background of President George W. Bush and Nobel Prize for Economics winner Paul Krugman on 24 November 2008 (Huffington Post: 25 November 2008.)

One may interpret the lack of flags as another indication of the closeness of the two principle actors. As the presence of the national symbol acts as a definitive circumstance of location and denotes the location of the photograph, it also reinforces a distance between the officials. This is because the hosting diplomat is visibly on his 'home turf' and implicitly yields an advantage. This distance is markedly absent in the featured photograph.

3.2.3.2.3.1.3 Classificational, Analytical, and Symbolic Structures

The taxonomical relationship between the image's participants is as follows. The central location of President Bush (and his noticeable height) gives the American president a slightly superordinate quality when compared to his Colombian counterpart. One may also speculate that Laura Bush's light coloured suit garners her a covertly superior aspect when compared with Lina Moreno. Tomás and Jerónimo are subordinate to all of the other participants in the photograph.

With respect to the analytical structures, the carrier is the grouping of the Bush and Uribe families. The possessive attributes can then be understood to be the individual participants. Topographically, the spatial relations appear to be accurate and the location of the carrier is the standard background for official photographs in Bogotá, the Casa de Nariño. Topologically, there is only a small distance between each of the participants. As one might expect, the greatest distance can be perceived between Laura Bush and Tomás Uribe. There is little distance between Mr. and Mrs. Bush. Similarly, there is no

distance between the Uribes located on the left side of the image. Temporally, with the exception of daylight streaming through the backgrounded windows, the image does not denote a timeline. The attached caption only indicates that this picture took place during the eleventh meeting of the two leaders.

With respect to symbolic structures, the image signifies the unity of the United States and Colombia. The presence of the Uribe children demonstrates the familiarity one may expect of a friendly relationship. Additionally, the placement of Tomás Uribe on the left envelops Laura and George Bush into the Uribe family. Indeed, while the carrier includes all of the individuals photographed, the essential participants are the two presidents. The wives and sons are therefore symbolic attributes, as their presence in the photograph is optional, but yields an amical atmosphere. There does not appear to be an obvious symbolic suggestive process, however, it can be noted that the camera flashbulb is reflected in President Uribe's glasses. The symbolic attributive process is one of formality.

3.2.3.2.3.2 The Interpersonal Metafunction

3.2.3.2.3.2.1 Perspective

3.2.3.2.3.2.1.1 Shot Type

With respect to the perspective, the image is between a medium-close and a medium-long shot in which the participants are visible to slightly below their knees. There is significant space visible above the heads of the participants. The inclusion of this extra space indicates that the photographer chose to capture particular details found in the physical space rather than the legs and feet of the represented participants. It is interesting that other official photographs of the president and visiting dignitaries taken in the *Salón Luis XV* (such as those featured above in figures 322 and 323)

are absolute medium-close shots, in which the participants are visible from the waist up. This distinction does not indicate that there is an even closer social relationship enjoyed between Uribe and Köhler or Merkel, but simply is a reflection of the number of represented participants. In the case of the Bush-Uribe photograph, the shot type denotes a formal relationship between the visitor and the represented participants. Citizens have a largely impersonal relationship with their president and there is an even greater distance with the leader of another nation. The participants' formal clothing and the Uribes' formal expression (with exception of Jerónimo) echo the formal quality of the image.

3.2.3.2.3.2.1.2 Vertical and Horizontal Angles

While the photograph's vertical angle is eye-level, a feeling of equality is not established between the visitor and the participants. One may contrast the Bush-Uribe image with that of figure 324 in which the camera angle is low, making the presidents appear larger than life. The horizontal angle is frontal and each participant is facing the camera directly. This angle signals an objective stance, or a 'this is who we are' presentation.

3.2.3.2.3.2.2 Modality

Even though the represented participants are posing for the photograph, the image's modality is high.

3.2.3.2.3.2.2 1 Depth and Detail

The level of detail is reasonably high, as details on the men's ties are visible, as are Laura Bush's earrings. The most detailed element in the photograph is the backgrounded picture frame. This level of clarity centres the image on George Bush.

3.2.3.2.3.2.2.2 Colour

Most of the colours in the image are muted (the blackness of the men's suits, Mrs. Bush's beige suit, Mrs. Moreno's white blouse and grey suit). The grey wall covering and drapes are an example of colour coordination, making the background one solid, saturated colour. Bright colours can be found in the ties of President Bush, President Uribe, and Tomás Uribe. While Mrs. Bush's suit is brighter than that of her fellow participants, the grey-beige tone nullifies any imbued importance.

3.2.3.2.3.2.2.3 Lighting, Illumination, and Clarity

Generally, the image brightness and lighting are neither unrealistically intense nor hazy. The brightness and illumination is what one might expect from an official photograph that was taken indoors. The element in the image that is illuminated most brightly is the Reyes portrait's frame.

3.2.3.2.3.2.2.4 Contextualization

With respect to contextualization, in order to identify the setting one would have to read the image's caption or be familiar with other official photographs of the Colombian president. That is to say, the background of the image does not clearly designate the location. The lack of flags or other national symbols further contribute to decontextualization.

3.2.3.2.3.3 The Textual Metafunction

3.2.3.2.3.3.1 Coherence and Cohesion

Organizationally, the image is internally coherent as the represented participants are posing formally, are facing the same direction, and are dressed according to expected protocol. The only challenge to internal coherence is the inconsistency of facial expressions. As stated above, only the Bushes and Jerónimo Uribe are smiling, the

other members of the Uribe family bear serious facial expressions. However, it is unlikely that President Uribe's facial expression is indicative of any apprehension regarding the Bush visit. Images captured during other visits indicate a rather friendly relationship with President Bush (figures 327 and 328).



Figure 327

Presidents Bush and Uribe and first ladies of the United States and Colombia during a visit to the Bush Ranch in August 2005.



Figure 328

President Bush welcomes President Uribe to the Oval Office in September 2008[153].

153 http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/09/images/20080920-4_d-0126-690v.html

The featured image bears external coherence on the webpage, as it is located directly below the banner in zone one that states: *Visita del Presidente Bush a Colombia*. Indeed, the entire presidential homepage is devoted to the presence of George Bush in Bogotá. Coherence is also achieved in the placement of five small images below the featured photograph (figure 329).



Figure 329

Five images of Bush visit found in zone two.

The images in figure 329 document events that took place during the same day as the featured image (the participants are wearing the same clothing). Cohesion amongst the represented participants is achieved by their formal dress and physical proximity. While the colours of Tomás Uribe, President Bush, and President Uribe's neckties coincide with the national colours of Colombia, Jerónimo Uribe's tie, Mrs. Bush, and Ms. Moreno's suits harmonize well with the neutral tones of the Salón Luis XV.

3.2.3.2.3.3.2 Framing

The windows create a horizontal frame within the image. The vertical frame is uneven as it consists of window coverings, grey walls, the Reyes portrait from above and the floor, white baseboards, and a chair behind Mrs. Bush from below. Beyond the borders of the image, the featured photograph is framed to the left by a thin grey line (which coincidentally coordinates with the grey tones of the Salón). A thicker grey line borders the image on the right. From below, the image is separated from the five images of figure 329 by a

link to *Noticias* (news) and *Fotos* (photos). From above, the image is distinguished from zone one by the *Buscar* (Search) button and search field. The featured image's framing within the homepage is subtle. The minimal framing allows the photograph to act as the primary illustration for the accompanying articles in zone three.

3.2.3.2.3.3.3 Salience

The most salient part of the featured photograph is the presence of President Bush. To demonstrate his physical importance, the red lines in figure 330 divide the image into four equal quadrants, and place George Bush at the spatial centre.

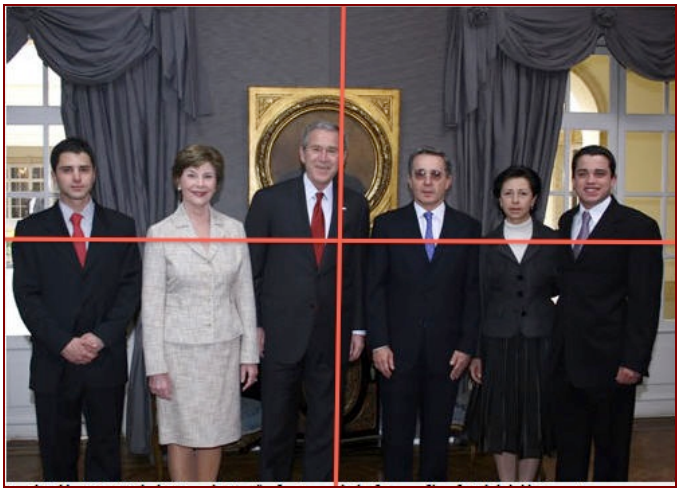


Figure 330

Featured image divided into quadrants.

Similarly, a slight line is visible above the Reyes portrait (figure 331).



Figure 331

Centre line above George W. Bush (I).

If one were to continue the line in the wall, it would also place President Bush at the centre of both the Reyes portrait and the entire featured photograph (figure 332).



Figure 332

Centre line above George W. Bush (II).

The centrality of President Bush and consequential relegation of President Uribe on the Colombian president's homepage is a recurrent theme on presidencia.gov.co.

3.2.3.2.3.3.4 Information Value

With respect to information value, figure 333 delineates the different zones of the featured image.

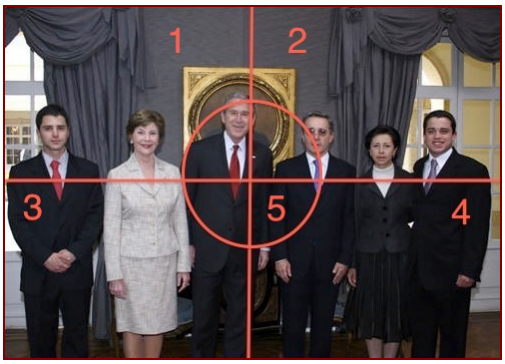


Figure 333

Featured image: Information value.

In the case of this image, the distinction between left and right (given and new) is not easily applicable. Similarly, the top-bottom differentiation (ideal and real) is also difficult to discern. However, the distinction between elements that are central and those that are peripheral is apparent. The presence of George W. Bush in the absolute centre of the photograph magnifies the American President's status within the image. Interestingly, President Uribe is marginalized, as only his right shoulder and arm are located in the nucleic area of the photo. The first wives and the Uribe children are the most marginalized in the photograph. When contrasted with other official photographs, especially those found in figures 323 and 324, the focal point of the image is divided equally amongst the domestic and foreign dignitaries. In the case of the featured image on 11 March 2007, the locus of the photograph is the visiting diplomat.

3.2.3.2.4 Links

On 11 March 2007, the majority of the links on presidencia.gov.co can be found in zone three. In the case of the presidential homepage, the presence of 21 links is only striking when it is compared to the amount of links that were present one week before and one week subsequent to the Bush visit. On 4 March 2007, there were 60 links on presidencia.gov.co. On 18 March 2007, there were 75 links.

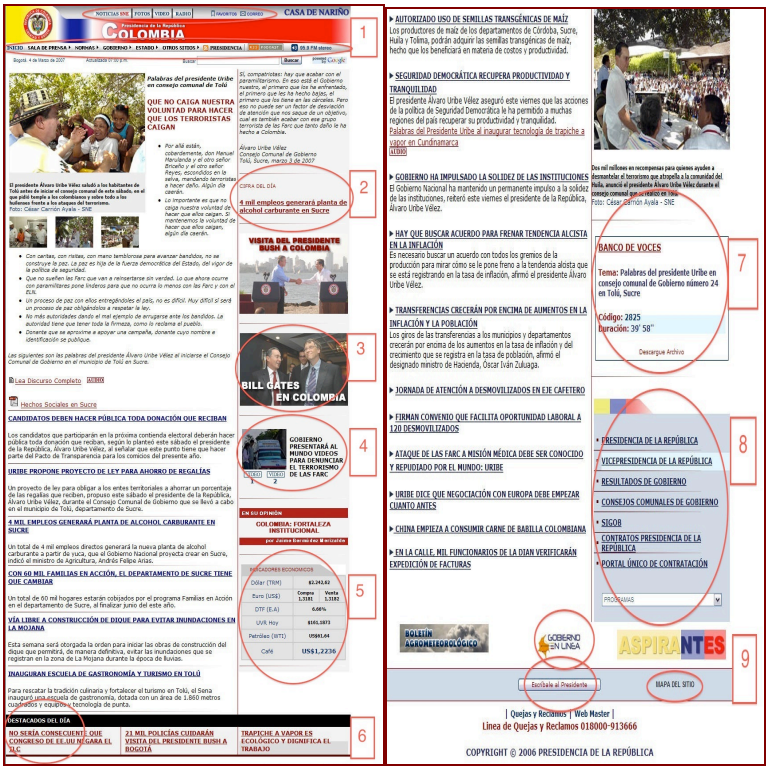


Figure 334

Presidencia.gov.co on 4 March 2007 (top of page on the left, bottom of page on the right).

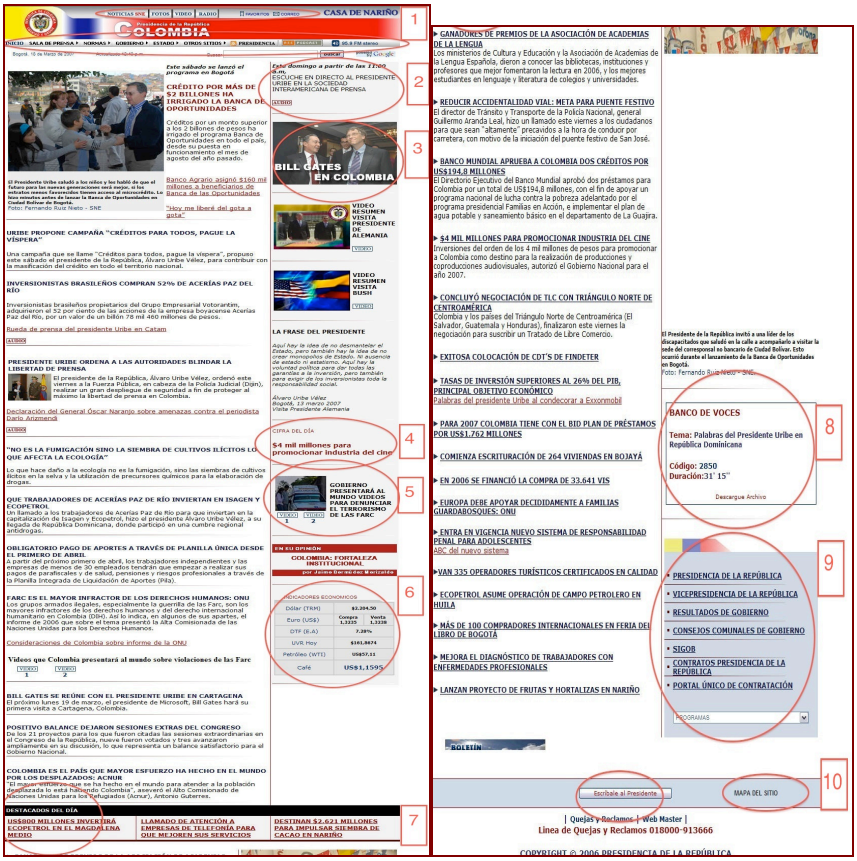


Figure 335

Presidencia.gov.co on 18 March 2007 (top of page on the left, bottom of page on the right).

To illustrate the extent to which the Colombian president's homepage responded to the American president's visit, I have circled and enumerated sections of the same webpage as it appeared one week prior and one week following the Bush visit in 2007. Area one of both figures 334 and 335 includes 16 links[154] within the limits of zone one. During the Bush visit, the only link available in zone one was the search box. On 18 March 2007, area two contained a link that once clicked upon allowed the visitor to listen to a live speech by

[154] Area one on 4 March 2007 and 18 March 2007 included links to *Noticias SNE* (News from the Press Office of the President), *Fotos* (photos), *Video*, *Radio*, *Favorito* (Favourite), *Correo* (Mail), *Inicio* (Home), *Sala de Prensa* (Press Room), *Normas* (Guidelines), *Gobierno* (Government), *Estado* (State), *Otros Sitios* (Other Sites), *Presidencia* (Presidency), *RSS Podcast*, *93.9 FM*, and *Buscar* (Search).

the president at 11:00am. Area two in figure 334 and area three in figure 335 provided information regarding an upcoming visit to Colombia by Microsoft magnate Bill Gates. Area two on 4 March 2007 and area four on 18 March 2007 refer to a *Cifra del día*[155] (numeric figure of the day). Area four in figure 334 and area five in figure 335 direct the visitor to two videos produced by the government that denounce FARC terrorism. Area five on 4 March 2007 and area six on 18 March 2007 include a listing of *Indicadores Económicos* (Economic Indicators) that allow the visitor to learn more about the current valuation of the Colombian peso, the interest rate, and the price of domestic goods such as oil and coffee. Area six on in figure 334 and area seven in figure 335 contain three news articles that are *Destacados del día*[156] (Highlights of the Day). Area seven on 4 March and area eight on 18 March include the link to the *Banco de Voces* (Voice Bank) where the visitor can listen to President Uribe's speeches[157]. In an unusual placement for a menu, the visitor could

[155] The numeric figure of the day on 4 March 2007 states "4 *mil empleos generará* (sic) *planta de alcohol carburante en Sucre*" (4 thousand employees will generate an ethanol plant in Sucre). On 18 March, this section contained a link to the article "*$4 mil millones para promocionar industria del cine*" ($4 billion to promote film industry).

[156] On 4 March 2007, the highlighted articles were "*No sería consecuente que congreso de EE.UU. negara el TLC*" (It would not be consistent for the United States to refuse the Free Trade Agreement), "*21 mil policías cuidarán visita del Presidente Bush a Bogotá*" (21 thousand police will secure President Bush's visit to Bogotá) and "*Trapiche a vapor es ecológico y dignifica el trabajo*" (Steam mill is environmentally friendly and dignifies the work). On 18 March 2007 the highlighted articles were: "*US $800 millones invertirá Ecopetrol en el Magdalena Medio*" (Ecopetrol will invest $800 million US in Magdalena Medio), "*LLamado de atención a empresas de telefonía para que mejoren sus servicios*" (Wakeup call for telephone companies to improve their services), and "*Destinan $2.621 millones para impulsar siembra de cacao en Nariño*" ([Government] Allocates $2.621 billion to boost cocoa planting in Nariño).

[157] On 4 March 2007, the Voice Bank linked the visitor to a speech regarding *Palabras del Presidente Uribe en consejo communal de Gobierno número veinticuatro en Tolú, Sucre* (Remarks by President Uribe at the government's communal council number 24 in Tolú, Sucre). On 18 March 2007 the Voice Bank led to *Palabras del Presidente Uribe en República Dominicana* (Remarks by President Uribe in the Dominican Republic).

find links to various government websites[158] in area eight on 4 March and area nine on 18 March. Finally, at the bottom of the webpage in both figures 334 and 335 one can find links to a map of the website and a link to *Escríbale al Presidente* (Write to the President). The only common links on 4 March 2007, 11 March 2007, and 18 March 2007 were the search link in zone one, and the agro-meterological, government on-line, candidates, and complaints links in zone four.

Additionally, on 4 March 2007 there were 26 links to news articles. On 18 March 2007, that quantity grew to 43. The content of those news articles included commentary regarding themes such as terrorism, transparency, government sponsored social programs, democratic security, the economy, foreign investments in Colombia, aerial fumigation, the plight of displaced persons, health research, and construction projects. In contrast, on 11 March 2007, there were nine articles and each was thematically based on aspects of the Bush visit. The reduced quantity and restricted content of news articles and lack of links to government information severely limit information about the Colombian presidency and access to other government agencies.

3.2.3.3 Presidencia.gov.co Conclusions

3.2.3.3.1 General Conclusions

At first glance, the appearance of the Colombian president's homepage is replete with respect and honour for the visiting American dignitary. When one compares presidencia.gov.co's layout and content to that of the previous and subsequent weeks, it is clear that President Bush was welcomed heartily by the Colombian

[158] These links include: *Presidencia de la República* (Presidency of the Republic), *Vicepresidencia de la República* (Vice-Presidency of the Republic), *Resultados de Gobierno* (Government Results), *Consejos Comunales del Gobierno* (Government Communal Councils), *SIGOB* (Management and Monitoring System of Government Goals), *Contratos Presidencia de la República* (Presidency of the Republic's Contracts), and *Portal Único de Contratación* (Recruitment Portal).

government and that his presence was especially heralded by President Uribe. However, one must consider how such palpable changes reflect on the Uribe administration, when such changes were not present two weeks later during the visit of King Juan Carlos of Spain (figure 336) or one year later during the official visit of German Chancellor Angela Merkel (figure 337).



Figure 336

Presidencia.gov.co on 25 March 2007 during state visit of King Juan Carlos (top of page on the left, bottom on the right).



Figure 337

Presidencia.gov.co on 19 May 2007 during state visit of Chancellor Merkel (top of page on the left, bottom on the right).

Furthermore, it warrants mentioning that President Bush's name can be found nine times on the 11 March 2007 version of the homepage, while President Uribe's name appears only six[159] times. Does a diplomatic visit by the American president subsume the relevance and importance of Colombia's own political leader? Is President Uribe so beholden to the American state that the day-to-day needs of his own citizenry can be temporarily disregarded? The focus on the Bush visit can be viewed from two standpoints. Firstly, one may examine what items are present and what information can be found. Secondly, one can question what content is missing. With respect to the former question, the text (in zone three) and images (in zone two) concern only one event: the diplomatic visit of the American President and the treaties to be discussed in his presence.

With regard to the missing information, in addition to the links that were present one week before and one week after the Bush visit, concrete references[160] to the precarious political situation in Colombia are notably absent. In addition to the words guerrilla and paramilitary being excluded from the homepage, references to the *Para-Política* scandal do not appear in any form on presidencia.gov.co. While the lack of controversial content allows for greater focus on the state visit, it also threatens government transparency. If, as former American President Harry Truman touted 'the buck stops here', shouldn't the public face of the Uribe presidency at least acknowledge that the scandal exists and that the government is determined to root out those who consort with paramilitaries? The absence of content regarding the scandal is especially conspicuous, as it had already been insinuated that the president himself had held meetings with paramilitary members.

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[159] On 4 March 2007, President Uribe's name can be found 15 times on presidencia.gov.co. On 18 March 2007, his name appears 12 times.

[160] Vague references to the drugs, guerrilla, and the paramilitary dilemma appear in articles one and six in zone three.

References to the passing of the FTA are present in articles two and nine. However, the homepage does not provide any details to explain why President Bush will have to work *muchísimo* in order to pass the agreement. As was explained above in section 3.2.1.5, the Democratic majority in Congress raised serious concerns about human rights and the treatment of trade unionists in Colombia, details that are also unmentioned on presidencia.gov.co.

With respect to design, the disorganized visual composition of the president's webpage does not imbue the screen with a sense of political supremacy. The upper half of presidencia.gov.ve is asymmetrical (figure 338).



Figure 338

Asymmetrical design of presidencia.gov.co.

Three areas of the Colombian President's homepage are asymmetrical. The first area, indicated in figure 338 by the number 1 refers to the left text alignment found in each of the nine article excerpts. Rather than justifying the text evenly, the left alignment

detracts from the page's neatness and organization. As can be evinced in the first article's excerpt, the text appears frayed and uneven.

The number 2 in figure 338 references the circled areas that are asymmetrical. It is odd that the backgrounded grey square that frames the featured image is off-balance. The border on the left side of the image is quite thin, while the corresponding border on the right is significantly thicker. The arrows located above number 3 in figure 338 further emphasize this discrepancy. It appears that the five small images are aligned with neither the main featured image, the backgrounded grey square, the *Noticias* and *Fotos* links, or the surrounding articles in zone two. The asymmetrical qualities and lack of consistency in design reduce the overall effectiveness of the president's webpage.

3.2.3.2.2 The probable reading path

Similar in appearance to the other analyses in this project, as a reflection of salience, the reading path dictates the order in which parts of the visual space attract the visitor's attention. Figure 339 illustrates a probable reading path for the webpage.



Figure 339

Reading path for presidencia.gov.co.

As annotated above, the probable reading path for President Uribe's homepage is:

1. Banner I
2. Featured image
3. Title of article one
4. Titles of remaining articles

It is necessary to note that three of the four likely targets on the reading path are located above the fold (figure 340).



Figure 340

Presidencia.gov.co: Content Above-the-Fold and Below-the-Fold

The placement of the national colours and the extension of the flag's red hue along the top of the webpage provide an eye-catching backdrop for the (new) title of the president's homepage. Additionally, the use of bold white capital letters further attracts the visitor's eyes. The salience of banner I reinforces the impact of the page's new title. No longer the Office of the Presidency, the name and purpose of the website have been changed to document the Bush visit.

In spite of the featured photograph maintaining a somewhat muted appearance due to the repeated use of grey tones, the presence of George W. Bush immediately captures the visitor's attention. The halo-effect generated by the framed Reyes portrait ensures a lengthy visit at this stop along the reading path. Article one's red lettering and lack of underlining is likely to be the next place on the website that the visitor will visit. Finally, the last stop on the reading path may include reading the remaining article titles and excerpts. However, as these parts of the webpage are not remarkable in their placement or design, they may be ignored all together. The areas of the webpage that are least likely to be noticed (and interacted with) by the visitor are the remarks and speech headings (figures 341-344).



Figure 341

President Uribe's opening remarks (located below article one).



Figure 342

President Bush's opening remarks (located below article two).

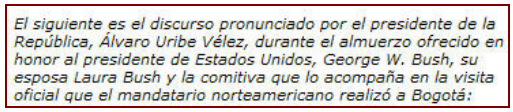


Figure 343

President Uribe's speech (located below article four).

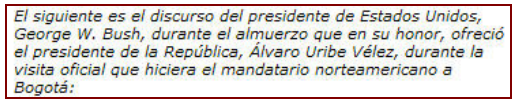


Figure 344

President Bush's speech (located below article five).

Notwithstanding the red coloured capital lettering and salient location, the opening remarks' links (figures 341 and 342) are unlikely to be noticed by the visitor as they are located underneath the headings and excerpts of articles one and two. The speech links (figures 343 and 344) shall not be part of the reading path as they are written in italic lettering.

Ultimately, the re-vamping of the content and design of the presidencia.gov.co website in recognition of the 2007 Bush visit to Bogotá is significant. As noted above, such changes did not occur when dignitaries from other countries conducted state visits to Colombia. It is therefore plausible that such changes reflect the overarching influence of the American state on Colombia.

3.2.4 Homepage of the Colombian Army Recruitment



Figure 345

Reclutamiento.mil.co on 12 August 2007.

3.2.4.1 Zones



Figure 346

Zones of reclutamiento.mil.co.

Zone one: **Banner**

This zone is located in the upper-middle region of the webpage and displays a moving image banner. The final scene of the moving image banner includes the Colombian Military's coat of arms and the website title *Dirección de Reclutamiento y Control de Reservas del Ejército* (Recruitment Office and Control of the Army Reserves) on the left. On the right side of the banner is the image of three camouflaged soldiers standing on a rocky cliff aiming rifles at an off-camera target. To the left of the soldiers is the text: *96 años incorporando lo mejor del talento humano* (96 years [of] incorporating the best of human talent). The framing of zone one is

irregular as the rectangular shape of zone three infringes upon the upper left side of the banner.

Zone two: Featured advertisement

Located directly below zone one is a featured moving image advertisement. The final segment of the advertisement contains the image of human eyes and eyebrows that are captured in a greenish hue. Above the eyes is the title *Dirección de Reclutamiento y Control de Reservas del Ejército* (Recruitment Office and Control of the Army Reserves) and the military coat of arms. To the right of the eyes appear the following underlined words: *Honestidad. Lealtad. Compromiso*. (Honesty. Loyalty. Commitment). Below the eyes, the following text appears consecutively: *Mantén tu mirada firme y en alto. Eres transparente. Eres un hombre al máximo. www.reclutamiento.mil.co* (Keep your gaze steady and high. You are transparent. You are a man to the max. www.reclutamiento.mil.co). Zone two is separated from the surrounding zones by a horizontal white band at the top and bottom of the advertisement.

Zone three: Menu

The menu can be found in its prototypical location on the far left side of the page. The menu is divided into two vertical categories, *Información General* (General Information) and *Enlaces* (Links). The first category contains links to *Noticias* (News), *Conózcanos* (Get to know us), *Servicio Militar Obligatorio* (Mandatory Military Service), *Infractores y Sanciones* (Offenders and Sanctions), *Incorporaciones* (Additions), *Duplicados* (Duplicates), *Cedula Miltar* (Military Indentification Card), *Imágenes* (Images), *Consulta en línea* (On-Line Help), *Iso 9001-2000* (International Standardization Organization), *Denuncie* (Report), *Legislación* (Legislation), *Publicaciones* (Publications) *Glosario* (Glossary), *Contratación* (Recruitment), and

Consulta Siir (Help [with the] Integrated Recruitment Information System).

The second category includes links to *Gobierno en Línea* (Government On Line), *Presidencia de la República* (Presidency of the Republic), *Ministerio de Defensa* (Ministry of Defence), *Fuerzas Militares* (Military Forces), *Ejército Nacional* (National Army), *Escuela José María Córdova* (José María Córdova [Cadet Training] School), and *Universidad Militar Nueva Granada* (Nueva Granada Military University).

Zone four: Recruitment Information

Zone four provides access to military recruitment information such as the *Incremento de la Tarjeta Militar* (Military Card Increase), *Jornada Regional*[161] (Regional Day), *Incorporaciones* (Additions), and *Portal Único de Contratación* (Recruitment Portal). An illustration accompanies each topic. A thin horizontal line separates each topic. Three of the four illustrations include soldiers aiming rifles at targets that are not included within the image.

Zone five: Questionnaire and Visit Count

The fifth zone is located below zone three on the left side of the webpage. On 12 August 2007, the questionnaire posed the following query *¿Cómo califica la atención de los funcionarios de Reclutamiento?* (How do you rate the Recruitment officials' attention?). The website visitor can select from four possible adjectives, *Excelente* (Excellent), *Buena* (Good), *Regular* (Average), and *Malo* [sic] (Bad). Below the

[161] Regional Days provide opportunities for Colombians to *definir su situación militar* (define their military situation). As military enlistment is mandatory, Colombian men who have reached the age of majority are required by law to register with the government and delineate their military service obligation. To facilitate registration, the government arranges Regional Days to take place across the country.

questionnaire is a website hit counter. On the date of capture, the counter read *Total Visitas* (Total Visits)*: 88730*.

3.2.4.2 Image & Texts to be reviewed

1. Banner
2. Military documents and image accompaniments
3. Multimodal analysis of featured advertisement

3.2.4.2.1 Banner

Zone one contains a moving image banner that begins to play upon opening the webpage[162]. It is worth noting that while the banner slideshow takes place, there are audible music and audio effects. The musical accompaniment, however, harmonizes more accurately with the featured advertisement in zone two. The moving image banner begins with a green camouflage background in the upper region on the website (figure 347).



Figure 347

Banner stage one.

The first elements to appear in the banner are: the image of the soldiers pointing rifles on the right, a beige box in the middle of the banner, and the words *Reservas del Ejército* (Army Reserves) (figure 348).

[162] This quality is in contrast to the moving images found in zone two's featured advertisement that play on a repeated loop.

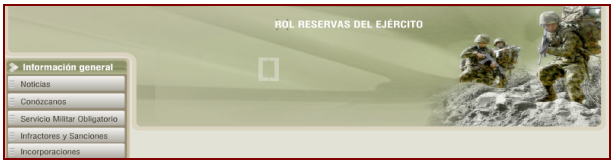


Figure 348

Banner stage two.

