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The battle for hearts and minds: the media relations of the antiwar movement in the UK

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**The Battle for Hearts and Minds:
The Media Relations of the Antiwar Movement in the UK**

by

Ian Taylor

A Doctoral Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the relations between the local base of the anti-Iraq War movement and the local press in the UK. It is, as such, a study of the interactions between local newswriters and local activists, as well as a Content Analysis study of how the Iraq crisis, and particularly opposition to military action, was reported on in the pages of the local press. Key questions to be addressed include how local journalists assessed the legitimacy of the antiwar movement; how, and the reasons why, opponents of the war sought local press coverage, and with what consequences (if any) their interactions with the media may have had for the movement; and how the local press handled the almost uniquely controversial nature of the Iraq crisis in its reporting.

Most previous research on the Iraq crisis has focused on the national media – local media has hitherto been absent from the research agenda. Likewise, the majority of research on social movements has usually focused on the national leaderships of those movements – again the local dimension of social movements has rarely been studied. In these ways it is hoped that the study makes a unique contribution to research into both the reporting of the Iraq crisis, and to the study of the interactions between social movements and the media.

Keywords:

Iraq War, Antiwar movement, Local news, Social Movements, Media relations.

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Part I: The Scope of this Study

Chapter 1: Introduction:

The case for researching the media relations of the antiwar movement

The subtitle of this thesis – the media relations of the antiwar movement – contains the keywords and phrases outlining what, in many ways, this study is about. The antiwar movement in question is the contemporary antiwar movement in the UK, and this study in particular focuses on its campaign against the recent war on Iraq, as initially the movement tried to prevent the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and then campaigned to end the occupation once the invasion had been launched. More specifically, this is a study of how the locally based antiwar groups that could be found the length and breadth of the country at the height of the crisis in 2003 (and which in diminished numbers can still be found) – engaged with their local press, and how they were reported on by the local press in their respective areas. This is then, a matter of studying both the media relations and the coverage the local groups received.

With respect to media relations, the key questions are:

- What reasons did the locally based antiwar groups have for engaging with the local press? That is, what purposes did they believe that media coverage could serve for them?
- How did activists assess the coverage that they received?
- How far, if at all, did activists' assessments and prior perceptions of the local media influence the ways in which they engaged with the local media?
- And, for those groups that took dealing with the media seriously enough to incorporate it into their campaigning such that it became an integral part of their activism, how did engaging with the media relate to the rest of their campaigning over the Iraq crisis?

As for media coverage itself, the key questions addressed in this study are:

- How were local antiwar activities reported on in the local press?
- In what ways could press coverage of their activities actually be said to be of service to the groups?
- How were antiwar activists themselves represented?
- In what ways, if any, were they able to contribute to the debates surrounding the controversy over the war?
- And, what patterns of association and variation could be found within the coverage?

- I.e. were there any significant differences between the papers in the sample?
- Were different types of activity (e.g. protests, public meetings, etc.) reported on in different ways?
- And did the reporting of the movement and its activities change as the Iraq crisis rolled through its successive stages?

This study is an important one because it plugs a major gap in the literature on the Iraq War and the media. In the six years since the invasion of Iraq there have been numerous studies of the processes and structures that the British government put in place to manage the reporting of the conflict and coordinate their efforts with the American administration alongside, and often intertwined with, studies of the rhetoric and the claims made to promote the conflict (Brown 2003; Lewis et al 2006; Miller 2004; Robinson et al 2008; Taylor 2003; Tumber and Palmer 2004: Ch.2). There is also already a sizeable body of research outlining the British media's reporting of the conflict (Goddard et al 2008; Lewis and Brookes 2004a; 2004b; Lewis et al 2006; Richardson 2007; Tumber and Palmer 2004), the reporting of the crisis in the American media (Bennett et al 2007; Pfau et al 2004), and a number of cross-national comparative studies (Aday et al 2005; Dimitrova and Strömbäck 2008; Lehmann 2005; Ravi 2005). But this is the first study to have examined how the local media in mainland Britain reported on the Iraq crisis.¹ This absence of locally orientated research is a significant lacuna in the canon of Iraq crisis reporting studies because, as I shall argue later on in the thesis, there are important differences between the ways that the national press reported on the Iraq crisis and the ways the local press did.

Furthermore, for all the volumes of research that have been published on the reporting of the Iraq crisis and official news management during it, there has been far less research on matters relating to the media and the antiwar movement. This is a significant oversight given that military action against Iraq was, for reasons that will also be outlined later on in this study, not only highly controversial but it also spawned an active and very sizable antiwar movement, which I believe made a significant contribution to the 'story' of the Iraq crisis and the nature of the discourses surrounding it. Moreover such research as there has been, has generally focused either on representations of the antiwar movement in press coverage (Murray et al 2008; Peng 2008; Such et al 2005²), or the movement's uses of the new media of Computer Mediated Communication, (e.g. Anstead and Chadwick 2006; Gillan 2008; Gillan et al 2008³), but not on the matter of how, and the reasons why, opponents of the war actually engaged with the *mass* media.

In seeking to rectify this oversight, it has been important not to fall into the trap of supposing that the media relations' strategies of the local groups could, in and of themselves, explain the nature of the press coverage the local groups received, because there are a whole raft of factors that bear down on news production processes to shape the contours and character of news content. But, questions may still be asked as to whether the strategies that the antiwar groups adopted influenced, in any significant way, the news coverage of their activities in the pages of the local press, and even whether the opponents of the war changed the way that the local press reported on the Iraq crisis. Additionally, the significance of linking research on media relations with content analysis research is that it allows us to identify the continuities and disconnections between what the local antiwar groups may have hoped to get out of local press coverage and the nature of the coverage they actually received.

On a more theoretical and generalisable level, this work can also be seen as complimenting the growing body of research on the sociology of the media relations of the non-official 'challenger' sources, of which the Trade Unions, Environmental Pressure groups, and Social Movements in general would be prime examples. Recent research that has examined the ways in which these kinds of 'challenger' sources have engaged with the media, has often found evidence that they have become increasingly media literate over the past two decades or so, especially when compared to the way those sources handled the media in the 1960s and '70s (Anderson 1997: 207; Cottle 2008: 864; Davis 2000; Deacon 2003; Manning 1996; 2001).⁴ Part of the research agenda for this project has involved examining the media literacy of the local antiwar groups. Additionally though, over the course of the last few decades, research investigating the interactions between social movements and the media, (rather like research into the relationships between pressure groups and the media), has often argued that an engagement with the media has the potential to change the priorities, the behaviour, the image, and even the socio-political composition of social movements (and pressure groups) (Blumler 1989; Gitlin 1980).⁵ Hence one of the key questions for this research, is whether this principle applies in the case of the local dimension of the contemporary antiwar movement in the UK?

However, if research into the media relations of the antiwar movement is valuable because it redresses an important oversight in research on the wider Iraq crisis and also because it makes connections with the literature on the interactions between non-official news sources and the media, questions still remain as to why this research has been pitched at the local level, especially given the international nature of the crisis. There are two broad explanatory strands that answer

that point: one concerning the nature of the antiwar movement, the other relating to the state of the local media.

The focus on local groups

In common with most radical campaigning organisations, the antiwar movement has been keen to highlight its grassroots base. The Stop the War Coalition (the largest antiwar organisation in the UK) attaches considerable importance to its local base, as is evident from the way its Steering Committee is structured as to ensure representation from each of the English regions, and from the way that, at the time of writing (July 2009), its website (www.stopwar.org.uk) currently lists 109 locally based antiwar groups. More importantly, as I shall argue later on, the antiwar movement was dependent on the locally based groups to the extent that the movement would not have secured the profile that it did, or been as active as it was, without its local base. So one of the reasons why this study has been pitched at the local level is in recognition of the significance of the local groups to the movement as a whole.

The focus on the local press

After the invasion of Iraq, one commentator who was sympathetic to the antiwar movement, remarked that the local media may well have been more responsive to the antiwar movement than the national media were, and further that the more positive nature of local press coverage had helped the 'Stop the War Coalition sink deep roots' (Crouch 2004: 274). Crouch's claims about the potential responsiveness of local press vis-à-vis that of the national press are by no means implausible, and receive some measure of corroboration from earlier research into the local media's handling of a number of controversial issues.

For instance, Deacon and Golding's (1994) study of the media, political communication, and the poll tax controversy, found that the local press's reporting on the issue was marked by a different and wider thematic agenda – one that focused less on how the tax might damage the Conservative Party's electoral prospects, and more on the question of the tax's (un)fairness, its impact on local services, and the issue of the redistribution of wealth – than could be found in the national media. The local press were also found to have 'accessed a greater diversity of news sources' than the national media did (Ibid.: 142). In addition, the anti-poll tax groups and protesters typically received more sympathetic and indulgent treatment from the local media than in the national media (Ibid.: 145).

In a comparable way, Anderson's (1997) study of how environmental pressure groups interact with the media found that they 'tend to enjoy qualitatively greater access to local media' than what they do with national press and broadcasting (1997: 132).⁶ And, adding weight to the argument that local newspapers are more pluralistic than their national counterparts, is research that has focused on local press coverage of general elections in the UK. This research

suggests that local newspapers are notably less partisan in their election coverage than their national newspaper counterparts, they explore a wider electoral agenda, [and] provide readers with detailed information about candidates and issues. (Franklin 2004: 155).

Such a conclusion lends weight to Franklin and Murphy's (1991) larger argument that the local press is, in general and for all its faults, open to a wider range of concerns and sources than national newspapers are.

So beyond the previously mentioned need to rectify the neglect of the local media in studies of the reporting of the Iraq crisis, previous research would suggest that there is the very real possibility that the local press reported on the antiwar movement differently from the national press. This is part of the reason why this study is focused on the local media.

Additionally though, the focus on the local press is also the logical extension of studying local antiwar groups. My own empirical research has found, (perhaps predictably), that whenever the local groups sought media coverage they usually targeted local media, and also that most local groups usually received their greatest amount of coverage from the local media, particularly the local press. So as a result of researching the local media's coverage of the Iraq crisis alongside the media relations' strategies of the local antiwar groups, the study aspires to draw out and explore any possible connections between the two.⁷

The structure of this study

Part I of this thesis is made up of Chapters 1 through to 4. The concern here will be to outline the theoretical paradigms of the study and the key empirical questions they provoke.

Aspects of this study, particularly the content analysis and the proposed schema for understanding the controversy over the Iraq crisis, draw heavily on the tradition of frame analysis research. Chapter 2 aims to justify this approach by explaining why it is appropriate for this study. Then,

for reasons that are spelt out in the chapter, it proceeds to discuss the general nature of source-media relations arguing that questions of source access to the media, the representation of sources, the legitimacy they are accorded by the media, and the contributions they are able to make to any debates, are all linked together. There is however, nothing permanently fixed about the hierarchies between sources. Elite sources, have on occasions seen their access to the media, favourable representations, legitimacy, and contributions to debates decline, while non-elite sources have on occasions seen their stock rise.

Chapter 3 continues with an exploration of this theme by narrowing down the focus of enquiry to examine past research on the interactions between social movements and the media. The key questions addressed here concern the reasons why social movements should wish to attract media coverage; how social movements and their activities have been reported on by the media; what the consequences for social movements have been whenever they have engaged with the media; and the dilemmas that the presence of the media presents for social movements. These questions, along with more detailed follow-up questions, are the ones that inform much of the research agenda that is explored in Part II of this study.

Chapter 4 returns to frame analysis using the approach to explore the multidimensional controversy that flared up over the Iraq crisis. The chapter also examines the different schools of thought of the protagonists in the 'Iraq debate', and in the process of doing so establishes a conceptual framework that moves beyond a simplistic for-or-against way of understanding the controversy over the Iraq crisis. This chapter will conclude Part I of the thesis.

If Chapters 2 and 3 establish that for media discourses to become more open depends on elite division, media division (specifically the matter of whether media outlets are divided on an issue), and the agency and acumen of challenger sources, Chapter 4 shows that both elite and media opinion were indeed divided over the decision to invade Iraq in 2003. The significance of this is that it meant that the foundations were in place by which challenger sources could, potentially, make a significant contribution to mediated debates. Part II of this thesis, which encompasses Chapters 5 through to 10, is devoted to an empirically based investigation into the agency and acumen of one of the most significant challenger sources in the debate over the Iraq crisis, namely the antiwar movement. The objective, in Part II, is to examine how successfully or otherwise the antiwar movement exploited these conditions so as to make their case against military action.

In Chapter 5, I outline the methods and methodological procedures that I used to gather the empirical research. The main methods were survey research, semi-structured interviews and content analysis.