The remaining words from the title then appear and the beige box separates into two square brackets (figure 349).



Figure 349

Banner stage three.

The square brackets continue to travel across the banner and four small circles (indicated by the red arrow in figure 350) appear next to the *Dirección de Reclutamiento y Control de Reservas del Ejército* title.



Figure 350

Banner stage four.

The four small circles convert into dark green chevrons that frame the recruitment coat of arms. The square brackets continue to travel horizontally across the banner (figure 351).



Figure 351

Banner stage five.

The final stage of the banner is accomplished when the text *96 años incorporando lo mejor del talento humano* begins to appear within the square brackets (figure 352).



Figure 352

Banner stage six.

The final of version of the banner (figure 353) includes all of the elements described above. The evolution of the banner takes approximately five seconds to complete from stage one to seven.



Figure 353

Banner stage seven.

Rather than the banner being a stagnant image, the moving image quality imparts movement and rhythm to the zone. It is unfortunate that while the elements of the banner move across the upper area of the webpage, the featured advertisement in zone two is

simultaneously displaying a moving image show. The two zones are in direct competition for the visitor's attention. The result of the concurrently playing videos is that neither zone retains the visitor's full attention. The rivalry is unnecessary and would have been averted had the banner completed its cycle before the advertisement began.

Within the banner in zone one, four components (the recruitment coat of arms, website title, slogan, and image of the soldiers) compete for visual salience. However, it is difficult to determine which is the most eye-catching. Despite the recruitment coat of arms' use of bright national colours, its value in the banner is reduced because it is small in size and is relegated to a peripheral location on the far left. Both the title and the slogan are written in a cream colour that harmonizes well with the background, but doesn't attract the visitors' eye. Of the two written texts, the slogan is slightly more noticeable due to its anticipated appearance between the square brackets and the use of different font sizes for the words *incorporando* and *talento humano*. Finally, the image of the soldiers relinquishes some salience as the camouflage uniforms and grey rocks blend into the banner's background. However, the violent nature of the image is likely to be the most noticeable component in the zone. Furthermore, when viewing the webpage as a whole, it is notable that the foregrounded soldier photographed in the banner image appears to be pointing his rifle in the direction of the face pictured in zone two (figure 354). The vector created by the foregrounded soldier visually connects the two zones.



Figure 354

Vector connecting zones one and two.

The banner and the featured advertisement are also visually connected by the mirrored placement of the website title and the recruitment coat of arms (figure 355).



Figure 355

Repetition of contents in zones one and two.

3.2.4.2.2. Recruitment Information

The four headings in this zone display information that is in keeping with the thematic purpose of a recruitment website. However, the first heading, *Incremento de la Tarjeta Militar* (indicated by the number 1 in figure 356), is puzzling.



Figure 356

Recruitment information.

The excerpt written under this heading states *Descargue el Decreto 4580 del 27 de Diciembre de 2006, el cual rige a partir del 01 de Enero de 2007, para el Incremento de la Tarjeta Militar* (Download Decree 4580 of 27 December 2006, which was entrenched on 1 January 2007, for the Military Card Increase). When one clicks upon the *Descargar* (Download) link, the visitor is transported to the *Decretos En Línea* (Decrees On-Line) homepage (figure 357).



Figure 357

Decretos En Línea (Decrees On-Line) homepage.

However, the title of Decree 4580 is *Por el cual se fije el salario mínimo legal* (By which the minimum wage is fixed). It is unclear

how the legal basis for the minimum wage is associated with the dissemination of military identification cards.

The second and third headlines in zone four are reasonable additions to the recruitment website. As described above in a footnote on page 332, the Regional Days give Colombians the opportunity to register with the government and enlist in the military at the appropriate time. This information zone provides a link to *Descargar Requisitos* (Download Requirements). Clicking on that link transports the visitor to a webpage that describes the means by which one can expedite the production of a Military Card[163] (figure 358).



Figure 358

Requirements for Military Card.

The Requirements webpage also outlines details specifically for those that have demobilized from extra-legal groups[164], the indigenous[165], those displaced by violence[166], and anyone who is seeking a replacement Military Card (figure 359).

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[163] Amongst other requirements, the applicant is expected to produce a photocopy affirming his citizenship, a copy of his high school diploma (if he is applying as a high school graduate or *bachiller*), and tax statements.

[164] These citizens are expected to provide certification that they have laid down their arms and are in the process of reincorporating into civilian life.

[165] Along with identification cards, members of Colombia's indigenous population are required to produce a certificate indicating that the applicant resides on a Reservation and cultivates the social, cultural, and economic responsibilities applicable to the group. This certificate is to be signed by the President of the City Council or Aboriginal Reservation.

[166] After acquiring a certificate from the Social Solidarity Network that authenticates the applicant's displacement, the displaced citizen is expected to pay the equivalent of $1 US for a Military Card.

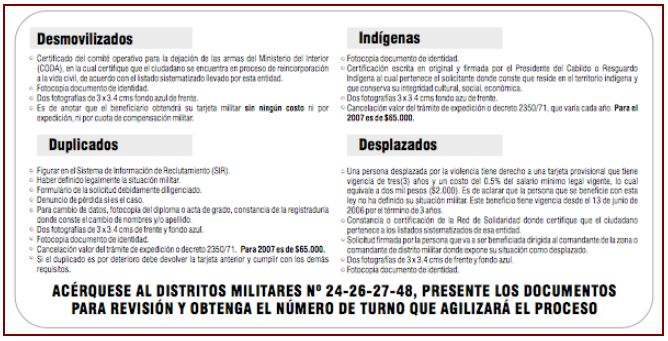


Figure 359

Registration information for the demobilized, indigenous, and displaced individuals.

The third headline, *Incorporaciones*, solicits the registration of high school graduates who enlist as *Bachiller* soldiers. Such enlistees are directed to contact the nearest Military District office for further information.

The final entry in zone four is an effort to increase transparency. The inclusion of the *Portal Único de Contratación*, indicates that the national army's recruitment and reserve control website benefits from the Procurement Process Portal[167].

While the four information items in zone four are interesting, the most eye-catching elements of this section are the first three[168] accompanying photographs (figure 360).

[167] In response to widespread allegations of corruption and bribery regarding the awarding of public contracts, the government of Colombia passed Law 80, the Procurement Law (contratos.gov.co/Archivos/normas/Ley_80_1993.pdf), and Decree 2434, the Obligation to Publicize Information on the Procurement Portal (contratos.gov.co/Archivos/normas/Ley_80_1993.pdf). Should any citizen wish to examine procurement records, s/he would only have to visit contratos.gov.co for details. The information regarding the portal first appeared on the reclutamiento.mil.co website in early June 2007.

[168] The fourth image accompaniment is a photograph of the *Portal Único de Contratación* homepage whose details are impossible to discern.



Figure 360

Image accompaniments to (1) *Incorporaciones de la Tarjeta Militar*, (2) *Jornada Regional*, and (3) *Incorporaciones*.

Essentially, the three images present parallel thematic illustrations of the military in action. In each photograph, a small grouping of soldiers aim rifles at off-camera targets. The distinguishing details between photos one-three are the settings and uniform styles. Perhaps inspired by the geographical variation found in the South American nation, the first image is captured in an arid, rocky terrain, reminiscent of the northern La Guajira region. The background of the second image presents a jungle scene, likely a reference to the Amazonian area. The third photograph places the soldiers on uneven terrain with a hazy backdrop. It is possible that this image alludes to the Andes mountain range. By assigning military members to diverse geographical positions, the military can intimate that the armed forces are active throughout the country (including the relatively remote areas where traditionally guerrilla groups were in control). Furthermore, as each soldier is photographed aiming a rifle (rather than performing passive community services), the threat to rogue organizations or criminal gangs is apparent. The absent targets allow the visitor to imagine at whom the rifles are aimed.

The third image includes the slogan *Eres un hombre al máximo*. An examination of this phrase will be included in the multimodal analysis of zone two to follow.

3.2.4.2.3 A Multimodal Analysis of the Featured Advertisement

The above description of reclutamiento.mil.co's zones (see section 3.2.4.1) specifies that zone two consists of a photograph of a pair of eyes & eyebrows, the recruitment coat of arms, the national coat of arms, the title of the webpage, and various slogans. As the components of the zone are a moving slide show and the image captured on 12 August 2007 was of just one stage of the show, the following analysis will be based on a website capture performed on 13 April 2008 (figure 361). On 13 April 2008, the website capture was of the final stage of the moving image show. The content of the zone is identical to that found throughout 2007 and 2008.



Figure 361

Zone two on 13 April 2008.

Before commencing the multimodal analysis, it is useful to designate the evolution of the moving image slideshow. In the first stage of the presentation, zone two is comprised of a light green coloured background in which various square shapes move across the screen (figure 362). The musical accompaniment during the first stages is of a fast-paced electronic nature.



Figure 362

Featured advertisement stage one.

In stage two, the squares dissolve and a horizontal frame appears in the upper and lower portions of the zone (figure 363).



Figure 363

Featured advertisement stage two.

The title of the website is the first recognizable element to appear and a set of four chevrons (indicated by the red arrow) begins to travel from left to right across the top of the advertisement (figure 364). As soon as the title begins to appear, the background music changes into a rock music style.



Figure 364

Featured advertisement stage three.

A pair of eyes appear in the centre of the advertisement and the national coat of arms takes its place within the chevrons (figure 365).



Figure 365

Featured advertisement stage four.

The next three stages involve the appearance of verbal text. The text *Manten tu Mirada firme y en alto* is the first to emerge under the eyes (figure 366).



Figure 366

Featured advertisement stage five.

The words *Eres transparente* are next to materialize (figure 367).



Figure 367

Featured advertisement stage six.

Stage seven adds the slogan *Eres un hombre al máximo* (figure 368).



Figure 368

Featured advertisement stage seven.

Finally, the website address, www.reclutamiento.mil.co, appears as a virtual stamp (and is accompanied by the sound of a stamp) at the bottom of the advertisement. At the same time, the words *Honestidad Lealtad Compromiso* appear and are underlined next to the left eye. As these words are in very small typeset, they are circled in figure 369.



Figure 369

Featured advertisement stage eight.

3.2.4.2.3.1 The Ideational Metafunction

3.2.4.2.3.1.1 Vectors

The eyes stare directly at the visitor; thereby creating a unidirectional transactional vector that is aimed at the viewing audience.

3.2.4.2.3.1.2 Roles, Processes, and Circumstances

The featured face is the actor and the viewing audience is the goal. There are no identifiable behavioural processes, as the eyes do not express a specific expression and the rest of the face is not photographed. While relational processes are also difficult to decipher, the backgrounded camouflage colours are in keeping with a military theme. The recruitment and national coats of arms are detectable circumstances of location, indicating that the photograph is attributable to Colombia. There are no circumstances of manner or accompaniment.

3.2.4.2.3.1.3 Classificational, Analytical, and Symbolic Structures

The relationship between the represented participant and the viewing audience is neither subordinate nor superordinate. The forward facing eyes create a relationship of equality. With respect to the analytical structures, the carrier is the set of eyes. The possessive attributes are the eyelashes and eyebrows. As a horizontal line connects the text *Honestidad Lealtad Compromiso* to the eyes, those words also become possessive attributes. The topographic structures of the eyes are accurate, however the nose is invisible and appears to have been removed from the photograph in post-production. The topological structures are accurate. There are no temporal structures in this image thereby denoting a sense of timelessness. Symbolically, the image of the eyes, when examined in conjunction with the words *Manten tu mirada firme y en alto* and *Eres*

transparente, indicate that the moral ideal is to be a proud and honest soldier. The carrier, in this case, is the pair of eyes. The symbolic attribute is the aligned verbal text. A symbolic suggestive process is portrayed by the eyes' steadfast stare. Viewing the eyes and the text in tandem bestows a symbolic attributive process of honesty and pride upon the eyes.

3.2.4.2.3.2 The Interpersonal Metafunction

3.2.4.2.3.2.1 Perspective

3.2.4.2.3.2.1.1 Shot Type

The shot type is a very close, as the participant's eyes are the only body parts visible. While close shots customarily indicate social familiarity, in this case one cannot expect an intimate relationship between the represented participant and the visitor. The identity of the eyes' owner is unknown and this anonymity negates a social alliance. Therefore, it is likely that the close up shot of the represented participant's face signifies themes of honesty and transparency, rather than intimating a particular social proximity with the visitor.

3.2.4.2.3.2.1.2 Vertical and Horizontal Angle

The vertical angle is eye-level and thereby promotes equality between the photographed face and the visitor. The horizontal angle is frontal, which also denotes the sentiment of honesty and transparency. Had the eyes been captured from an oblique angle, the visitor's understanding of the advertisement would have changed dramatically. With respect to modality, the image of the eyes, reveals a high degree of detail. Specifically, the visitor can discern features found within the irises, eyelashes, and eyebrows.

3.2.4.2.3.2.2 Modality

3.2.4.2.3.2.2.1 Depth and Detail

The post-production adjustments made to this image reduce its overall modality. For example, there are several elements that are absent that lessen the image's believability. The most conspicuous of which is a nose.

3.2.4.2.3.2.2.2 Colour

Colour is adjusted greatly as the represented participant's skin tone is light green, a tone that is commonly associated with military camouflage.

3.2.4.2.3.2.2.3 Lighting, Illumination, and Clarity

With respect to image brightness, the webpage is constructed in such a way as to make the sclera, or white parts of the eyes, the same colour brightness as the advertisement's border. Furthermore, the sclera and the advertisement border are the brightest segments on the webpage. When contrasted with the modified skin colour, the brightness of the sclera further diminishes the photograph's modality.

3.2.4.2.3.2.2.4 Contextualization

The lack of contextualization further reduces modality.

3.2.4.2.3.3 The Textual Metafunction

3.2.4.2.3.3.1 Coherence and Cohesion

The advertisement maintains internal coherence because the image of the eyes is mirrored by the verbal reference to the word *mirada* (gaze). Additionally, the advertisement's musical accompaniment harmonizes well with the moving image presentation. Evidence of external coherence can be noted in the repetitive usage of camouflage colours, the recruitment and national coats of arms, and the presence

of the *Hombre al Máximo* slogan in zone four. The advertisement is cohesive with the surrounding environment as the titles, fonts, and colour palette in zones one and two are identical.

3.2.4.2.3.3.2 Framing

The framing around and within the advertisement is unusual as it segregated from the surrounding zones, while at the same time violating all borders within its zone (figure 370).

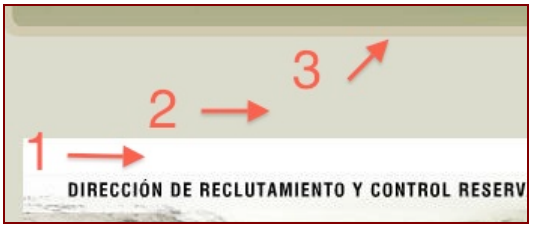


Figure 370

Framing above the advertisement.

The advertisement's outer frames include a sharply drawn white border (indicated by the number 1 in figure 370), a thick pale green border directly above the advertisement (indicated by number 2 in figure 370), and a thin putty-coloured bar at the bottom of zone one (indicated by number 3 in figure 370).

A similar frame can be found to the left of the advertisement. That frame is differentiated by a significantly thinner frame (figure 371).



Figure 371

Framing to the left of the advertisement.

The framing below the advertisement does not starkly separate zones two and four (figure 372). As indicated in figure 372, the white border is the only element dividing the two zones.



Figure 372

Framing below the advertisement.

The least perceptible frame is found to the right of the advertisement. As zone two does not compete with any visual information on the left, only the pale green background demarcates the edge of the advertisement (figure 373).



Figure 373

Framing to the left of the advertisement.

As stated above, framing within the advertisement is uneven. Figure 374 enumerates the various frame incursions found within the advertisement.



Figure 374

Internal frame incursions.

Incursion 1 references the visibility of the left eyebrow within the white frame. A thin beige bar violates the white border (number 2). The military recruitment coat of arms and chevrons straddle both the white border and the green background (number 3). A thin white line and verbal text dissect the right eye (number 4). The www.reclutamiento.mil.co website address appears within both the central and white bordered areas (number 5). The 'dripping' typeset of *Hombre al Máximo* infringes upon the white border (number 6). A grey line breaches the limits of the white border (number 7). The national coat of arms is located upon the internal background, the grey line, and the white border (number 8). Incursion number nine emphasizes the thin white square found to the left of the left eye. When combined with the musical accompaniment and moving images, the erratic nature of the internal frames is consistent with the feeling of movement found in this zone. The continuous loop reaffirms the importance of motion.

3.2.4.2.3.3.3 Salience

In spite of the use of various font types, colours, and bold typeset, the size and noticeability of the eyes make them the most salient

elements of the zone. The military and recruitment coats of arms do not garner significant salience, as they are located in the peripheral areas of the zone.

3.2.4.2.3.3.4 Information Value

Regarding information value, the upper portion of the advertisement (areas 1 and 2 in figure 375) aptly takes the place of the 'ideal'. The clarity and assumed trustworthiness of the eyes is replicated by the text *Honestidad Lealtad Compromiso*.



Figure 375

Advertisement's information value.

Similarly, the placement of the affirmative statements *Eres transparente* and *Eres hombre al máximo* in the lower portion of the advertisement (areas 3 and 4 in figure 375) imbue that verbal material with truthfulness. However, the latter statement is likely to only gain a positive response from masculine visitors. The left eye occupies the majority of the nucleic area (area 5 in figure 375). The left eye also bears heavier visual weight due to the attached white line and verbal text.

3.2.4.3 Reclutamiento.mil.co Conclusions

3.2.4.3.1 General Conclusions

The Colombian recruitment homepage is neatly organized and has sufficient visual details to attract the visitors' eyes. The page as a whole displays a consistent colour palette and similar typefaces. The images, which are compatible with the goal of recruitment, are visually stimulating. However, there are inconsistencies that challenge the site's commitment to organization and clarity. For example, there is irregular verb conjugation [169] throughout the homepage. Figure 376 provides examples of the formal *usted* (sir/madam) verb conjugations on reclutamiento.mil.co.

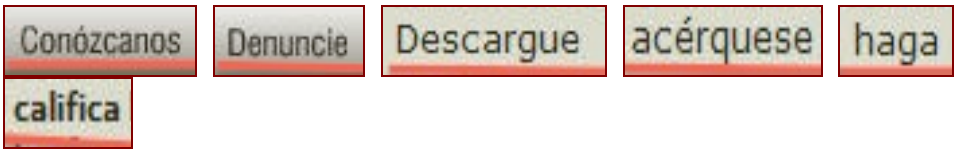


Figure 376

Formal verb conjugations.

Figure 377 illustrates the inclusion of the informal *tú* (you) conjugation.



Figure 377

Informal verb conjugations.

It is important to note that while the formal conjugation appears in zones three, four, and five, the informal conjugation can be found only

[169] In South America, the formal third-person verb conjugation of 'you' (*usted*) is commonly used when addressing strangers, whereas the informal (*tú*) conjugation is typically used amongst family and close friends.

in the featured advertisement. While the inconsistent use of formal/informal verb conjugations may be the result of human error, by communicating an informal order to the visitor (maintain) and issuing two complements (you are transparent; you are a man to the max), the website is able to establish a familiar relationship with the visitor in zone two.

An orthographical error can be found in zone five (figure 378).

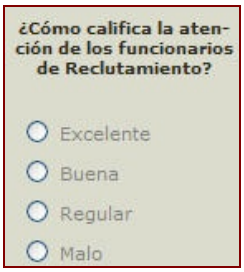


Figure 378

Orthographical error in zone five.

While the feminine adjective *buena* grammatically agrees with the feminine noun *atención*, the masculine adjective *malo* does not. Furthermore, the usefulness of the questionnaire section is unclear. The space on the bottom left of the webpage may have been put to better use.

The website is also visually disadvantaged by a slightly asymmetrical appearance (figure 379).



Figure 379

Asymmetrical appearance.

The area on reclutamiento.mil.co indicated by the number one in figure 379 exemplifies the unusual placement of the menu. The upper limit of zone three appears to infringe upon the website's banner, thereby reducing the banner's visual weight. The numbers two and three in figure 379 indicate that the upper and lower limits of the featured advertisement do not blend with the borders of the links in zone three. A similar situation occurs at the bottom of the webpage. As indicated by the number four, the lower limit of the questionnaire is uneven when aligned with the entries in zone four. The number five emphasizes the irregular vertical border that can be found along the right side of the webpage. Finally, the sixth visual inconsistency is the asymmetrical placement of the eyes within the advertisement. It is curious why the eyes are not centred within the image. While these inconsistencies are slight, each cumulatively reduces the homepage's overall impact.

When viewing the recruitment homepage, it is difficult to ignore the masculine focus of its presentation. While women are publicly welcomed to enlist[170], their presence on the recruitment website is invisible. Of the fourteen visible soldiers photographed on the webpage, it is impossible to discern whether any is female. Furthermore, the repeated usage of the *Eres hombre al máximo* slogan entrenches the military's gendered focus.

The recruitment homepage's most glaring discrepancy is its inconsistent availability. The website was under construction from July 2008 until late April 2009. During that time, the visitor would have seen the following English-language message (figure 380). Clearly, such a serious electronic malfunction reflects very poorly on the website.

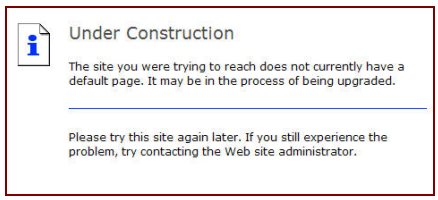


Figure 380

Reclutamiento.mil.co under construction message.

3.2.4.3.2 The probable reading path

The reading path on reclutamiento.mil.co is guided by the most salient elements of the visual space. Figure 381 demonstrates a probable reading path:

[170] For the last twenty-five years, female soldiers had been limited to health and legal military divisions. However, current trends indicate that military women are gaining ground in the areas of logistics, engineering, economic planning, and administration. (Ejercito.mil.co: 8 March 2007).



Figure 381

Probable reading path on reclutamiento.mil.co.

As annotated above, the probable reading path for the Colombian recruitment homepage is:

1. Banner
2. Featured advertisement
3. Recruitment information photographs

Zone one's moving images and violent photograph would initially attract the visitor's attention. Following zone one, the visitor's eyes may follow the rifles' vectors and notice the presentation in zone two. The repeated loop and accompanying music would continue to draw the visitor's attention. Following the featured advertisement, the visitor may be inclined to notice the first three photographs in zone four. The fourth photograph is unlikely to garner attention, as the details are too small to identify.

While there are slight adjustments to the content in zone four, the appearance of reclutamiento.mil.co does not change dramatically from 2006-2009. The pivotal visual element of this webpage throughout those years is the set of eyes. When appreciated in tandem with the advertisement's verbal text, zone two urges the importance of transparency. As described above in section 3.2.1.6, myriad accusations of human rights abuses and extra-judicial murders were levied against Colombian soldiers. In those cases, the national and international press impugned Colombian military transparency and moral superiority. It is then possible to interpret reclutamiento.mil.co's content and design as indicative of the military's shared aspiration.

3.2.5 Conclusions regarding Colombian websites

With respect to concrete references to items listed in the thematic checklist, only the extra-legal role and actions of the paramilitaries are absent from the Colombian websites studied. Army successes in the war on drugs and against the FARC are present in zone four on the Colombian Army's homepage, while the slogan *Eres Transparente* (You are transparent) found in zone 2 of the Army's Recruitment[171] webpage can be interpreted as a a means to stymie allegations of military misconduct. A slightly abstract reference to the various difficulties facing Colombia can be detected in the content of President Bush's speech. During his visit to Colombia, President Bush stated "We have arrived in your country at a time when you have passed through a difficult time…"

However, prior to commencing the Colombian website analyses, my expectation was that the government sites were a means for the Uribe administration to pursue international aid money, specifically

[171] Furthermore, evidence of a correlation between politics and the reclutamiento.mil.co homepage is difficult to pinpoint as the website did not change substantially between September 2006 and April 2008.

from the United States. Following the analyses, it became apparent that the military and presidential homepages conformed to that hypothesized pattern. The military recruitment website only marginally responded to the political climate of 2007. To temporally situate the analysed editions of the army and presidential websites within the Colombian narrative, in early 2007 the FTA lay in the hands of the United States Congress and Democratic Representatives were presenting damning evidence of trade unionist violence and human rights assaults in Colombia. At the same time, presidencia.gov.co underwent a comprehensive renovation during President Bush's visit to Colombia[172] and the army homepage promptly included multiple references to the army's dedication to human rights[173]. While it is impossible to certify that these changes were purposeful verbal and visual antidotes to the Democratic Party's misgivings, it is difficult to ignore the timeliness of the new content and design.

3.3 The United States of America

3.3.1 Contemporary History of the United States

In this chapter, I will determine whether the American military, recruitment, and presidential websites employ virtual 'shock and awe'[174] tactics to lure targeted visitors into enlisting in the AVF. To

[172] As is stated above presidencia.gov.co did not endure significant changes when other heads of state visited.

[173] The 6 May 2007 edition of the army's website featured the words *derechos humanos* (human rights) and *derechos humanos internacionales* (international human rights) seven times.

[174] The military term 'shock and awe', also known as 'rapid dominance', gained widespread notoriety in 1996 following the publication of Ullman and Wade's "Shock and Awe –Achieving Rapid Dominance." According to the authors, upon employing this strategy, an offensive force "would seize control of the environment and paralyze or so overload an adversary's perceptions and understanding of events so that the enemy would be incapable of resistance at tactical and strategic levels" (p. xxv). Furthermore, "deception, misinformation, and disinformation are

illustrate this hypothesis and provide a historical framework for the website analyses, the following section will outline the political circumstances in which military recruitment took place from 2006-2008.

Specifically, in spite of record levels of military spending[175], the American armed forces were subject to intense strain during 2007 and 2008. This strain, coupled with an executive order to 'surge' the number of active-duty combat troops in Iraq, was exacerbated by increasing violence in Iraq, escalating troop casualties, negative public opinion, and scandals regarding military improprieties and veteran mistreatment. It was in this context that military recruiters were expected to not only meet but also exceed prescribed enlistment quotas. The final part of this section will examine the tactics used to persuade enlistment. Such recourses include generous financial incentives; lowered physical, moral, and intelligence standards; and marketing techniques aimed specifically at young, impoverished, minority men.

3.3.1.1 At War with the Al Qaeda in Afghanistan

Twenty-six days following the 11 September 2001 attacks in which al Qaeda hijackers crashed commercial airliners into the World Trade Center towers, the Pentagon, and a field in Pennsylvania, the United States ordered military attacks on Afghanistan. Following American demands that the Taliban surrender leader Osama bin Laden, stop supporting terrorism, and release captured foreign aid workers, the

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key components in this assault on the will and understanding of the opponent" (xxvii). Finally, this combat technique is meant to "paralyze, shock, unnerve, deny, and destroy" (p.xxv). In the case of this hypothesis, the offensive force is to be understood as the American recruitment effort, while the enemy or adversary is the potential recruit.

[175] In 2006, the United States was the world's largest military spender, investing $529 billion in arms (Ritter: 11 June 2007). In 2007, the budget for the Iraq & Afghanistan wars grew to more than $600 billion (Shanker: 4 February 2008). With respect to recruitment and retention, the United States spent $7.7 billion in 2008 (Vogel: 11 May 2009).

United States launched a deluge of cruise missiles at terrorist training camps in the Afghani capital city Kabul (Tyler: 8 October 2001). While 'Operation Enduring Freedom' was officially a joint American-British mission (Sanger: 6 October 2001), President Bush clarified that the "U.S. plans to act largely alone" (Sciolino & Myers: 7 October 2001). The American military action in Afghanistan continues to this day under the leadership of President Barack Obama.

3.3.1.2 At War with Iraq

On 18 March 2003, more than 18 months after 9/11, President George W. Bush announced that the United States was to engage in war with Iraq. Having previously publicized links between al Qaeda and Iraq[176], the President stated that waiting to act until after enemies "have struck first is not self-defense, it is suicide" (Sanger: 18 March 2003). That statement indicated a marked shift in national security policy in which pre-emptive self-defense (rather than reactionary) military action would be brought to bear upon potential enemies (Sanger: 18 March 2003; Leffler 2011).

Notwithstanding international condemnation[177], President George W. Bush concluded "the security of the world requires disarming

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[176] During President Bush's weekly radio address on 28 September 2002, the president stated, "The [Iraqi] regime has longstanding and continuing ties to terrorist groups, and there are al Qaeda terrorists inside Iraq." (http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/radio/). Also in 2002, US Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, stated to the US Armed Services Committee that the Iraqi government has offered al Qaeda members a safe haven, reciprocal nonaggression agreements, and, most importantly, the contacts necessary for the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction (US House Armed Services Committee: 26 September 2002). Interestingly, the alleged connection between al Qaeda and Iraq was proven erroneous in the autumn of 2003 (New York Times: 19 September 2003). Furthermore, Washington insiders revealed that the Bush administration had plans to invade Iraq months before the twin towers were felled (CNN: 10 January 2004). While the veracity of the Bush administration's claims is outside the scope of this thesis, it was reported in 2005 that President Bush claimed, "I was on a mission from God. […] God would tell me "George, go and end the tyranny in Iraq." And I did." (MacAskill: 7 October 2005).

[177] Unable to amass a majority nine United Nations' Security Council votes, the United States lacked UN consent to wage war against Iraq (Burns: 20 March 2003).

President Saddam Hussein now" (Diebel: 18 March 2003). The war's objectives were to eliminate the threat of nuclear, biological, and chemical attacks, overthrow the government, disarm the Iraqi nation, create a democratic and unified Iraq, and potentially spread representative governments across the region (Gee: 18 March 2003).

3.3.1.3 Military Strain

The initial estimates speculated that this second gulf war in Iraq would be short –or even shorter- than its 1990 predecessor and that President Hussein would be ousted from office in a matter of days (Sanger: 18 March 2003). However, by 2005, the American military was beginning to buckle under the strain of a seemingly unending war (Herbert: 22 August 2005). Some attributed the difficulties to the military's inability to sustain lengthy, indefinite deployments at peak strength in both Afghanistan and Iraq (New York Times: 18 March 2007).

To achieve President Bush's ambitious goals, the military was obligated to deploy 160,000 soldiers to Iraq. To offset that massive undertaking, the military required the recruitment of 92,000 new troops (Shanker: 25 February 2007) and an additional $3 billion to expedite the growth of the active duty force (Fox News: 27 September 2007). Concurrent troop deployments left American service members exhausted as war-zone rotations were frequently repeated and grew longer in duration (Fox News: 27 February 2007). Similarly, the overuse of military equipment left military commanders wondering if operations could possibly continue at their current level (New York Times: 18 May 2008). Insider frustration

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Proceeding without UN approval resulted in international outcry (Koring: 18 March 2003).

with military strain entered the public domain as several high commanders[178] deplored the military's current state of readiness.

The over-deployment of the American National Guard[179] left the United States vulnerable to domestic natural disasters and terrorist attacks (Schreck: 28 March 2007). With the military deemed to be 'at the breaking point', historian Fredrick Kagan stated that the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East jeopardized domestic and international security (ABC News: 12 November 2007), thus leaving the country ill prepared for another catastrophic attack (Fox News: 31 January 2008). A Foreign Policy magazine survey of 3,400 active and retired high-level command officers indicated that service personnel believe that the American military was weaker than it was in 2003 (The Economic Times: 9 March 2008).