Chapter 6 is a study of the sociological and ideological compositions of the different kinds of locally based antiwar groups that could be found at around the time of the invasion of Iraq (and which still can be found in diminished numbers). It is a necessary precursor to Chapter 7, which examines the media relations' strategies of the local antiwar groups and particularly the way they engaged with the local press in their respective areas, because those media relations' strategies and the messages they articulated were rooted in the sociological and ideological compromises that sustained the groups. Indeed Chapter 7 argues that the need to sustain the groups has a greater influence over their activities than communicating through the media does. The findings from both chapters were discovered through a combination of survey and interview research.

Chapter 8 examines the perspectives of local news workers. Specifically it enquires into how they set about reporting on both the crisis itself and the manifestation of opposition to military action within their local areas. Based on interview testimony, the chapter reveals how journalists' perspectives were rooted in their occupational values and a collective sense of what local news stories should be about irrespective of their personal views on the Iraq crisis. Yet for all the seeming impartiality of their approach to reporting, it was evident that journalists made judgements about the legitimacy of different sections of the movement.

Chapters 9 and 10 pick up on this theme to see how the crisis and the controversy it provoked were reported on in the local press. Both chapters are based on content analysis research. Chapter 9's general overview of these matters absolves the local press of charges of pro-war 'bias' in the sense that it shows how, in their editorials and reporting, most local papers gave voice to both sides of the argument – in fact, if anything, they tended to lean in the antiwar direction. However, the chapter also shows that the local press fell a long way short of providing a comprehensive account of the crisis and the different positions in the debate it provoked, since many of the key issues in the crisis remained unexplored in both the editorial commentary and the news reporting of the local press.

Chapter 10 concentrates on the contribution that one particular set of actors made to the debates on the Iraq crisis – namely the antiwar movement. Of key concern are the ways in which the antiwar movement was represented in local press news reports – did the reporting of its activities conform to the delegitimising portrayals of protest activity that earlier research discovered (research that is outlined in Chapter 3), or did the local press reporting of antiwar protests break from those expectations? The chapter also examines how those local press representations of the antiwar movement enabled and constrained its capacity to promote its own preferred set of framings about the crisis.

The final two chapters are, respectively, a summary of the empirical findings from all of Part II of this study, and a concluding chapter that seeks to relate the empirical findings to the more theoretical pitch of the discussion in Part I. Of particular interest in the final chapter, is the question of whether or not the ways in which the locally based antiwar groups engaged with the local media in their vicinities had any significant impact on the priorities, activities, identities and composition of those groups.

End Notes

¹ Research has, however, been conducted by Rolston and McLaughlin (2004) into the reporting of the crisis in the Northern Irish press. It may well be however, that the conclusions they reached do not apply in the case of the English local press, because of the way that the newspaper market in the province tends to be divided along sectarian lines, and because the different communities had markedly different perspectives on the crisis. *The Belfast Telegraph*, which is mainly read by the province's Protestant community, tended to reproduce the staples of pro-war claims making and argumentation and was largely negative in its coverage of protests against the war. By contrast *The Irish Times*, whose readership tends to come from the Catholic communities, was more sceptical about the case for war, and generally more sympathetic to the antiwar protests. However, for reasons that I shall explain in Chapter 8, the local press in the rest of Britain usually strives to avoid partisanship, meaning that the conclusions reached in Rolston and McLaughlin's study are unlikely to apply in the case of the provincial press reporting throughout the rest of the United Kingdom.

² Such et al (2005) examine the national press treatment of a particular type of protest that took place on the eve of the invasion of Iraq, namely the protests involving school children, rather than the reporting of protests by the antiwar movement as a whole, which is what Murray et al's research focuses on. Peng's (2008) research is a comparative study of the reporting of antiwar protests in America, Britain and China.

³ I am also aware of another PhD project that also examines the antiwar movement's uses of the new media.

⁴ Reading Gitlin's (1980) study of how opponents of the Vietnam War approached their dealings with the media, one is often struck by how naïve their attitudes towards the media were.

⁵ Gitlin's (1980) study is of how a particular social movement organisation was transformed through its engagement with the media. Blumler (1989) offers a general commentary on the impact of the pursuit of media coverage on pressure groups.

⁶ Although Anderson's (1997) research also found that the newsworthiness of any given environmental story was also dependent on the nature of the environmental story, and specifically whether it was a local or a national/international concern.

⁷ Early on in the research, a decision was made to study the newspaper rather than radio reporting of, and commentary on, the crisis, simply because newspaper archives are generally more accessible.

Chapter 2: Frame Analysis and the ‘Dual Role’ of the Media

This chapter lays out the theoretical foundations for understanding the relations between the news media and media sources, particularly non-official news sources of which the antiwar movement would be one example. Drawing on theories of frame analysis, Hall et al’s (1978) concept of ‘primary definition’, and a critique of the ‘primary definition’ concept, this chapter outlines the circumstances under which media discourse opens up the prospect of non-official news sources having the potential to make a meaningful contribution to public debate. Questions about whether or not the locally based antiwar groups could be said to have realised that potential will not be addressed until the second half of this thesis.

The starting point for an analysis of the significance of the media within this research is the observation that the media fulfil a dual role in society:

- The media frame issues for public attention;
- The media are also the most important and influential ‘site’ in our society ‘on which various social groups, institutions, and ideologies struggle over the definition and construction of social reality’ (Gurevitch and Levy 1985: 19).

The unifying idea that cuts across both functions is the idea of ‘framing’. Given the complexity of theories of frame analysis, and given that there is more to this idea of the ‘dual role’ of the media than meets the eye, it is best to begin by discussing each separately, before orientating the discussion to consider the complexities of source-media interactions.

Framing

Framing has been described as a ‘fractured’ paradigm (Entman 1993). To date there is no single unified definition of frames or framing capable of commanding universal assent to have emerged from within this school of thought. Instead we find that the definitions of the concept are littered with a number of recurrent words, phrases and ideas: ‘Emphasis’, ‘selection’, ‘slant’, ‘omission’, ‘organising principles’, ‘organising ideas’, a way of ‘making sense’ of new information, and of ‘structuring meaning’, with researchers keen to highlight the ‘persistence over time’ of the ideas underpinning frames (see Callaghan and Schell 2001: 185; Deacon et al 2007; Entman 1993: 52;

Gamson and Modigliani 1989: 3; Gitlin 1980: 6-7; Reese 2003: 11). Frame analysis then, is not a matter of identifying the mere presence of certain topics within any given text in the manner of content analysis. Rather, as a method, frame analysis seeks to identify the 'central organising idea' (Gamson and Modigliani 1989: 3) that structures the meaning of any given text, such as a news report. Drawing on some of the key words and phrases from other people's definitions of framing mentioned above, and staking no claims to originality, the expanded definition of 'a frame' that I propose for the purposes of this study is:

A frame is a central organising idea that gives meaning and context to a particular issue by providing it with definitional shape, being persistent over time, and by being recognised and understood by society at large.

This definition trades on an analytical distinction between frames and issues, since it proposes that frames make sense of issues. It follows from this definition that issues can (usually) be framed in a number of different ways (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, a point also made by theories of ideology [see Hall 1982]). This is why the protagonists in any public political debate are at least as likely to be arguing over which frames can most appropriately be used to make sense of any given controversy as they are to be contesting the fine points of detail about policy proposals and outcomes. In other words, when 'various social groups, institutions, and ideologies struggle over the definition and construction of social reality' (Gurevitch and Levy 1985: 19), it means that those sources are 'compelled to compete' with other advocates (and also with journalists) over the shape and substance of news reporting (Entman 1993: 55). Furthermore, Entman argues that it is precisely because the advocates of any particular frame are 'compelled to compete' with other advocates, that the triumph of whichever frame comes to structure news reporting can be said to represent the 'imprint of power' (Ibid.: 55). This is not necessarily meant to imply that those in established positions always win out over non-official sources to ensure that all news reports are structured in ways that the powerful would prefer, but rather in the teleological sense that the triumph of framing enhances at source's influence over the news discourse when addressing the issue in question.

The great strength of adopting a framing approach is that it should emphasise contestation between ideas. Yet an additional implication of this stress upon contestation is that it means that researchers must spell out the competing frames that surround whichever controversy is under investigation. For this reason Chapter 4 is dedicated to outlining the frames underpinning the

main arguments over the Iraq War, and then to showing how the different schools of thought simultaneously made use of those frames and were constructed out of them.

Unanswered questions

In common with the lack of an agreed upon definition of framing, there are many other questions about frame analysis over which a consensus has yet to be reached among academics. Questions remain about whether frames ultimately reside in the collective consciousness without our awareness of principles upholding them as Goffman (1974) is inclined to argue; whether they are best seen as journalistic devices as suggested by Gitlin (1980), Wolfsfeld (1997), and Reese (2003); or whether frames are most appropriately understood as purposely manufactured by what may broadly be defined as ‘political players’ to promote a particular political agenda (Callaghan and Schell 2001: 185). Nor has this study been written with the intention of making any contribution towards the resolution of those debates. Frames may also be useful to journalists and ‘political players’ alike, but the extent to which either set of agents are conscious of manufacturing frames – if indeed that can be distinguished from taping into them – is not a matter about which a priori generalisations should be made. Ultimately it is best if definitions of framing avoid making assumptions about their origins or the levels of intent behind them.

It is ought not to go unnoticed however, that the two ideas that make up the ‘dual role’ of the media are in tension with each other. The next section considers this matter and what it says about significance of the media in contemporary society.

The ‘dual role’ of the media

In Athenian democracy, or so legend has it, politicians would present their competing pitches to the (middle class male) citizens of Athens as they assembled in the agora. Given that the modern mass media also facilitate struggles between competing frames – which is to say that the media functions as a “‘site’ ‘on which various social groups, institutions, and ideologies struggle over the definition and construction of social reality’” (Gurevitch and Levy 1985: 19) – it may be tempting to assert that the modern mass media serve an equivalent function as the Athenian agora. However, because the challenge for the media in doing so ideally requires impartial adjudication it clashes with the other role of the media, i.e. that they should ‘frame issues for public attention’ (Ibid.). The act of framing issues for public attention is not simply a matter of highlighting issues such that they are placed on the public agenda (agenda setting), it also means that issues are presented in particular ways with the result that some kind of ‘meaning’, ‘context’

and 'definitional shape' is attached to those issues. This doesn't necessarily mean that the media will pursue partisan agendas in the party political sense. Some media outlets do of course, particularly the national newspapers in the UK that are either loosely or closely aligned to party politics (Curran and Seaton 1997; Seymour-Ure 1974; 1996: 214-224), but the local press – the focus of this study after all – tend to be far less partisan in the party political sense, as studies of the ways that the local press have reported on general elections have shown (Franklin and Parry 1998: 213). Instead, a more universally applicable statement about framing and the mainstream news media would start with an acknowledgement that although the news media are by no means exclusively focused on the activities and viewpoints of the powerful they are still generally orientated towards them. For there does seem to have been a consensus among 'virtually all studies of news production ... be they liberal ... [references cited] or radical ... [references cited] that news has been consistently dominated by sources from government and established institutions' (Goldsmiths Media Group 2000: 35; see also Schlesinger 1990: 70; Seymour-Ure 1987). Furthermore, when it comes to the reporting of conflicts involving British and/or American forces, the dominance of official sources from government and the military, has always been particularly apparent. This much is evident from research into the reporting of successive conflicts, including the Vietnam War (Hallin 1986; Herman and Chomsky 1988; Williams 1993), the Falklands/Malvinas conflict (Glasgow Media Group 1985; Harris 1983), America's war against Nicaragua in the 1980s (Bennett 1990; Herman and Chomsky 1988), the Gulf War (Bennett and Paletz 1994; Keeble 1997; Kellner 1992; MacArthur 1993; Taylor 1998), Kosovo (Knightley 2000), and the recent Iraq War (Dimitrova and Strömbäck 2008; Goddard et al 2008; Lewis and Brookes 2004a; Lewis et al 2006; Tumber and Palmer 2004).

The finding that 'government and establishment institutions' dominate media discourse should certainly not be taken to imply that there is some of kind of conspiracy between the 'government and establishment institutions' and the media – an idea that has virtually no credibility among media scholars (O'Sullivan et al 1994: 61). Nor does it mean that the media are necessarily inclined to give elite sources 'an easy ride' by rarely ever seriously questioning the claims they make about issues and events, although this matter is a legitimate investigation. Rather the 'dominance' of elite sources means that while the media can still be expected to serve as a 'site' for the 'struggle over the definition and construction of social reality', the limited range of 'social groups, institutions, and ideologies' (Gurevitch and Levy 1985: 19) locked in this contestation can be expected to set the parameters for subsequent discussions such that they are bounded within elite understandings of social and political issues.

Four interconnected factors – perceptions of legitimacy, representation, source access and the contribution that sources are able to make to debates – distinguish elite sources from non-elites, and the significance of these and how they relate to each other will be considered in the next section. This is followed by discussion of the ‘primary definition’ model, as proposed by Hall et al (1978), since it is one of the most influential models to attempt to sketch out a series of connections between those four factors.