3.3.1.4 The Troop 'Surge'

By the final weeks of 2006, the United States stationed more than 140,000 troops in Iraq and 20,000 in Afghanistan (Scott Tyson: 13 December 2006). However, escalating violence and bloodshed in Baghdad compelled President Bush to seek a troop increase of 10 or more combat brigades, totaling 35,000 additional soldiers (Burns: 15 December 2006; Cave and Shanker: 24 December 2006). The Pentagon's ability to accomplish this task was impeded by the difficulty in finding fully trained, equipped, and rested soldiers who were ready for another deployment overseas (The News & Observer:

[178] General Peter Pace, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated that the growing commitment in Iraq precluded the military's ability to respond swiftly to other global hot spots (Scott Tyson: 19 March 2007). Secretary of Defense Robert Gates admitted, "Our forces are stretched. There's no question about that." (Austin-American Statesman: 16 April 2007). In May 2007, Major General Benjamin R. Mixon affirmed that he does not have enough soldiers to staff the mission in Iraq's precarious Diyala province (Jelinek: 11 May 2007). Presidential candidate Senator John McCain campaigned on the premise that if elected he would increase the size of the Army and Marine Corps (Maze: 15 October 2007).

[179] The National Guard, a force primarily designed for domestic activities (Tempest & Spiegel: 2 March 2007) bore a heavy burden fighting insurgent groups in in Iraq and Afghanistan (Smith-Spark: 25 April 2007).

17 December 2006). To fulfill the surge's personnel requirements as quickly as possible, new recruits received abbreviated training for the mission. By condensing the standard four-week Iraq training course into ten days, troops departed sooner, but without the preparation required for desert combat (Thompson et al: 16 April 2007).

Support for the troop increase was tenuous at best, as many former and active duty commanders publicized their skepticism of the initiative[180]. Soldiers stationed in Baghdad also doubted the surge's prospects as they expected that a boost in troop numbers would likely suppress violence only temporarily (Lasseter: 3 February 2007). In rebuke of the surge, Senate Democrats planned to introduce legislation requiring the president to acquire congressional authority in order to complete the surge (Zeleny: 9 January 2007), a threat that President Bush promptly dismissed.

A poll in early 2007 revealed that public disapproval regarding the war in Iraq grew to sixty per cent and the prospect of a surge yielded only thirty per cent support (The Economist: 18 January 2007). Political scuffles[181] between Democrats and

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[180] Former Secretary of State and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell underscored his personal pessimisim regarding the troop surge by stating "There really are no additional troops" to send. He also deduced that the increase "cannot be sustained" (Knowlton: 18 December 2006). Middle East Commander General John P. Abizaid dismissed the surge and said, "I do not believe that more American troops right now is the solution to the problem. I believe that the troop levels need to stay where they are" (Baker: 21 December 2006). Retired Army Colonel Douglas MacGregor maintained that the surge "will break the force, which in my estimation is broken already. It will leave you with no strategic reserves" (Fox28.com: 3 January 2007).

[181] The Iraq war and the subsequent troop surge were vehemently disliked by the Democratic Party, as illustrated by the following collection of articles: (Reichmann: 7 January 2007); (Levey: 14 January 2007); (Simmons: 19 January 2007); (Levey: 27 January 2007); (Knowlton: 18 February 2007); (Simon: 25 February 2007); (CBC: 23 March 2007); (Los Angeles Times: 26 March 2007); (The Economist: 29 March 2007); (Jackson: 3 April 2007); (Stout: 10 April 2007); (Fox News: 11 April 2007); (Stolberg: 17 April 2007); (Stout & Stolberg: 1 May 2007); (BBC News: 2 May 2007b); (The Economist: 3 May 2007); (Weisman: 11 May 2007); (Levey: 22 May 2007); (The Economist: 12 July 2007); (Stolberg & Myers: 13 September 2007); (Herszenhorn: 18 November 2007); (Levey: 27 January 2008). The stark

Republicans persisted through the New Year and into the spring as the Foreign Relations Committee panned the surge as "not in the national interest" [182] (Toronto Star: 24 January 2007). Iraq Commander General David Petraeus warned that incoming troops would likely be stationed in Baghdad for a significant period, emphasizing that the surge should not be understood as a short-term commitment (Oppel & Rubin: 8 March 2007). Against political odds, the troop surge commenced when 21,500 troops received call-up orders in the spring of 2007. In order to strengthen security in the beleaguered nation, President Bush then added 4,400 more troops in Iraq and 3,600 in Afghanistan (Toronto Star: 10 March 2007; MacAskill: 12 March 2007). In early 2008, one year following the troop surge, the Associated Press stated that the surge had gained some positive outcomes as security improved in the Iraqi capital (Hurst: 12 February 2008).

3.3.1.5 Troop & Civilian Casualties

The Iraq and Afghanistan wars brought much violence [183] and bloodshed[184] to the already battered civilian populations. The total

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division between the Democratic Party and the Republican Party with respect to the Iraq war further deepened a national divide over the surge.

[182] In response to that statement, President Bush boldly declared, "I'm the decision maker" (CBS News: 26 January 2007).

[183] While not an exhaustive listing of all violent events in Iraq, the following articles characterize the extent to which American forces faced extreme danger while on duty in Iraq: (Sanger: 28 February 2007), (Globe and Mail: 11 April 2007), (Partlow: 22 April 2007), (Mroue: 17 July 2007), (Forbes: 14 August 2007), (Susman: 23 November 2007), (Farrell & Al-Husaini: 2 February 2008), (CBS News: 10 February 2008), (Moore: 24 February 2008), (Agence France Presse: 29 February 2008), (Moore & Al-Husaini: 4 March 2008); (Lodoño & Eggen: 16 July 2008), (Oppel: 16 July 2008), and (Raouf: 26 August 2008).

[184] While merely a snapshot of the civilian casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan, the following articles characterize the frequent presence of such events in the press: (Wong: 12 June 2005); (Hassan: 20 July 2005); (Rubin: 20 July 2005); (Semple & Tavernise: 10 November 2005); (Burns: 1 June 2006); (Crain: 31 July 2006); (Cave: 31 August 2006); (New York Times: 31 August 2006); (King: 11 October 2006); (Al-Jibouri: 8 December 2006); (Hurst: 2 January 2007); (Tavernise: 16 January 2007); (Glanz: 2 February 2007); (Qais & Oppel: 4 February 2007); (Santora: 19 February 2007); (Babak & Nordland: 2 April 2007); (Burns: 16 Apri 2007); (CBC: 9

number of Iraqi civilians and Iraqi military service members killed during the American invasion is unclear. The United States Central Command Office estimates that nearly 77,000 Iraqis were killed and 121,649 were wounded from January 2004-August 2008. However, the Iraqi Human Rights Ministry maintains that 85,694 civilians were killed and 147,195 were injured during the same period (New York Times: 15 October 2010). These statistics pale in comparison to those compiled by Iraq Body Count[185] (IBC), a reputable source cited by the Guardian Unlimited (Rogers: 3 January 2012). IBC estimates that 162,333 Iraqis died during the conflict from January 2003-December 2011.

According to the Associated Press' Iraq War Casualties Database[186], from March 2003 until December 2011, the total number of American military casualties in Iraq totaled 4485. Of that sum, the majority (2676) of those troops were aged 18-25. The deadliest month of Operation Iraqi Freedom was November 2004 when 137 troops were killed in action. In Afghanistan, from December 2001 until November 2010, the total number of American military casualties totaled 1929, of which 1054 were aged 18-25. The bloodiest month of Operation Enduring Freedom took the lives of 65 American soldiers.

In total, more than 6,000 American troops have lost their lives during the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan; 44,000 were wounded in action, including 1,000 who are now missing at least one limb (Dao: 11 September 2011). While reviewing those data in the year 2012 is staggering, the continuous presence of civilian and troop casualty

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May 2007); (Globe & Mail: 11 May 2007); (The Economist: 12 May 2007); (BBC News: 18 June 2007); (BBC News: 12 October 2007); (Reuters: 4 February 2008).

[185] Iraq Body Count: http://www.iraqbodycount.org/

[186] Statistics regarding Operation Iraqi Freedom: http://nrcdata.ap.org/casualties/default.aspx
Statistics regarding Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan): http://nrcdata.ap.org/afghancasualties/default.aspx?username=casualty&password=2005battle

reports in the media[187] negatively swayed public opinion and recruitment potential.

[187] While not an exhaustive collection of all American military casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan, the following chronological listing demonstrates the pervasiveness of casualty reports that appeared in the North American and European media during the period studied: (Daragahi: 23 October 2006); (Villebeitia: 26 Oxtober 2006); (CNN: 16 November 2006); (Semple: 4 December 2006); (Trejos: 10 December 2006); (Yacoub: 11 December 2006); (International Herald Tribune: 12 December 2006); (Boston Herald: 15 December 2006); (Gamel: 16 December 2006); (Reuters: 17 December 2006); (Washington Post: 30 December 2006); (CNN: 2 January 2007); (International Herald Tribune: 7 January 2007); (CBC: 26 January 2007); (Houston Chronicle: 2 February 2007); (USA Today: 7 February 2007); (Boston Globe: 10 February 2007); (Juhi: 19 February 2007); (News Channel 5: 27 February 2007); (NBC3: 2 March 2007); (San Diego Union Tribune: 16 March 2007); (Hurst: 18 March 2007); (International Herald Tribune: 20 March 2007); (Reuters: 24 March 2007); (CBS News: 26 March 2007); (Reuters: 2 April 2007); (KMBC-TV: 8 April 2007); (Parker: 9 April 2007); (Toronto Star: 11 April 2007); (CBS News: 13 April 2007); (Boston Globe: 15 April 2007); (Ahmed: 20 April 2007); (Army Times: 23 April 2007); (Ahmed: 24 April 2007); (WSBTV.com: 27 April 2007); (Yates: 30 April 2007); (Raghavan & Brulliard: 1 May 2007); (Reid: 3 May 2007); (Baltimore Sun: 7 May 2007); (Army Times: 9 May 2007); (CNN: 18 May 2007); (Zucchino: 18 May 2007); (Chicago Sun Times: 20 May 2007); (Fox News: 21 May 2007); (Reuters: 23 May 2007); (International Herald Tribune: 25 May 2007); (Nessman: 29 May 2007); (Partlow: 4 June 2007); (USA Today: 13 June 2007); (Army Times: 18 June 2007A); (Prensa Latina: 18 June 2007); (Army Times: 12 July 2007); (Fox News: 18 July 2007); (Stringer & Hall: 20 July 2007); (CBC: 23 July 2007); (CBS News: 31 July 2007); (Forbes: 3 August 2007); (Boston Herald: 7 August 2007); (CBS News: 7 August 2007); (International Herald Tribune: 17 August 2007); (Reuters: 27 August 2007); (Reuters: 5 September 2007); (Los Angeles Times: 6 September 2007); (Rubin: 7 September 2007); (Los Angeles Times: 11 September 2007); (International Herald Tribune: 19 September 2007); (International Herald Tribune: 5 October 2007); (New York Times: 9 October 2007); (Reuters: 12 October 2007); (Army Times: 6 November 2007); (BBC News: 10 November 2007); (Tait & Missy: 14 November 2007); (Associated Press: 12 December 2007); (Agence France Presse: 14 December 2007); (Youssef: 29 December 2007); (International Herald Tribune: 3 January 2008); (Reuters: 16 January 2008); (Boston Globe: 21 January 2008); (Ahmed: 27 January 2008); (Reuters: 28 January 2008); (Youssef: 1 February 2008); (Army Times: 8 February 2008); (Los Angeles Times: 9 February 2008); (Affleck: 4 March 2008); (Goode & Oppel: 11 March 2008); (Los Angeles Times: 13 March 2008); (Brooksly: 16 March 2008): (Freeman: 24 March 2008); (Oppel: 27 May 2008); (Minneapolis Star Tribune: 9 April 2008); (Los Angeles Times: 20 April 2008); (Associated Press: 24 April 2008); (International Herald Tribune: 25 April 2008); (Orr: 29 April 2008); (BBC News: 30 April 2008); (Toronto Star: 4 May 2008); (Los Angeles Times: 12 May 2008); (Reuters: 13 June 2008); (Read: 13 June 2008); (CNN: 14 June 2008); (Gilmore: 16 June 2008); (Associated Press: 20 June 2008); (Rubin & Bowley: 25 June 2008); (Salaheddin: 25 June 2008); (Kansas City Star: 28 June 2008); (Straziuso: 14 July 2008); (Seattle Times: 30 July 2008); (Associated Press: 3 August 2008); (Raghavan: 5 August 2008); (Semple & Lehren: 7 August 2008); (International Herald Tribune: 9 August 2008); (Reuters: 13 August 2008); (Associated Press: 15 August 2008); (International Herald Tribune: 19 August 2008); and (Farrell: 18 September 2008).

3.3.1.6 Negative Public Opinion

At the commencement of the war in Iraq, public opinion polls indicated that two out of every three Americans favoured the Iraqi invasion (Benedetto: 16 March 2003). Three months into Operation Iraqi Freedom, 79 per cent of Americans deemed the Iraq war to be justified, even if weapons of mass destruction were never found (Milbank & VandeHei: 17 May 2003). In November 2003, the support amongst the American public began to fall. A Washington Post survey indicated that only 58 per cent of respondents felt that the United States should remain in Iraq; 38 per cent stated that American troops should leave Iraq immediately (The Economist: 8 November 2003). In May 2004, 48 per cent of those polled agreed that invading Iraq was 'the right thing to do' (CNN: 22 May 2004). The same poll indicated that 56 per cent felt that the war did not justify the loss of American lives. One year later, 60 per cent of respondents to a Washington Post poll expressed that the Iraq war was not worth fighting (Milbank & Deane: 8 June 2005). Three months later, only 44 per cent supported the Iraq war (Europe Intelligence Wire: 17 September 2005). That figure remained steady into the spring of 2006 (Xinhua News Agency: 2 June 2006). By late summer 2006, only 35 per cent of Americans supported the war (UPI News Track: 22 August 2006). In December 2006[188], that number dropped to 31 per cent (Xinhua News Agency: 19 December 2006). In March 2007, while President Bush made a public appeal for

[188] Statements by President Bush's nominee for Secretary of Defense, Robert M. Gates mirrored the public's negative view of the Iraq war. During confirmation hearings, Mr. Gates informed senators that the US was not winning the war in Iraq and that "there clearly were insufficient troops in Iraq after the initial invasion." (Stout: 5 December 2006). Similarly, troops based in Iraq publicly doubted the touted 'hearts and minds' objective. First Lieutenant Gerard Dow said "In Iraq we try to win the hearts and minds of the population. They want Americans out of here. They blame us for all of their problems. They look at us as the terrorists and then turn around and help the terrorists who are trying to kill us." (Weissert: 7 December 2006).

patience regarding Iraq, less than half the country believed that the war could be won (CBC: 19 March 2007) and 55 per cent thought that the 2003 invasion was a mistake[189] (The Economist: 22 March 2007). By July 2007, 70 per cent favoured removing nearly all troops from Iraq (Page: 10 July 2007).

A significant detriment to recruiting efforts, the descending pattern of public approval of the war in Iraq also seeped into violent action as military recruitment centers regularly received bomb threats and were subject to other means of intimidation (Liao: 10 February 2007; Underwood: 26 March 2008; CNN: 6 April 2012).

3.3.1.7 Scandals

3.3.1.7.1 Military Improprieties

The circumstances in which military recruiters sought new enlistees were negatively influenced by highly publicized crimes committed by soldiers stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan. While any public institution is vulnerable to white-collar crime, such as bribery (International Herald Tribune: 23 August 2007), violent crimes such as sexual assault, kidnapping, and murder attract significant public attention. For example, in 2007 the domestic and international press published news stories documenting the November 2005 unlawful murder of 24 unarmed Iraqi civilians in the city of Haditha. In the largest American criminal case involving civilian deaths in Iraq (CBC: 8 May 2007), the marines, who allegedly shot five of the men as they stood with their hands in the air (Baltimore Sun: 14 May 2007), testified that they committed the crime because they 'devalued Iraqi lives' (BBC News: 21 April 2007). In January 2007, Private First Class (Pfc.) Steven D. Green pled guilty to the March 2006 sexual

[189] While typically rare, public criticism of the Iraq war effort by active duty soldiers became more commonplace. One U.S. officer blamed American generals for not properly preparing the forces for an insurgency (Toronto Star: 27 April 2007).

assault of a 14 year-old Iraqi child and the murder of her parents and sister in the village of Mahmudiya (BBC News: 18 January 2007). By entering a guilty plea, the soldier narrowly avoided his own death via state execution (BBC News: 23 February 2007; White: 4 July 2007). In April 2006, a group of seven marines were accused and found guilty of kidnapping and murdering an unarmed Iraqi man. The first of the group to face sentencing, Corporal Trent D. Thomas, informed Judge Lieutenant Colonel Tracy A. Daly that they killed the Iraqi man because they "were sick and tired of getting bombed" (New York Times: 19 January 2007). In May 2006, three American soldiers murdered three Iraqi detainees who were captured on a battlefield in Baghdad (Barnes & Yoshino: 30 January 2008). Charged with three counts of negligent homicide (BBC News: 17 March 2007) and sentenced to 18 years in prison, Pfc. Corey Clagett, originally tried to claim that the detainees were attempting to escape custody (BBC News: 25 January 2007). In March 2007, three American soldiers from the 1st Batallion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd 'Dagger' Brigade were accused of murdering four captured Iraqis. Those soldiers testified that the murders were retaliation for American casualties in Iraq (Finn: 18 September 2008). In June 2007, Specialist Christopher P. Shore and his platoon leader, Sargeant (Sgt.) First Class Trey A. Corrales were charged with murdering an unarmed Iraqi during a nighttime raid (Army Times: 20 December 2007).

Paul Zielbauer of the International Herald Tribune provided a possible explanation for the growing list of unlawful actions. In his exposé, he revealed that alcohol and illegal drugs play a significant role in the crimes committed by American soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan (Zielbauer: 13 March 2007). According to the journalist, more than one-third of army criminal prosecutions involved alcohol and drugs. Subsequently, one-third of those cases were the elevated crimes of murder, sexual assault, armed robbery, and assault. To

further darken the military's reputation, a Pentagon survey released in May 2007 divulged that one in three soldiers stationed in Iraq condone torture (The Economist: 10 May 2007b). That revelation sparked a reminder from General Petraeus that American troops must 'fight by the rules' (Reid: 11 May 2007).

While crimes committed against Iraqi civilians received international attention, unlawful acts perpetrated by American soldiers at home also regularly appeared in the press. Accusations levied against military recruiters were especially harmful to the recruitment effort. Evidence of widespread abuses surfaced in 2005 when reports of recruiter 'improprieties' increased by 60 per cent from 1999 -2004 (Cave: 12 May 2005). Examples of improper recruiter behaviour range from harassment (USA Today: 14 August 2006), fraudulent enlistments [190], and deliberate acts of disinformation[191]. Recruiters also misled enlistees by advising them that being stationed in Iraq was no more physically dangerous than living near the recruiting center (Osman: 19 July 2007). Petty Officer First Class Jimmy Pecadeso lured two Hawaiian students into the Navy by promising that they would immediately be able to register for and begin their free university education. The students later learned that their G.I. (Government Issue) benefits would only be available to them following boot camp and several years of full-time active duty (Essoyan: 15 June 2008). Recruiter Sgt. Glenn Marquette of Houston regularly lied to and threatened potential enlistees. In spite of the fact that recruits who sign a non-binding contract can withdraw from the military for any reason up to the time they report

[190] A 'fraud' recruit is one enlisted who does not meet "the strict physical, moral, and educational standards laid out by the military-a violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, punishable by court-martial" (Bronner: September 2005).

[191] An example of a deliberate act of disinformation took place when recruiters knowingly told potential enlistees that the Iraq war was over (ABC News: 3 November 2006) and that soldiers are already being brought back to the United States (Chicago Tribune: 5 November 2006)

for basic training, Sgt. Marquette customarily warned those recruits that they would be jailed for abandoning military duty (CBS News: 28 July 2008).

Beyond allegations of misinformation, recruiters regularly faced charges of sexual misconduct and sexual assault. In 2005, Sgt. Eric Vetesy, a recruiter for the Indiana National Guard faced 31 counts of sexual assault, sexual battery, and official misconduct (New York Times: 2 March 2005). In August 2006, the Associated Press reported that, "more than 100 young women who expressed interest in joining the military in the past year were preyed upon sexually by their recruiters. Women were attacked on recruiting office couches, assaulted in government cars, and groped en route to entrance exams" (Goodman: 16 September 2006). In 2005, 80 recruiters were charged with and disciplined for sexual misconduct with prospective soldiers (Toledo Blade: 26 September 2006). Such allegations prompted US senators to seek the installation of video cameras in all recruiting stations (Maze: 12 June 2007). Recruiter sexual assault and misconduct charges continued to surface throughout 2007 (Gonzalez: 28 February 2007; Army Times: 18 June 2007b; Aimee: 24 July 2007; Army Times: 23 November 2007). From 1996-2009, 722 American Army recruiters faced charges of sexual assault and sexual misconduct (CBS News: 11 February 2009).

3.3.1.7.2 Veteran Mistreatment

While soldier improprieties and recruiter abuse may weigh heavily on the minds of future recruits, the treatment of active-duty and military veterans is also likely to discourage enlistment. For example, the standard 12-month active-duty rotation was extended to 'traumatic' 15-month tours (Bynum: 3 June 2008). The lengthened service time in Iraq exhausted troops to the extent that authorities within the military actively petitioned for a return to 12-month tours

(Flaherty: 7 February 2008; International Herald Tribune: 26 February 2008; Baker & Weisman: 10 April 2008). For the soldiers whose assignments in Iraq and Afghanistan were nearing completion, thousands received controversial 'stop loss' orders (three-month mandatory extensions of duty) (Semple: 13 April 2007; Bynum: 12 June 2008). Equated with being a 'back-door draft' (Bay Area Indymedia: 11 July 2008), more than 13,000 army personnel were forced to remain in service beyond their scheduled call of duty (Shanker: 18 March 2009). In 2006, to avoid a 'stop loss' order and another redeployment, 3,196 soldiers deserted the army or 'went AWOL' (absent without leave) (Von Zielbauer: 23 March 2007). In 2007, that number grew to 4,698, the highest rate since 2001 (McMichael: 16 November 2007). In violation of Article 86 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, punishments for deserters range from fines to a dishonorable discharge to 18 months imprisonment (Tully: 12 May 2011).

Soldiers who were wounded while stationed abroad faced innumerable challenges upon their return to the United States. The treatment of veterans at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C. became the subject of mass criticism in 2007. The substandard conditions at the hospital included the ubiquitous presence of cockroaches (BBC News: 21 February 2007) and rats (BBC News: 5 March 2007b) in patient rooms. Following medical treatment, wounded soldiers were met with a lumbering bureaucracy that required paper processing by 16 different information systems (The Economist: 8 March 2007) and lengthy delays in disability payments (Fox News: 26 September 2007). Upon their release from Walter Reed, as many as 43,000 troops who were listed to be 'medically unfit for combat' (Zoroya: 8 May 2008) and continued to suffer from physical injuries (Army Times: 17 January 2008) were redeployed to the Middle East.

In 2006-2007, the incidence rate of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a mental affliction, rose dramatically (Kennedy: 4 May 2007) to at least one in eight[192] veterans (Mariscal: June 2007), debilitating many soldiers for future service. Soldiers airlifted out of Iraq due to PTSD received ineffectual treatment at Walter Reed (Hull & Priest: 18 June 2007), were denied a one-month long break from combat duty (Zoroya: 19 June 2007), and were disqualified from the purple heart commendation award, a military decoration for those wounded while on duty (McMichael: 6 January 2009). Subject to mistreatment, and facing another lengthy redeployment, many veterans opted for suicide over returning to Iraq (Toronto Star: 31 January 2008; International Herald Tribune: 12 February 2008; New York Times: 30 May 2008; Madhani: 15 June 2008; Jelinek: 29 January 2009).

3.3.1.8 Recruitment Objectives and Recruiter Strain

The Department of Defense's (DoD) statistics[193] regarding military recruitment and retention in the United States indicate that the four components (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force) met or exceeded all recruitment goals during the fiscal years 2006-8. However, data regarding recruitment and retention during fiscal year 2005 are conspicuously absent from the DoD's website. During that year, each component reported significant monthly recruitment shortfalls. For example, the Army missed its recruiting targets in

[192] According to the American Psychological Association's report in 2007, the quantity of psychologically wounded soldiers may be as high as one in four (Priest & Hull: 17 June 2007).

[193] 2006: Army: 80,635 (goal was 80,000); Navy: 36,679 (goal was 36,656); Marine Corps: 32,337 (goal was 32,301); Air Force: 30,889 (goal was 30,750) 100% (http://www.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=10057)
2007: Army: 80,407 (goal was 80,000); Navy: 37,361 (goal was 37,000); Marine Corps: 35,603 (goal was 35,576); Air Force: 27,801 (goal was 27,801) (http://www.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=11398)
2008: Army: 80,517 (goal was 80,000); Navy: 38,485 (goal was 38,419); Marine Corps: 37,991 (goal was 37,967); Air Force: 27,848 (goal was 27,800) (http://www.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=12277)

both February and March. In April, the Army missed its target by 42 per cent (CBS News: 9 June 2005). At the end of fiscal 2005, the amount of new military recruits fell from 250,000 in 2004 to 215,000 (White: 15 August 2006). Specifically, Army recruiting was down nearly 10 per cent[194] as only 73,000 out of the expected 80,000 enlisted (Kaplan: 4 October 2005).

The pressure to satisfy and exceed enlistment quotas is intense for the 7,600[195] active-duty Army recruiters (Thompson: 2 April 2009) who work at the 1,600 recruitment stations in the United States (Davey: 14 June 2004). To achieve objectives, each recruiter is expected to enlist at least two recruits each month, a quantity that may sound attainable to an outsider, but is frustrating to recruiters (Bronner: September 2005). The strain of selling a military career during wartime pushed five recruiters from the same Houston battalion to commit suicide (Army Times: 29 September 2008). The rash of suicides incited an independent investigation (ABC News: 7 November 2008) and a brief 'stand-down' of the entire Army recruiting force (Tan: 27 January 2009). The long hours, lack of vacation time, relentless demand of 'must do two' (enlist two soldiers per month), and the threat of humiliating punishments for failure have contributed to an elevated[196] suicide rate amongst recruiters (Thompson: 2 April 2009).

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[194] Recruitment numbers were decimated in some regions, such as South Florida, where Army enlistment quotas were missed by 50 per cent (Clary: 20 December 2008).

[195] Of those recruiters, more than 1,000 were 'involuntarily' recalled to recruiting duty (Tan: 13 March 2008). Others received special reclassification bonuses to transfer to recruiting posts (Tice: 22 April 2007).

[196] The number of recruiters who committed suicide in 2008 was triple that of the overall Army (Thompson: 2 April 2009).

3.3.1.9 Recruitment Tactics

3.3.1.9.1 Lower enlistment standards

In order to cast a wider net and enable the enlistment of a greater number of recruits (Christenson: 20 January 2006), all branches of the military lowered their acceptance standards. In addition to elevating the maximum enlistment age from 35 to 42 (Rosenberg: 28 February 2008) and permitting recruits who surpass weight restrictions to join (St. Petersburg Times: 10 August 2007), the Army National Guard lowered mental aptitude standards and allowed applicants who scored in the 16th percentile to enlist (McAfee: 10 April 2007). Similarly, the Army reduced its minimum mental threshold to admit those who are classified as 'category three', or "one level above imbecility," according to former Colonel (Col.) Larry Wilkerson, former chief of staff to Gen. (General) Colin Powel (Luce: 5 January 2007).

Despite the Army's commitment to enlisting 'high quality'[197] individuals and requiring that at least 90 per cent of its recruits be high school graduates, men and women who had neither a high school diploma nor General Education Diploma (GED) were admitted[198]. According to military studies, the distinction between being a high school graduate and attaining a GED is significant when one considers that 80 per cent of those with a diploma complete their first term of enlistment. Conversely, fifty per cent of recruits with a

[197] A 'high quality' recruit is one who is a high school graduate and scores in the upper half of the military's qualification test. Between the years 2004-2007, the quantity of high quality recruits dropped from 61 to 45 per cent (Hefling: 22 January 2008).

[198] The percentage of recruited high school graduates dropped from 84 per cent in 2005 to 73 per cent in 2006 (Hefling: 10 August 2007) to 71 per cent in 2007 (Hefling: 22 January 2008 & 10 August 2007). Those without their high school equivalency qualifications enter the Education Plus program, in which recruits attend a military prep school (Bender: 9 February 2008) and the Army incurs the costs of both a GED preparation course and the GED examination fee (Chenelly: 3 October 2006).

GED drop out of the military within the first three years (Thompson: 23 January 2008).

The most controversial change to enlistment standards involved the granting of moral waivers for past criminal misconduct or drug offenses (Potter: 20 December 2006). Between 2003-2006, the quantity of moral waivers grew by 65 per cent. According to the Commander of the U.S. Army Recruiting Command, Major General Thomas Bostic, the types of offenses absolved by a moral waiver were prototypically minor crimes, such as joy riding or curfew violation (Jelinek: 10 October 2007). However, DoD records indicate that the majority of moral waivers forgave felonies such as aggravated assault, burglary, robbery, and vehicular homicide (Alvarez: 14 February 2007). According to a report released by a congressional committee, in 2006 the Army granted 249 moral waivers. In 2007, that quantity more than doubled to 511 (Fox News: 21 April 2008). While most of the crimes previously committed by recruits were burglaries and drug offenses, dozens were aggravated assault, nine were sex crimes, and six were manslaughter/vehicular homicide (Fox News: 21 April 2008). In sum, nearly three in every ten recruits required a waiver, two-thirds of which for criminal behaviour (Fox News: 2 July 2008).

According to the Sacramento Bee, in spite of the increasing the size of the military's applicant pool, the proliferation of moral waivers for criminal activity is a risky undertaking. Having conducted a yearlong examination of active-duty troops who had been granted moral waivers, the study determined that those with a criminal past are statistically more likely to commit violent crimes while on duty (Sacramento Bee: 13 July 2008). Accepting recruits who previously would have been rejected by the military and who would not qualify for domestic law enforcement jobs in the United States threatens the viability of the military as a whole.

3.3.1.9.2 Attract the poor with bonuses

By and large, military demographics indicate that the Army's best prospects for recruitment (Bailey: June 2007) come from rural communities (Cushing & Bishop: 20 July 2005) where educational and economic opportunities are limited (Deans: 2 November 2006). A concept familiar since the end of mandatory military service in 1973, the 'poverty draft' has come to fruition as nearly 75 per cent of American troops "killed in Iraq came from towns where the per capita income was below the national average. More than half came from towns where the percentage of people living in poverty topped the national average" (Mariscal: June 2007). From a geographical standpoint, nearly one third of the soldiers killed in Iraq came from poor southern states (Bruce: 27 March 2008). According to military sociologist David Segal, a downward economy encourages many to seek out employment in the military, an institution that is always hiring (Christenson: 1 February 2009).

The military has sought the attention of those who face economic hardship by increasing the financial benefits of service. Enlistment bonuses range from up to of $20,000 for those who enter a two-year active-duty contract, $25,000 for a three-year commitment, and $40,000 for longer contractual engagements (Tice: 31 July 2007). Additional bonuses are offered to those willing to perform special duties such as truck drivers, signal support specialists, and artillery tactical data system operators (Tice: 14 August 2007). Recruits with special skills, such as those who are native speakers of Arabic, receive the maximum signing bonus of $20,000 (Tice: 19 October 2009). If the recruit is willing to depart for basic training within four weeks of enlistment, he may qualify for an additional $20,000 'quick ship' bonus, an option accepted by 90 per cent of recruits in July 2007 (White: 27 August 2007).