Perceptions of Legitimacy, Representation, Source Access and Contribution

Perceptions of legitimacy, representation, source access and the contribution that sources make to mediated debates are discussed together because they interact with and explain each other. The perceived legitimacy of elite sources is in many ways the most influential factor here, because their accredited legitimacy, along with the fact that they are taken to be representative of either the public at large or organised interest groups, justifies the high levels of access they are granted to the news media (Davis 2003: 34-35; Hall et al 1978: 58). Furthermore, the working routines of journalism are often structured to be receptive to incoming information from elite sources. This enhances the newsworthiness of elites and helps sustain their high levels of access to the media (Fishman 1980; Hall et al 1978: 53-54). To claim that political elites always receive favourable coverage would be to place oneself on shakier ground, not least of all because leading politicians have long since complained, with varying degrees of justification, about the ways they have been represented by the news media (see Jones 1995; Tracey 1977: Ch 10; Kirkup 2004; Wintour 2007¹). Although when the treatment of elite sources is compared to that of many non-elite sources a sound case can still be made for saying that leading politicians and representatives of establishment institutions are generally subject to a more favourable order of representation than say, protesters are.² But to merely be the subject of news reports (‘news presence’ in Deacon et al’s [2007: 123] terms), and represented in a relatively benign manner, is of little value to most sources unless it is linked to them having an influence over the news agenda. So the real significance of elite sources, I would argue, is that they have the power to set the news agenda and the ‘terms of the debate’ (Hall et al 1978) about the issues in the news. Non-elite sources rarely ever exert a comparable measure of influence.

The working hypothesis informing much of this study, then, is that as a generalisation, having regular access to the media combined with favourable representation (relative to non-elites), paves the way for elite sources being able to make a regular contribution to mediated debates,

thereby enhancing their influence on the political scene.³ By the same logic, the limited contribution that certain (usually non-official) sources make to mediated debates can be explained in terms of the rarity of those occasions when they receive regular access to the media in combination with the sometimes unfavourable nature of representations of them when they do appear. However, it is important to appreciate that an equation that *automatically* links elite sources with regular media access, favourable representation, and an influential contribution to debate is deeply flawed, since, as will be explored shortly, there have been occasions when elites have found their stock diminished in those terms. Furthermore, as shall be explored in the next chapter, there have also been occasions when non-official sources have broken free from their disadvantaged positions to secure regular media access, favourable representation and make an influential contribution to public debate. In other words, the hypothesis that has just been sketched out can only be said to represent general tendencies in relation to questions of legitimacy and all that flows from it, not a timeless and immutable set of principles that are beyond challenge.

Primary Definition

One influential study that attempted to situate the interconnections between the four factors discussed above in the context of the workings of the media, was based on an inquiry into the politics of law and order in 1970s Britain with particular reference to the ‘mugging’ moral panic that gripped the UK in the early years of that decade. The study, by Stuart Hall and his colleagues (*Policing the Crisis*, 1978) is not without its flaws and some of these shall be considered shortly, but it also makes a number of insightful observations about the connections between access, legitimacy, representation and contribution, and for this reason is worth exploring in more detail. The explanations that Hall et al propose to explain the hierarchies they identify will also be discussed later on in this chapter.

Hall et al’s analysis attempts to identify and theorise the causal and existential connections between the influence of certain sources and the dominance of certain framings on particular issues. Their research found that in the case of law and order issues in the 1970s, the dominant sources were the police, politicians, and the judiciary, while at the same time an authoritarian discourse prevailed in news reporting, editorial commentary and letters to the editor. Believing that this was more than a coincidence and that the police, politicians and judiciary had a strong bearing on the resulting media discourse, Hall et al labelled those sources ‘primary definers’ to distinguish the greater degree of influence they had when compared to other sources. It is

important to appreciate that although the ‘primary definers’ were often found to have had higher levels of access to the media than most other relevant sources, such as advocates for civil liberties and campaigners for penal reform, it was their influence in establishing the initial definitions of the issues in question and for setting the limits ‘for all subsequent discussion by *framing what the problem is*’ (1978: 59 original emphasis) that lay at the heart of ideas of ‘primary definition’. By speaking the language of ‘defining the terms of the debate’ and establishing the ‘definitions of the situation’, ‘primary definition’ is as much a verb as it is a noun, because not only does it place the concept of meaning at centre stage, it also recognises that meanings have to be actively generated – ‘the world has to be *made to mean*’, as Hall wrote elsewhere (Hall 1982: 67 original emphasis). It is with this recognition that meaning has to be actively generated, that the concept of ‘primary definition’ converges with certain strands of framing theory when definitions of framing ‘move beyond an emphasis on selection to capture a more active generation of meaning’ (Reese 2003: 10), which is something that my own definition of framing (above) also attempts to capture. What ‘primary definition’ adds to framing theory is an acknowledgement of the importance of power – something that framing theory has been accused of neglecting (Carragee and Roefs 2004). As with the concept of framing then, the essence of ‘primary definition’ is that the ‘primary definers’ exert considerable influence on the contours of news reporting and current affairs discussions. Thus it may be said that ‘primary definition’, like framing, represents the ‘imprint of power’.

Nor should the significance of establishing a set of understandings and defining the terms of the debate about issues when they first rise to public prominence be overlooked, because it is the initial interpretation that ‘commands the field’ in all subsequent treatment’ setting ‘the terms of reference within which all further coverage or debate takes place’ (Hall et al 1978: 58). This then, provides a cogent explanation for the long-standing finding from empirical research that the initial framings adopted in media discourses have the greatest influence on public opinion (Klapper 1960; Lang and Lang 1994) – a find that Hall had previously drawn on (Hall 1973 cited in Murdock 1981: 210).

Adamant that the hierarchies of influence that the ‘primary definition’ thesis identifies do not stem from any kind of conspiracy theory, Hall et al instead propose that the ‘routine *structures* of news production’ lead to a tendency ‘to *reproduce the definitions of the powerful*, without being, in a simple sense, in their pay’ (Hall et al 1978: 57 original emphasis). Hall et al acknowledge that challenger sources will be referenced from time to time, but their model outlines the conditionality of securing both regular access to the media and favourable representations from

them. Access is more frequently granted to those challenger sources that are powerful, represent a substantial proportion of the population or a significant vested interest (examples cited include the T.U.C. and the C.B.I.), and that have a 'degree of legitimacy within the system' (Ibid.: 64). Moving their discussion of politics beyond the terrain of law and order, they cite the case of the General Secretary of the T.U.C. as being an example of a relatively powerful and legitimate challenger source. There is though, more at stake here than the sociological question of access, because the contribution that any source can make to media depends on the way they are represented and, related to that, the politics of their arguments.⁴

Here again, Hall et al are alert to the connections between a source's arguments, the way they are represented, and the characteristics of the resulting discourse. This happens because, in effect, the media police the boundaries between legitimate complaint and unreasonable demands:

The General Secretary of the T.U.C. has an easier passage [through the media system] if he [or she] makes a 'reasonable' trade-union case ... if he is arguing and debating and negotiating within the rules rather than if he is defending unofficial strike action and so on. If they do not play within the rules of the game, counter-spokesmen [or women] run the risk of being defined out of the debate (because they have broken the rules of reasonable opposition) – labelled as 'extremist' or 'irrational'. (Hall et al 1978: 64).

In this way Hall et al propose that there is an evident thread running from the discourses that challenger sources utter through to the contribution that they are entitled to make to media debates via the way they are represented or 'labelled' by the media. For this reason then, the General Secretary of the T.U.C. would not quite qualify as being a 'primary definer' because he (or she) 'must respond *in terms* pre-scheduled by the primary definers and privileged definitions' (Ibid.: 64 original emphasis).

Other writers who have researched the interactions between challenger sources (social movements, pressure groups or trade unions) and the media have also commented on the dilemma this poses for the challenger sources. If challenger sources attempt to accommodate the mainstream media they must either 'respond *in terms* pre-scheduled by the primary definers and privileged definitions' (Hall et al 1978: 64 original emphasis) but in the process risk compromising the integrity and perhaps even the rationality of *their own* understandings and ideology, or, if they wish to preserve the complexity of their arguments, they might choose to 'remain outside the mainstream media' (Manning 2001: 200) but at the cost of seriously limiting

the size of the audience they could hope to reach. The ‘primary definer’ thesis then, as spelt out by Hall and his colleagues, makes for a relatively pessimistic account of source-media relations. Rather than identify a series of openings within the media system that challenger sources could exploit, the model leaves them with a series of dilemmas about how to handle the media.

A critique of the primary definition model

However, neither the concept of ‘primary definition’ itself nor Hall et al’s accounting for it have proven themselves to be above criticism. Indeed, the shortcomings and blind spots of the model are worth considering at some length precisely because a detailed exploration of them can reveal much about the media, sources and the interactions between them.

Probably the best-known critique of the ‘primary definition’ model came from Phillip Schlesinger in 1990. Before exploring Schlesinger’s criticisms in detail, it is important to understand that the general thrust of his critique, along with many other studies that would appear to have been influenced by it (see Cottle 2000: 436-437), is not to contradict Hall et al’s assertion that elite sources tend to exert a greater degree of influence over media discourses than non-elites – indeed Schlesinger explicitly declares himself reluctant to break with ‘theories of dominance’ (Schlesinger 1990: 63). Rather, Schlesinger’s critique invites us to be open to the idea that although elites still tend to dominate public discourses, the unspoken principles by which access to the media is granted and legitimacy supposedly conferred in Hall et al’s account are in fact less rigid than they suggest.

The question of evidence

Recent empirical research focused on any one of a number of controversies, be it criminal justice campaigning, environmentalism, or industrial disputes – research that has in some cases acknowledged the influence of Schlesinger’s critique – has often painted a more complicated and nuanced picture of the media’s reporting of those controversies than what the ‘primary definer’ model would lead us to believe. As Curran (1998) observes, whereas *Policing the Crisis* showed ‘how in the early 1970s the press responded to a closed loop of news sources – the police, judiciary, and politicians – who fostered a moral panic about muggers and promoted a repressive law and order agenda’, Schlesinger and Tumber’s (1994) study of the same subject area 16 years later showed

how law and order had become ... a highly contested terrain in which effective pressure groups with significant and other allies, gained access to the press (especially the broadsheets) and opened up a fusillade of criticism concerned with prison reform, police violence and miscarriages of justice. (Curran 1998: 98).

That this should have been so underscores one of Schlesinger's (1990) criticisms of the 'primary definer' model: specifically that the model is insufficiently flexible to allow for changed circumstances over time. Furthermore, the findings from a number of other studies of the reporting of controversial issues also tilt in the direction of a more pluralist interpretation of media output in contradistinction to what the implicitly predictive strands of the 'primary definer' model would suggest. The position I outline is not fully pluralist however; it is perhaps best described as a 'radical pluralist' position (Davis 2000: 175; Goldsmiths Media Group 2000: 30).

Hansen's (1993) content analysis study of the reporting on the activities and statements of the environmental pressure group Greenpeace, from 1987 to 1991 in *The Guardian* and *Today* newspapers, identified what from Greenpeace's perspective would presumably count as significant positives in the coverage. Greenpeace were 'remarkably successful in gaining media coverage' (Ibid.: 164). They were frequently quoted in news reports, usually portrayed in a positive light, and rarely ever subject to explicit criticism from either of the two newspapers. The research also found that Greenpeace had 'been successful in deflecting criticism away from itself as an organisation to keep such attention focused instead on the issues' they were campaigning on (Ibid.: 165). This, as we shall see in the next chapter, is something of a rarity among campaigning organisations, particularly those whose activities revolve around protest. Further, Hansen argues that Greenpeace had established a measure of legitimacy by cultivating a reputation for expertise through their 'alliance with science' – i.e. sponsoring research, commissioning opinion polls, and ensuring that their spokespersons were well informed about environmental science (Ibid.: 170).

But Hansen also notes that the coverage that Greenpeace got from 1987 to 1991 varied from issue to issue, and was dependent on their campaigning, which meant that Greenpeace was not considered 'an 'automatic' routine news forum' (Ibid.: 176). Hansen also observed a decline in the newsworthiness of the organisation in the early 1990s. Moreover, research into more recent controversies involving Greenpeace, notably their involvement in the campaign over the Brent Spar controversy,⁵ underscore the fragile nature of whatever legitimacy they may have previously acquired. Greenpeace was strongly criticised by sections of the media for making what turned out to be inaccurate claims in relation to that controversy (see Hansen 2000). This also led to strained

relations between the group and journalists for years afterwards (Manning 2001: 194-196). Furthermore, it is evident that for all the partial legitimacy that Greenpeace may have acquired in the 1980s, the organisation was still held in a lower standing than some of the other actors involved, notably Shell UK, by the way the media tended to overlook some of the equally dubious claims made by Shell throughout the Brent Spar saga (Ibid.: 195).

The case of press treatment of environmental pressure groups has not been wholly dissimilar to the pattern and salient features of the British media's reporting of trade union activity over the past two decades. Research investigating the reporting of the controversial mining pit closures of 1992, the 1989-1990 ambulance dispute, and the unions' campaign against plans for the partial privatisation of the Post Office in 1994, found that the trade unions received generally positive coverage – subject to qualifications that shall be considered shortly (see Negrine 1996 on the pit closures; Manning 1996 on the ambulance dispute; and Davis 2000 on the campaign over the Post Office).

Before considering some of these case studies, it is important to stress that the findings from this research, which for convenience shall be labelled the 'second wave' of trade union and media research, reached a different set of conclusions from research into this area conducted from the mid 1970s to the mid-1980s – the 'first wave' of trade union and media research, of which the Glasgow Media Group's (1976) study of industrial action is probably the best known example. The findings from the 'second wave' however, do not invalidate the findings from the 'first wave' of this research genre. Rather, the findings of the 'second wave' of the research stem from certain changes that swept through the trade union movement after the 1984-85 coal dispute: namely a mood of 'new realism' within trade unions about what their stated policy objectives should be, along with a greater prioritisation of public relations and news management (Davis 2000; Deacon 2003; Manning 1996). That this should be so further reinforces the sagacity of Schlesinger's previously mentioned comments about the inability of the 'primary definer' model to be able to deal with historical change.

Manning's (1996) study of the ambulance dispute⁶ found that even though the unions involved found it difficult to get detailed arguments into news reports, they were still successful in using the coverage they received to promote their own 'preferred interpretative agendas' in relation to the dispute (Ibid.: 311). But, as the ambulance dispute dragged on into 1990 (the strike lasted a total of 9 months), the reporting became less favourable. This was because the unions ran out of

fresh news angles around which to structure news reports with the result that they lost control of the flow of information about their activities, combined with a growing preparedness to consider strike action among rank and file members. In consequence, as the dispute drew close to its conclusion, reporting began to invoke themes of union militancy by focusing on whether the dispute was likely to turn to strike action, and the potential consequences of that including the prospect of endangering the public. By and large though, the union managed to avoid negative coverage by disavowing radicalism and militancy (Ibid.).

Similarly, Davis's (2000) study of the Union of Communication Workers' campaign against UK Government proposals for the partial privatisation of the Post Office⁷ suggests a correlation between political moderation and favourable coverage. 'Union militancy' was disavowed throughout the campaign (Ibid.: 185); while overall press 'coverage was significantly more favourable to the unions and critical' of the government (Ibid.: 178). Strengthening the idea of there being a connection between the nature of the political activism undertaken and the kind of reporting it generates is O'Neill's (2007) content analysis study of national press reporting of the 2002-2003 fire-fighters strike.⁸ O'Neill found that large sections of the press were highly critical of the decision to strike and of the fire-fighters' claim for the 40 percent pay rise, and she argues that the critical coverage largely arose because the media were unprepared to tolerate strike action. Thus it would appear that the mainstream media draw sharp distinctions between different modes of activism and that their attitudes are reflected in their reporting. These ideas are discussed at greater length in the next chapter and then explored in relation to the antiwar movement in Part II of this thesis.

Davis's (2000) research also found that the Union of Communication Workers was careful to frame its arguments against partial privatisation around issues of providing a decent public service for all communities in the country irrespective of the profitability of rural branches, rather than issues like job losses because they feared the job losses issue was too reminiscent of traditional unionism. Those involved in the campaign were also keen to highlight 'positive alternatives to privatisation' so as to head off accusations of union intransigence (Ibid.: 185). It is significant that the unions in this case should have attempted to play down the traditional trade unions concerns (such as job losses) in their arguments, because this has not been the only 'left-wing' campaign in recent times to have distanced itself from traditional 'left-wing' concerns. The campaign to preserve the Greater London Council (GLC) in the mid-1980s revolved around the argument that the abolition of the GLC undermined local democracy. Significantly though, this

line of argument was adopted after advice from a consultancy firm and in place of the GLC councillors' preference for a campaign that revolved around their belief that they were best placed to deliver local services (Curran et al 2005 Ch.3).

In many ways though, the conclusions from these empirical studies could be interpreted as supporting the arguments set forth by Hall et al (1978). It may be recalled that just as Hall et al speculate that the 'General Secretary of the T.U.C. has an easier passage if he makes a 'reasonable' trade-union case ...' (Ibid.: 64), so too the more recent empirical studies discussed above, particularly Davis's (2000) study of the Post Office campaign, show that in the favourably reported campaigns the 'ideological terrain' upon which the unions sought to build their arguments was not the terrain of traditional trade unionism; rather they had ceded the 'ideological terrain' over which the issues were fought. But there is an important difference of interpretation of between Hall et al and the studies of Hansen, Manning and Davis. Whereas Hall et al see the unspoken rules of favourable coverage as presenting challenger groups with a series of impossible dilemmas, the authors of the later studies would appear to see the contradictions in the media system, the differences in political leaning between different media outlets, and (as shall be considered very shortly) divisions among political elites, as opening up a series of strategic and framing options for challenger groups from which they may be able to advance a progressive agenda, or at least preserve certain pockets of public life from neo-liberalism. Although how far challenger groups regard this as a dilemma will, to a large extent, depend on the radicalism of their politics.

Groups whose members appear to come from the elite, whose goals are more reformist than revolutionary, and whose actions fall into what the news media regard as reasonable dissent, will find it much easier to promote their frames to the media than those who violate these norms. (Wolfsfeld 1997: 47).

The evidence presented so far suggests that as a 'site' 'on which various social groups, institutions, and ideologies struggle over the definition and construction of social reality' (Gurevitch and Levy 1985: 19) the media are actually slightly more open than is implied in the thesis laid out by Hall and his colleagues. However, the main thrust of Schlesinger's critique against the conceptualisation of the role of the media that is laid out in *Policing the Crisis*, is that the thinking underpinning the 'primary definer' model, (like that of a number of other studies of the media he discusses in the paper), fails to capture the complexity of the processes and conditionality by which '*definitional advantage*' is secured (Schlesinger 1990: 76 original

emphasis). In the discussion that follows I shall concentrate on four aspects of Schlesinger's reasoning here that are of greatest relevance to this study:

- The question of elite division;
- The question of source agency;
- The question of distinguishing 'primary definers' from other sources;
- The question of the origins of frames.⁹

The question of elite division

The extent to which 'government and establishment institutions' are unified or divided has long been recognised by media scholars to be an influential factor in shaping media discourses. It forms, for instance, the basis of Bennett's (1990) 'indexing hypothesis':

Mass media news professionals, from the boardroom to the beat, tend to "index" the range of voices and viewpoints in both news and editorials according to the range of views expressed in mainstream government debate about a given topic. (Bennett 1990: 106).

Bennett's hypothesis is not so rigid as to suppose that leading politicians are the only ones who participate in mediated debates, since non-official news sources will, on occasions, be permitted to express their views through the news media. But, according to Bennett, like Hall et al (1978) before him, non-official sources can only expect to be able to do so on a semi-regular basis when their views chime within the bounds of elite controversy (Bennett 1990: 106).¹⁰ Like the 'primary definer' thesis then, the 'indexing hypothesis' grants government and establishment sources considerable power in framing media discourse.

A further consequence of the 'indexing hypothesis' however, is that when elite opinion is divided elites tend to lose control of the definition of the situation. Schlesinger (1990) argues that this failure to consider the significance of strongly held differences of opinion among political elites is one of the main shortcomings in Hall et al's 'primary definition' thesis. Can we speak of 'primary definition' when elite opinion is divided? Schlesinger asks.

The impact that divisions among political elites can have on the contours of media coverage has been well documented in empirical research, particularly when those divisions reside *within* major political parties. Both Deacon and Golding's (1994) study of the British media's reporting

of the Poll Tax controversy, and Hallin's (1986) study of American media's coverage of the Vietnam War, show that elite divisions contributed to unfavourable coverage, and that this in turn fatally undermined those policies.¹¹ The same is true of the campaign to prevent the partial privatisation of the Post Office. To a significant degree, the proposals received unfavourable media coverage because the ruling Conservative Party was divided on the matter, with these divisions often becoming the focus of news stories about the issue (Davis 2000: 180; Deacon 2003: 103).

However, without subscribing to naïve ideas about the press simply reflecting public opinion, a strong case can be made for saying that, for commercial reasons, media outlets still need to be seen to be responsive to the public mood – at least to some extent (Curran 1998). Thus it would be inadequate to suppose that elite consensus/division is the only external factor shaping the contours of the news. Davis (2000: 180-181) argues that the unpopularity of the Major Government fuelled the negative coverage that their proposals for the Post Office attracted.¹² So within the context of a divided and unpopular ruling party, such influence as the Union of Communication Workers had in relation to Post Office campaign then, worked through orchestrating the campaign against partial privatisation, commissioning opinion polls, and encouraging 'third parties' (pressure groups, charities, and even a free-market think-tank) to speak on their behalf. While this strategy undoubtedly made a difference, it was only able to do so because their campaign, in effect, exploited the unpopularity of the Government and the space opened up by divisions within Conservative ranks on the issue (Davis 2000).

If the overall conclusion to be drawn from these studies is that elite division paves the way for a more open media discourse that can *potentially* give voice to a wider range of perspectives than would otherwise be the case, then these insights ought to be of self-evident relevance for this study given that elite opinion was bitterly divided over the Iraq crisis as shall be explored in Chapter 4.

The question of source agency

For the purposes of this research one of the most pertinent criticisms that Schlesinger levels against the 'primary definer' thesis is that it fails to give due consideration to the agency of sources as they engage with the media. It would not be accurate to say that Hall et al are completely blind to the agency of source organisations since they acknowledge it at one point

(1978: 57), but it is true that they fail to investigate this. As an alternative, Schlesinger proposes that researchers ought to think about media sources as

occupying fields in which *competition for access* to the media takes place, but in which material and symbolic resources are unequally distributed. But the most advantaged do not secure a primary definition in virtue of their positions alone. Rather, if they do so, it is because of successful *strategic action* in an imperfectly competitive field. (Schlesinger 1990: 77 original emphases).

The unavoidable inference from conceptualising the role of sources in this way, is to understand 'primary definition' not as a pre-determined outcome that can be solely explained in terms of political elites exerting some kind of gravitational pull on the news media, but an achievement resulting from effective news management.

Over the last two decades or so, there has been a substantial growth in the volume of literature documenting how the major political parties in Britain (and America) have gone to great lengths to market themselves and their policies to the electorate via the media, and how they have attempted to *proactively* manage the news media through a combination of means that can be subtle and imaginative (particularly in their use of language i.e. 'spin'), as well as aggressive and intimidating (Blumler 1990; Blumler and Gurevitch 1995; Deacon and Golding 1994; Franklin 2004; Gabor 2001; Jones 1995; Staney 2001; Swanson 1997; Wring 2004). However, if the media are automatically inclined to take an interest in leading politicians and official institutions, (which, as Schlesinger [1990: 81] is alert to, is not to say that the media will always believe what politicians have to say), and if, as Hall et al are alert to, news gathering routines are as a consequence organised to meet the requirement of reporting on elites (Hall et al 1978: 53-54; see also Fishman 1980), elite sources will adopt a different set of proactive strategies from non-elites sources. For elites, attracting the media's attention is not usually a problem; the challenge for their news management operations is to manage the nature of the coverage they receive, which includes being able to deflect the media's attention elsewhere when necessary (Deacon and Golding 1994: 13; Ericson et al 1989). But because non-official news sources are different in both regards – they are not automatically considered newsworthy by the media, and (as a result) journalists' news gathering routines rarely ever revolve around the need to report on the activities of non-official sources – it follows that they must develop a different set of strategies for dealing with the media. Questions about how one particular non-official source, the antiwar movement, engaged with the media and the strategies they employed are integral to this thesis alongside supplementary questions about what the consequences of engaging with the media were for the

antiwar movement. Since those questions are addressed in empirically orientated Part II of this thesis, and more is said about the conceptual nature of the proactive media relations' strategies of social movements in the next chapter, it would not be appropriate to say any more about the manifestation of those strategies for access at this stage.¹³

The question of distinguishing 'primary definers' from other sources

One of the foremost conundrums with the concept of 'primary definition' is how to distinguish 'primary definers' from other sources. We may accept for example, that within the British context, the Prime Minister of the day qualifies as being a primary definer in contrast to low-profile backbenchers who are only ever the subjects or main informants of news reports on rare occasions. But what about those in between including ambitious backbenchers aspiring to ministerial office, former ministers, or those who hold important positions on select committees?¹⁴ Above them, arguably qualifying as primary definers, stand the Cabinet ministers. But even here demarcations may be observed between high and low profile members (and in ways that do not necessarily correlate to the importance of their roles or the amount of 'real' power they have). For these kinds of reasons Schlesinger (1990: 67) observes that some primary definers may be more 'primary' than others.