To further appeal to impoverished recruits, the Army proposed two financial incentives in 2006. These initiatives, the U.S. Army Home Ownership Fund and the Army Business Fund, provide recruits with up to $45,000 tax-free to subsidize either the cost of purchasing a home or starting a new business. It bears mentioning that the maximum benefit is only available to those who commit to a six-year active duty term of service (Wasserman: 27 February 2006; Hefling: 20 August 2007).

According to sociologist Meredith Kleykamp (2006: 274-275), between 1996 and 2006, the cost of a four-year undergraduate degree rose faster than the average family income in 41 states. The economic burden of higher education thereby forces young people to seek out alternative means to finance their studies. Signed into law in 1944 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Montgomery GI-Bill[199] provides active duty and reservist veterans with access to higher education, home loans, and unemployment benefits. The most recent adaptation of the Bill, the Post-9/11 GI-Bill[200], signed into law in July 2008 by President George W. Bush (USA Today: 8 March 2009), extends the bill to include a monthly housing allowance during a veteran's time of undergraduate/post-graduate study and a textbook stipend. In spite of the GI-Bill's advertising, which boasts "100 per cent tuition reimbursement" (MSNBC: 11 January 2009), it bears noting that reservists are entitled to only $400 per month in educational benefits. Regular service members qualify for $1101 per month (Henican: 4 December 2007). While financial incentives have become a standard means for attracting new recruits, Professor Alan Gropman, a specialist in security policy at the National Defense University in Washington D.C., warns against joining the military for

[199] The Montgomery GI-Bill: http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/montgomery_gibill/index.html.
[200] The Post-9/11 GI-Bill: http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/post_911_gibill/index.html

economic reasons because enlistees are obligated to complete their military service even in the event of an upward tick in the economy (Bender: 1 March 2009).

3.3.1.9.3 Employ the law to entice the young

Section 9528 of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act is entitled The Armed Forces Recruiter Access to Students and Student Recruiting Information. Subsections one and three of this Act specify that schools in receipt of federal funding must provide the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all secondary school students to military recruiters, in the same manner as such details may be provided to a post-secondary educational institution[201]. Deemed an important means of sowing the seeds of future enlistment (Lewin: 29 January 2003), the recruitment of high school students typically takes place in lower-middle class schools (New York Times: 4 January 2005). While parents can legally opt out of recruitment telephone calls and home visits, the official withdrawal application is often bundled together with many other pre-registration documents. According to the father of one California high school student, the opt-out notification in his son's school district took the form of an ambiguous statement requiring parents to write a letter if they didn't want their child to be listed in a public directory (Cave: 3 June 2005).

Enabling recruiters' access to high school students is not limited to occasional visits to the campus cafeteria during lunch hour. According to the Army's School Recruiting Program Handbook[202], "school ownership is the goal". The handbook suggests achieving that objective by gifting doughnuts to the faculty, trolling the halls, striking up conversations with students about military service, and

[201] United States Department of Education: http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg112.html#sec9528

[202] A PDF version of the Handbook is available on the following website: http://www.usarec.army.mil/im/formpub/rec_pubs/p350_13.pdf

volunteering in uniform at official school functions such as the prom or sporting events (Van Houten: 4 January 2007). Enforcement of the recruitment sections of the NCLB Act incited a California high school teacher to launch a lawsuit disputing recruiter aggressiveness[203] and the one-sided presentation of the risks associated with war zone duty (School Library Journal: 1 October 2006). Similarly, anti-war activists in California sought school board arbitration to limit military presence in schools (Mill-Faraudo: 6 March 2007). The extent to which the military availed itself of the NCLB Act was evident when a seventh-grade class in Maine joined a six-week anti-drug program hosted by the Maine Veterans for Peace, a course that culminated with a class trip to a military training base (Wack: 25 September 2006).

3.3.1.9.4 Advertise military strength and pacify the 'influencers'

In 2001, following twenty years of 'Be all you can be', the military changed its slogan to 'Army of One'. Pioneered by the Chicago-based advertising firm Leo Burnett U.S.A., the $150 million campaign was intended to appeal to a generation that is highly individualistic, resistant to authority (Haberman: 20 January 2001), and in need of deeper gratification for enlistment (Dao: 10 January 2001). The Army of One campaign drew criticism from soldiers who felt that individual empowerment contradicted the essence of military training (Adweek: 16 October 2006).

In 2005, the Army replaced Leo Burnett U.S.A. with the McCann Erickson Worldwide advertising agency, transferring its $1.35 billion advertising account to the New York firm (Elliott: 8 December 2005). The new agency's first task was to replace the controversial Army of One slogan with one that would be better

[203] According to San Fernando High librarian Kitty Kroger, students were being "barraged" at home with relentless telephone calls and home visits from the military (Oleck: 1 October 2006).

suited to appeal to 18-24 year old patriots. The new campaign, entitled 'Army Strong', which debuted in the fall of 2006 at a cost of $200 million, intended to articulate that one gains physical and emotional strength during military training and service (Burns: 9 October 2006). According to Army Public Affairs, the new slogan underscores "skills, teamwork, selfless service, and the transformative power of the U.S. Army" (Harper: 10 October 2006). Many of the Army Strong advertisements disseminated on television and in movie theatres focused on the symbolic nature of the Army uniform, personifying a soldier's clothes with qualities like commitment, achievement, and leadership. At the conclusion of the ad, the voice-over announcer (actor Gary Sinise) encouraged the audience to "Try it on at goarmy.com" (Elliott: 25 May 2011). By including the website address, the advertisement motivates the audience to visit the Army's virtual home and make contact with a recruiter (Bailey 2007: 73).

Criticism of the Army Strong campaign emphasized the unrealistic portrayal of military life without sober recognition of the risks involved. According to journalist Nancy Bartley, the ads "don't show a hint of the battlefield, although joining means a strong likelihood of deploying to Afghanistan or Iraq" (Bartley: 21 March 2008). Similarly, the publicity for the Navy and Air Force, which informed their audience 'It's not science fiction, it's what we do everyday', also obscures battlefield bloodshed with technologically impressive graphics (Sirota: 28 August 2009). Other forms of military advertising also refrain from drawing attention to the bodily risks of enlistment. For example, a mailed Army brochure heralds the 30 days of annual paid vacation, free medical and dental benefits, a competitive retirement program, and access to home loan funding. However, there was "no mention of combat, or what it's like to walk the corridors and grounds of Walter Reed Army Medical Centre in

Washington, where you'll see a tragic, unending parade of young men and women, struggling to move about despite their paralysis, or with one, two, or three limbs missing" (Herbert: 22 August 2005). According to Beth Bailey (2007: 50), the military's use of sophisticated advertising merits public scrutiny as these techniques blur the line between the transparent communication of information and propaganda.

During the development of the Army Strong campaign, the military recognized that advertising couldn't only be centred on the potential recruit; it had to also extinguish the concerns of what it called the 'influencers' (parents and other influential adults who may advise the recruit to refrain from enlistment) (Herbert: 22 August 2005). Efforts to appease influencers, which joined the Army Strong campaign in 2006 (Elliott: 11 November 2008), included videos of parents discussing why they encouraged their children to enlist (Cave: 3 June 2005) and slogans such as 'You made them strong. We'll make them Army strong.' (Erickson: 30 October 2008) The parent-oriented advertising was essential as recruiters realized that parental support is an integral part of recruitment and only 25 per cent of parents would recommend military service to their children during wartime (Williams: 8 February 2006).

3.3.1.9.5 Make service a game

Launched in 2001, the America's Army video game[204] endeavored to illustrate that the US Army is an "elite, innovative, and high-tech organization" (Army Magazine: 6 January 2002). Free to download in the United States from americasarmy.com, America's Army is a first-person-shooter game that consists of mock military training followed by ten-minute missions in which participants compete with

[204] See Williamson and Resnick 2003 for a description of an earlier state of the americasarmy.com website.

each other in real time. The players, who are in constant contact with each other by way of on-screen chat or audio headsets, complete the military missions using accurately designed Army equipment. The typical operation backdrop includes deserts similar to those found in Central Asia or North Africa and rural scenes in the United States to demonstrate the challenges of homeland security (Li 2003: 7). The primary objective[205] of America's Army is to target the 13-24 year old demographic and sow the seeds of military enlistment, a goal facilitated by a button in the game menu that transfers the player to the Army's recruitment website, goarmy.com [206] (Grossman: 28 February 2005). The number of registered players of America's Army grew from 3.4 million in 2004 (Loftus: 18 July 2004), to five million in 2005 (Herbert: 22 August 2005), to 7.5 million in 2006 (Sisco: 12 January 2007).

Again, similar to other modes of military advertising, the video game drew criticism as it sanitizes the violent nature of war. As stated by University of Michigan psychology professor Brad Bushman, "…when you shoot someone or when you are shot you see a puff of blood; you don't see anyone suffering or writhing in pain" (CBS News: 30 March 2004). At a cost of $32.8 million over eight years (Mastrapa: 9 December 2009), the details regarding America's Army will be explored in the America's Army homepage analysis which can be found in section 3.3.4.

3.3.1.9.6 Appeal to minorities and immigrants

To increase the size of the military, the Pentagon has spent millions of dollars to capture the interest of the Hispanic and African-American

[205] Internal objectives of America's Army include the capacity to track a player's military aptitude and predict his or her potential military career path (Reagan: 6 August 2008).

[206] According to The Sydney Morning Herald, 28 per cent of players click through to the recruitment website and 40 per cent of recruits played the game before enlisting (Molloy: 22 November 2007).

communities (Mariscal: June 2007). Since the establishment of the AVF, African-American enlistment grew from 11 per cent in 1972 to nearly 30 per cent in the mid-1980s (Kleykamp 2006: 276). The growth of black military participation is attributed to the military being perceived as a less discriminatory workplace in which one can gain steady employment, benefits, and competitive remuneration. Furthermore, the access to college education provided a path to social mobility (Kleykamp 2006: 273).

However, the African-American view that the Iraq invasion was illegitimate (Arndorfer: 28 February 2005) nullified targeted advertising campaigns such as the 'Takin' it to the Streets Tour[207]' (Mariscal: 26 June 2007). In fact, a CBS News poll in 2007 indicated that, in contrast to the caucasian population's nearly 50-50 division, 82 per cent of the African-Americans surveyed felt that United States should have never invaded Iraq. Disapproval of the war in Iraq decreased this minority group's enlistment rate to 13 per cent in 2006 (Abruzzese: 22 August 2007). The branch of the military most affected by the African-American reduction in enlistment was the Army. In the year 2000 more than 42,000 black men and women applied for Army enlistment, in 2005 that number decreased to 17,000 (Williams & Baron: 7 October 2007), a decline of more than 58 per cent (Askia: 9 December 2007).

It is projected that by the year 2025, one in every four Americans will be Hispanic (Lovato 2005: 15). In order to attract the attention of this large and growing demographic, the military has constructed culture-specific publicity to promulgate the advantages of service. At a cost of $55 million, the Latino-centered marketing campaign includes advertisements in Spanish-language newspapers and Spanish-language commercials broadcast on Univision and

[207] The 'Takin' it to the Streets Tour' is a recruitment campaign centred on the African-American community.

Telemundo, the largest Spanish-language television and radio networks in the United States (Alvarez: 9 February 2006). Other specialized campaigns include the 'Hispanic H2 Tour' (Mariscal: 26 June 2007) and Army sponsored events such as the 'Tropical Music Festival' in the Bronx (Santos: 30 July 2007). An important segment of Hispanic recruitment is allaying the reservations of a potential recruit's parents. To counter the concerns of Spanish-speaking family members, the Army produced Spanish-language text written specifically for Hispanic parents (Arndorfer: 28 February 2005).

Since 2001, the Latino recruitment drive was successful as enlistment amongst this group increased by 26 per cent in 2005 (Alvarez: 9 February 2006). Hispanic enlistment further grew by 30 per cent by 2007 (Muhammad: 16 June 2008). However, even with that substantial growth, Hispanics only represent 10 per cent of the military population, in spite of their being 14 per cent of the 18-24 year old American population (Kleykamp 2006: 277). Akin to the draw of enlistment for African-Americans, Hispanics view the military as a path to societal acceptance and social mobility (Alvarez: 9 February 2006).

Another group of citizens pursued by the recruitment divisions of the United States Military is the immigrant population. In 2002, President George W. Bush signed a wartime executive order allowing legal permanent residents of the United States to apply for expedited citizenship following just one day of military service (Schulte: 22 May 2007). In 2007, approximately 70,000 foreign-born men and women performed active-duty military service; of that group, nearly 30,000 (43 per cent) were not American citizens (Navarette: 14 August 2007). Between 2001-2007, the United States extended citizenship to 32,500 soldiers (Meyer: 19 October 2007). The non-American contingent of the U.S. Military comes from over 200 countries; however, the majority are citizens of Mexico, the

Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and El Salvador (The Economist: 1 February 2007). By 2008, 109 of the so-called 'Green Card Soldiers' died while on duty. In those cases, posthumous citizenship was granted to the deceased soldier, subsequently allowing his or her spouse and/or children to apply for their own expedited citizenship (O'Neil: 24 March 2008). Critics of immigrant military participation argue that the government is taking advantage of 'desperate people' (Moscoso: 24 November 2006).

3.3.1.10 Thematic Checklist for American Website Analyses

- terrorism
- military strain
  - the troop 'surge'
  - mounting casualties and injuries
  - negative public opinion
    - military impropriety scandals
    - veteran mistreatment
  - recruiter strain
- changes to recruitment tactics
  - lowered enlistment standards
  - attracting the poor with bonuses
  - No Child Left Behind (legal approach)
  - the promise of 'strength'
  - the pacification of 'influencers'
  - military service as a 'game'
  - appeal to the needs of minorities and immigrants

3.3.2 Homepage of the President of the United States



Figure 382

Whitehouse.gov/president on 8 April 2007.

3.3.2.1 Zones

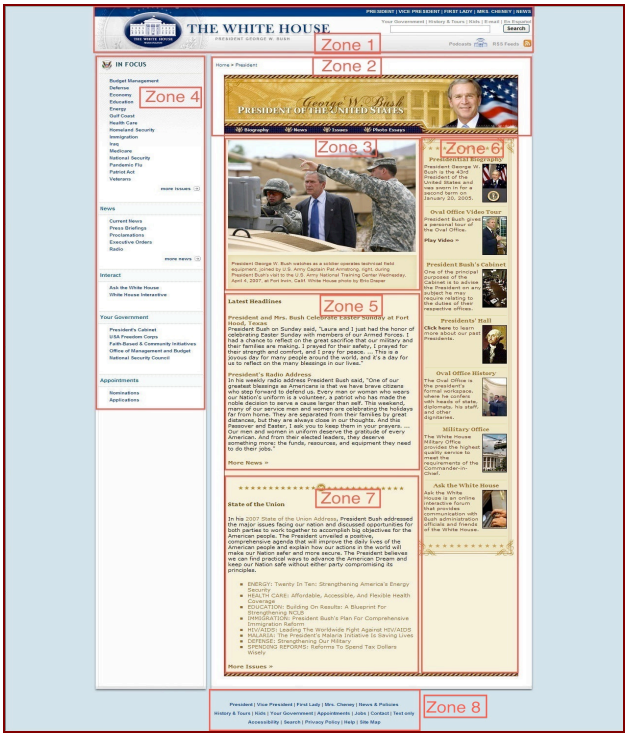


Figure 383

Zones of whitehouse.gov/president.

Zone one: **Banner I and Menu I**

This zone is located along the uppermost region of the webpage and displays a banner. At the top of the banner is a dark blue band. Below the band is a thick light grey background. On the far left side of the banner is an image of the White House and the caption *The White House Washington*. The website title can be found to the right of the image and states *The White House*. Under that title is the name of the head of state, *President George W. Bush.* On the left side of the banner is the website's first menu of twelve links divided into three horizontal rows. The uppermost row offers the visitor links to learn more about the *President*, *Vice President*, *First Lady*, *Mrs. Cheney*, and *News*. Those links are written in white capital letters against the dark blue background. The second row of links includes: *Your*

Government, *History & Tours*, *Kids*, *E-mail*, *En Español*, and a search box and search button. The third row provides the visitor with linked access to *Podcasts* and *RSS Feeds*.

Zone two: Banner II and Menu II

Located below zone one is the second banner on the whitehouse.gov/president homepage. Banner II is distinguished from banner I by a coiled rope border. The background of the left and central area of banner II is a golden tone within which one can distinguish the seal of the president and an image of the White House. The official photograph of President George W. Bush appears on the right side of banner II, as does the image of a waving American flag. Verbal content in banner II is limited to a handwritten cursive presentation of the president's name and title, *President of the United States.* Banner II also contains the website's second menu. The links provided are: *Biography, News, Issues*, and *Photo Essays.*

Zone three: Featured News Item

The featured news item on whitehouse.gov/president contains an image and a caption. The image is composed of President Bush and two soldiers. The president, dressed formally in a business suit, stands between two uniformed service persons. The soldier on the left side of the image, wearing a helmet and sunglasses, appears to be operating military equipment from within a large briefcase. The soldier on the right, U.S. Army Captain Pat Armstrong, is facing President Bush and is gesticulating with his left arm and hand. The president appears to be viewing the briefcase components. The image caption states: "*President George W. Bush watches as a soldier operates technical field equipment, joined by U.S. Army Captain Pat Armstrong, right, during President Bush's visit to the U.S. Army*

National Training Center Wednesday, April 4, 2007, at Fort Irwin, Calif. White House photo by Eric Draper."

Zone four: Menu III

The most detailed menu on the homepage is located on the far left side of the screen. The menu items are divided into five sub-headings. The title of the menu listing is *IN FOCUS*. Under that heading are the following linked options: *Budget Management*, *Defense*, *Economy*, *Education*, *Energy*, *Gulf Coast*, *Health Care*, *Homeland Security*, *Immigration*, *Iraq*, *Medicare*, *National Security*, *Pandemic Flu*, *Patriot Act*, *Veterans*, and *more issues.* The second heading, *News*, provides links to *Current News*, *Press Briefings*, *Proclamations*, *Executive Orders*, *Radio*, and *more news.* The third heading, *Interact*, contains the following two links: *Ask the White House* and *White House Interactive*. The subsequent heading, *Your Government*, contains links to *President's Cabinet*, *USA Freedom Corps*, *Faith-Based & Community Initiatives*, *Office of Management and Budget*, and *National Security Council*. The final menu heading, *Appointments*, provides links to *Nominations* and *Applications*.

Zone five: News

The news section of the president's homepage contains the following two headlines: *President and Mrs. Bush Celebrate Easter Sunday at Fort Hood, Texas*[208] and *President's Radio Address*[209]. This zone also contains a link to *More News*.

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[208] Article text: *President Bush on Sunday said, "Laura and I just had the honor of celebrating Easter Sunday with members of our Armed Forces. I had a chance to reflect on the great sacrifice that our military and their families are making. I prayed for their safety, I prayed for their strength and comfort, and I pray for peace…This is a joyous day for many people around the world, and it's a day for us to reflect on the many blessings in our lives."*

[209] Article text: *In his weekly radio address President Bush said, "One of our greatest blessings as Americans is that we have brave citizens who step forward to defend us. Every man or woman who wears our Nation's uniform is a volunteer, a patriot who*

Zone six: Menu IV

In this zone of president's homepage one can find the fourth and final menu, a horizontal listing of seven presidentially themed links. Each link in zone six is accompanied by an image. The links in this section include: *Presidential Biography*[210], *Oval Office Video Tour*[211], *President Bush's Cabinet*[212], *President's Hall*[213], *Oval Office History*[214], *Military Office*[215], and *Ask the White House*[216].

Zone seven: State of the Union

This final zone is located at the bottom of the homepage and provides a summary[217] of President Bush's January 2007 State of the Union.

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has made the noble decision to serve a cause larger than self. This weekend, many of our service men and women are celebrating the holidays far from home. They are separated from their families by great distances, but they are always close in our thoughts. And this Passover and Easter, I ask you to keep them in your prayers… Our men and women in uniform deserve the gratitude of every American. And from their elected leaders, they deserve something more: the funds, resources, and equipment the need to do their jobs."

[210] Presidential Biography text: *President George W. Bush is the 43rd President of the United States and was sworn in for a second term on January 20, 2005.*

[211] Oval Office Video Tour text: *President Bush gives a personal tour of the Oval Office. Play video >>.*

[212] President Bush's Cabinet text: *One of the principal purposes of the Cabinet is to advise the President on any subject he may require relating to the duties of their respective offices.*

[213] President's Hall text: *Click here to learn more about our past Presidents.*

[214] Oval Office History text: *The Oval Office is the president's workplace, where he confers with heads of states, diplomats, his staff, and other dignitaries.*

[215] Military Office text: *The White House Military Office provides the highest quality service to meet the requirements of the Commander-in-Chief.*

[216] Ask the White House text: *As the White House is an online interactive forum that provides communication with Bush administration officials and friends of the White House.*

[217] State of the Union text: *In his 2007 State of the Union Address, President Bush addressed the major issues facing our nation and discussed opportunities for both parties to work together to accomplish big objectives for the American people. The President unveiled a positive, comprehensive agenda that will improve the daily lives of the American people and explain how our actions in the world will make our Nation safer and more secure. The President believes we can find practical ways to advance the American Dream and keep our Nation safe without either party compromising its principles.*

Along with a link to the complete State of the Union, this zone includes eight focal points[218] of the speech.

Zone eight: Menu V

The final menu on whitehouse.gov/president is located at the bottom of the homepage. The links provided in this zone are: *President*, *Vice President*, *First Lady*, *Mrs. Cheney*, *News & Policies*, *History & Tours*, *Kids*, *Your Government*, *Appointments*, *Jobs*, *Contact*, *Text Only*, *Accessibility*, *Search*, *Privacy Policy*, *Help*, and *Site Map.*

3.3.2.2. Images & Texts to be reviewed

1. Multiple banners and the presidential presence
2. Multiple menus and links
3. Multimodal analysis of featured article

3.3.2.2.1 Multiple Banners and the Presidential Presence

It is important to note that while the White House has a homepage (whitehouse.gov), the President of the United States has his own homepage (whitehouse.gov/president). The two homepages are quite similar, with the exception of the absence of banner II on whitehouse.gov and a section entitled *Features* in place of the zone six menu on whitehouse.gov/president.

As the president's homepage still retains the title *The White House* and the name of the White House in the website address, it is possible to conclude that the home and workplace of the Commander-in-Chief is undifferentiated from the work of the elected leader. This blurred line acts to distance the actions of the president from the work

[218] The eight State of the Union highlights are: *ENERGY: Twenty in Ten: Strengthening America's Energy Security; HEALTH CARE: Affordable, Accessible, And Flexible Health Coverage; EDUCATION: Building on Results: A Blueprint For Strengthening NCLB; IMMIGRATION: President Bush's Plan For Comprehensive Immigration Reform; HIV/AIDS: Leading The Worldwide Fight Against HIV/AIDS; MALARIA: The President's Malaria Initiative Is Saving Lives; DEFENSE: Strengthening Our Military; SPENDING REFORMS: Reforms To Spend Tax Dollars Wisely.*

performed by the person, George W. Bush. This sentiment is echoed in the 8 April 2007 edition of this website in which the identification of the White House in banner I takes the prominent upper-central screen location (figure 384). Similarly, the principal image in banner I is the White House (rather than the president). In the background of the White House drawing, one can find the trace presence of the President's Official seal (circled in figure 384).



Figure 384

Whitehouse.gov/president banner I.

A second mini-White House can also be found next to the Podcasts link in zone one (figure 385).

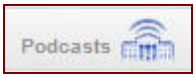


Figure 385

Mini-White House in zone one.

The striking presence of the White House and the Official Seal of the President communicate the power that is inherent to the administration's executive office. The subsequent placement and identification of George W. Bush as the president is located in a subordinate position and in a less salient font and colour when compared to the banner's title (figure 386)



Figure 386

Textual identification of the president in banner I.

Interestingly, the only other person specifically named in banner II is the wife of the Vice President, Mrs. Cheney, an unelected and untitled personage.

The homepage's second banner in zone two (figure 387) provides information regarding the identity of the president.



Figure 387

Whitehouse.gov/president banner II.

The verbal content of zone two includes the President's name that appears in a handwritten typeset. The font utilized for *George W. Bush* in banner II is neither in the President's handwriting, nor is it his signature (figure 388)

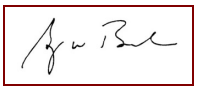


Figure 388

Signature of President George W. Bush[219].

[219] The image of the President's signature can be found on official documents, such as Executive Order 13446 of 28 September 2007, the Continuance of Certain Federal Advisory Committees and Amendments to and Revocation of Other Executive Orders (http://www.fitness.gov/about/order/index.html).

One may interpret the cursive handwritten font as an attempt to soften the webpage's appearance and bestow a personal contribution from the Commander-in-Chief. While the President's official photograph is the most salient element of banner II, the zone is irregularly shaped and contains four dissonant backgrounds (figure 389).



Figure 389

Backgrounds of zone two.

The first background on the far left side of the zone is the Official Seal of the President. The second background, located beyond President Bush's right shoulder is the White House. The third background is the waving American flag beyond the President's left shoulder. The fourth background is a navy blue backdrop for menu I. The dark blue background compliments the flag's blue colour and coheres the zone's disparate elements.

The placement of the president's photograph in the foreground of those designs and in a highly noticeable location on the homepage articulates that he is the face of the governing administration. Indeed, the whitehouse.gov/president homepage makes it difficult to ignore the importance of the most recognizable member of the American federal government. For example, the 8 April 2007 edition includes six images of Mr. Bush (figure 390).



Figure 390

Six images of President Bush in zones two, three, and six[220].

The Official Seal of the President can be found in ten locations (indicated by red arrows in figure 391) while verbal references to *President Bush* appear twelve times.

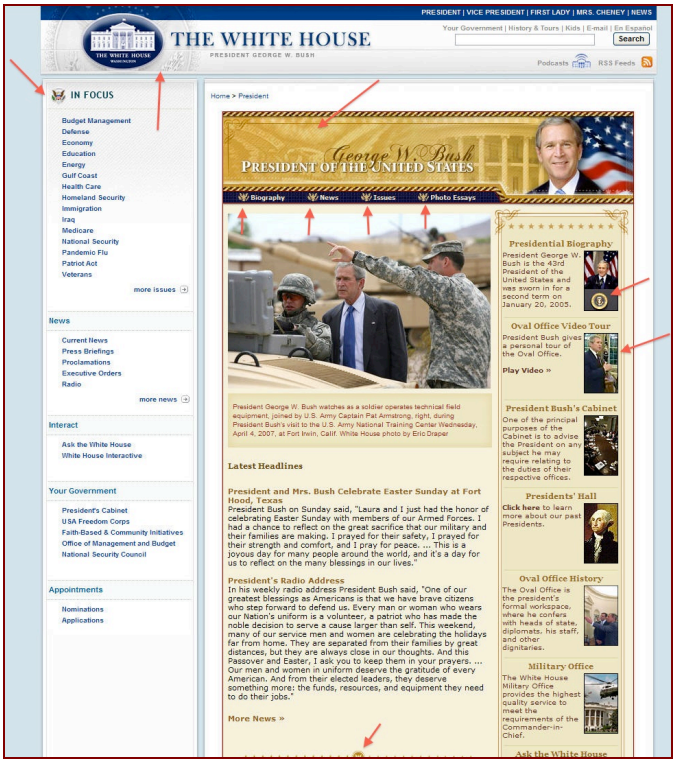


Figure 391

Presence of the Seal of the President.

[220] The fifth image included in figure 390 is a bird's eye view of the Cabinet during a meeting. Although it is difficult to distinguish President Bush within the grouping, it is very likely that he is included in the photograph.

The arrows in figure 392 indicate the 22 places on whitehouse.gov/president in which the word *President* can be found.



Figure 392

Verbal references to *President.*

This repetition of verbal and visual material emphasizes the sweeping power intrinsic to the office of the President of the United States and subscribed to the acting Commander-in-Chief.

3.3.2.2.2 Multiple Menus and Links

With the exception of three news articles (located in zones three and five) and a summary of the 2007 State of the Union (located in zone seven), the president's homepage is a collection of links organized under five separate menus (see circled items in figure 393).

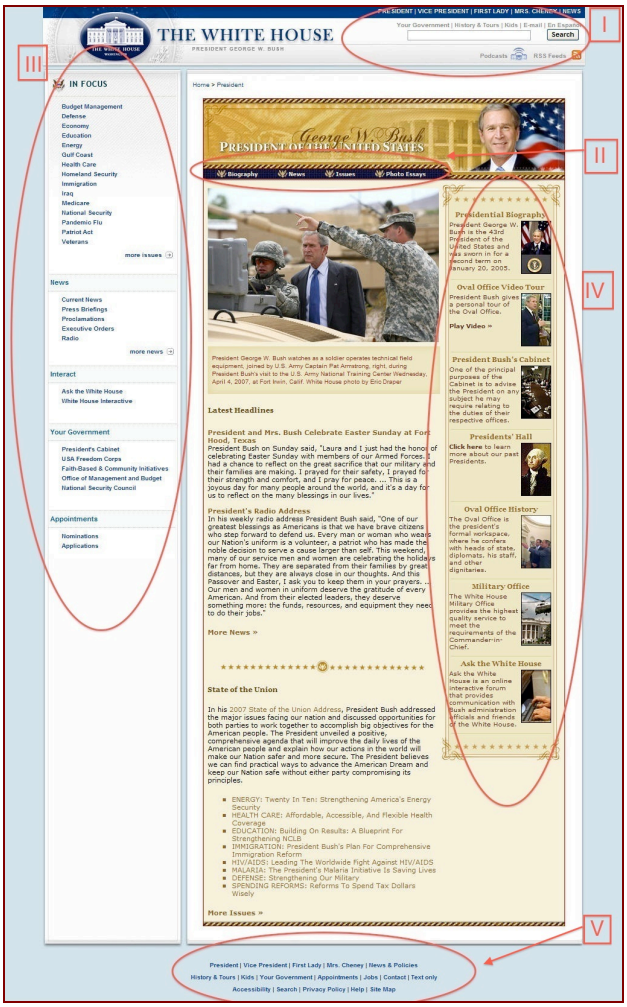


Figure 393

Multiple menu locations.

Of those menus, the menu located in zone six provides incidental information, including the president's biography, a tour and history of the Oval Office, and details regarding the White House as a military office. The remaining four menus, which are nearly identical to those

found on whitehouse.gov, offer links to various governmental bodies and administrative personalities.

On 8 April 2007, of the 91 links found on whitehouse.gov/president, 17 were repeated at least once. To illustrate the ubiquity of repeated links on this homepage, the arrows added to figure 394 annul each link that is superfluous.



Figure 394

Repeated links on whitehouse.gov/president.

At least half of the links found in four of the eight zones[221] on this homepage are repetitious. The content in zone eight is almost entirely composed of links that appear in other zones on the homepage. Of the repeated links on whitehouse.gov/president, there are several whose names are verbatim or are very similar, such as the link to the president's homepage in figure 395.



Figure 395

Three links to the president's homepage.

The three links to 'President' transport the visitor back to the president's homepage whitehouse.gov/president. Interestingly, the identification of President George W. Bush in banner I is not a link to the president's homepage (figure 396). Rather, it returns the visitor to the White House's homepage.



Figure 396

Link to whitehouse.gov in banner I.

Other repeated links on whitehouse.gov/president include *news* (figure 397) and *issues* (figure 398).



Figure 397

[221] Zone two: 3/6 links are superfluous (50%); Zone five: 2/3 links are superfluous (66%); Zone six: 4/8 links are superfluous; and Zone eight: 9/16 links are superfluous.