Likewise within *Policing the Crisis* there is a measure of ambiguity about the status of the trade unions. Although the unions were not placed within the 'primary definer' category they were nonetheless thought of as having enough clout to stand up to dominant interests – conditional upon them articulating a 'reasonable' case (Ibid.: 64) as was mentioned previously. This was said to be in contrast to marginal campaigning groups. Thus a sliding scale is implied.

These insights, however, need not deal a fatal blow to the concept of primary definition. For one thing Hall et al never claimed the idea represented anything more than a general 'tendency' (1978: 65). For this reason we may be demanding too much of the concept if we are hoping for a clear-cut categorisation marking out those who have attained this status from those who have not. My own view is that we ought to reconceptualise ideas about the primacy of definition to see source influence over the media as existing along a *continuum*, with, as a generalisation, those sources closest to officialdom having the greatest influence over the shape of news discourses. Hereafter, the use of the terms 'primary definition' and 'primary definers' refers to this less tightly bound understanding of the concept, indicating fairly regular access to the news media and, more importantly, relatively strong influence over the qualitative dimensions of the media

discourses. It is a more flexible reconfiguration that has certain parallels with Blumler and Gurevitch's (1995) observation that 'journalists react to all social groups and institutions, not only via news-value criteria but also according to the degree of respect (or lack of it) to which they are regarded as entitled by the dominant value system' (Blumler and Gurevitch 1995: 55). In a slightly different way it was in recognition of the disproportionate access to and influence over the qualitative dimensions of mediated discourses, including news reports, that Schlesinger declared himself reluctant to break with 'theories of dominance' (1990: 63). All subsequent research into source-reporter relations, he argued, ought to work from that starting point.

The question of the origins of frames

The last of Schlesinger's criticisms of the 'primary definition' model that I intend to discuss here concerns the way the model underplays the agency of the media and the media's inventiveness in constructing framings about social reality. Specifically, Schlesinger takes issue with the way the model assumes that definitions of social reality uniformly move from the 'power centre to the media' (Ibid.: 67).

The flaw is not that the 'primary definition' model relegates the media to a passive role:

Not every statement by a relevant primary definer in respect of a particular topic is likely to be reproduced in the media; nor is every part of each statement. By exercising selectivity the media begin to impose their own criteria on the structured 'raw materials' – and thus actively appropriate and transform them. (Hall et al 1978: 60).

Yet while this means that the media play a significant role in the 'construction of social reality' (Gurevitch and Levy 1985: 19), this conception would, if correct, still mean that the media only ever channel other people's definitions of reality, albeit selectively. Thus, while the media may still qualify as a 'site' 'on which various social groups, institutions, and ideologies struggle over the definition and construction of social reality' (Ibid.: 19), the influence of the media would merely be confined to deciding who to let onto the 'site'. The problem with the 'primary definer' model, as proposed by Hall and his colleagues, is that it is blind to the role that media outlets themselves play in the construction and promotion of frames about socio-political matters. Which is to say that it fails to register that the media are political actors in their own right (Curran 1990; Couldry and Curran 2003; Curran and Seaton 1997), whose influence changes the political landscape in all sorts of ways from columnists composing pithy slogans and succinct arguments that are subsequently taken up by politicians, to cases of campaigning or investigative journalism

(Schlesinger 1990: 67), to being able to mount sustained coverage that ‘contextualises’ a source in a negative (or positive) manner (Ericson et al 1989: 378). The media can also

help set the political agenda, they can accelerate and magnify political success and failure, they can serve as independent advocates for victims of oppression, [and] they can mobilise third parties into a conflict. (Wolfsfeld 1997: 3).

The significance of the media being political actors in their own right is particularly pertinent to the case of national press reporting of the antiwar movement. *The Sun* for instance, was not only strongly in favour of military action; it also vehemently attacked opponents of the war (Couldry and Downey 2004: 273-274; Goddard et al 2008; Murray et al 2008). In its support for the war the paper could be said to have largely followed the UK Government’s justifications for military action; but in its attacks upon the antiwar movement the paper was surely staking out its own set of arguments, framings and rhetoric. When the Prime Minister confronted the antiwar movement’s arguments, at a speech in Glasgow in February 2003, he struck a conciliatory tone towards the antiwar marchers saying he believed that they were driven by a ‘right and entirely understandable hatred of war’ for which he had ‘respect’ (Blair 2003). *The Sun*’s treatment of the antiwar movement reflected none of this: opponents of military action were derided “war wobblers” whom *Sun* readers were encouraged to “score a direct hit against” on a bespoke dartboard included in the 11 April 2003 edition of the paper (Murray et al 2008: 13). Thus the idea that the media will only ever channel the rhetoric and framings of others cannot be maintained. There are occasions when media outlets themselves devise their own rhetoric and framings.

Concluding remarks

Through the discussion of the ‘primary definition’ model and its shortcomings, this chapter has attempted to outline what is sometimes called a ‘radical pluralist’ position (Davis 2000: 175; Goldsmiths Media Group 2000: 30). One that recognises the dominant influence that ‘government and established institutions’ (Goldsmiths Media Group 2000: 35) have in framing media discourses, and yet which also recognises that far from being permanently established beyond all challenge such dominance is in fact conditional upon circumstances and effective media relations. Just as importantly, the ‘radical pluralist’ position also sees non-official news sources as having the potential to make a significant contribution to mediated debates. Thus when taken as a whole, the media are conceptualised as a site of unequal contest rather than ‘an unchanging agent of control’ (Curran 2000: 13).

The circumstances that pave the way for non-official news sources, like the antiwar movement, being able to make a significant contribution to media debates, will be at their least predictable when elite, public, and media opinion are divided over an issue, as was the case with the Iraq War. Whether or not non-official news sources succeed in taking advantage of such circumstances however, is another matter. As shall be explored in Part II of this thesis, in the case of the contemporary antiwar movement in the UK, much depended on how the movement set about engaging with the media, the extent to which they prioritised media relations, and the concessions, both sociological and ideological, that they are prepared to concede in order to make a significant contribution to publicly mediated debates. Preceding Part II however is the next chapter, which explores the interactions between the mainstream media and social movements in general.

End Notes

¹ Former President Richard Nixon's view that the media were hostile him and the Vietnam War is sporadically discussed in Hallin 1986.

² As we shall see in the next chapter, protesters have often been 'delegitimised, marginalised, and demonised' in news reporting (Luther and Miller 2005: 80; McFarlane 2001; McLeod and Detenber 1999: 5), whereas the actions of political elites are treated with a greater degree of reverence.

³ This is not to suggest that a high media profile is the only route to having an influential say in political debate: some pressure groups have found that their influence on public policy is best maintained by not breaking ranks with the government or the civil service through speaking to the media (Grant 1989).

⁴ My thinking here bears the imprint of Wolfsfeld's (1997) and Cottle's (2000) reflections on source-media relations. Both writers argue that to fully understand the interactions between sources and the media, attention needs to be paid to questions of both media access that reside along the sociological axis, and the cultural axis where questions of representation belong.

⁵ The Brent Spar was an oil storage buoy owned by Shell UK and which Shell, with the support of the British government, proposed be sunk in the North Sea in 1995 after the end of its natural life. The Brent Spar was eventually decommissioned on shore after Shell's original plan generated considerable controversy. This was in part thanks to Greenpeace's campaign against sinking the buoy in the North Sea. But Greenpeace later had to admit that some of the claims it had made as part of its campaign had been inaccurate. Specifically, Greenpeace had overestimated the amount of oil contained in the Brent Spar.

⁶ Five Unions, COHSE, NUPE, TGWU, NALGO, and GMB, joined forces to demand increased pay for ambulance workers and a new pay formula. They were also campaigning against local bargaining on pay and privatisation.

⁷ In 1994 John Major's government proposed a partial privatisation of the Post Office, i.e. selling off 51 percent of the company to the private sector. Their plans were defeated in the House of Commons

following a campaign against the proposals in which the unions joined forces with the Labour Party, pensioners groups, charities, and even a 'free-market think tank' (London Economics) (Davis 2000).

⁸ The fire-fighters initial demand, first formally endorsed at the Fire Brigades Union conference was for a 40 percent pay rise, although it was widely believed that this was a starting bid for negotiations. Following the breakdown of negotiations with their employers a series of two-day and eight-day strikes began in November 2002 carrying on until June 2003 when the fire-fighters eventually settled for a 16 percent pay rise staged over 30 months and linked to an agreement to 'modernise' their practices (O'Neill 2007: 828).

⁹ Schlesinger (1990) also criticises the 'primary definition' model for being ahistorical, because the model is insufficiently flexible to allow for and anticipate changes over time. If anything though, it might be more appropriate to say that Hall et al's (1978) 'primary definition' model is too historical, and to some extent, too issue specific, in that the model was built upon their observations of how the media dealt with a particular issue at a particular point in time, i.e. the 'mugging' moral panic from the early 1970s. (Although Hall et al's thinking was also influenced by studies of the reporting of demonstrations and industrial action from that decade.) My thanks to David Deacon for making this observation.

¹⁰ Bennett is also alert to those occasions when non-official sources whose views fall outside the bounds of the establishment make it onto the news agenda. But, he asserts, this only tends to happen within the context of 'civil disobedience, protests, or lawless acts that establish negative interpretative contexts for those voices' (1990: 107). Ideas of this kind will be considered in the next chapter.

¹¹ It would be mistaken to suppose that there is an *instantaneous* equation between elite division and unfavourable coverage. Rather the unfavourable nature of the coverage of both these policies emerged over a matter of years. Unfavourable coverage was partly as a result of elites having been divided on these issues, partly because they were unpopular, and partly because neither Poll Tax nor the Vietnam War yielded their intended successes.

¹² The (un)popularity of individual policies can also have a strong bearing on the way those policies are reported. Deacon and Golding (1994) for instance, found that the high levels of 'public antipathy' towards the Poll Tax 'exerted a powerful framing influence over [the] reporting' of the controversy (Deacon and Golding 1994: 177).

¹³ Also implicit in Schlesinger's critique, is an invitation to embark upon comparative research into the different media relations' strategies of official and non-official news sources. This invitation has not been taken up for the purposes of this study.

¹⁴ Examples based on an amalgamation of ideas from Schlesinger 1990: 67, and Manning 2001: 16.

Chapter 3: Social Movements, Campaigning Organisations and the Media

This chapter explores and critiques past research examining the interactions between social movements and the mainstream media. In the process of doing so, it also outlines some of the key empirical questions informing this thesis, the results of which are presented in the second half of this study. More than that though, this chapter validates many of those key empirical questions by relating them to wider conceptual reflections on social movements and other campaigning organisations. These reflections fall under the following headings that structure this chapter:

- Identifying and understanding what social movements are;
- How social movements have engaged with the media in the recent past;
- The reasons why social movements, along with other campaigning organisations, have engaged with and sought media coverage;
- How social movements and their activities have been reported on in the media;
- The consequences of engaging with the media for social movements (and campaigning organisations) and the dilemmas that this engagement presents for them.

Furthermore, it is also hoped that by examining the interactions between social movements and the media, combined with many of the insights from the previous chapter, that a more fluid and conditional understanding of the interactions between the media and their sources arises.

Identifying and understanding what social movements are

Social movements vary considerably in their politics, the causes they campaign on behalf of, the levels of popular and elite support they command, the images they convey, their attitudes towards the media, their dependency on the media, and the extent to which they prioritize media relations. As such, any generalisations made about social movements should be understood as just that – generalisations. Nonetheless there are certain distinguishing characteristics of social movements that can be identified.

Definitions of social movements, from the works of Gillan (2006: 24), Zirakzadeh (2006: 4-5), Anderson (1997: 77), Stammers and Eschle (2005: 53) and Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993: 115) tend to draw upon several observations about them. As shall be argued in Chapter 6, all these observations are applicable in the case of opposition to the wars against Afghanistan and Iraq thus creating an antiwar *movement* that is distinguishable from organised party political or pressure

group activity on the one hand, and a widely felt but atomised sense of anger about an impending war on the other.

1. *Social movements are informally structured – they do not have any kind of formally documented constitution or mission statement* (Anderson 1997: 77; Stammers and Eschle 2005).
2. *Social movements often involve a plurality of organisations working together* (Stammers and Eschle 2005; Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993: 115). This doesn't necessarily distinguish them from other political actors since it is not uncommon for campaigning organisations to band together under an umbrella body – the T.U.C. is a case in point, as is the national Stop the War Coalition – but it is still an important feature of many social movements. Nor does the informality of social movements necessarily mean that organisations within social movements (such as pressure groups, trade unions and political parties) will be without formal positions, constitutions or mission statements. But if movements and the organisations within them overlap, as is often the case, then it is important that research does not confuse the two (Tilly 2004: 6). To illustrate using an example suggested by Stammers and Eschle (2005): while an organisation like Greenpeace is clearly part of the environment movement, a study of Greenpeace is not a study of the whole of the environment movement. Likewise it is important to avoid making assertions about particular organisations, e.g. Greenpeace, on the basis of generalisations about the movement that it is a part of.
3. *People voluntarily become involved in social movements* (Gillan 2006: 24).
4. *Social movements express a desire for radical (or occasionally reactionary) social change. Their political ambition extends far beyond policy orientated campaigning* (Anderson 1997: 77; Gillan 2006: 24; Zirakzadeh 2006: 4).
5. *Social movements are extra-institutional in the sense that the people involved are 'non-elites' lacking 'routine access' to the decision-making processes* (Anderson 1997: 77; Zirakzadeh 2006: 4).
6. *As part of their repertoire of effecting change, social movements will often go beyond institutional means such as lobbying and petitioning, to engage in mass demonstrations and even non-violent direct action (NVDA), which can be illegal depending on the actions in question* (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993: 115; Gillan 2006: 24; Zirakzadeh 2006: 4).

All of these observations are applicable to social movements in general. However if we wish to distinguish social movements from other political actors such as politicians and political parties,

trade unions, and pressure groups, the first item on the list above is the most significant. Although politicians, trade unions and pressure groups all tend to limit their demands to policy orientated campaigning, it is not unknown for them to express a desire for radical social change. It is true that some pressure groups have 'routine access' to the corridors of power and may even influence government policy, but other pressure groups work very differently, (which may or may not be a matter of choice on their behalf), and as such have been labelled 'outsider' pressure groups (Grant 1989). Similarly some pressure groups, Greenpeace for instance, have been known to resort to NVDA in order to make their case. Even the matter of the voluntary nature of social movements amounts to a less than fully satisfactory basis for a distinction between them and other political actors, because while many pressure groups and Trade Unions will often be professionalized in the sense that they employ their own staff, pressure groups rely on volunteer support just as Trade Unions depend on their membership, which is a matter of personal choice not compulsion. Politicians and political parties also rely on a small army of volunteers to go canvassing during election times. More than anything else then, it is the informal structures of social movements that distinguish them from other political actors.

One last qualification ought to be introduced. There is a tendency in contemporary social movement literature to assume that all social movements are politically progressive (Calabrese 2005), perhaps because the term 'social movement' has, in recent times, 'acquired attractive overtones across the world' (Tilly 2004: 6). Yet social movement research has in the past focused on the National Socialist movement in Hitler's Germany (Zirakzadeh 2006), and racist youth movements associated with the National Front in 1970s Britain (Fielding 1981). Without inviting comparisons between those extreme right movements and the contemporary antiwar movement, some critics of the antiwar movement have cast aspersions on its progressive credentials (Aaronovitch 2003; Cohen 2007). It is best if value judgements about whether the antiwar movement, along with social movements in general, are regressive or progressive are left to one side. Suffice to say that most of the people and organisations associated with the antiwar movement regard themselves as left-wing.

How social movements have engaged with the media in the recent past

A key argument of the previous chapter was that whereas government and established institutions are almost guaranteed to attract an enormous amount of media attention due to their accredited position within the social structure (Davis 2003: 34-35; Goldsmiths Media Group 2000: 35; Hall et al 1978: 58; Schlesinger 1990: 70; Seymour-Ure 1987), non-official news sources, including

social movements, can assume no such automatic interest from the media. I proposed, that as a consequence, non-official sources are compelled to resort to a different set of strategies from political elites in order to maximise their chances of the media taking an interest in their activities and granting them the chance to make a meaningful contribution to media debates. Here I shall argue that although Negrine's (1996: 170) concept of 'media events' applies to the strategies of elite sources as much as it does to non-elites, the 'media events' concept still offers the most appropriately measured description of the way in which communicating through the media figures within the broader repertoire of most social movement activism.

'Media events' are 'planned and staged' with media coverage in mind, but not to the point where those events are instigated for the *sole* purpose of attracting the media's attention (ibid.: 170). 'Media events' are thus distinguishable from what Boorstin (1962) calls 'pseudo-events' on the one hand, and what Negrine (1996) labels 'ordinary events' on the other. 'Pseudo-events' encompass activities like press conferences and publicity stunts that are staged solely for the purpose of generating and then controlling media coverage. 'Ordinary events' happen irrespective of whether the media report on them or not. In between stand 'royal weddings, inaugurations, state funerals, [the] signing of peace accords' and other events that are all classic examples of 'media events' (ibid.: 170) since each serves a larger purpose beyond attracting the media's attention, but, in each case, it is likely that publicising the event would have been close to the top of any list of priorities that the organisers had, and also that the choreography of each event would have been planned for and organised with anticipated media coverage in mind so to ensure favourable coverage. Hence a demonstration would also qualify as a 'media event', because although demonstrations pre-date the mass media (Cottle 2008: 863; Tilly 2004) and serve a wider set of purposes beyond generating media coverage, such as establishing a sense of solidarity among participants as well as building and consolidating the movement's frameworks of understanding about the issues in question, 'their media dimension is now crucial' (Keeble 2000: 119).

People carry banners with simple slogans, they wear eccentric costumes, they chant, they play music, they chose routes often heavy with symbolism, they distribute leaflets and they attract prominent speakers. They do all this for political reasons. But they also do it hoping to attract media attention. A demonstration serves many purposes. For the participants and organisers, it represents a statement of solidarity for a cause. (Ibid.: 119).

However, the ‘media events’ that social movements most regularly partake in, such as demonstrations and acts of civil disobedience, can often be problematic means of attracting the media’s attention. For one thing there is no guarantee that they will be covered in the first place. In fact, demonstrations and NVDA are rarely ever sustainable tactics for generating media attention since the ‘novelty’ of them soon wears off in the minds of journalists, as research into the actions of Environmental Pressure Groups has shown (Anderson 1991: 469). Moreover, even when demonstrations and acts of civil disobedience do attract the media’s attention, there remains a potential incompatibility between the means of attracting media attention and the aim of securing legitimacy. The visual spectacle of demonstrations (e.g. ‘eccentric costumes’, choosing routes that are often loaded with ‘heavy symbolism’, as well as carrying banners and placards with pithy slogans) that so often enhances the media’s interest in the protests and protesters, also underscores a movement’s ‘challenger’ status. In this way the spectacle of demonstrations caps the degree of legitimacy and seriousness they and their cause are accorded (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993). Furthermore, numerous studies have shown that if incidences of violence should happen to break out at demonstrations, however marginal those outbreaks may be, then the demonstrations themselves come to be defined as ‘the problem’, and in the process sideline whatever cause provoked the demonstrations in the first place (Halloran et al 1970; see also Cottle 1998; Deacon and Golding 1994: 130-135; Gitlin 1980; Hackett and Zhao 1994; Luther and Miller 2005; McLeod and Detenber 1999; Murdock 1981).

The reasons why social movements have engaged with and sought media coverage

The discussion in this section explores past scholarship addressed to the matter of why social movements in general have sought access to the media.

Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) argue that social movements in general seek media coverage for the purposes of:

- ‘Mobilisation’ – the mass media allows movements to reach their own constituencies so they can goad those constituents to partake in political activism (or so movement leaders hope).
- ‘Validation’ – movements can only be regarded as important political players if they attract media coverage.
- ‘Scope enlargement’ – i.e. to attract new recruits.

While Gitlin's (1980) study of the SDS (Students for a Democratic Society – one of the largest organisations of 1960s America involved in the anti-Vietnam War movement) argues that the SDS purposely sought media coverage to attract new recruits ('scope enlargement'), to 'challenge the authority of dominant institutions', to place issues on the agenda and address specific grievances, and because, for those involved in the movement, media coverage meant that they did '*mattered in the world*' (Gitlin 1980: 242-243 original emphasis). This last factor evidently has certain affinities with Gamson and Wolfsfeld's concept of 'validation'.¹

The idea that media coverage of certain categories of event, particularly protests, proves that those protests 'matter in the world' is almost axiomatic, and frequently expressed through semi-comic analogies:

If protest tactics are not considered significant by the media, or if newspaper and television reporters or editors decide to overlook protest tactics, protest organisations will not succeed. Like trees falling silently in the forest, there is no protest unless protest is perceived and projected. (Lipsky 1970 quoted in Deacon 1996: 177).

Protest without media coverage is like a mime performance in the dark: possible but fairly pointless. (Jordan 1998 quoted in Doherty et al 2003: 674).

Gitlin's list though, is more expansive than Gamson and Wolfsfeld's because it recognises that the desire for media coverage among protest movements goes beyond the ambition of enhancing the profile and size of the movement; media coverage also enables movements to engage with politics. Gamson and Wolfsfeld's taxonomy is in danger of implying that movements seek media coverage purely for the purpose of becoming big and recognisable 'brands'.

Chapter 7 will consider how far elements of these taxonomies, along with those based on observations of pressure group-media interactions from the work of Blumler (1989), Cracknell (1993), Deacon (1996), Grant (1989) and Ryan (1991), can be said to apply in the case of contemporary antiwar movement in the UK. In the meantime I wish to outline some of the unifying principles and shortcomings of the taxonomies from previous research.

First, all the items on the taxonomies produced by Gitlin (1980), and Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) could be described as 'positive' reasons for engaging with the media: they pinpoint how media coverage could (potentially) be of service to any given movement. Yet research into the British Trade Union movement's engagement with the media has identified a more 'defensive'

set of reasons for taking the media seriously. Since the late 1980s most unions have come to prioritise their media relations' strategies for the purposes of a) reducing the amount of unfavourable coverage they receive and b) minimising the degree of negativity in any unfavourable coverage (Manning 1996; see also Davis 2000; Deacon 2003). Essentially then, media relations is an exercise in damage limitation (Manning 1996: 52) born of trade unionists' bitter experiences of having been maligned by the mainstream media in the not too distant past (see Manning 1996; O'Neill 2007). In no sense is this line of reasoning confined to the Trade Union movement. Monbiot (2001a) for instance, argues that the prominence and power of the media combined with what he would regard as most media outlets' inclination to be wary of protesters but without necessarily being determinedly hostile towards them, means that protesters need to take the media seriously if only to do their best to avoid negative coverage. So one of the questions Chapter 7 asks is whether this has resulted in the antiwar movement prioritising media relations for the sake of avoiding unfavourable coverage.

Second, the rise and growth of the 'new media' in its various forms and the enthusiasm with which the activist community has embraced it (Anstead and Chadwick 2006; Gillan 2008; Gillan et al 2008; Klein 2000; 2002) may well have lessened the activist communities' dependencies on the mainstream mass media to meet their communicative needs, since 'new media' communication provides an alternative.

Third, existing taxonomies have generally failed to ask questions about how movements aspire to reach and engage with different sections of public opinion through the media. Given that movements (and pressure groups) nearly always campaign on behalf of issues that are in some way or other controversial, this is a serious oversight. Timm's (2005) research into the World Development Movement's² reasons for seeking press coverage identifies the following objectives: Retaining existing members, gaining new members, 'exerting direct political pressure on specific campaigns, raising the profile of the WDM within the activist community and the general education of that community,' and increasing the awareness of global issues and the impact of 'corporate globalisation' among the general public (2005: 126). Thus several different constituencies are identified and targeted through the media – existing members, potential new members who would presumably be sympathetic to the WDM's aims, the 'activist community', and the 'general public' (see also Ryan 1991: 4 who makes a similar point).

For the purposes of my own research, public opinion on the Iraq crisis has been divided into those already involved in the antiwar movement, those who were opposed to military action but not involved in the antiwar movement, undecided opinion, and pro-war opinion. The research enquires into how far across the political spectrum activists aimed to reach, and whether different media were used to target different sections of public opinion (as Timm's [2005] research found to have been the case with the WDM's press strategy).

How social movements and their activities have been reported on in the media

Given the diversity of social movements, the causes they have embraced, and the wide variety of means by which dissent was expressed, any generalisations about the media coverage that social movements have attracted over the years need to be treated with a measure of circumspection. Nonetheless most prevalent category of 'media event' by which most social movements attract media coverage remains the public demonstration, and the reporting of demonstrations is something about which a number of generalisations can be made. Hence researchers have identified a 'protest paradigm' that spells out a number of recurrent characteristics in the reporting of protests and the representation of protest organisations (see Luther and Miller 2005; McFarlane 2001; McLeod and Detenber 1999; Murray et al 2008; Parry and Murray 2005).