Six links to *news*, each of which transports the visitor to the same *News & Policies* webpage that features *Presidential News & Speeches.*



Figure 398

Three links to *issues*, each of which send the visitor to the same *Policies & Initiatives* webpage.

There are also links on this homepage that have different names, but lead the visitor to the same destination. For example, the link to *Applications* in zone four transports the visitor to the same webpage as the *Appointments* link in zone eight (figure 399)



Figure 399

Links to *Applications* and *Appointments*.

The reiterative presence of links related to news may indicate that the president's homepage is designed to articulate what the executive branch deems to be the most newsworthy articles of the day. However, as with most webpages, the space devoted to repetitious links could have been utilized more effectively.

3.3.2.2.3 Multimodal Analysis: Featured News Article

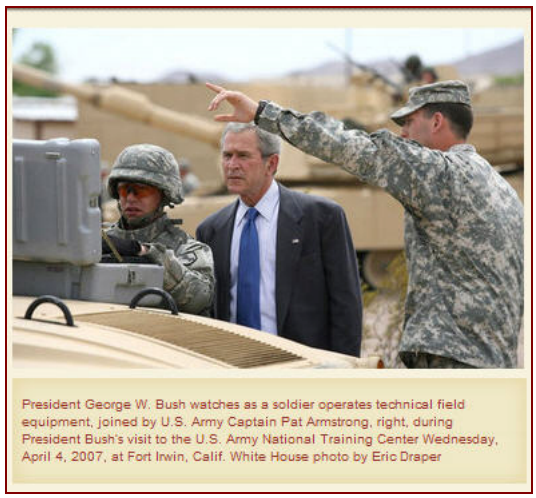


Figure 400

Whitehouse.gov/president featured article.

The above description of whitehouse.gov/president's zones (section 3.3.2.1) specifies that zone three consists of a news caption and a photograph of the President of the United States flanked by two soldiers that are dressed in camouflage uniforms (figure 400). The soldier on the left side of the image (Soldier 'A') is unidentified. The soldier on the right side of the image is identified in the news caption as U.S. Army Captain Pat Armstrong. The image was captured at the U.S. Army National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California. In spite of the background's blurry appearance, it is possible to discern a backgrounded tank's caterpillar tracks, hull, turret, gun, and a manned machine gun (figure 401).

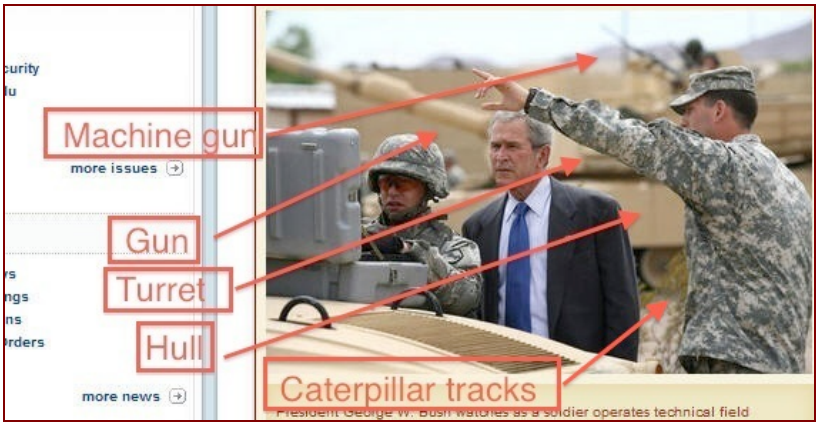


Figure 401

Identifiable parts of backgrounded tank.

With the exception of the grey-blue sky, the military equipment present is beige in colour, suitable to be camouflaged in a desert environment.

The image is separated from zone four by a thin red line that limits the left side of zones three, five, and seven. The image caption is distinguished from zone five by a darker beige background colour. Zone six separates itself from zones three, five, and seven by two thin lines and decorative curls that embellish the zone's edges. Only a pale beige border disconnects banner II and the featured image.

3.3.2.2.3.1 The Ideational Metafunction

3.3.2.2.3.1.1 Vectors

There are six identifiable vectors in this image (figure 402).



Figure 402

Vectors in the featured image.

Captain Armstrong creates two vectors simultaneously. The Captain projects the first vector, a unidirectional transactional action by gazing at President Bush.

The second vector, also a unidirectional transactional action, emanates from his finger. While his deictic gesture's target is not identifiable, one may surmise from the image's caption that he is pointing at technical field equipment. Vector three stems from a backgrounded soldier's machine gun and vector four comes from a tank's gun, both of which mirror the Captain's gesture and point in the same upward direction. Alternatively, vectors two, three, and four can be seen as pointing towards the content in zone four. The President does not return the Captain's vector; rather his eye line focuses on the inside of the metal briefcase, thereby creating a transactional reaction. Soldier A creates vector six, as he also is examining the contents of the briefcase. In summary, even though the vectors are not all pointed in the same direction, the candid nature of the image connects the different elements together and depicts the collective action of operating technical field equipment.

3.3.2.2.3.1.2 Roles, Processes, and Circumstances

Although Soldier A's right hand is not visible in the image, it is most likely that he is the 'doer' of the action, thereby making him the actor. The goal is not identifiable. With respect to behavioural processes, President Bush appears to be squinting and viewing the briefcase's contents with interest. There is evidence of a verbal process in the image. Captain Armstrong is a sayer who is articulating the verbiage at the receivers, President Bush and Soldier A.

Relational processes are present as both soldiers are dressed in camouflage uniforms, thereby confirming their shared membership in a group. President Bush's wardrobe markedly distinguishes him from the service men and the desert-like background at Fort Irwin. The American Commander-in-Chief is not issued a formal military uniform. Therefore, while the President's formal wardrobe choice is appropriate, his business suit relegates him to observer status at the army base.

While the background tank and other military equipment could be removed from the image without altering the message, their presence reinforces the gravity associated with military work.

3.3.2.2.3.1.3 Classificational, Analytical, and Symbolic Structures

There is a tripartite taxonomical relationship between the image's participants in the featured image. The President automatically assumes a superordinate position over both of the soldiers. As the Captain is specifically identified in the image's caption and appears to be older than Soldier A, he is subordinate to the President, but superordinate to his younger military colleague. Soldier A, who is identified as *a soldier* in the caption is subordinate to both the Captain and President Bush.

With respect to the analytical structures, the carrier is the process of demonstrating military equipment. Subsequently, the

possessive attributes are Soldier A operating the equipment, President Bush looking at the briefcase's contents, Captain Armstrong's verbal explanation, and the necessary military paraphernalia. The topographic and topological structures appear to be accurate. However, the placement of the Captain in the foreground creates the impression that his arm is either as large or larger than the backgrounded tank's gun shaft. The colour of the sky is a temporal structure indicating that the photograph was captured during the daytime. The presence of leaves on trees in the background indicates that the inspection took place during the spring or summer in California. This timeframe is clarified by the caption.

Regarding symbolic structures, the image signifies the President's role as chief military commander. His interest in technical field equipment can be related to the presence of American service people in the desert locations of Iraq and Afghanistan. In this image, the carrier includes each of the represented participants and the nearby military apparatus. To eliminate any of those constituents would reduce the image's impact. The backgrounded haziness can be considered a symbolic suggestive process. The vague background allows for the camera's focus to centre on President Bush.

3.3.2.2.3.2 The Interpersonal Metafunction

3.3.2.2.3.2.1 Perspective

3.3.2.2.3.2.1.1 Shot Type

Regarding shot type, the image is medium-close as most of the participants are visible from above the waist. Soldier A is only visible from above the shoulders, but as he has the least status in the photograph, this distinct perspective does not alter the overall effect of the shot type. While medium-close shots typically indicate a close

social relationship between the visitor and the represented participant(s), this quality is controverted by the presence of George W. Bush. Any photograph that includes the Commander-in-Chief while on duty implies automatic social distance.

3.3.2.2.3.2.1.2 Vertical and Horizontal Angles

With respect to the vertical angle, the image is captured from the eye-level of President Bush. Similarly, the horizontal angle is frontal and both President Bush and Soldier A are close to face-to-face with the image producer. Only Captain Armstrong appears from an oblique angle, facing away from the audience. However, it is worth mentioning that the Captain is directly facing the most salient participant, President Bush. The backgrounded tank faces the audience from an oblique angle, as it does not appear to be driving towards the audience. This perspective allows the audience to observe and appreciate the power of the apparatus, without feeling threatened.

3.3.2.2.3.2.2 Modality

3.3.2.2.3.2.2.*1* Depth & Detail

In this photograph, where the perspective is centred upon the president, the image displays high modality. The measure of detail is also high, but information regarding the 'technical field equipment' is absent. Neither the image nor the caption explains what kind of equipment is being tested at the Training Center. The website visitor is not privy to the confidential military information and is therby reminded of his/her spectator status. This lack of detail lowers the image's overall modality.

3.3.2.2.3.2.2.*2* Colour

Set against a plethora of camouflage, desert-like sand, and grey equipment, the most salient colours in this image are the President's

blue tie and his white shirt. The blue necktie also coordinates with the repeated use of blue on whitehouse.gov/president. With respect to colour meaning potential, the use of camouflage is typically indicative of a military situation. The backgrounded tanks, soldiers, and other army equipment confirm this interpretation.

3.3.2.2.3.2.2.*3* Lighting, Illumination, and Clarity

The lighting in this image is uniform, as each of the represented participants is well lit. However, as President Bush is wearing neither a hat nor helmet, he responds to the brightness by squinting. The lighting appears to be naturalistic and is what one might expect from an overcast day.

3.3.2.2.3.2.2.4 Contextualization

The image's contextualization is reliant upon the caption; a quality that lowers the photograph's overall modality. Had the specific geographic location been eliminated from the caption, the audience would not be able to identify the locale.

3.3.2.2.3.3 The Textual Metafunction

3.3.2.2.3.3.1 Coherence and Cohesion

The image is coherent insofar as each of the represented participants is engaged in the shared task of operating equipment. The serious facial expressions of Soldier A, Captain Armstrong, and President Bush cohere the participants into a solitary group. The repeated presence of camouflage colours and a backgrounded soldier provide external coherence within the image. This image also displays external cohesion within the whitehouse.gov/president website by recreating colours of the same ilk. The golden background of banner II and the colour of the president's necktie are mirrored throughout the homepage.

Cohesion is accomplished in this image by way of the vectors shared by Soldier A and President Bush. Their matching eyelines solidly connect the two participants to the action that is taking place within the briefcase. Captain Armstrong's arm and pointed gesture physically connect the backgrounded tank gun and machine gun. Typography's role in cohesion is minimal, but one may notice that the red font colour used in the image caption re-occurs throughout the president's homepage.

3.3.2.2.3.3.2 Framing

As President Bush is the most important facet of the image, framing helps to maintain that focus. The backgrounded machine gun, tank gun, Captain Armstrong's arm, and the edge of the foregrounded tank create vectors that envelope the salient figure (figure 403).



Figure 403

Vectors encompassing President Bush.

With respect to the frames that separate the featured news image and caption from the rest of the homepage, there are several borders that segregate zone three. For example, the left side of the image has eight vertical borders that delimit zone three from zone four (figure 404).



Figure 404

Vertical borders dividing zones three and four.

However, in spite of those physical limitations, the image and caption are well integrated into the surrounding webpage. This integration is accomplished by the repeated use of the colours beige and blue.

3.3.2.2.3.3.3 Salience

The salience of President Bush is visually and verbally supported by his ubiquitous presence in zone three and throughout the above-the-fold sections of the webpage (figure 405).

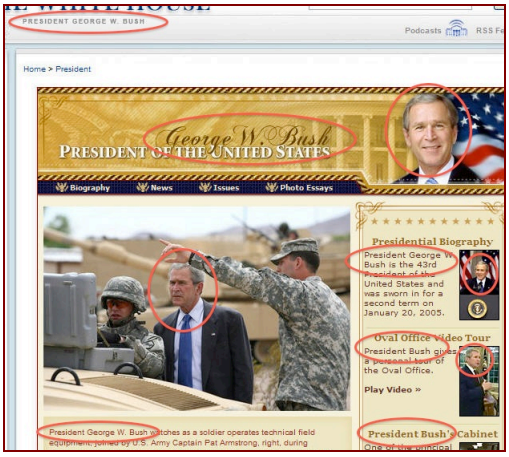


Figure 405

Above-the-fold verbal and visual presence of President George W. Bush.

Furthermore, as neither Captain Armstrong, Soldier A, nor the man that appears next to President Bush in the 'Oval Office History' image in zone six are recognizable members of the Bush administration, the President automatically acquires the visitor's attention. Also, as stated above, the President's wardrobe attracts visual attention, as it is distinct from that of the other represented participants.

3.3.2.2.3.3.4 Information Value

Figure 406 segments the image into the given-new, real-ideal, and central areas. The only section of this image that conforms well to the information value division is labeled number five. President Bush is located in the exact nucleus of the image. The military items and service people who surround the nucleus are peripheral to the leadership of the President.



Figure 406

Information Value.

3.3.2.3 Whitehouse.gov/president Conclusions

3.3.2.3.1 General Conclusions

At first glance, whitehouse.gov/president provides the visitor with sufficient information regarding the identity of the American

Commander-in-Chief. The website is attractive and the design patterns are coherent. However, certain aspects of the webpage's content and design jeopardize the overall utitilty of the homepage. For example, the wealth of repeated links, and ensuing underutilized space, reduce the page's effectiveness. Another case of underutilized space can be found in zone six. While some visitors may be interested in a presidential biography or information related to the design of the Oval Office, it is unfortunate that the crux of the presidency, and the President's assertions and plans (the State of the Union) are located below-the-fold (figure 407).

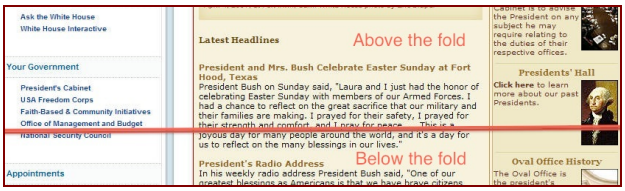


Figure 407

Whitehouse.gov/president: content Above-the-fold and below-the-fold.

Similarly, the placement of specific news stories in a prominent location is nullified when the visitor can only view a small portion of the first story upon opening the webpage.

The practicality of this webpage is also somewhat inconclusive when it is compared to it's parent website, whitehouse.gov. As a visitor is less likely to include the */president* suffix to the website, s/he may be more likely to view whitehouse.com, rather than the president's homepage. While the two websites do present differing information from time to time, on some dates the distinction between the two homepages is minimal (figure 408).



Figure 408

Minimal distinction between whitehouse.gov (left) and whitehouse.gov/president (right) on 29 November 2007.

Whitehouse.gov/president's inefficiencies are further emphasized by an asymmetrical design. The website's design is asymmetrical in four ways (figure 409).

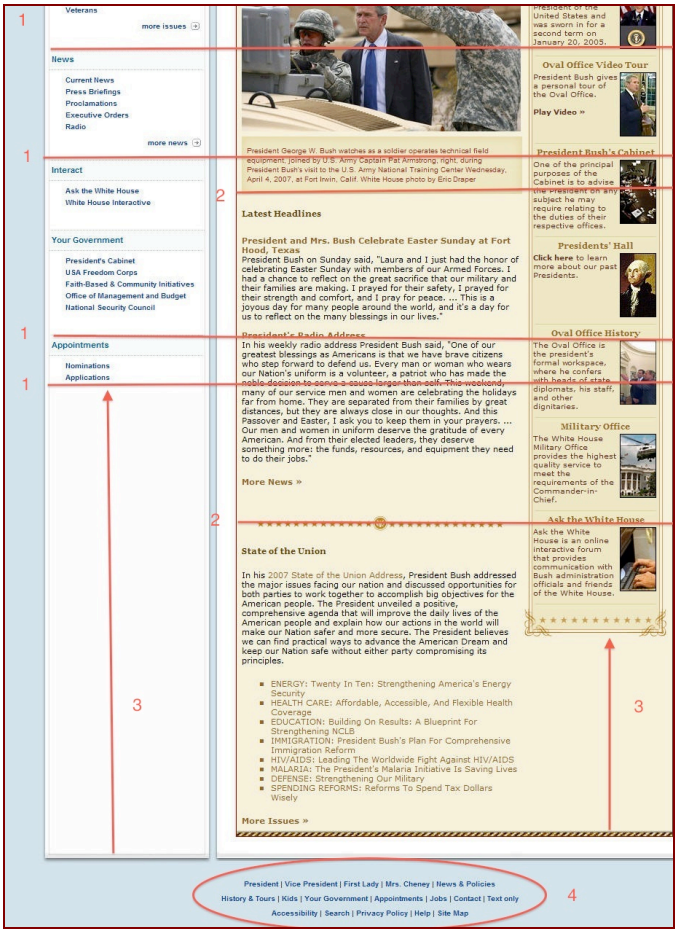


Figure 409

Asymmetrical design of whitehouse.gov/president.

For example, the horizontal lines labeled by the number one in figure 409 indicate that the segmentation of zone four does not correspond to that of zone six. Mismatched bordering (labeled number two) is also apparent at the bottom of zone three, which does not harmonize with the divisions in zone six. The vertical lines (labeled three) signal the unevenness on the lower half of the webpage. Finally, while zone eight is centred (labeled four), it does not appear at the midpoint of the homepage.

3.3.2.3.2 The probable reading path

The following proposed reading path is limited by what can be physically viewed upon first opening the website. Figure 410 illustrates the visitor's most likely reading path.



Figure 410

Reading path on whitehouse.gov/president.

1. Banner I
2. Banner II
3. Featured news item
4. News story in zone five

The above reading path capitalizes on the automatic salience attributed to verbal terms such as *The White House* and the physical likeness of the President. Banner I's sheer size and verbal/visual representation of the White House are likely to gain the visitor's attention upon opening the webpage. Banner II's brightness and inclusion of the President's official photograph alongside a waving American flag are likely the visitor's second stop on whitehouse.gov/president. Subsequently, the featured image and,

again, the likeness of George W. Bush, are expected to draw the visitor's attention. Finally, the last zone the visitor is likely to notice is the *Latest Headlines* title in zone five. It is unlikely that the visitor will include zone six's content in the immediate reading path as the pictures included are quite small. The represented participants in the photograph of *President Bush's Cabinet* (figure 411) are nearly indistinguishable.



Figure 411
Photograph of the Cabinet in zone six.

The reading path and the recurrent visual and verbal references to President Bush work together to reinforce the President's accomplishments in office. As this edition of the homepage surfaced during the height of the troop increase in Iraq, the featured news photograph reminds the visitor of the President's on-the-ground involvement in the military training process.

3.3.3 Homepage of *Today's Military*



Figure 412

Todaysmilitary.com on 16 November 2008.

3.3.3.1 Zones



Figure 413

Zones of todaysmilitary.com.

Zone one: **Banner and Menu I**

This zone is located in the upper-middle region of the webpage and displays a banner and the first menu on the homepage. The banner is quite simple in its design and includes the website's name *Today's Military* written in maroon lettering against a beige background. The menu items found across the top of the website include *Home*, *Service Branches*, *Before Serving*, *Benefits*, *Careers*, *Contact a Recruiter*, *Request Information*, a search box, and *search* link.

Zone two: Featured image and website objective

Located directly below zone one is the featured image and website objective. The featured image contains a woman and a young man who appear to be engaged in a serious conversation. Under the image is the caption *Parents: The conversation continues here. Discover the reality of today's military.* From that caption, it is assumed that the female is to be understood as the 'mother' and the young man as the 'son' who is interested in joining the military.

To the left of the image is the heading *Honest and accurate information about the military today.* Below the heading is the following text: *While not meant as a source of military news (you can find that at www.defenselink.mil), todaysmilitary.com is intended to inform students, parents, and educators as they discuss the Military as a career option. The decision to serve is intensely personal and, for all involved, the choice can be one of growth and self-discovery.*

Along with the featured image and website objective, this zone also contains two links to *Advising your students* (a link for educators) and *What will I learn?* (a link for potential recruits to learn about military training programs).

Zone three: Featured video

The featured video on 16 November 2008 is entitled *Futures Magazine*. This zone contains a still image from the video. Within the still image is a young male soldier wearing a headset. The soldier is sitting in front of the controls of a large apparatus. As stated on the right side of the image, *Futures magazine is an annual publication of the Department of Defense that features articles on men and women from all branches of the military. Here you can hear more from them, in their own words*. This zone also provides links to *See more*, *Order Futures magazine*, and *Careers*.

Zone four: Did you Know & Myth versus Reality

This zone is positioned to the right of zone three and is segmented into two distinct squares. The upper square states *Did you know…the eagle, globe and anchor on the Marine Corps insignia symbolize pride, service and tradition. See more.* The verbal message is written entirely in capital letters. The words *Marine Corps* are emboldened and the words *eagle*, *globe*, *anchor*, *pride*, *service* and *tradition* are written in maroon lettering.

The lower square states *Myth* [:] *The Military is a roadblock to higher education*. *Reality* [:] *Qualified servicemembers can receive more than $70,000 in tuition benefits. See other Myths vs. Realities.* The words *myth* and *reality* are written in red lettering and appear to be stamped onto the webpage.

Zone five: Menu II

The fifth zone is located below zones three and four. It contains the insignias and links to the five military branches. Above the insignias is the following text: *The U.S. Military consists of five active-duty Services and their respective Guard and Reserve units. Together, they offer a broad variety of ways to serve*. The five branches are the U.S. Army, the Marine Corps, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Coast Guard.

Zone six: Baner II /Menu III

The second banner and third menu on todaysmilitary.com is located at the bottom of the homepage. This menu listing is divided into two columns. The left-most column bears the heading *You might also be interested in* and lists the following four links: *Before serving, including the ASVAB, ROTC and boot camp; Compensation info, including salary, benefits and Special Pay; Installation maps, including bases and training facilities; Careers, including infantry,* and *medical and communications.*

The right-most menu contains the following three links, each of which is accompanied by a photograph: *Support for parents. What to expect when your child joins the Military; Futures Magazine. Learn about Military life from servicemembers. Order now; Questions to ask a recruiter. Get the most from your meeting.*

3.3.3.2 Image & Texts to be reviewed

1. Countering expectations
2. Multiple menus and links
3. Multimodal analysis of featured image

3.3.3.2.1 Countering Expectations

The purpose of todaysmilitary.com is plainly stated in the website address. As opposed to what the military may have been in the past, or what one's expectations are as a result of stereotypes and misconceptions, this website is to be a trusted source of *honest and accurate information about the military today*. This idea is mirrored in the statement also found in zone two: *Parents: The Conversation Continues Here. Discover the reality of today's military*. The need to counter past expectations is ubiquitous on this website. Aside from the objective statement in zone two, zone four devotes a significant amount of space to dispelling military *myths*. On the 16 November 2008 edition of the website, the rejected myth pertained to the military being a *roadblock to higher education*. As stated in section 3.3.1.9.2, the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill provides funds for higher education to active-duty and reservist soldiers. The dismissal of this particular myth is significant, as it helps to advertise a key selling feature of military service.

The debunking of military rumours is also rampant in zone six. For example, if the visitor accesses the link to *Before Serving*, s/he will encounter the following statement: *You don't need to finish high*

school to join the Military. Similarly, the *ASVAB* (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) webpage states *Military training and jobs have little relation to the civilian world. 88 per cent of military jobs have direct civilian counterparts.* The *boot camp* link leads the visitor to the following headline: *The purpose of this training isn't to "break" recruits*. If the visitor clicks on the FAQs link, s/he will find the following frequently asked question: *Don't recruiters just pressure young people to sign up?*[222] However, the boldest statement that negates past military expectations can be found when the visitor clicks on the *See other Myths vs. Realities* link in zone four. On that page is the following text: *Many people have misconceptions, or outdated ideas, about Today's Military. Yes, you can still go to college. No, women don't have to shave their heads. Yes, you can make it through boot camp. Take a look at some common misconceptions, and find out the truth for yourself.* The prevalence of the *myth* versus *reality* tactic intimates that military recruitment is greatly impeded by misunderstandings and misrepresentations of service.

To complement the negation of misconceptions, zone four also contains a *Did you know* statement. These statements are educational and are intended to entice the visitor with the benefits of military service. The *Did you know* section first appeared on the todaysmilitary.com homepage in the fall of 2003 (figure 414).

[222] In spite of the numerous reports of recruiter stress (see section 3.3.1.8), the answer to this frequently asked question is: *Recruiters are there to find the right recruits, not just any recruits. The image of military recruiters as high-pressure people who stop at nothing to get a candidate to sign on the dotted line is not only old-fashioned, it's wrong. The Military needs candidates with the ability and the real desire to join. As such, pressuring people to join would do a disservice to both the recruit and to the Military.*



Figure 414

Did you know content on 26 September 2003.

Figures 415-420 illustrate the type of information that commonly appeared in the *Did you know* box from 2006-2008.



Figure 415

Did you know content on 1 February 2006.



Figure 416

Did you know content on 21 January 2007.



Figure 417

Did you know content on 6 January 2008.



Figure 418

Did you know content on 17 March 2008.



Figure 419

Did you know content on 28 April 2008.



Figure 420

Did you know content on 1 June 2008.

While the *Myths versus Reality* and *Did you know* statements in zone four are unlikely to be considered advertising per se, their presence in the centre of the webpage is conspicuous. When one considers the *Did you know* statement on the 16 November 2008 edition (figure 421), the font and colour choices emphasize the words *eagle globe*, *anchor*, *Marine Corps*, *pride*, *service*, and *tradition*.



Figure 421

Did you know content on 16 November 2008.

The salience of those words helps to remind the potential enlistee and his/her parents of the emotional benefits of service.

3.3.3.2.2 Multiple Menus and Links

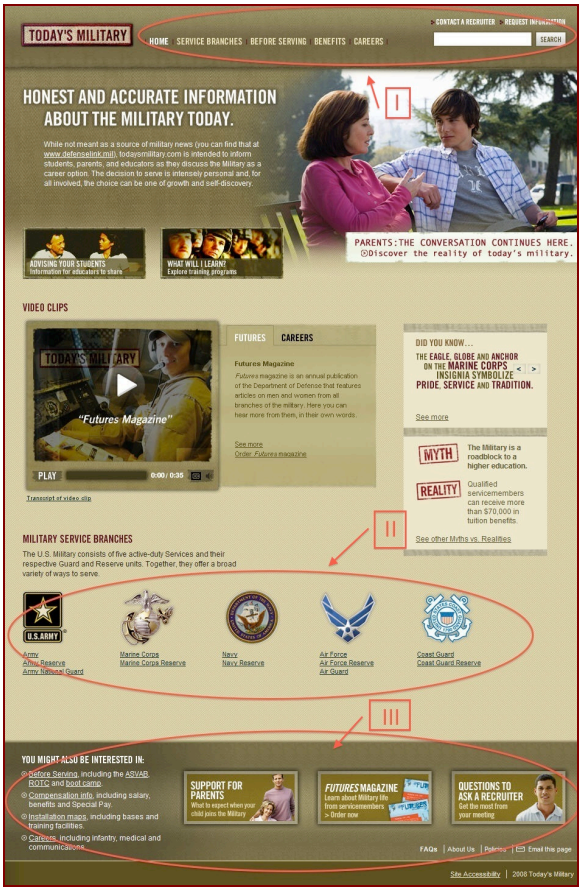


Figure 422

Multiple menu locations.

As stated above, there are three menus on the 16 November 2008 edition of todaysmilitary.com (these menus are circled and labelled I, II, and III in figure 422). In many ways, the content found in menus II and III are mirrored in menu I. For example, the first substantive link found in menu I in zone one is *Service Branches*. This link directs the visitor to learn more about the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard, along with their respective Reserve and/or National Guard options. However, this information is the basis of menu II in zone five. Similarly, the second link in menu I, *Before Serving*, is the also the first link in zone six's menu III. Menu I's *Benefits* link is analogous to menu III's *Compensation Info*. Finally, the *Careers* link in menu I is a duplicate of menu III's *Careers* link. This repetition of links makes the space utilized by menus II and III redundant.

In addition to the link duplication present in the three menus, the primary content in zone three, *Future's Magazine*, is re-linked in zone six. Furthermore, the *Careers* link in zone three can also be found in zones one and six. Interestingly, banners I and II appear on each of the linked websites, forming a consistent border around the related content. The continuous replication of both banners' links lends increased importance to those destinations. However, one should note that there is little content found outside of the two banners that is not repeated in some form in zones one and six. This, in turn, makes zones two, three, four, and five redundant.

3.3.3.2.3 A Multimodal Analysis of the Featured Image

The featured image section of the todaysmilitary.com homepage has not varied extensively throughout the period of study. This section typically contained a parent and a son[223] (figures 423-425)

[223] It is worth noting that in none of the website captures of todaysmilitary.com was a female recruit (or 'daughter') included in the featured image area.



Figure 423

Featured image on 11 February 2007.



Figure 424

Featured image on 5 June 2007.

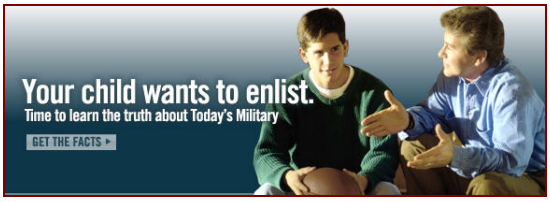


Figure 425

Featured image on 6 January 2008.

The above description of todaysmilitary.com's zones (section 3.3.3.1) specifies that the featured image on 16 November 2008 includes a photograph of a woman and a young man sitting on a park bench (figure 426).



Figure 426

Featured image on 16 November 2008.

The informally dressed woman appears to be speaking to the young man while gesticulating with her right hand. The young man, also dressed informally, is looking at the woman and is actively listening to her. As stated above, it is likely that the young man is to be understood as the woman's son. The young man and the woman share the same hair colour, which also contributes to a familial interpretation. The text underneath the image verbally confirms that the two participants are engaged in a conversation. The image is visually separated from the surrounding text by a gentle fading of the backgrounded tree into the medium-brown colour of zone two.

3.3.3.2.3.1 The Ideational Metafunction

3.3.3.2.3.1.1 Vectors

There are three perceptible vectors in the featured image (figure 427).

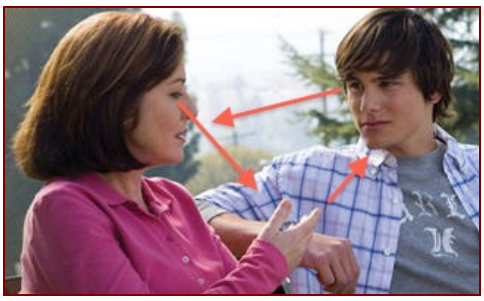


Figure 427

Featured image vectors.

The mother's eyes create the first vector. As her eyes are looking downward, she creates a non-transactional action. The son is looking at his mother, thereby creating the second vector, a unidirectional transactional action. Although the mother is not looking directly at her son (completing the transactional action), her participation in the image is essential. Furthermore, her nearly closed eyes create the appearance of a candid photograph, thereby increasing the photograph's modality. The third vector, which is created by the mother's hand gesture, points in the direction of the son.

3.3.3.2.3.1.*2* *Roles, Processes, and Circumstances*

In this image, the actor is the mother who is doing the action of speaking; the goal is the son, who is listening to the discourse. While it is unusual to describe 'listening' as an identifiable behavioural process, the son's facial expression indicates his active role in the conversation. Had both the mother and son been smiling and laughing, the seriousness of the conversation would have been put in jeopardy. There is a verbal process in which the mother is the sayer, the discussion about joining the military is the verbiage, and the son is the receiver. Relational processes include the young man's clothes, which are typical of a teenager. The son is also holding a cellular phone in his left hand, also common to today's teenagers. The image's circumstances of location include the park bench and the

backgrounded trees, placing the participants in a generic community park.

3.3.3.2.3.1.*3* *Classificational, Analytical, and Symbolic Structures*

The taxonomical relationship involves the superordinate participant speaking to the subordinate participant. As potential recruits younger than eighteen years of age require parental permission to enlist, the son's youth precludes him from taxonomical superiority. With respect to the analytical structures, the carrier is the conversation that is taking place between the mother and the son. Subsequently, the possessive attributes are the two represented participants. The topographic and topological structures appear to be accurate. With the exception of sunlight, there are no indications of temporal stuctures. Regarding symbolic structures, the image signifies the merit of discussing service with one's parents/children.

3.3.3.2.3.2 The Interpersonal Metafunction

3.3.3.2.3.2.1 Perspective

3.3.3.2.3.2.1.1 Shot Type

With respect to the perspective, the image is a close up of the two participants as they are visible from above the waist. This perspective is appropriate for a serious conversation between family members.

3.3.3.2.3.2.1.2 Vertical and Horizontal Angles

The vertical angle is low, as the camera points slightly upwards toward the mother and son. This angle is also appropriate and it bestows upon the visitor the ability to observe the conversation from a comfortable distance. The image's horizontal angle is a blend of frontal and oblique. Even though the son's face is angled towards his mother, his body frontally faces the internet visitor. Both the

mother's face and body are facing away from the visitor. However, the mother's body angle does not detatch the visitor from the action that is taking place in the image. Conversely, the profiled view of the mother reinforces the seriousness of the conversation. Had the mother faced the camera (rather than her son), it would be unclear to whom she was speaking.

3.3.3.2.3.2.2 Modality

3.3.3.2.3.2.2.1 Depth and Detail

The image's depth does not appear to be manipulated and does not reduce or increase the modality. The level of detail is what one might expect from a close-up shot. Modality is increased as individual strands of the mother's and son's hair can be seen. Details on the participant's clothes, such as buttons, are visible, as are branches on the backgrounded trees.

3.3.3.2.3.2.2.2 Colour

The colours present in the featured image are natural and crisp. Aside from the faded appearance of the left side of the image, there does not appear to be any colour manipulation. With respect to colour meaning potential, the mother's pink shirt may be indicative of her femininity, which softens the mother's appearance and makes her more approachable. Had the mother been dressed in somber dark colours, or in a military uniform of her own, the tone of the conversation would have changed.

3.3.3.2.3.2.2.3 Lighting, Illumination, and Clarity

The lighting in the image is provided by bright sunshine that glows from behind the represented participants. A circle of brightness can be found above the mother's head (figure 428), thereby emphasizing the importance of discussing recruitment with one's parents.

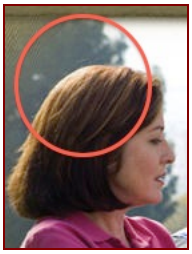


Figure 428

Lighting of the mother's head.

3.3.3.2.3.2.2.4 Contextualization

The image in zone two is decontextualized, as the setting cannot be defined with any certainty. However, this quality does not decrease modality. The non-descript park background encourages the visitor to imagine that this conversation is, and should be, happening in neighbourhoods throughout in the United States.

3.3.3.2.3.3 The Textual Metafunction

3.3.3.2.3.3.1 Coherence and Cohesion

Organizationally, the image is internally coherent as the appearance of the represented participants is consistent with the park background. External cohesion is accomplished by the nearby placement of the verbal text *Parents: The conversation continues here*. The image is cohesive insofar as the mother and son are clearly engaged in the conversation. The mother and son create a cohesive unit by sitting next to each other and by the close physical proximity of their hands (figure 429).



Figure 429

Proximity of the mother and son.

External cohesion is also evident in the nearby background colours of zones two, three, and four. The use of camouflage shades (rather than the national colours of red, white, and blue) affirms the webpage's relationship with the military. Finally, the font utilized in the zone's title, *Honest and accurate information about the military today*, mirrors the colour of the sky in the featured image.

3.3.3.2.3.3.2 Framing

The image is externally framed on the left by a gradual fading of colour into a military green. The *Parents: The conversation continues here* headline borders the lower segment of the image. As the image is located on the far right of the webpage, only a thin green band defines that side of the zone. Within the image, the intermingling of the mother and son's hands allows the two participants to be understood as an integrated family unit.

3.3.3.2.3.3.3 Salience

The most salient elements of the image are the represented participants' faces. Their serious expressions are indicative of the gravity associated with their conversation topic.

3.3.3.2.3.3.4 Information Value

Regarding information value (figure 430), in the upper portion of the image the left-right distinction of 'given' and 'new' corresponds well with the placement of the older participant on the left.

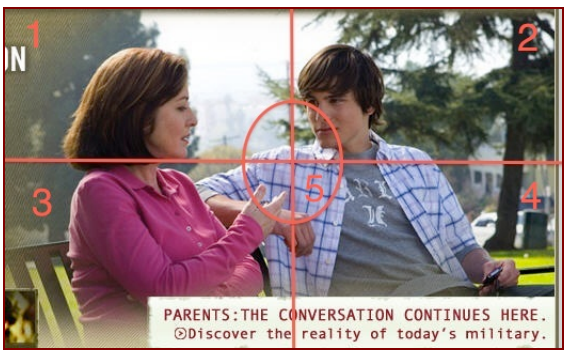


Figure 430

Featured image's information value.

In the lower segment, the words *the reality of today's military* harmonize with the newness of today's military. The ideal/real-top/bottom allocation recognizes the ideal nature of having the serious conversation about enlistment. Appropriately, the central content is the young man, whose future is most influenced by the decision to join the military. The mother, in this case, is ancillary, but her proximity to the centre of the image maintains her substantial role in the discussion.

3.3.3.3 Todaysmilitary.com Conclusions

3.3.3.3.1 General Conclusions

When compared to the other homepages analyzed in this thesis, the todaysmilitary.com website is unusual insofar as it clearly states an objective. As a consequence, it is important to question whether the website is successful in its intentions. For example, the homepage's clean and simple design makes todaysmilitary.com accessible to the parents of today's teenagers, who may not be as technologically literate as their children. However, if the website is aimed at attracting the eyes of enlistment-aged students, one might wonder if the lack of visual pizzaz simultaneously forfeits the attention of young people.

Slight inconsistencies on this website may distract the visitor from the stated objective. For example, the word *military* appears to be haphazardly capitalized throughout the homepage (figures 431-433).

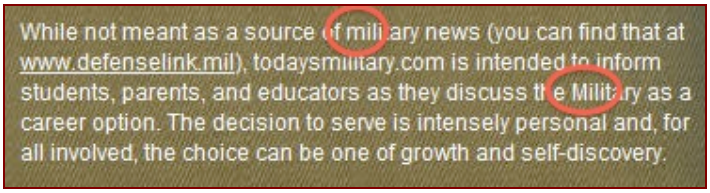


Figure 431

Inconsistent capitalization of *military* in zone two.

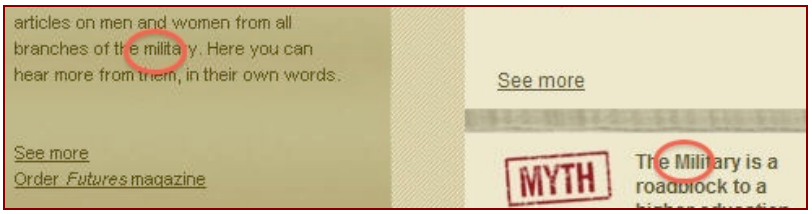


Figure 432

Inconsistent capitalization of *military* in zones three and four.

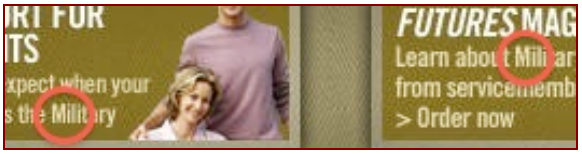


Figure 433

Inconsistent capitalization of *military* in zone six.

While the use of undefined acronyms such as *ASVAB* and *ROTC* (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) may enhance the military feel of the website, it also leaves the visitor feeling ignorant and excluded from the institution. It is interesting that even after clicking on the *Before Serving* link, a site, which should theoretically provide detailed information regarding enlistment, the term *ASVAB* is left undefined. The first sentence on that page states: *Before serving in the Military, there are a few things a young adult can do to prepare. The ASVAB Career Exploration Program can help young adults discover suitable jobs.*

As stated in section 2.3.2, the repetition of links makes entire sections of this website redundant. As illustrated in figure 434, the links covered with arrows are those that are repeated.

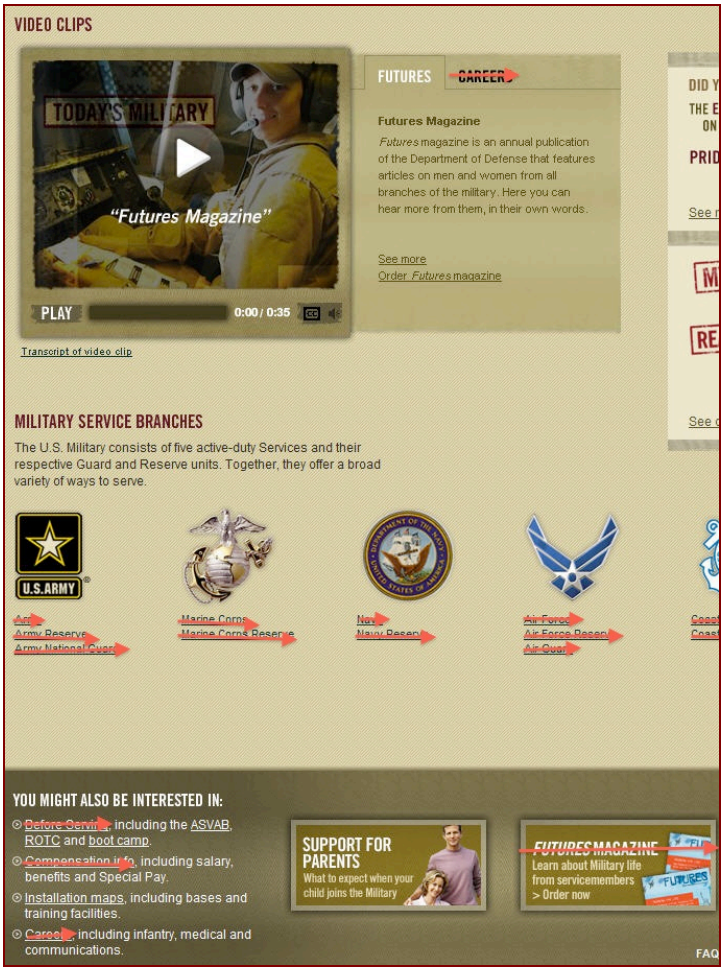


Figure 434

Redundant links.

While redundant linking drastically reduces the value of zones five and six, the placement of those zones below-the-fold mitigates this design issue.

Another design concern is the under-use of space. As illustrated by the red *X*s in figure 435, there is a surprising lack of verbal content on the homepage.



Figure 435

Under-utilized space.

The website is also disadvantaged by an assymetrical design (figure 436).

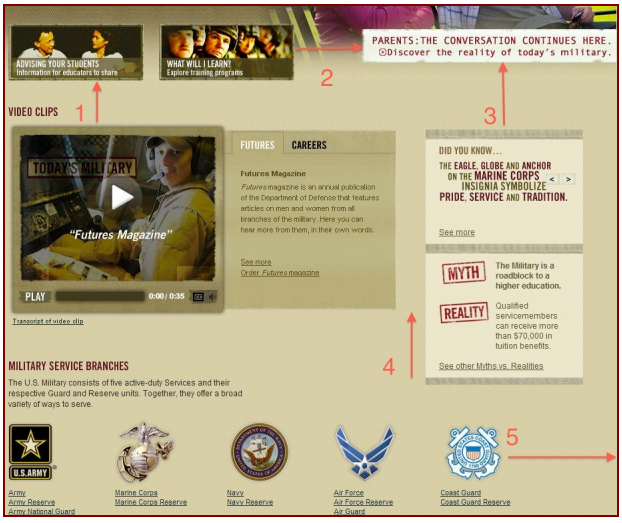


Figure 436

Asymmetrical design.

The arrows labeled 1 and 3 in figure 436 refer to the uneven frame beneath zone two. Arrow number 2 emphasizes the uncentred nature of the *Advising your students*, *What will I learn?*, and the *Parents: the conversation continues here* heading. The fourth arrow calls attention to the uneven lower frame of zones three and four. The final arrow, number 5, underscores the empty space in zone five. The asymmetrical quality of this webpage detracts the visitor from the content because it is indicative of a disorganized institution.

3.3.3.3.2 The probable reading path

The reading path on todaysmilitary.com is guided by the most salient elements of the visual space. Figure 437 demonstrates a probable reading path:



Figure 437

Probable reading path on todaysmilitary.com.

As annotated above, the probable reading path for the Today's Military homepage is:

1. Featured image.
2. *Honest and accurate information about the military today* headline.
3. *Did you know* and *Myth versus Reality*.

It is necessary to note that all of the likely targets on the reading path are located in the upper area of the webpage and would be visible to the visitor upon opening the website. The bright scene illustrated in the featured image would immediately attract the visitor's attention. It is unlikely that the visitor would first focus on banner I as the colouring and design are not salient. Following the featured image, the visitor's eyes are likely to notice the heading in zone two. Due to their brightened background colour, the third site for visitor interest is apt to be the *Did you know* and *Myth versus Reality* boxes in zone four. The shaded colouring of the featured video is unlikely to garner significant consideration from the visitor. While the military emblems in zone five are visually interesting, their size diminishes their overall effect on the reading path. For example, even though the components of the Marine Corps' insignia are described in the *Did you know* box, the actual insignia is difficult to discern against the beige background (figure 438).



Figure 438
Marine Corps' insignia.

As stated above, teacher and parental approval are crucial to a potential recruit's enlistment decision. Consequently, the creation of a website that is specifically targeted at parents and school advisors is wise. Dismissing the arbitrary capitalization, redundant linking,

and assymetrical design, this website is a reasonable source of information for parent. By limiting the visual pizzaz that is common to websites designed for young visitors, the parents can easily seek out the information that is pertinent to their child'senlistment.

3.3.4 Homepage of the *America's Army* Video Game

As americasarmy.com is significantly different from all other military homepages analyzed in this thesis, see section 3.3.1.9.5 for a comprehensive description of the video game.



Figure 439

Americasarmy.com on 1 September 2008.

3.3.4.1 Zones

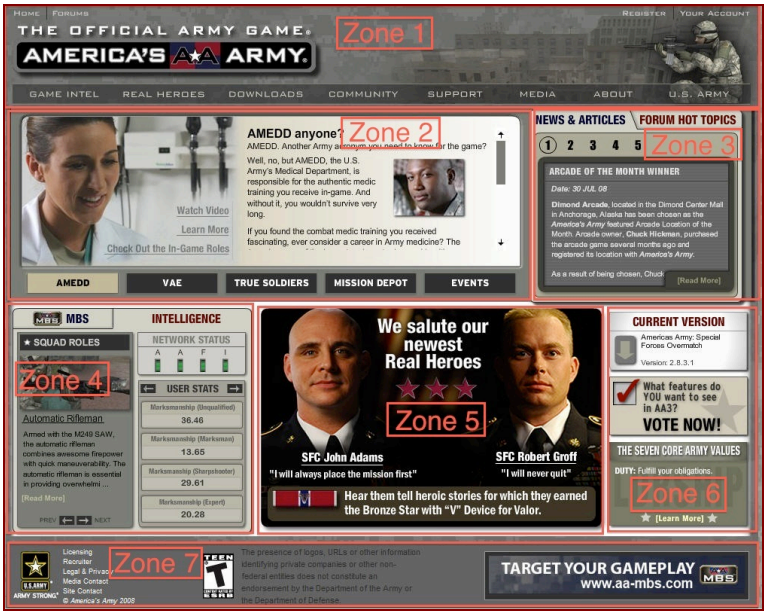


Figure 440

Zones of americasarmy.com.

Zone one: **Banner I and Menu I**

This zone is located in the upper-middle region of the webpage and displays a banner and the first menu on the homepage. On the left side of the banner are two links (*Home* and *Forums*) and the webpage's title, *The Official Army Game. America's Army*. The America's Army logo appears between the words *America's* and *Army*. In the far left corner of the zone are two more links (*Register* and *Your Account*). Below those links is a scene from the video game. The scene includes a soldier dressed in a camouflage uniform and helmet. The soldier is kneeling and pointing a rifle at an unseen target. The soldier appears in front of a video game representation of a cityscape. The bottom of the zone offers the visitor the following eight links: *Game Intel*, *Real Heroes*, *Downloads*, *Community*, *Support*, *Media*, *About*, and *U.S. Army.*

Zone two: Featured image and menu II

Located directly below zone one is the featured image and menu II. The featured image contains a woman wearing a white lab coat. In the background of the image are two instruments typically found in a doctor's office (an otoscope and an ophthalmoscope). Imbedded in the image are three links: *Watch video*, *Learn more*, and *Check out the in-game rules*.

To the right of the image is the following text: *AMEDD anyone? AMEDD. Another Army acronym you need to know for the game? Well, no, but AMEDD, the U.S. Army's Medical Department, is responsible for the authentic medic training you receive in-game. And without it, you wouldn't survive very long. If you found the combat medic training you received fascinating, ever consider a career in Army medicine?* To the right of the AMEDD text is a close-up image of a soldier's face.

At the bottom of zone two are five links: *AMEDD* (U.S. Army Medical Department), *VAE* [224] (Virtual Army Experience), *True Soldiers*, *Mission Depot*[225], and *Events.*

Zone three: News and Forum Hot Topics

This zone, which is located to the right of zone two, allows the visitor to read news and articles regarding the video game. On the 1 September 2008 edition of the website, the news headline was *Arcade of the Month Winner*. The article excerpt that followed the

[224] The Virtual Army Experience is a traveling army simulation workshop that integrates the sights, sounds, and sensations of the battlefield (Turner: 17 May 2010).

[225] According to the 2012 America's Army website (http://www.americasarmy.com/aa/intel/features.php) the Mission Depot is a website where gamers can submit maps to be considered for future gameplay. The website states: "The core of Mission Depot is the map review process. Maps uploaded to Mission Depot will be reviewed by a panel of experts. The most creative and well constructed maps that best fit within the *America's Army* game may be chosen to become Official *America's Army* maps! Only maps submitted and approved by Mission Depot will be designated Official Maps for deployment on Honor Servers."

headline stated: *Date 30 Jul 08. Dimond Arcade, located in the Dimond Center Mall in Anchorage, Alaska has been chosen as the America's Army featured Arcade Location of the Month. Arcade owner, Chuck Hickman, purchased the arcade game several months ago and registered the location with America's Army. As a result of being chosen, Chuck [read more].* This zone provides access to five news articles. To the right of the *News & Articles* title, the visitor can also click on *Forum Hot Topics*.

Zone four: Video game statistics

This zone is positioned directly below zone two and is divided into two vertical columns. The column on the left is entitled *MBS* (Master Browser Server). Under that column is the *Automatic Rifleman* example of *Squad Roles.* The accompanying text states *Armed with the M249 SAW, the automatic rifleman combines awesome firepower with quick maneuverability. The automatic rifleman is essential in providing overwhelming… [Read More].* The photograph included in this section is of a soldier dressed in camouflage looking through the sight of a rifle at an unknown target.

The right-hand column of zone four is entitled *Intelligence*. Under this heading is the sub-heading *Network Status*. The *Network Status* sub-section includes the letters *A*, *A*, *F*, *and I*[226]. Under those letters are small green rectangles that indicate the network's current standings and maintenance status. It is unclear what *AAFI* signify.

Beneath the *Network Status* box is a listing of *User Stats*. On 1 September 2008, those statistics were as follows: *Marksmanship (Unqualified) 36.46; Marksmanship (Marksman) 13.65; Marksmanship*

[226] According to the 4 January 2007 edition of americasarmy.com, the four letters signify: Account Manager, Authentication, Forums, and IRC (Interactive Conversations).

(Sharpshooter) 29.61; and *Marksmanship (Expert) 20.28*. The significance of those statistics is not explained.

Zone five: Real Heroes

The fifth zone is located to the right of zone four. It is entitled *We salute our newest Real Heroes.* According to the current America's Army manual[227], "The America's Army Real Heroes program gives America's Army players a closer look into the lives of Soldiers, helping civilians learn about a Soldier's personal character and accomplishments, and giving them greater insight into the wide range of individuals who make up the Army's elite fighting force. The America's Army Real Heroes program highlights heroic Soldiers and their stories in a variety of venues. Soldiers likenesses and biographies are incorporated in the America's Army game…" The featured Real Heroes are Sfc. (Sergeant First Class) John Adams and Sfc. Robert Groff. In addition to a photograph of each soldier, this section contains the soldiers' mottos (*"I will always place the mission first."* and "*I will never quit."*). At the bottom of zone five is the image of a Bronze Star commendation and the text *Hear them tell heroic stories for which they earned the Bronze Star with "V" Device for Valor.*

Zone six: Banner Downloads, Vote, and Values

To the right of zone five is a column that contains three separate boxes. The uppermost box provides a link for visitors to download the most current version of the video game. The middle box invites visitors to respond to the question *What features do YOU want to see in AA3* (America's Army [version] Three)*? Vote Now*. The final box is entitled *The seven core army values*. The value featured on this date is *Duty: Fulfill your obligations*. In the background of that statement are

[227] http://manual.americasarmy.com/index.php/Real_Heroes

the letters *LDRSHIP.* This box also provides a link for visitors to *[Learn More].*

Zone seven: Legal and Contact Information

The final zone borders the bottom of the homepage screen. On the far left of the zone is the insignia for the U.S. Army and the motto *Army Strong.* To the right of the insignia are links to *Licensing*, *Recruiter*, *Legal & Privacy*, *Media Contact*, *Site Contact*, and © *America's Army 2008*. In the centre of the zone is the Entertainment Software Rating Board's (ESRB) *T*[228] rating and the following text: *The presence of logos, URLs or other information identifying private companies or other non-federal entities does not constitute an endorsement by the Department of the Army of the Department of Defense.*

The far right side of the zone encourages visitors to *Target your gameplay*. This invitation includes the website address www.aa-mbs.com.

3.3.4.2 Image & Texts to be reviewed

1. Recruitment methods
2. Multimodal analysis of banner image

3.3.4.2.1 Recruitment Methods

As stated in section 3.3.1.9.5, the America's Army video game is a valuable recruitment tool to the United States Army. The homepage, americasarmy.com, the threshold to the first-person shooter game, is the first page that potential players/recruits must visit in order to download the video game. This section of the americasarmy.com

[228] According to the ESRB website (http://www.esrb.org/ratings/ratings_guide.jsp), this rating indicates, that the video game has "content that may be suitable for ages 13 and older. Titles in this category may contain violence, suggestive themes, crude humor, minimal blood, simulated gambling, and/or infrequent use of strong language."

analysis will examine the recruitment tactics that are identifiable on the game's homepage and will determine whether this homepage is primarily a purveyor of video game or recruitment information.

The only section of the website that exclusively pertains to the video game is zone three, as one cannot construe the *Arcade of the Month* article to be recruiting in nature. In each of the other zones, some element of either the verbal and/or visual content can be interpreted as a recruitment method[229]. The areas enumerated and circled figure 441 illustrate the pervasiveness of the recruitment content.



Figure 441

Verbal and visual recruitment content.

[229] For the purposes of this analysis, I will consider a *recruitment method* to be any verbal or visual text that glamourizes and/or advertises military service.

For example, area one in figure 441 emphasizes an image that idealizes the work of a rifleman (for further detail, see figure 442).

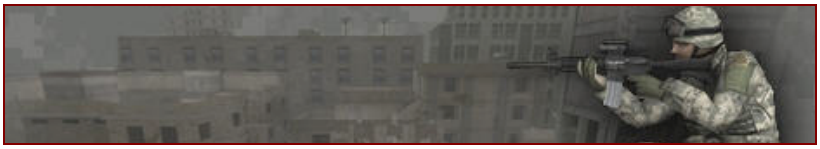


Figure 442

Rifleman image in zone one.

In that image, the soldier is free of detectable harm and appears in the forefront of an urban setting, a background that is likely to be familiar to a visitor. A link in zone one also emphasizes the romanticized conception of the soldier as a *Real Hero*.

Area two in figure 441 calls attention to the featured image of the physician. In this case, the doctor is accompanied by the following direct question to the visitor: […] *ever considered a career in Army medicine?* That question, in conjunction with the image of the smiling female physician, is the most conspicuous example of a verbal recruitment method on the webpage. By placing zone two in a salient location, the visitor is reminded of the educational benefits available to enlistees. Zone one also contains a link to the *U.S. Army*. Should the visitor click on that link, s/he is transported to a webpage that contains the following image (figure 443) and invitation to visit the official recruitment website, goarmy.com.



Figure 443

U.S. Army link.

Similar to the image in area one, area three in figure 441 contains the photograph of the automatic rifleman (figure 444).



Figure 444
Automatic rifleman in zone four.

Within the photograph, the size of the rifle far eclipses the size of the soldier, making the machine gun the most salient element and thereby maximizing the allure of the automatic weapon to the teenaged visitor.

Area four in figure 441 contains an expansion of the *Real Heroes* link found in zone one. By incorporating genuine soldiers into the America's Army game and featuring their likenesses on the homepage, the visitor is apt to imagine the glory and pride associated with being a military *real hero*. Furthermore, Sfc. John Adams and Sfc. Robert Groff face the camera frontally, have serious facial expressions, and are wearing dress military uniforms, characteristics that highten the importance of this zone. The inclusion of the *Bronze Star with "V" Device for Valor* emphasizes the decorations awarded for bravery, acts of merit, and acts of heroism. The commendation's red tone is echoed in the America's Army logo (figure 445), thereby imbuing further importance to this area.

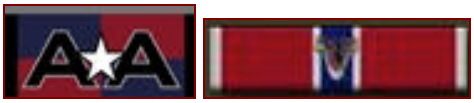


Figure 445

Red tone in America's Army logo and Bronze Star.

The *Seven Core Army Values* section of area five in figure 441 communicates the positive expectations to which soldiers commit while playing the video game and upon enlistment. According to the U.S. Army recruitment website[230], the seven values are loyalty ("*Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit, and other soldiers*"), duty, ("*Fulfill your obligations*."), respect ("*Treat people as they should be treated*.")*,* selfless service ("*Put the welfare of the Nation, the Army, and your subordinates before your own*."), honor ("*Live up to Army values*."), integrity ("*Do what's right, legally and morally*."), and personal courage ("*Face fear, danger or adversity (physical or moral*).").

The U.S. Army logo and motto are both located in zone seven and clicking on the logo transports the visitor to the recruitment website, goarmy.com. While it is surprising that the *Recruiter* link in zone seven is relatively small and inconspicuous, it is even more perplexing that clicking on that link transports the visitor to the video game's event site and not to a recruiter.

Figure 446 illustrates the remaining video game content should the above-described recruitment methods be eliminated.

[230] http://www.goarmy.com/soldier-life/being-a-soldier/living-the-army-values.html



Figure 446

Video game content on americasarmy.com.

As figure 446 demonstrates, removing the recruitment material consequently eliminates the most salient and visually interesting content from americasarmy.com.

3.3.4.2.2 A Multimodal Analysis of the Banner Image

Though the appearance of zone one has changed during the period of study, nearly every example captured includes a video game avatar of a male soldier, his weapon (a rifle, in most cases), and a somewhat contextualized background (figures 447-451).

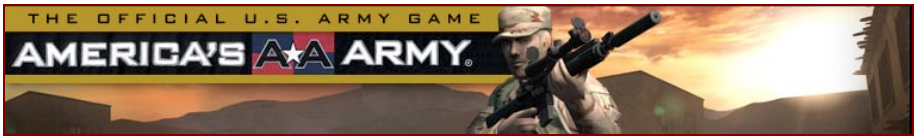


Figure 447

Banner image on 4 February 2006.

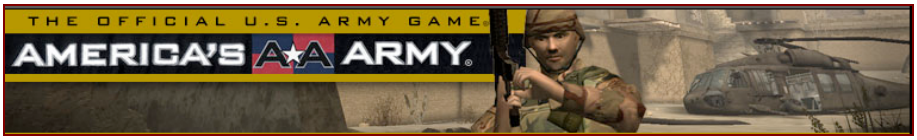


Figure 448

Banner image on 6 February 2006.



Figure 449

Banner image on 18 February 2006.



Figure 450

Banner image on 25 February 2006.



Figure 451

Banner image on 3 April 2006.

The banner image on 1 September 2008 (figure 452) emulates that pattern.



Figure 452

Banner image on 1 September 2008.

As described above in section 3.3.4.1, the banner includes an image captured during the America's Army game. As the links to *Register*, *Your account*, *Support*, *Media*, *About*, and *U.S. Army* each appear against the cityscape background, they are to be considered part of the image. The image is visually separated from the remaining parts of zone one by a fading of the urban background into a medium-grey camouflage tone.

3.3.4.2.2.1 The Ideational Metafunction

3.3.4.2.2.1.1 Vectors

There are two perceptible vectors in the banner image (figure 453).

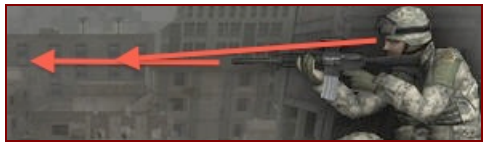


Figure 453

Vectors in the banner image.

The rifle's barrel creates a non-transactional vector as it is pointed at a target that is not visible in the image. The second vector is also non-transactional and emanates from the soldier's eyes as he gazes through the rifle's sight. Both vectors merge into the same direction, but do not connect with a discernable goal.

3.3.4.2.2.1.2 Roles, Processes, and Circumstances

In this image, the actor is the soldier who is doing the action of aiming his rifle; the goal is the soldier's target (not included in the image). While it is unusual to reference a goal that is not visible, the placement of the soldier in an urban environment (rather than in a training facility) introduces the expectation that the soldier is aiming his weapon at a threat to national security. It is difficult to identify a

mental process in the mind of the soldier, as the majority of his face is concealed by his helmet and rifle. Similarly, there are no verifiable behavioural processes. The soldier's helmet, goggles, gloves, uniform, and rifle are an attributive relational process, confirming his membership in the U.S. Army. The circumstances of location are the backgrounded buildings, denoting an urban background. The soldier's exact location is unknown and it is also unclear upon what surface the soldier is sitting. His location outside a high-rise building indicates that he may be standing on a rooftop. There are no circumstances of manner or accompaniment.

3.3.4.2.2.1.3 Analytical and Symbolic Structures

The carrier in this image is the soldier and his possessive attributes are the components of his uniform and his rifle. With respect to the analytical structures, the physical spatial relations and location of his possessive attributes appear to be accurate. Temporal structures are unclear in this image. The lack of streetlights or lights within the backgrounded buildings may indicate an urban combat situation where power has been disabled or destyroyed. While there is no visible timeline, the image indicates that the action took place during the daytime.

Regarding symbolic structures, the image signifies an act that is part of the duties common to a soldier in America's Army. The essential participant in this image is the soldier and his symbolic attribute is his rifle. Had the soldier been aiming a camera or holding a microphone, the meaning of the image would have changed significantly. The dimness of the background can be considered a symbolic suggestive process, permeating the scene with danger and the unknown. The symbolic attributive process in this image is the conscientiousness and assumed bravery of the represented participant.