The 'protest paradigm'

In essence, the 'protest paradigm' serves to 'delegitimise, marginalise, and demonise' protest groups (Luther and Miller 2005: 80; McFarlane 2001; McLeod and Detenber 1999: 5). The 'protest paradigm' reveals itself through the manifest features of news reporting such as the recurrent themes and most regularly cited sources, and through what Deacon et al (2007: 119) describe as the 'textual and discursive forms' and 'rhetorical nuances' of the new reports. To date, most studies that have adopted the phrase the 'protest paradigm' have concentrated on outlining the manifest features of the content (e.g. McFarlane 2001; Luther and Miller 2005; McLeod and Detenber 1999). But I wish to argue that an examination of the discursive features of the 'protest paradigm' compliments any study of manifest content because it highlights the equations, oppositions and implicit assumptions that underpin reporting that could be said to adopt the 'protest paradigm' and further chip away at the legitimacy of the protesters.

Studies of the reporting of protests, whether they have used the term the 'protest paradigm' or not, have identified a number of recurrent themes in, and features that are emphasised in, protest stories:

1. *A consistent focus on protest as performance or spectacle* (Gitlin 1980; Luther and Miller 2005; McFarlane 2001).
2. *A focus on any incidents of violence and criminality at demonstrations, however minimal or isolated those incidents may have been* (Halloran et al 1970; Cottle 1998; Deacon and Golding 1994: 130-135; Gitlin 1980; Hackett and Zhao 1994; Luther and Miller 2005; McLeod and Detember 1999; Murdock 1981). When the reporting concentrates on marginal incidents of violence in this way, it may be said that the reporting is marked by techniques of 'malevolent metonymy' (Hackett and Zhao 1994), because it takes the negative image from isolated incidents and projects it as though it were representative of the movement as a whole.
3. *Event orientation.* Numerous studies of the reporting of demonstrations have drawn attention to the 'event orientation' of the reporting protests (e.g. Gitlin 1980; Halloran et al 1970; Luther and Miller 2005; McFarlane 2001; McLeod and Detember 1999). The result is not simply a failure to explore the underlying issues; it also has the effect of delegitimising dissent by making protests seem irrational and 'essentially ephemeral' (Murdock 1981: 214).³ As the Glasgow Media Group (1985: 274) have observed, the reporting of a demonstration 'is not an obvious vehicle for the expression of rational argument'.
4. *A focus on the appearance (including hairstyles and clothing), identity and personal attributes of the protesters* (Gitlin 1980; McFarlane 2001; McLeod and Detember 1999). The significance of this aspect of the reporting is thrown into sharp relief when the protests are directed against World leaders, because as McFarlane (2001) has shown in his study of *The Australian's* reporting of the anti-WTO protests in Seattle in 1999, the paper's reporting never once focused on the delegates' clothing or hairstyles. Furthermore, personalising the reporting of the protesters in this way empties demonstrations of their political content (as Murdock 1981 has also argued), because it implies that dissent happens purely because of who the protesters are. The focus on appearances etc. does not encourage us to consider that they might have a legitimate set of grievances.
5. *A reliance on official framings and official sources whose commentary on protests has often attacked the protesters* (Gitlin 1980; Luther and Miller 2005: 80; McLeod and Detember 1999).

6. *A strong implication that the protesters were unrepresentative of public opinion established through the use of 'opinion polls, overt characterisations, invocations of social norms, violation of laws, and the symbolic use of bystanders'* (McLeod and Detenber 1999: 6; see also Gitlin 1980; MacFarlane 2001).

Accounting for the manifestation of the 'protest paradigm'

The event orientation of the reporting of demonstrations, as well as the focus on performance, spectacle, and incidents of violence, are a product of the 'episodic' nature of protest reporting. The term comes from Iyengar (1991) who distinguishes between 'episodic framing', which 'focuses on specific events or particular cases', and 'thematic framing' that 'places political issues in some general context' (1991: 2). It is important to appreciate that in no sense is the 'event orientation' identified here unique to the reporting of protests. Indeed the tendency towards 'event orientation' needs to be understood as a product of the occupational routines and values of journalism (Cottle 2000: 433). For this reason the 'event orientation' of protest reporting is not in itself a deviance-defining characteristic, unlike most of the other features and themes of the 'protest paradigm'. But, in order to make sense of events for audiences, news has to frame those events by giving them 'meaning', 'context', and 'definitional shape' in ways that can be 'recognised and understood by society at large' (quoting the definition of framing that I proposed in the previous chapter). In the process of doing so, reporting comes to combine episodic and thematic framing with the result that 'in practice, few news reports are exclusively episodic or thematic' (Iyengar 1991: 14). But in spite of the fact that Iyengar doesn't research the reporting of protests, the cumulative weight of evidence from research into the reporting of demonstrations points strongly to a tendency to privilege 'episodic framing' in protest reporting.

Furthermore, it is important to appreciate that the ways in which protesters themselves have been represented under the 'protest paradigm' can also be explained in terms of the occupational values of journalism itself. The tendency to continually replay a certain set of stereotypes about protesters stems from the sense of newsworthiness (which journalists have been socialised into⁴) that is as much a matter of 'form' as it is about 'content' (Cottle 2000). News narratives symbolically position certain categories of person, e.g. celebrities, ordinary people, victims and so on, such that those people are presented as acting out a repertoire of 'standardised roles' that are particular to them (Ibid.: 439). And according to some accounts, even when sources speak to and are quoted in the media, there is only a limited amount of influence they can have to change the pre-determined roles they are set to play. Journalists can be expected to be selective in the

information they take from sources to produce a narrative wherein anything the source is quoted as saying only serves to capture the essence of ‘what the source represents in the story’ (Ericson et al 1987: 286). It would seem on the basis of the evidence outlined above, that in the case of the reporting of protests the ‘standardised role’ that demonstrators are condemned to play is that of eccentric and unrepresentative troublemakers. The reason why these ‘standardised roles’ tend to be continually reproduced is because journalists look to past precedent to see how they, (and their competitor-colleagues in other news outlets), have reported on similar events and comparable sources in the past (Ericson et al 1987; Tuchman 1997). So when reporting on demonstrations for example, journalists can be expected to reach for the kind of themes outlined in the ‘protest paradigm’.

Yet the unrelentingly negative portrayal of demonstrators under the ‘protest paradigm’, and explanations that account for this solely in terms of the workings and occupational values of the media, are at odds with the more fluid conception of the media that arose from the critique of ‘primary definition’ in the previous chapter, along with the evidence, also from the previous chapter, of challenger organisations acquiring a measure of qualified legitimacy in news reporting. As it happens research into the reporting of demonstrations has sometimes identified a variety of ways in which the ‘protest paradigm’ has manifested itself in news reporting, and these shall be considered shortly. But it is probably true to say that questions about how the movements and pressure groups involved in staging demonstrations might have organised their media relations’ strategies so as to avoid the kind of negative stereotypes outlined above, as well as how those organisations have worked to secure ‘*definitional advantage*’ (Schlesinger 1990: 76 original emphasis), have been generally absent from many of the previous studies to have come out of the social-movements-and-the-media genre of scholarship.

Finally though, it is worth restating that the depth of the elite, popular and national media divisions over the Iraq crisis, and the scale of protests it provoked, particularly the demonstrations of 15 February 2003, may well mean that the ‘protest paradigm’ fails to manifest itself in the ways that earlier studies would predict.

Variations in the manifestation of the ‘protest paradigm’

The ‘protest paradigm’ ought not to be conceptualised as a set menu. The strength and vividness with which it is invoked can vary considerably across reports (McLeod and Detenber 1999). Specifically, it has been suggested that there tends to be an association between the radicalism of

the protesters' agenda and the vividness with which 'protest paradigm' is made manifest in the news reporting, such that the more radical the protest agenda is the more strongly the protesters can expect to be vilified in news reporting (Ibid). If this is the case then it echoes one of the key arguments from the previous chapter, that 'elite', 'reformist' groups who restrict their activism to 'reasonable dissent, will find it much easier to promote their frames' than 'revolutionary' groups 'who violate' those norms (quoting Wolfsfeld 1997: 47). Chapter 10 of this study tests whether or not this hypothesis can be said to have applied in the case of local press treatment of the contemporary antiwar movement.

The other significant variation that has been identified in the reporting of protests comes from Hackett and Zhao's (1994) study of the Op-Ed commentary on protesters who objected to the first Gulf War of 1991 (even though Hackett and Zhao don't use the term the 'protest paradigm'). Hackett and Zhao draw a distinction between reporting that casts opponents of the war as dangerous, violent and/or treasonous, which they call the 'Enemy Within frame', and reporting that represented opponents of the war as ineffective, which they label the 'Marginal Oddity frame'.⁵ These tendencies are, to be sure, ideal-typical distinctions drawn out for analytical purposes rather than clear-cut divisions into which all reporting fell one way or the other, since commentary on the anti-Gulf War protests often contained elements of both frames. That this is so may at first seem surprising, but, drawing on Gitlin's (1980) study, Hackett and Zhao argue that the 'enemy within' and 'marginal oddity' frames are 'alternating expressions' of protest as 'deviant other' (1994: 519).

Furthermore, although Hackett and Zhao's critical discourse analysis is concentrated on Op-Ed commentary on the protests against Gulf War I, their study still makes a number of observations about that commentary that can be reformulated into a series of questions about the presentation of those ideas, the logic those ideas imply, and the assumptions that logic trades upon. Among the questions they ask that can be applied to my research in Chapter 10 are:

- Do we find, as Hackett and Zhao (1994) do, (and as Cottle 1998 and Keeble 1986; 1997: 173 also allege) that protesters were subject to name-calling (e.g. 'criminals', 'traitors', 'un-American', etc.) and dehumanising metaphors (e.g. 'simple-minded creatures', 'pigs of peace', [Hackett and Zhao 1994: 514]) that contribute to the 'enemy within frame'?
- Does the reporting trade upon a series of delegitimising 'equations and oppositions' such that to protest against the war is presented as tantamount to 'treason', 'violent

anarchy/making war on authority', 'irresponsibility', and/or the 'opposite of democratic politics', which again go some way towards constructing the 'enemy within frame'?

- Did the reporting set up a series of 'us and them' binary oppositions in which protesters were cast as outside the bounds of ordinary society?
- Did the reporting equate youth with irrationalism and emotionalism, as was characteristic of the 'marginal oddity frame'?

Alternatively it may well be, as Hackett and Zhao (1994) found to have sometimes been the case with the Op-Ed commentary on the protests against Gulf War I, that opponents of the war were presented as being a (semi) legitimate force in the political debates, with the commentary either stressing their right to protest or reaching for some kind of common ground between the protesters and supporters of the war. If it should be the case that antiwar protesters acquired a measure of qualified legitimacy in this way then it would lend support to the 'radical pluralist' expectations of media content that were outlined in the previous chapter, rather than the pessimistic orientation of the 'protest paradigm'. This in turn opens up questions about the conditionality of antiwar protesters securing partial legitimacy and the media orientated work they have to engage in to secure it. These questions will be addressed in Chapter 10 of this study.⁶

Towards an understanding of source-media interactions, and the consequences and dilemmas these interactions present for social movements

It has long been an article of faith among antiwar protesters that the media are 'against' them on the grounds that media coverage will either ignore the antiwar movement, or will delegitimise the movement in a manner that is akin to the 'protest paradigm' when their protests are covered – in either case the media are not expected to take the movement's concerns seriously (Gitlin 1980; Keeble 1986; Shaw 2005). This perception of media pessimism is typically shared by environmental pressure groups (Anderson 1997: 101), and other social movements in general (Bennett 2003: 18; Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993; Monbiot 2001a; Tilly 2004: 85). While up until the late 1980s and to some extent since, this attitude also found an echo among the organised 'left' in the trade unions (Manning 1996; O'Neill 2007) and in Labour run local councils (Curran et al 2005). On this basis then, one may reasonably expect that many contemporary locally based antiwar groups will have also shared this sense that the mainstream media were innately hostile towards them. In response some local groups may have reasoned that the most prudent course of action was to stay out of the (local) media's spotlight, relying instead on non-mass mediated

forms of communication to meet their communicative needs. These are the kind of sources that Gans (1979) would label 'recalcitrant' sources.

But it is important to appreciate that the media are not monolithic, since the media outlets will often vary in their predispositions towards sources and the politics they stand for. One consequence of this is that media outlets tend to gravitate towards sources that they are inclined to agree with, and whose information and expertise they are inclined to trust. The result is that media outlets tend to reproduce the framings that their main sources promote. It might be assumed that for those antiwar groups which are not 'recalcitrant' sources, the wisest course of action to take would be to concentrate their communication strategies on only those media outlets that are not unsympathetic to them, and minimise their contact with outlets that are avowedly hostile.⁷ Furthermore, sources that are sensitively attuned to the cultural predispositions of particular media outlets – i.e. whether the paper they are targeting is a national tabloid, broadsheet, or a local paper – can be expected to respond to and present themselves and their arguments in different ways to different media depending on what they think a particular media outlet wants and expects of them (Manning 2001: 152-153). Then, in a further twist, media outlets can be expected to respond differently to different sources depending on how those sources respond to them. So if relations between sources and the media are to be likened to a 'dance', (as in Gans' now famous metaphor [1979: 116]), the complexity and the variety of the dance routines is captured well by Tumber and Palmer's (2004) speculative explanation for the contributions that the media and their main sources made in shaping the contours of the debate surrounding the pre-invasion phase of the Iraq crisis. Even though Tumber and Palmer's explanation is written in the speculative tense and was penned in relation to a specific issue, the principles they outline could well apply to any political controversy. That is why it is worth quoting at length:

Perhaps titles tended to find – or even seek – facts that fitted their predispositions, or to interpret the facts in the light of their overall commitment. But equally, journalists take their information from sources, and it is in the interaction between the two that definitions arise. If a source is saying the same thing to a number of journalists, and the reports differ in the way that we have seen [referring to their research], then clearly editorial interpretation is responsible. However, it is equally possible that different journalists have different sources, or even that the same source responds to slightly different questions from different journalists in different ways. In short, there are many variables in the news gathering and production process... (Tumber and Palmer 2004: 93).