3.3.4.2.2.2 The Interpersonal Metafunction

3.3.4.2.2.2.1 Perspective

3.3.4.2.2.2.1.1 Shot Type

With respect to the perspective, the image is a close up of the participant as he is visible from above the waist.

3.3.4.2.2.2.1.2 Vertical and Horizontal Angles

The vertical angle is eye level, as the camera points directly at the soldier. This angle is also appropriate because it bestows upon the visitor the ability to visualize himself in the soldier's place. As this image is captured from the video game, the player should be able to see eye-to-eye with his own avatar.

The image's horizontal angle is oblique. The soldier appears only in profile and faces away from the visitor. While an oblique horizontal angle can encourage a detachment between the visitor and the represented participant, an image of a soldier pointing his rifle directly at the visitor would have misconstrued the symbolic nature of the action and could have been interpreted as a direct threat.

3.3.4.2.2.2.2 Modality

An analysis of modality verfies the authenticity of an image. The examination of the banner image on americasarmy.com is unique in this respect, as the visitor knows that it was virtually generated from the video game. Therefore, questions regarding modality will determine how realistic the image is, being mindful that the image is electronically produced.

3.3.4.2.2.2.2.1 Depth and Detail

Upon examining the depth, the placement of the soldier in the extreme foreground of the image suggests that even in his kneeling position, the soldier is as tall as the story of building. As the visitor is

unable to see the surface upon which the soldier is kneeling, the depth lowers the overall modality.

With respect to detail, the soldier's face is almost entirely obscured. The only element in the image that is captured in detail is the rifle.

3.3.4.2.2.2.2.2 Colour

The colours present in the banner image are dark and murky. However, these colours coordinate well with the grey camouflage colours found throughout the homepage. As one might expect, the soldier's camouflage uniform blends in with the bleak cityscape. Had the soldier worn a dress uniform, his presence would be conspicuous and would consequently threaten his responsibilities.

The colour of the sky decreases the image's modality, as it is a camouflage tone, rather than a more naturalistic shade of blue or grey (figure 454).



Figure 454

Camouflage sky.

The colour meaning potential related to the grey camouflage palate invokes the gravity and dangers associated with war. The lack of sunshine and artificial lights within the backgrounded buildings intensifies the atmosphere's precarious nature.

3.3.4.2.2.2.2.3 Lighting, Illumination, and Clarity

Notwithstanding the absence of the lighting's source, the soldier's arm and helmet are the brightest parts of the image (figure 455).



Figure 455

Lighting of the soldier's arm and helmet.

The dimness of the soldier's surroundings decreases the image's modality, as the image does not present a naturalistic representation of daylight. The image also lacks the clarity one might expect of a daytime combat mission.

3.3.4.2.2.2.4 Contextualization

The banner image is decontextualized, as the exact city location cannot be defined. However, this quality does not decrease modality because the video game does not allow players to attempt missions in specific cities. The non-descript urban background simply introduces the concept of domestic security, in place of events that take place in a distinctly foreign desert or jungle.

3.3.4.2.2.3 The Textual Metafunction

3.3.4.2.2.3.1 Coherence and Cohesion

The image is internally coherent as the appearance of the represented participant is consistent with what one might expect from an urban military mission. External cohesion is accomplished by the placement of the *U.S. Army* link within the banner. The image is cohesive insofar as the soldier's uniform coordinates with the backgrounded buildings and the surrounding grey camouflage of the website.

3.3.4.2.2.3.2 Framing

The banner image is externally framed on the left by a gradual fading of the buildings into grey camouflage. The tinted grey rectangle that contains the links *Game Intel*, *Real Heroes*, *Downloads*, *Community*, *Support*, *Media*, *About*, and *U.S. Army* frames the lower portion of the banner. A lighter grey bar frames the rectangle from zones two and three. The repeated use of grey camouflage visually connects the banner image to the rest of the homepage.

3.3.4.2.2.3.3 Salience

The most salient element of the image is the soldier. His placement in the foreground of the image and the brightness of his figure contribute to his visual prominence.

3.3.4.2.2.3.4 Information Value

With respect to information value (figure 456), the presence of the virtual soldier on the left corresponds well with the 'newness' inherent to that section.



Figure 456

Banner image's information value.

The links located in the dark grey rectangle distinguish the material found in the upper and lower segments of the image. Interestingly, the centre of the image is indistinguishable from the other portions of the background. One may interpret the soldier's peripheral location as a visual interpretation of the *selfless service* expected of new recruits.

3.3.4.3 Americasarmy.com Conclusions

3.3.4.3.1 General Conclusions

Within this thesis, the americasarmy.com homepage is the sole example of a video game recruitment tool. It is therefore necessary to question whether the homepage offers a genuine portrayal of military life or, as military scholars have argued, distorts reality and glorifies violence (CBS News: 30 March 2004). As described above, the video game content is blended seamlessly into the recruitment methods. The effectiveness of the combined subject matter is likely to depend on the age and interests of the visitor. For example, the virtual images of soldiers aiming rifles in zones one and four and the *Real Heroes* in zone five are likely to draw the attention of a younger visitor. However, an older visitor may be more apt to learn more about the AMEDD, and the ways in which an enlistee can offset the burdensome cost of medical school with military service.

As with all websites in this thesis, the americasarmy.com homepage is not free of inconsistencies, the most obvious of which is the use of undefined acronyms and military jargon. For example, the menu in zone two contains links to both *AMEDD* and *VAE.* While a definition of AMEDD can be found next to the verbal material in zone two, VAE is unexplained. In zone four, the acronym *MBS* is undefined. The *Network Status* indicator in zone four does not clarify the significance of the *A*, *A*, *F*, and *I* nor does the *User Stats* section identify what the *Marksmanship* calculations measure. However, in the unique case that is americasarmy.com, undefined acronyms may not be disconcerting to the visitor. In contrast, the use of such abbreviations may even intensify the 'reality' of the military game. As is stated in zone 2, *AMEDD. Another Army acronym you need to know for the game?*, a potential enlistee may find learning military jargon to be fun and exciting. Furthermore, being literate in the acronyms will

allow the visitor to communicate with the other players and gain acceptance within the larger AA 'gamer' community.

3.3.4.3.2 The probable reading path

The reading path on americasarmy.com is guided by the most salient elements of the visual space. Figure 457 demonstrates a probable reading path:



Figure 457

Probable reading path on americasarmy.com.

As annotated above, the probable reading path for the America's Army homepage is:

1. Banner
2. Featured Image
3. Real Heroes

The design of americasarmy.com is unique insofar as the only zone located below-the-fold is zone seven (figure 458).

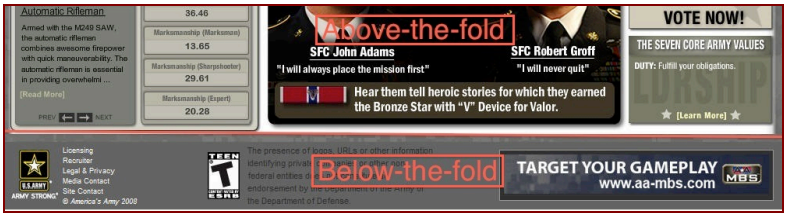


Figure 458

Americasarmy.com: Above-the-fold versus Below-the-fold.

The rectangular distribution of content therefore does not discriminate against verbal or visual material located in the lower segment of the screen[231]. The probable reading path order begins at the top of the webpage in the banner. The brightness of the America's Army logo in the left corner competes only with the image of the soldier on the right. The second stop along the reading path is likely the featured image in zone two. This zone is visually appealing for multiple reasons. Firstly, the close-up image of the physician's face draws the eye while the bright background colour of the verbal AMEDD material retains the visitor's attention. Finally, the imbedded image of the male soldier within the verbal content solidifies the importance of this zone. It is reasonable to posit that the last stop along the reading path is the *Real Heroes* image in zone five. The heading's white lettering and dramatic close-up shot of the two Sergeants First Class inject reality into the video game concept. Even though zone four contains the striking image of a soldier aiming a rifle, the dimness of the image reduces visual effectiveness.

While the popularity of this video game cannot be dismissed, the question remains as to whether America's Army is an accurate and honest portrayal of military life. To do so requires placing the 1 September 2008 homepage against the framework of the American missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. The harsh reality of mounting

[231] While the legal information and ESRB rating are located below-the-fold, such details are outside the interest of most visitors.

casualties[232], soldier scandals, and military strain are not mentioned on this homepage. In fact, the existence of enemies is also absent on this page as the soldiers in zones one and four are aiming weapons at absent targets. As argued above by Professor Brad Bushman, the authenticity of the America's Army game is minimal. One must then wonder what a potential enlistee learns from his gaming experience. As the majority of the content on americasarmy.com is devoted to recruitment, are the sober facts regarding military service articulated clearly? Or, does this website employ virtual shock and awe, paralyzing and overloading the young and vultnerable visitor's perceptions and understanding?

3.3.5 Homepage of American Army Recruitment

[232] According to icasualties.com, the quantity of American military casualties in Afghanistan and Iraq totalled 4383 between 2001-2007.

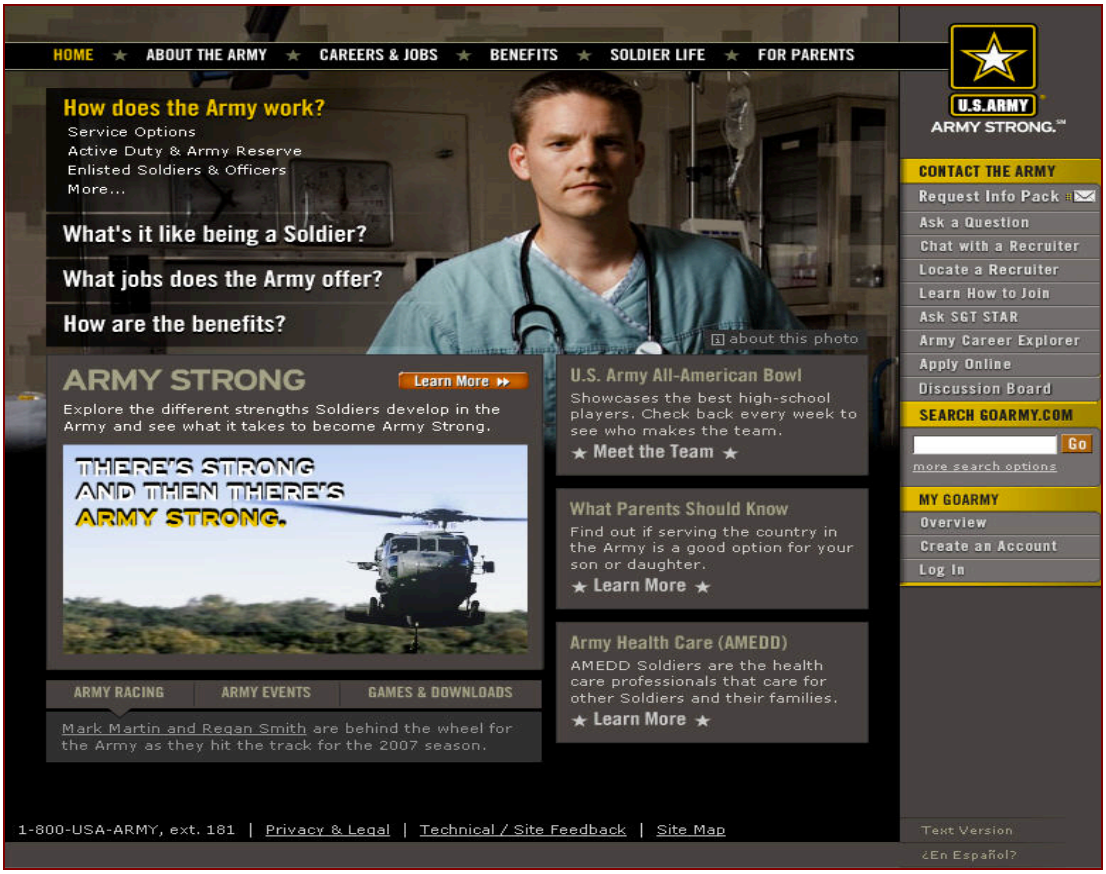


Figure 459

Goarmy.com on 28 January 2007.

3.3.5.1 Zones



Figure 460

Zones of goarmy.com.

Zone one: **Menu I**

This zone is located in the upper-middle region of the webpage and contains the first menu on the homepage. The menu provides the following six links: *Home*, *About the Army*, *Careers & Jobs*, *Benefits*, *Soldier Life*, and *For Parents.* The links are written in white capital letters and are framed from each other by small grey stars. A thin grey line frames this menu from the featured photograph background.

Zone two: Featured image

Located directly below zone one is the homepage's featured image. The featured image contains a man in a scrub shirt with a stethoscope hanging around his neck. The background of the image

appears to be a hospital or operating room as an intravenous bag and stand are visible behind the physician's left shoulder. Imbedded in the image are three questions, the first of which lists four related links. The questions and links are as follows: *How does the Army work? Service options, Active Duty & Army Reserve, Enlisted Soldiers & Officers* and *More…*

The three questions that follow are: *What's it like being a Soldier? What jobs does the Army offer? How are the benefits?* In the far right corner of the zone is a link to *about this photo*.

Zone three: Menu II

This zone is located along the far right side of the page and provides the visitor with access to 13 links that are categorized under three headings. The headings and links are as follows: *Contact the Army: Request Info Pack*, *Ask a Question*, *Chat with a Recruiter*, *Locate a Recruiter*, *Learn How to Join*, *Ask SGT STAR*, *Army Career Explorer*, *Apply Online*, and *Discussion Board; Search Goarmy.com: Go,* and *more search options; My Goarmy: Overview*, *Create an Account*, and *Log In.*

Zone four: Army Strong

This zone, positioned directly below zone two, advertises the army motto *Army Strong*. Below *Army Strong* the website states *Explore the different strengths Soldiers develop in the Army and see what it takes to become Army Strong.* Below that text is an image of a helicopter flying above a forested area. Within the image and against a sky background is the slogan *There's Strong and then there's Army Strong.* The words *Army Strong* are written in yellow text.

This zone also provides links to *Army Racing*, *Army Events*, and *Games & Downloads.* Directly below the link to *Army Racing* is the following text: *Mark Martin and Regan Smith are behind the wheel for the Army as they hit the track for the 2007 season.*

Zone five: Fast Facts

The fifth zone is located below zone two and to the right of zone four. There are three distinct boxes within zone five, each of which provides links for the visitor to *Meet the Team* or *Learn More*. The upper box contains the heading *U.S. Army All-American Bowl* and the text *Showcases the best high-school players. Check back every week to see who makes the team.* The middle box states: *What Parents Should Know. Find out if serving the country in the Army is a good option for your son or daughter.* The bottom box is entitled *Army Health Care (AMEDD). AMEDD Soldiers are the health care professionals that care for other Soldiers and their families*.

Zone six: Legal and Contact Information

Along the lower edge of the screen is the legal, technical, and contact information for goarmy.com. Along with the Army's toll-free telephone number are links to *Privacy & Legal*, *Technical/Site Feedback*, *Site Map*, *Text Version*, and *¿En Español?*

3.3.5.2 Image & Texts to be reviewed

1. Strength and the absence of fear
2. Multimodal analysis of featured image

3.3.5.2.1 Strength and the Absence of Fear

As is stated above in section 3.3.1.4, in the final months of 2006 President Bush announced a forthcoming troop surge. In an effort to bolster recruitment numbers, the US Army released its newest advertising campaign, Army Strong. Evidence of the new campaign on goarmy.com is most evident in zones three and four, where the slogan is repeated several times (figure 461).

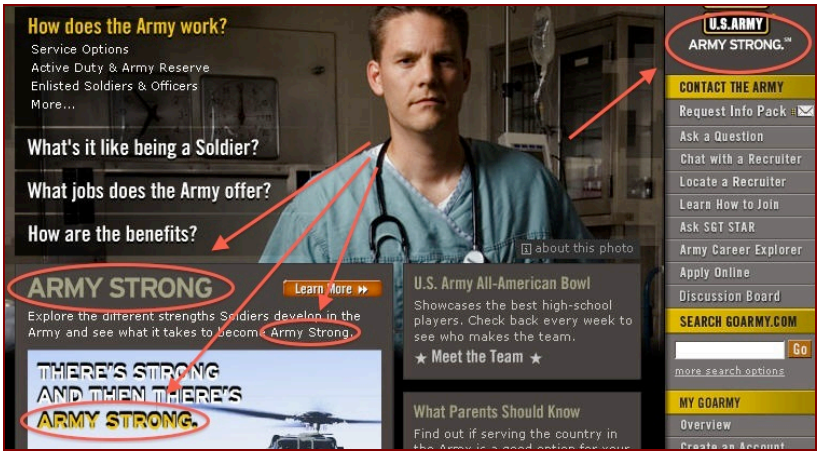


Figure 461

Presence of Army Strong slogan.

Prior to the Army Strong campaign, the content found in zone four varied from advertisments for the America's Army video game (figure 462) to the Paths of Strength (figure 463) video.



Figure 462

Zone five content on 21 May 2006.



Figure 463

Zone five content on 11 September 2006.

Another reference to the word strength can be found in zone four's verbal text *Explore the different strengths Soldiers develop in the Army and see what it takes to become Army Strong*. In spite of the predominance of the Army Strong campaign, it is unclear from the homepage what being *Army Strong* signifies. For example, one may argue that physical and mental strength are necessary to soldiers because they are likely to face adversity and violence while on duty. However, the goarmy.com homepage does not acknowledge the corporal risks associated with a career in the military. In lieu of recognizing the challenges of service, the majority of the links provided on the recruitment website pertain to career planning and entertaining military events. For example, there are five links in zones one, two, and three that concern career options and employment benefits. Similarly, there are six links in zones four and five devoted to *Army Racing*, *Army Events*, and *Games & Downloads.*
Neither the image of the physician in zone two nor the helicopter in zone four reminds the visitor of the dangers involved in enlistment. Rather, the website treats the Army as employer offering a job with substantial benefits, such as access to AMEDD health care.

3.3.5.2.2 A Multimodal Analysis of the Featured Image

The featured image of family medicine practicioner Dr. Jeffrey Kiki on 28 January 2007 (figure 464) was one of several promoted careers emphasized in the *Find your strength* (figure 465) subsection of the *Army Strong* campaign.

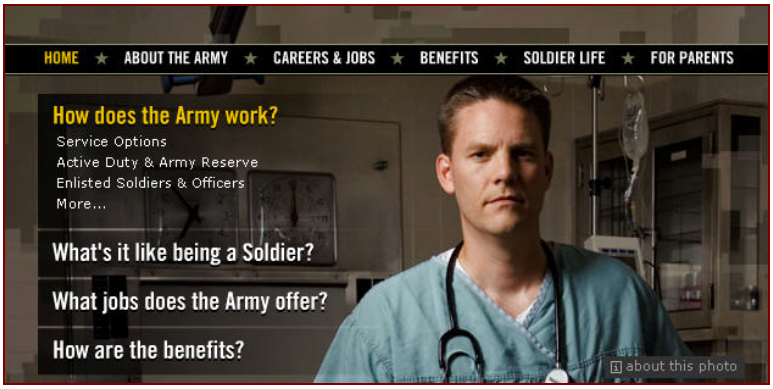


Figure 464

Featured Image on 28 January 2007.

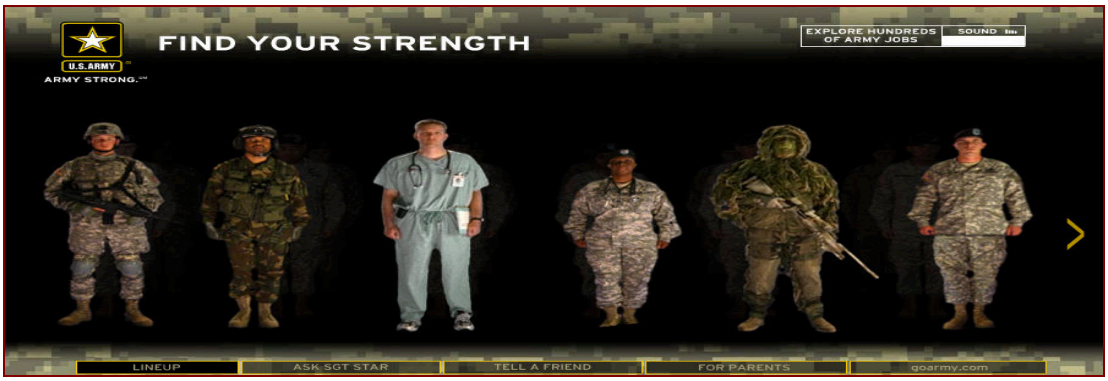


Figure 465

Find your strength campaign on 9 November 2006.

Other *Find your strength* featured images included those of Health Care Specialist (Combat Medic) Sergeant Tracey Lyons (figure 466), Chief Warrant Officer (Blackhawk Pilot) Verdo Jackson (figure 467), and Infantryman-Sniper Private Andrew Todhunter (figure 468).



Figure 466

Featured image of Health Care Specialist Sergeant Tracey Lyons on 12 December 2006.

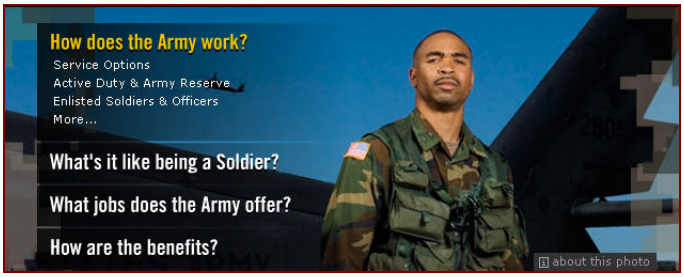


Figure 467

Featured image of Chief Warrant Officer Verdo Jackson on 16 December 2006.

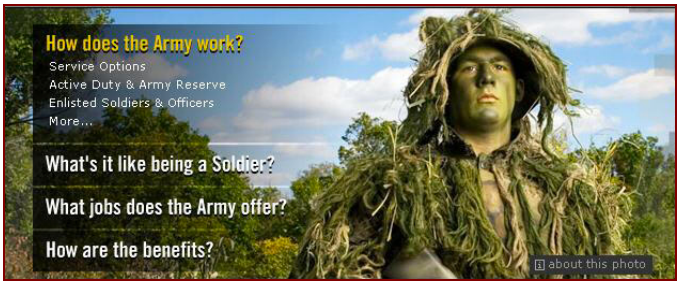


Figure 468

Featured image of Infantryman-Sniper Private Andrew Todhunter on 23 January 2007.

3.3.5.2.2.1 The Ideational Metafunction

3.3.5.2.2.1.1 Vectors

There is only one vector in the featured image, a non-transactional action. This vector emanates from the doctor's eyes, but does not point at another participant. The doctor's gaze does create a direct-address with the website visitor, connecting the represented participant with the interactive participant.

3.3.5.2.2.1.2 Roles, Processes, and Circumstances

In this image, the physician is the actor who is doing the action of standing in the hospital room. While there is no goal, per se, the physician appears to be looking directly at the website visitor. Interestingly, this stance is tantamount to those found in figures 466, 467, and 468. There are no identifiable behavioural processes, however the actor maintains a serious facial expression. As the links in zone two overlap the featured image, one may interpret the questions *How does the Army work? What's it like being a Soldier? What jobs does the Army offer?* and *How are the benefits?* as verbiage attributable to the physician as the sayer. In this case, the receiver is the website visitor. Alternatively, the questions can be the physician's thoughts, indicating the behavioural process of thinking.

With respect to relational processes, the actor expresses membership in the medical profession via his wardrobe, stethoscope, and his presence within the medical setting. While the hospital background provides context for the image, it qualifies as a circumstance as it can be removed without altering the message. For example, even though the background of the *Find your strength* image (figure 465) is decontextualized, the doctor's wardrobe provides sufficient identity information. The circumstances of location and manner are indistinguishable, both of which pertain to equipment normally found in a hospital. There are no circumstances of accompaniment.

3.3.5.2.2.1.3 Analytical and Symbolic Structures

The carrier in this image is the physician and his possessive attributes are the components of his wardrobe and his stethoscope. Topographically and topologically, the spatial relations, location of the possessive attributes, common boundaries, and sequence of connections are accurate. The image does not provide a timeline nor does it clarify if the image was captured during the day or night. The

lack of temporal structures is inkeeping with the day/night on-call schedule characterstic of a hospital physician's career.

Regarding symbolic structures, the image can have one of two significations. Firstly, the image of the physican can be understood as a possible career option for enlistees. Secondly, the final question in zone two (*How are the benefits?*) and the content found at the bottom of zone five (figure 469) indicate that enlisted soldiers and their families have access to military medical services. In either case, the photograph of the physician underscores the advantages of army medical insurance.

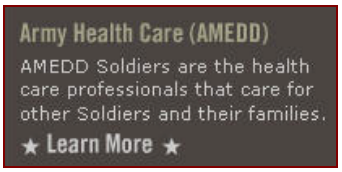


Figure 469

AMEDD information in zone five.

The lighting within the image provides a symbolic suggestive process, in which Dr. Kiki is the most central facet of the image. The doctor's wardrobe and serious facial expression provide for a symbolic attributive process, bestowing a sense of intelligence and confidence upon the physician.

3.3.5.2.2.2 The Interpersonal Metafunction

3.3.5.2.2.2.1 Perspective

3.3.5.2.2.2.1.1 Shot Type

With respect to the perspective, the image is a close up of the participant as he is visible from above the middle of his chest. This close physical distance is common for interaction with one's physician.

3.3.5.2.2.2.1.2 Vertical and Horizontal Angles

The vertical angle is eye-level, as the camera points directly at the doctor. The image's horizontal angle is frontal. The eye-level/frontal angles impart a feeling of honesty and directness; qualities that one would hope for from a doctor.

3.3.5.2.2.2.2 Modality

3.3.5.2.2.2.2.1 Depth and Detail

The elements in the photograph that appear closest to the physician garner the greatest detail. Conversely, the items that are located in the background or deeper parts of the image are less detailed. For example, the content within the metal cabinet behind the doctor's left shoulder is impossible to identify.

3.3.5.2.2.2.2 2 Colour

With the exception of the physician's scrub shirt and white t-shirt, the colours present in the image are mostly shades of silver and grey. The homogeneous nature of the background functions to preserve the assumed sterility of a hospital room or operating theatre. The colour meaning potential related to the grey toned palate emphasizes the serious nature of the medical care provided by the US Army.

3.3.5.2.2.2.2.3 Lighting, Illumination, and Clarity

Despite the absence of the lighting's source, the physician is the most illuminated component of the image. The majority of the backgrounded equipment remains shaded. The general dimness does not decrease the image's modality as one might expect that the peripheral areas of an operating room to be dark.

3.3.5.2.2.2.4 Contextualization

The featured image is only somewhat decontextualized, as the exact hospital location[233] cannot be verified. The lack of exact context does not decrease modality, as it can be interpreted as a generalization for superior military medical care.

3.3.5.2.2.3 The Textual Metafunction

3.3.5.2.2.3.1 Coherence and Cohesion

The placement of the medical doctor dressed in a scrub suit and wearing a stethoscope in the foreground of a hospital room accomplishes internal coherence. However, external coherence is threatened by the unclear intention of the image. Is the physician an example of a soldier whose education and training were sponsored by the army? Or, is the doctor an example of an AMEDD specialist whose treatment is available *to* military members and their families? Or, most likely, are both meanings simultaneously intimated by the image? Regardless of the intended meaning, the doctor's identity is not revealed on the homepage. The visitor would have to click on the *About this photo* link to learn more about Dr. Kiki.

The image is cohesive insofar as the represented participant is visually connected with his setting.

3.3.5.2.2.3.2 Framing

The featured image is externally framed on the right by the grey rectangle that contains menu II. Zone four's grey squares frame the lower horizontal section of the image. However, the doctor's scrub

[233] The most well-known army hospital in the United States is the Walter Reed Army Medical Centre in Washington, D.C. The scandals relating to the treatment of soldiers at that health facility surfaced in the press in February 2007, just a few days following the appearance of Dr. Kiki in zone two. The web capture of the physician's image on 28 January 2007 is the last image of a doctor in a military hospital that I found on goarmy.com during the period of study.

suit can be seen between the *Army Strong* and *US. Army All-American Bowl* segments and outside the left edge of zone four (figure 470).



Figure 470

Lower framing of feature image.

The presence of the physician's image behind zones four and five re-affirm his importance on the homepage. The upper horizontal area of the image is framed by a camouflage pattern (figure 471).

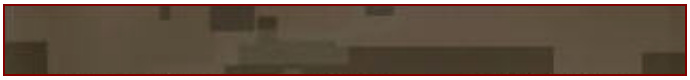


Figure 471

Upper camouflage frame.

This pattern is likely added in the photograph's post-production, as it is unlikely that the ceilings of army hospitals are painted in camouflage. The far left side of the image contains a similar camouflage pattern.

3.3.5.2.2.3.3 Salience

The most salient element of the image is the physician. His placement in the foreground of the image and the brightness of his figure contribute to his visual prominence. The doctor's only competition for the visitor's attention is the verbal material near his right arm and shoulder. The question written in yellow lettering, *How does the Army work*? is the most noticeable of the verbal text.

3.3.5.2.2.3.4 Information Value

With respect to information value (figure 472), the presence of the physician near the absolute centre of the image verifies the importance of his position.

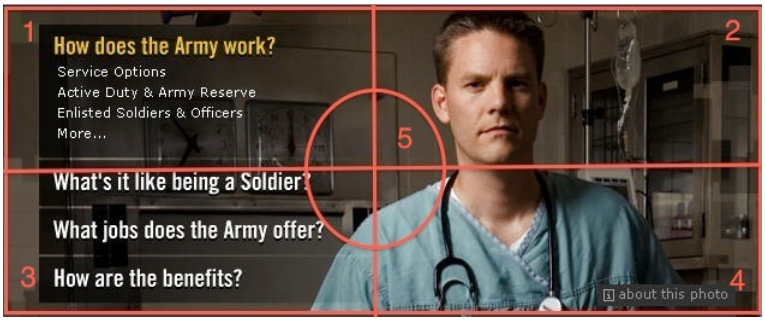


Figure 472

Feature image's information value.

However, the verbal text on the left does not correspond well with being 'old' information, especially to an interested potential recruit.

3.3.5.3 Goarmy.com Conclusions

3.3.5.3.1 General Conclusions

The US Army's recruitment homepage is effective insofar as the design is eye-catching and the amount of content is not overwhelming to the visitor. However, as is stated above, the risks of military duty are notably absent. The overabundance of links dedicated to the *All-American Bowl, Army Racing, Army Events,* and *Army Games & Downloads* distract from the harsh realities of service. Similarly, the multiple expressions of being *strong* and having *different strengths* in tandem with the self-proclaimed importance of soldiering (evidenced by an unusual capitalization of the word *soldier* in figure 473) do not contribute to the rational, sober thought process that is essential prior to enlistment.



Figure 473

Capitalization of *soldier* in zones two, four, and five.

3.3.5.3.2 The probable reading path

The reading path on goarmy.com is guided by the most salient elements of the visual space. Figure 474 demonstrates a probable reading path:

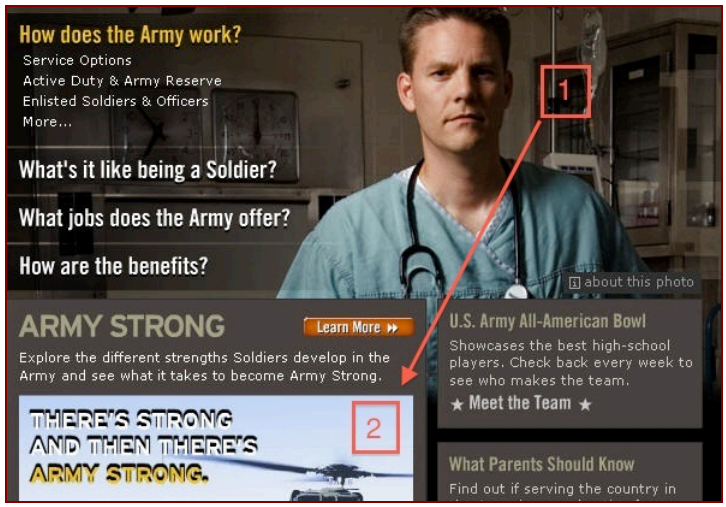


Figure 474

Probable reading path on goarmy.com.

As annotated above, the probable reading path for the America's Army homepage is:

1. Featured image
2. Army Strong content

Similar to the design of americasarmy.com, on goarmy.com the only zone located below-the-fold is the legal and privacy information found in zone six (figure 475).



Figure 475

Goarmy.com: Above-the-fold versus Below-the-fold.

This assymetrical division of content theoretically permits any of the content in zones one through five to attract the visitor's attention. However, as nearly all of the homepage's content is verbal material written in white or yellow lettering against a solid grey background, the two photographs become the most visually distinct elements.

The featured image of the physician is likely to be the first stop on the visitor's reading path as it is the most salient. Nevertheless, in contrast to the featured images of soldiers in uniform (figures 466-468), Dr. Kiki is not immediately recognizable as a service person. As a result, the ambiguity associated with the presence of a physician on the army recruitment webpage may shorten the visitor's viewing time in this zone. The second and perhaps final stop along the visitor's reading path is the image of the helicopter in zone four. The placement of the white and yellow lettered *Army Strong* slogan against the pale background of the light blue sky reduces the motto's efficacy (figure 476).



Figure 476

There's strong and then there's army strong slogan in zone four.

Goarmy.com, the primary recruitment website for the U.S. Army, communicates pertinent information regarding the career potential

and occupational benefits of military service. However, the effectiveness of the much-anticipated *Army Strong* campaign is dubious. What does it really mean to be *Army Strong*? Likewise, the impact of featuring a physician in the most salient position on the website is threatened by a gap in logic.

The most noticeable element that is absent on the 28 January 2007 version of goarmy.com is an identifiable soldier. Despite the fact that the word *army* is repeated 21 times on the recruitment webpage (circled in figure 477), goarmy.com does not include the likeness of a uniformed military service personnel.

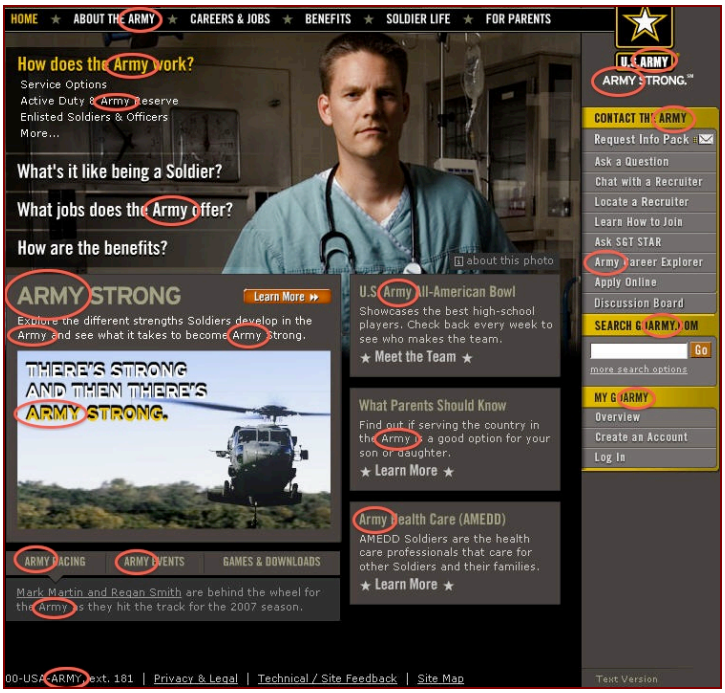


Figure 477

Repetition of the word *army*.

This design choice is unusual as most featured images on goarmy.com (figures 466-468 and 478) include at least one uniformed soldier.

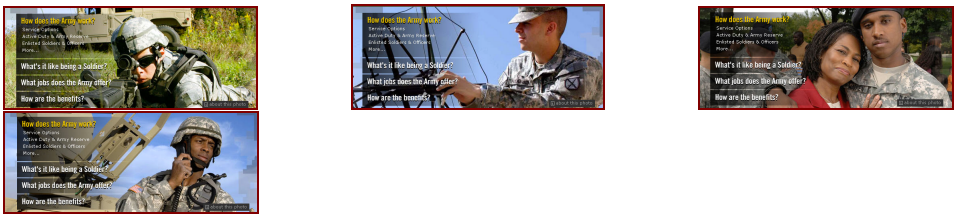


Figure 478

Featured images including soldiers in uniform on 14 April 2007, 17 June 2007, 8 July 2007, and 26 August 2007.

Essentially, the absence of a clearly identifiable soldier 'takes the army out of the army'. In this way, the military becomes a generic employer marketing a variety of occupational positions to interested potential workforce. Amongst the advertising are details related to career path and benefits, which would be of interest to any applicant. However, when faced with the bodily risks assumed by those who perform military duties, can the US Army ethically promote itself as just 'another employer'?

3.3.6 Conclusions regarding American websites

My initial hypothesis regarding the American websites was that the presidential, military, and army recruitment homepages would be replete with virtual 'shock and awe' techniques intended to overwhelm and paralyze the visitor and make him incapable of resistance. However, for the most part, the recruitment strategies employed are quite subtle and are stealthily imbedded within the content and design. And, overall, the content I expected to find[234] (for example, images of Hispanics, African-Americans, immigrants, and older enlistees, along with advertisments of generous signing

[234] Similarly, content that I did not expect to find, such as a *mea culpa* regarding the abhorrent conditions at the Walter Reed Medical Center, mounting troop deaths and injuries in Iraq and Afghanistan, statements regarding soldier misconduct in the United States and abroad, and the physical and mental difficulties associated with repeated deployments, was also absent from the four American homepages studied.

bonuses) was all but absent from the websites. The sole exception to this artful nature of American recruitment advertising is the America's Army homepage.

Interestingly, the homepage that ostensibly invites the visitor to download a free video game is the most brazen of the four homepages in its effort to generate enlistment. The bulk of the America's Army homepage is devoted to military recruitment in the plainest of manners. From virtual depictions of camouflaged soldiers aiming rifles, to accolades awarded to *Real Heroes*, and invitations for visitors to consider a career in army medicine, americasarmy.com does not eschew its primitive role in the recruitment process. Furthermore, by presenting a young recruit with impressive (albeit incomprehensible) marksmanship statistics, the selling features of the M249 SAW Automatic Rifle, and inculcating the desire to incorporate military values, such as 'duty', into his own life, the video game tempts the recruit with social acceptance and membership amongst like-minded adolescents. Finally, the video game's homepage is conveniently framed from above and below by links to visit goarmy.com. In this way, the video game's homepage is the 'ground zero' of the US Army recruitment campaign. In appealing to 13-24 year old males, the military is laying important groundwork for enlisting both present and future recruits.

As the todaysmilitary.com website did not drastically change during the period of study, it is difficult to assert that there is a correlation between its content/design and specific events that took place in the surrounding political sphere. However, the 16 November 2008 edition of the homepage is reflective of general trends in the American military climate. For instance, by late 2008 the US Army was maximally strained, casualties continued to mount, and multiple soldiers opted for suicide over another stop-loss redeployment. Faced with those and other wartime recruiting challenges, military

advertisers sought to alleviate the concerns of the so-called 'influencers' by unleashing a parent-focused advertising blitz (Erickson: 30 October 2008; Elliot: 11 November 2008). In order to encourage parental support for a child's military career, todaysmilitary.com serves as a repository for the 'honest and accurate information' that dispels the myths and misunderstandings associated with enlistment.

While it is unlikely that any homepage could completely quell a parent or educator's fears and anxieties, it is surprising that the Today's Military homepage avoids mentioning any of the negative aspects of service. In fact, following the brief concession that the choice to enlist is an 'intensely personal' decision, the fodder for 'continuing the conversation' is limited to the 'growth and self-discovery', 'pride, service, tradition' and, 'tuition benefits' of enlistment. One must then wonder, is this homepage successful in its objectives? As a parent's concerns are unlikely to be allayed by multiple links to *Future's Magazine* and the featured image of a mother speaking with her son, does this website substantially benefit the American recruitment campaign? I would argue that the lack of substantive content on the todaysmilitary.com homepage indicates that it is a hollow shell; the homepage is a means to pacify influencers, but is ineffective in substantially alleviating 'influencer' apprehension.

In comparison to the Venezuelan President's homepage, the homepage of Hugo Chávez's American counterpart is markedly tame in its use of political slogans, but is rich in its inclusion of military symbols. It was common for the featured image on whitehouse.gov/president to include President George W. Bush alongside military service personnel (figures 479-482), a visual scene indicative of a country at war.



President George W. Bush welcomes Army General David Petraeus, incoming Commander of the Multi-National Force-Iraq, Friday, Jan. 26, 2007, to the Oval Office. White House photo by Eric Draper

Figure 479

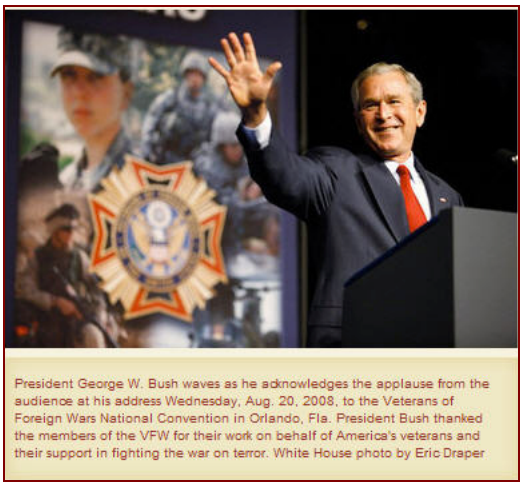
Featured image on 28 January 2007.



President George W. Bush stands stands with Marine General James Cartwright, left, Navy Admiral Michael Mullen, and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, right, as he announces his nomination of Admiral Mullen as Chairman and Gen. Cartwright as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Thursday, June 28, 2007, in the Roosevelt Room of the White House. White House photo by Chris Greenberg

Figure 480

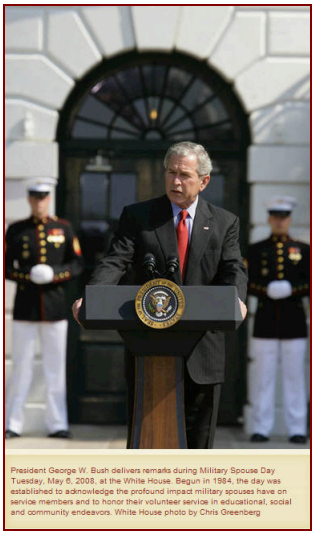
Featured image on 1 July 2007.



President George W. Bush waves as he acknowledges the applause from the audience at his address Wednesday, Aug. 20, 2008, to the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention in Orlando, Fla. President Bush thanked the members of the VFW for their work on behalf of America's veterans and their support in fighting the war on terror. White House photo by Eric Draper

Figure 481

Featured image on 25 August 2008.



President George W. Bush delivers remarks during Military Spouse Day Tuesday, May 6, 2008, at the White House. Begun in 1984, the day was established to acknowledge the profound impact military spouses have on service members and to honor their volunteer service in educational, social and community endeavors. White House photo by Chris Greenberg

Figure 482

Featured image on 11 May 2008.

It is worth noting that the photographs of a formally dressed president in conversation with or standing in the foreground of uniformed soldiers are found on a website that is not specifically related to the military, per se. However, President Bush's presence at Fort Irwin confirms his on-the-ground commitment to military affairs (as this is a task that could have been assigned to a subordinate

staffer) and thereby substantiates the importance of the military to a country engaged in combat.

Additionally, reports of aged equipment and the need for $17.1 billion in replacements (Moss: 14 August 2005; Xinhua News Agency: 26 June 2006; Shanker and Gordon: 21 September 2006) make the image of President Bush at the U.S. Army National Training Center even timelier. For, indeed, the military's success in Iraq and Afghanistan hinges on reliable and state-of-the-art machinery.

The relationship between the content and design of the 28 January 2007 edition of goarmy.com and the surrounding political climate is indeed the most puzzling of the four American websites examined. While one might expect the official recruitment homepage for the U.S. Army to employ dramatic gestures in its proclamation of the benefits of service, the edition in question, featuring the image of Dr. Kiki, is remarkably temperate in that respect. This is because the overall impression made by goarmy.com is dependent upon the featured image in zone two. For example, the zone two image on the 21 November 2006 edition of the homepage (figure 493), featuring Infantryman-Sniper Private Andrew Todhunter, substantively changes the mood of the website.

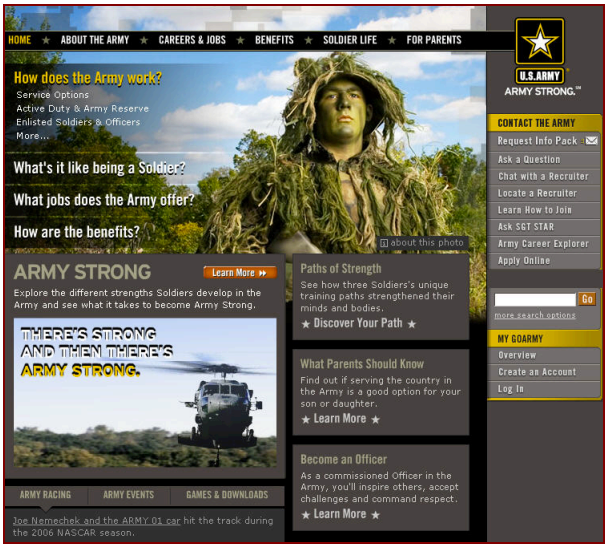


Figure 483

Goarmy.com on 21 November 2006.

The inclusion of an active duty sniper dressed entirely in camouflage exudes the intrigue and adventure one may encounter in the U.S. Army, whereas the image of Dr. Kiki is ambiguous in its intention. Furthermore, in spite of the multiple instantiations of the words *Army Strong*, the recruitment homepage does not clarify the significance of that motto, leaving the visitor uninformed and potentially unconvinced.

While there is a correlation between the American websites examined in this thesis and the surrounding political climate, the boldest exemplar remains the homepage intended for the youngest (and most impressionable and vulnerable) visitor – americasarmy.com. The president's webpage, the website intended for parents, and the official army recruitment homepage employ a rather understated approach to enlistment. Remarkably absent from each of the American websites is a reference to risk[235]. The expectation of absolute sacrifice from enlistees is one that cannot be evaded and must not be withheld for the purpose of subterfuge.

[235] Evidence of statistics regarding military casualties and injuries and the recruitment difficulties faced during wartime are absent on each of the four American websites studied. Similarly, it is noteworthy that explicit references to the reduction in enlistment standards and increase in enlistment bonuses are absent on all of the American websites.

4. Conclusion

The conclusion to this study will enable the three nations' military, governmental, and presidential websites to be viewed as comparable segments of a whole (rather than eleven disparate texts). To accomplish this, the conclusion will be subdivided in the following manner. Firstly, I will comment on the interconnectedness of each country's webpages. By establishing how the sites relate to each other, their overall message can be deduced. Secondly, in order to afford further understanding regarding message, I will speculate on the targeted audience(s) for each country's websites. Thirdly, I will focus on the commonalities of content and design shared by all of the homepages, so as to confirm whether ideologically driven material is evident on military recruitment webpages. Finally, I will include

some concluding remarks regarding the ethical nature of electronic military recruitment.

4.1 Interconnectedness and message

As the webpages fall under the purview of 'government publication[236]', it is necessary to delineate the relationships between each country's respective homepages. For example, do the individual sites present a coherent message? Do they share objectives, or are their purposes complementary (or perhaps competing?)? And, what conclusions can be drawn from their interconnectedness? With respect to the websites from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the content found in zone one is remarkably uniform. Specifically, a waving flag and the explicit naming of the overseeing governmental organization can be found on the far left of the banner. Similarly, each of the four Venezuelan homepages bears the *Ahora es de Todos* icon (section 3.1.2.1) in the upper right corner of the screen. The verbal and visual impact of that icon is emblematic on the four webpages, as it indicates an intentional and decisive break from the past.

Similarly, the emboldened typeface of the adjective *bolivariano* within the headings of each page emphasizes the overall importance of Simón Bolívar to the South American nation. However, as *Ahora es de Todos* severs the present from the past, the manifestation of Bolívar within the country's (new) name fuses current political activism with past military successes. In this way, these websites bear opposing messages.

Furthermore, it bears mentioning that while each of the Venezuelan websites analyzed is a part of the gov.ve family, there are few virtual connections between them. For example, the only website that provides a direct link to one of the other Venezuelan

[236] Each website address is terminated by a .gov specification.

homepages is that of the president (to the army's homepage). Surprisingly, the Venezuelan government's homepage does not link to the president's page, nor does it link to the Ministry of Defence or army's homepage. Moreover, the Ministry of Defence's homepage does not provide a link to the army's homepage. In this way, the design of the Venezuelan webpages limits the visitor's ability to explore the different sites consecutively. This disconnection illustrates the quotation by Hugo Chávez found in zone eight of the Ministry of Defence's homepage (section 3.1.4.1) "There will be a fusion of the Armed Force (sic) because still, still we have the Army on one side, the Navy on the other, the Air Force on another, and the National Guard on another and the Reserve over there. Each one with administrative and operative autonomy, this has to definitively stop." As a deliberate action or not, the fragmentation of the four Venezuelan websites is suggestive of a country in transition.

In contrast to the Venezuelan homepages, the Colombian websites provide adequate[237] linkages to each other. In that sense, the homepages are coherently related and allow for the visitor to move from site to site in a nearly effortless fashion. Analogous to the Venezuelan homepages, each of the Colombian webpages includes a coat of arms in zone one's banner I.

By the same token, the websites also communicate a cohesive message. However, upon close examination, the underlying message is distinct from the content published within the multiple *conózcanos*[238] (get to know us) links (sections 3.2.2.1 and 3.4.2.1).

[237] The president's homepage does not provide links to the army or the recruitment pages. However, one can find links on the army and recruitment pages to the president's homepage.

[238] From ejercito.mil.co, upon entering the *conózcanos* website, the visitor is presented with information regarding *historia* (history), *nuestros héroes* (our heroes), *línea de mando* (chain of command), *unidades militares* (military units), *direccionamiento estratégico* (strategic direction), *código de honor* (code of honour), *preservación de la fuerza* (preservation of the force –see section 3.2.2.2.1), *Sinaí Misión de Paz* (Sinai

Indeed, the focus within the three Colombian homepages deviates greatly from mundane niceties regarding military heroes and symbols. To the contrary, the homepages suggest a calculated advertising campaign to propagate the legitimacy of the Colombian military and state. Each website assumes a critical role in the tripartite operation. While the army's homepage commends successful military missions by way of the *positivos* (section 3.2.2.2.1) and proclaims the institution's deference to human rights (section 3.2.2.3.2), the president's homepage sought the international validity inherent to a diplomatic visit by President Bush 2007. And, finally, notwithstanding the deep-seated masculine bravado of being an *hombre al máximo*, the military recruitment homepage pronounced its dedication to 'transparency'[239] (section 3.2.4.2.3). Waging war against an international reputation tarnished by a raging drug war, violent insurgency, and political scandal, these websites collaboratively forgo reality for the sake of international validity (and *ipso facto*, financial aid).

The interconnectedness between the American websites is shrewdly designed so as to urge the interested party to contact a recruiter for the purpose of enlistment. For example, while both the Today's Military homepage and America's Army homepage link to Goarmy.com, that recruitment homepage does not mirror those linkages. Essentially, once the youth has engaged in a conversation with his influencers or played the military's video game, he is expected to visit the recruitment website, but is not encouraged to return to todaysmilitary.com or americasarmy.com. To further illustrate this objective, the page layout of each of the four American websites is distinct. In contrast with their Venezuelan and Colombian

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Peace Mission –see section 3.2.2.1), profesionales oficiales de la reserva (professional reserve official), and nuestros símbolos (our symbols).

[239] Interestingly, the term *transparencia* is never defined on reclutamiento.mil.co.

counterparts, there are no matching flags, colours, typeface, or emblems in banner I. Each website is thereby responsible for a specific, yet complementary task.

4.2 A question of audience

An integral facet of website analysis is the identification of the targeted audience. With respect to both Venezuela and Colombia, one must acknowledge the legal military service obligations of the South American nations (sections 3.1.1.6 and 3.2.1.6). As both countries require males of legal age to register with the government, the promulgation of military information in a virtual context is of use to the citizenry on only a superficial level.

In the case of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the evidence examined indicates that the webpages are unlikely to be directed solely toward a domestic audience. Despite the national, provincial, and municipal content that would be practical to a Venezuelan citizen, the repetitious nature of evocative slogans, the colour red, and references to President Chávez are symptomatic of a broader audience. In response to political altercations with both Colombia and the United States (see section 3.1.1.7), the Venezuelan government used the internet to defend its borders. An international audience to the homepages learns of the profound popular support for the homeland (see section 3.1.2.2.) the widespread popularity of both the Venezuelan president (see section 3.1.3.2.2) and his socialist revolution (see section 3.1.5.2.1).

Enlistment, also being mandatory in Colombia, poses a challenge to the analysis of military homepages. As was stated in section 2.4.1, why publicize military recruitment to a population obligated to enlist? To answer this question, I feel it is necessary to pay special attention to the content found on the Colombian Army's homepage (ejercito.mil.co). On that page, in addition to myriad *positivos* and references to international human rights, there are

particular links that extend the likely visitor's nationality beyond the borders of the South American republic. As the majority of Colombians speak Spanish or an indigenous language (CIA World Factbook), the presence of English, French, Portuguese, and German (section 3.2.2.2.2) translations[240] is indicative of an audience that lives outside of Colombia. Furthermore, the link to the *Shared Responsibility* homepage (section 3.2.2.1) firmly ties the page's content to an American audience. Essentially, while a Colombian may find content regarding the acquisition of a military card (section 3.2.4.2.2) convenient, it is likely that the majority of the Colombian homepages examined were constructed with a more global audience in mind.

As the only country within the study that depends upon an AVF (setting aside the recruitment tactics aimed at the uneducated, poor, naïve, and immigrant population discussed in section 3.3.1.9), the United States is unique in its targeted audience. The homepages examined sufficiently support the military recruiters' effort to enlist two cadets per month. However, one must also consider the larger consequences of depicting a military as *army strong* and composed of *real heroes*. In tandem, the elaborate design of the America's Army and Goarmy.com homepages depicts a military that is wealthy, supremely equipped, and fierce; qualities ignored at a potential enemy's peril.

4.3 Common content and design

To amalgamate the eleven homepages under the generic umbrella of 'governmental website', it is necessary to distinguish what aspects of the design and content are common to all or nearly all of the websites in question. In the case of the Venezuelan, Colombian, and American websites, the spatial location and content found along the first steps

[240] It is interesting to note that the Colombian Army Recruitment homepage is only available for viewing in Spanish.

of the proposed reading paths are remarkably uniform. Figures 484-494 illustrate that each of the homepages studied assign great importance to the upper-central area[241] of the visual space.



Figure 484

Ejercito.mil.ve: first and second stops along the proposed reading path (banner I and welcome message).



Figure 485

Gobiernoenlinea.ve: first and second stops along the proposed reading path (banner I and featured news article).



[241] According to Knox (2007: 42-43), the upper-central section of the computer screen is the 'guaranteed viewing area'.

Figure 486

Mindefensa.gov.ve: first, second, and third stops along the proposed reading path (banner I, featured images, and welcome message).



Figure 487

Venezuela.gob.ve: first and second stops along the proposed reading path (banner I and featured image).



Figure 488

Ejercito.mil.co: first and second stops along the proposed reading path (banner I and featured image).



Figure 489

Presidencia.gov.co: first and second stops along the proposed reading path (banner I and featured image).



Figure 490

Reclutamiento.mil.co: first and second stops along the proposed reading path (banner I and featured image).



Figure 491

Whitehouse.gov/president: first, second, and third stops along the proposed reading path (banner I, banner II, and featured image).



Figure 492

Todaysmilitary.com: first and second stops along the proposed reading path (featured image and 'honest and accurate' text).

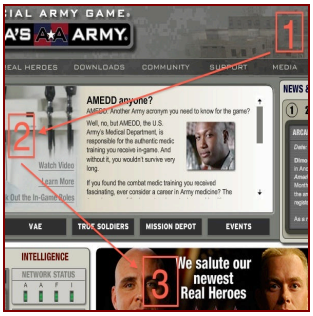


Figure 493

Americasarmy.com: first, second, and third stops along the proposed reading path (banner, featured image, and 'real heroes').

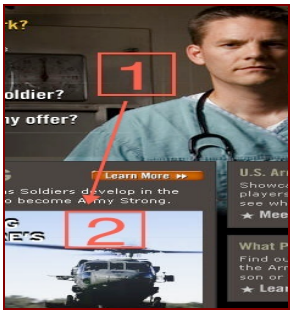


Figure 494

Goarmy.com: first and second stops along the proposed reading path (featured image and 'army strong' advertisement).

While the specific content within those areas is dissonant, the visual space (typically devoted to a banner and featured image) tends to contain at least one or more of the following: evocative verbal material (e.g./ a slogan), the image of a culturally recognizable person or persons, and/or other evocative imagery (see table 6).

The presence of any or all of those three types of content is indicative of a politically or ideologically charged message, one that immediately assails the visitor's senses.

Website	Evocative Verbal Material	Culturally Recognizable Person/s	Evocative Imagery
Venezuela			
Ejercito.mil.ve	✓		
Gobiernoenlinea.ve	✓		
Mindefensa.gov.ve	✓	✓	✓
Venezuela.gob.ve	✓	✓	✓
Colombia			
Ejercito.mil.co	✓		
Presidencia.gov.co		✓	
Reclutamiento.mil.co			✓
United States			
Whitehouse.gov/president		✓	✓
Todaysmilitary.com	✓		
Americasarmy.com	✗	✗	✗
Goarmy.com	✗	✗	✗

Table 6

Content found along the first, second, and third stops of the proposed reading path.

As described in table 6, it is interesting that each of the countries employs differing quantities of evocative material along the first steps of the reading path. Venezuela, for example, includes multiple instantiations of evocative verbal material, culturally recognizable persons, and evocative imagery. Colombia, includes similar content, but to a lesser degree. The United States, however, uses very little evocative subject matter at the top of the homepage. However, the

overall impact is not hampered. The ideological indicators are effective regardless of their quantity along the reading path.

Furthermore, the information delineated in table 6 indicates that there are two interconnected sides to the reading path coin. While a reading path is at its essence a premeditated visual guide that constrains the visitor's experience (McGann 2001: 73), it is also expedites the visitor's understanding of the text's underlying objectives[242]. To illustrate this conclusion, I will evaluate the content found along the first steps in the websites' proposed reading paths and the relationship to the likely website objectives.

Each of the four Venezuelan homepages analyzed contain evocative material in the upper-central areas of the screen, the first areas to be noticed upon opening the websites. One can thereby determine that the homepages' objectives include disseminating the value of socialism and patriotism (figure 484), the widespread public support for President Chávez (figure 485), the administration's dedication to improving the civic-military union (figure 486), and the critical nature of the revolution in Venezuela (figure 487). Cumulatively, these qualities articulate that political change is afoot in the South American nation, and that Hugo Chávez is the vanguard of the socialist revolution.

The first steps along the Colombian websites' reading paths indicate the priority of stressing the army's respect for human rights (figure 488), the momentousness of President Bush's visit to Colombia in 2007 (figure 489), and the transparency attributable to Colombia's Armed Forces (figure 490). As each of those themes corresponds to the criticisms put forth by the American Congress

[242] This conclusion is supported by the work of Kress and Van Leeuwen (in Bell and Garrett 1998: 200-201). These authors argue that salience is linked to producer ideology. Similarly, Van Leeuwen (in Norris and Jones 2005: 73) states that institutional websites are not constructed randomly, but are thoughtfully and deliberately created.

during the FTA debates, it is thereby reasonable to confirm a linkage to the surrounding political climate.

The American websites, while their communication of objectives is surprisingly subtle, the content found in the first steps along the reading path indicates a connection to current events in the United States. For example, whitehouse.gov/president professes the president's commitment to the on-the-ground initiatives needed to increase the military's chances of success in the Middle East (figure 491); todaysmilitary.com boldly pronounces its objectives in the upper-central area of the website and underscores the role assigned to parents and other 'influencers' in a potential enlistee's decision to serve (figure 492); americasarmy.com immediately exposes the visitor to the sense of adventure associated with military service (figure 493); and goarmy.com makes use of the upper-central area of the homepage to advertise the US Army as an attractive employer that provides its employees with myriad opportunities to improve their lives (figure 494). In concert, the American websites encourage the visitor to benefit from the personal fulfillment associated with a life in the American Military by enlisting in the US Army.

From the broadcasting that the benefits of socialism extend to the farest reaches of the Venezuelan *pueblo*, to the ubiquitous Colombian *positivos* that pursue billions of dollars in foreign aid, to the promotion of an ostensibly risk-free career in the United States Army, each of these websites reflects the contemporary political climate in their respective host countries. In this regard, the content found in the first steps of the reading path is politically driven, is reflective of the country's contemporary state of war, conclusions that indicate that the bureaucratic processes of military recruitment and enlistment are vulnerable to the interests of the ruling political party. And, while the placement of key content in the upper-central area of

the homepage is standard practice in website design[243], charging the primary steps along the reading path with overtly or covertly politically driven material is an original contribution to the literature.

4.4 The ethics of recruitment

In reference to both the conscripted and volunteer-based militaries, it is important to question the ethical nature of advertising a military career. Should a nation state engage with an advertising campaign to promote soldiering? As is discussed in the introduction to this thesis, *is* the practice of military recruitment akin to e-gov procedures such as filing one's taxes or applying for a passport? When the act of enlistment is analogous to placing your life in the hands of a government, military recruitment can in no way be considered similar to other bureaucratic procedures.

Furthermore, to sell a military career without concrete reference to the realities of combat is not just criminally negligent, it is criminal. The men and women who seek information regarding recruitment deserve more than a flamboyant and fanciful tale woven by a shrewd publicity team. They deserve a truthful and realistic depiction of both the benefits and risks of enlistment.

Finally, when recruitment is veiled in political conjecture, such as it is on each of the examined homepages, the potential recruit is forced to wade through propagandistic messages in order to find relevant content. The victim, in this case, is no longer limited to just an awestruck potential recruit, but also extends to the democratic principles of the state. As is stated by Noam Chomsky (1989), "citizens of the democratic societies should undertake a course of

[243] According to Nielsen and Tahir (2002: 23), the most important elements of a webpage should not only be located above-the-fold, but should also exploit the website user's 'F' shaped reading pattern (Nielsen: 17 April 2006). This pattern, evidenced by an extensive eye-tracking study, signifies that website users will first scan the material found across the upper part of the screen, then will acknowledge the horizontal content beneath the uppermost area, and will finally vertically allow his/her eyes to sweep vertically along the left side of the screen.

intellectual self defense to protect themselves from manipulation and control, and to lay the basis for meaningful democracy."

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