Once these principles behind the complex variety of the dance routines are understood, then several questions, pertinent to this research, began to crystallise. First of all we may ask:

- Did the locally based antiwar groups have any basis for supposing that the local press were inclined to respond to their activities in a particular way?
- How, if at all, did their expectations of likely media coverage (whatever they may have been) influence their media relations' strategies?
 - Did, for example, any local antiwar groups decide that it was best for them to try to stay out of the local media's spotlight, relying instead on non-mass mediated forms of communication to meet their communicative needs – recalcitrant sources in Gans' (1979) terms?
 - Did they reason that in recognition of the ubiquity of the modern mass media they had little choice but to engage with the media – 'agreeable' sources in Gans's terms?
 - Or alternatively, did they reject the 'hostile media' thesis outright, and instead regard engagement with the local press as a potential means of enhancing their campaigning – the kind of attitude that Gans would say makes for 'eager' sources?

But beyond the dilemmas of whether to engage with the media in the first place (for those sources that do decide to pursue media coverage), previous studies of the interactions between non-official news sources and the media have also argued that there is (what I shall call) an 'organisational dimension' to the dilemmas they face as well as a 'framing dimension' to those dilemmas.

The 'organisational dimension'

The 'organisational dimension' of the dilemmas that social movements and pressure groups face when engaging with the media, relate to questions about how the communications strategy that any given social movement organisation pursues connects to and is in tension with other aspects of their activism. It also concerns questions about what level of priority communicating through the media ought to be given. For instance, in recent years there have been cases where all the other elements of a given campaign have revolved around the need to communicate through the media. Manning's (1996) research on the unions' collective strategy in the 1989 Ambulance dispute is one such example. He found that the unions subordinated their entire strategy to the

needs of communicating through the media, which meant that strike action was explicitly ruled out due to fears about the negative coverage it would bring down upon the unions and deflect attention away from the issues that lay behind the strike (Ibid.: Ch. 9). Likewise the Labour Party's official strategy of opposition to the Poll Tax was acutely conscious of the need to avoid negative media coverage, which was why they ruled out participation in the non-payment campaign (Deacon and Golding 1994: Ch.4).

A recurrent theme running through research on the various ways by which movements, pressure groups and other non-official sources have engaged with the media, is that the pursuit of media coverage changes the priorities, the activities, and even the social composition and sense of identity of social movements and other non-official sources. Explanations as to why the pursuit of media coverage should have this degree of influence on pressure groups and social movement organisations revolve around how the potential usefulness of media coverage for those organisations places them in a position of being dependent on the media to meet their communicative needs (see Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993). For instance, Gitlin's (1980) study of the SDS argues that the organisation's belief that being in the news meant that what they did '*mattered in the world*' (1980: 242-243 original emphasis), encouraged the SDS to pursue media coverage almost for its own sake. This, combined with a recognition that the news media were guided by a set of news values that revolved around exceptionalism and sensationalism, coaxed the movement 'irreversibly towards the realm of spectacle, where what counted was numbers' (Ibid.: 160) so as to maximise the amount of coverage they received. Yet as a consequence of being in media 'spotlight' that they so eagerly pursued, the social composition, the sense of identity, and the focus of the SDS all changed. It did this by turning its leaders into celebrities; by bringing new members into the movement, who, having seen and bought into the 'radical' image of the movement they received through the news media, tended to be more radical than the movement's original leaders; and because the new members wanted to concentrate solely on campaigning against the Vietnam War rather than pursue the broader progressive agenda that the SDS originally stood for (Ibid.). Similarly in Blumler's (1989) analysis of the impact that the quest for media coverage has had on pressure groups, he argues that pressure groups have become increasingly 'media centric' since the 1960s, to the point where, as with the SDS, the pursuit of media attention has come to push groups towards 'inflammatory rhetoric and extravagant demands' so as to make stories about them more arresting (Blumler 1989: 352). Yet, as in the case of the SDS, the price to be paid for pursuing the media attention has so often been that it 'distorts what the group stands for' (Ibid.: 352). It is a phenomenon that Blumler labels 'spurious

amplification' (Ibid.: 352).⁸ The questions these insights invite for the purposes of this research are:

- How did the antiwar movement's media relations' strategy relate to other aspects of their campaigning?
- Was communicating through the mainstream media (particularly the local press) so central to the antiwar movement's overall campaigning that all other aspects of their strategy were subordinated to it?
- Did campaigning through the media change, in any significant way, the priorities, the activities, the social composition and/or the sense of identity of the antiwar movement? So for example, did the local groups restrain themselves from partaking in acts of civil disobedience for the sake of courting more favourable coverage?

The 'framing dimension'

The 'framing dimension' to the dilemmas faced by non-official sources concerns how they attempted to frame the issues under contention. Media relations isn't simply a matter of gaining access to the media when desired and then of trying to project the right image, it must also be about sources knowing what message they want to get across so they can make a meaningful contribution to the mediated debates. In simple terms, the key questions are how radical, how expansive, and in how much depth, should the set of understandings non-official sources try to promote be? At a practical level, these questions are very often linked together because, since by definition a radical analysis or manifesto must go against the prevailing currents of the 'dominant ideology' (to co-opt Marxist terminology), it follows that explaining, justifying and promoting the radical analysis and agenda can only be done at length and by challenging the secular shibboleths that sustain the 'dominant ideology'. Herman and Chomsky (1988) make a well put case explaining how the brevity of news reports and the need for concision in current affairs discussions 'virtually compels adherence to conventional thought; nothing else can be expressed between two commercials, or in seven hundred words, without the appearance of absurdity that is difficult to avoid when one is challenging familiar doctrine with an opportunity to develop facts or argument' (1988: 305-306).⁹ Thus for any group promoting a politically radical analysis, the decisions that inform their media relations' strategies are not simply decisions about how best to secure favourable representations from media coverage; those movements are also faced with questions about whether and how they can promote their own preferred set of framings through the coverage they get. Ultimately then, their decisions about how to, and indeed whether to,

engage with the media in the first place, are choices about frame promotion as well as decisions about the anticipated favourableness of media representations. The questions relevant to this research that this insight poses then, are:

- Did activists recognise the dilemma whereby they were forced to choose between remaining ‘outside the mainstream media’ so as to articulate the complexity of their case, and risk compromising the integrity and perhaps even the rationality of their own understandings and ideology by ‘accommodating the mainstream news media’ (Manning 2001: 200)?
- If so, which choice did they make throughout the duration of the Iraq crisis?

Yet it may well be that for all the radicalism of the antiwar movement (or at least large sections of it) – a matter that shall be discussed in Chapter 6 – the Iraq crisis was arguably so unique that a radical analysis would be an unnecessary departure for those making a case against military action. Shaw (2005) for example, argues, from what is evidently an anti-Iraq War perspective, that the unprecedented size of the demonstrations against military intervention in Iraq can be ‘explained by reference to the unique circumstances of going to war against a country posing no threat to us, without UN support, and when the alternative – inspections – seemed to be working’ (2005: 134-135). If then, the Iraq War broke with an existing set of principles that had previously laid down the guidelines for the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable conduct in international affairs, and the public was now being asked to support a war on the basis of a new set of principles – some advocates of military intervention spoke of ‘pre-emptive warfare’, others spoke of ‘humanitarian intervention’ as shall be explained in the next chapter – it follows that the supporters of the war were the ones trying to break with conventional thinking and challenge the ‘dominant ideology’. So for all the political radicalism of many of the people involved in the antiwar movement, it is questionable whether they were in the same position as most other social movements and campaigning organisations, both past and present, because the contemporary antiwar movement was not forced into the position of having to promote a radical counter-ideology in order to justify their opposition to war in this instance. Having said that, it is important to bear in mind that once the invasion went ahead and the occupation followed, the antiwar movement in general argued for the immediate withdrawal of coalition forces, and it is questionable whether the case for withdrawal under circumstances in which Iraq stood on the brink of civil war (see Chapter 4) could be made as easily as arguments against launching an invasion in the first place.

The matter of how the antiwar movement resolved both the ‘organisational’ and the ‘framing’ dilemmas is of central importance to this study, given the influence that source-media interactions have on news content, and particularly the levels of access to the media that sources receive, the way they are represented, and the contribution those sources make to media debates.

Concluding remarks

In attempting to situate the questions for research that have been outlined here within a wider discussion about social movements, pressure groups (to a lesser extent) and media, this chapter has paved the way for a broader consideration of how the antiwar movement compares and contrasts with other social movements. Thus the final chapters will be well placed to address a more specific set of comparative questions relating to the extent to which the antiwar movement prioritised their relations with the local press, as well as questions about how, why, and with what consequences and results, the contemporary antiwar movement channelled aspects of their campaigning through the media.

End Notes

¹ Given that Gamson and Wolfsfeld reference Gitlin’s work and would appear to have been influenced by it, these overlaps are not too surprising.

² The World Development Movement (WDM) lobbies government’s to tackle the ‘underlying causes of poverty’ and conducts research to ‘promote positive alternatives’. www.wdm.org.uk/about/index.htm accessed 28 March 2003).

³ It may be recalled from the previous chapter, that Hansen’s (1993) study of Greenpeace found that the group had ‘been successful in deflecting criticism away from itself as an organisation to keep such attention focused instead on the issues’ they were campaigning on (1993: 165). But this is not strictly comparable to the studies that inform the discussion on the ‘protest paradigm’, since Hansen’s study is of the reporting of Greenpeace’s activities and campaigns in general; it is not restricted to a study of the demonstrations and direct action stunts they had undertaken.

⁴ Ericson et al (1987) convincingly argue that journalists’ own sense of the properties they look for in potential news stories – also known as their sense of ‘newsworthiness’ or ‘news values’ – are learnt through their experiences of working as journalists.

⁵ Hackett and Zhao (1994) also point out that not all commentary on the anti-Gulf War protests served to delegitimise the protesters. A third strand of commentary, labelled the ‘legitimate controversy frame’, treated protesters as legitimate political actors, either by asserting their right to protest, or by searching for common ground between the protesters and supporters of the war.

⁶ Additional questions that could be asked might, for instance, examine how legitimacy is either conferred or denied through photographic images of protests (see Cottle 1998), but those questions are beyond the scope of this study.

⁷ Manning (2001: 152) reports that both the Trade Unions and the AIDS awareness charity the Terence Higgins Trust distinguished between different media outlets and tailored their media strategies according to whether newspapers were inclined to be fair to their cause or whether they were thought to be determinedly hostile. For example, the Unions and the Terence Higgins Trust both understood that *The Sun* was very hostile to both their causes, and so both types of organisation purposely minimised the amount of contact they had with that publication.

⁸ Like Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993), Blumler (1989) also references Gitlin's (1980) study of the SDS and would appear to have been influenced by it.

⁹ It is true that there may be occasions when the most easily expressed populist ideas will have an anti-establishment tilt to them, such as when the media readily assumes that power corrupts (example suggested by Wolfsfeld 1997: 39) or that those in power are 'out of touch' with the concerns of 'ordinary people'. But here the media frames adopted tend to lay the blame on the individual rather than the institutions of power and if solutions are (implicitly) called for they are usually more likely to be reformist than radical in nature (Ibid.: 39; Bennett 2001).

Chapter 4: Towards an understanding of the Iraq crisis¹

This chapter takes an overview of the controversy surrounding the Iraq crisis. Part I aims to establish that both the prospect and the occurrence of military action against Iraq divided elite, media, and popular opinion. These divisions had profound repercussions for the way the crisis was reported on by the media. In this section I shall also argue that regardless of what anyone thinks of the decision to go to war, Britain and America were determined to invade Iraq in 2003. The claim is not made for the sake of being controversial and it has never been the intention of this chapter, or indeed this dissertation, to make a case either for or against the war, but I feel it is important to mention this point in order to put the failure of the antiwar movement to actually stop the war in context – the odds were always heavily stacked against them.

Part II is dedicated to exploring and explaining the competing philosophical underpinnings of – and within – both sides of the debate about the decision to use military force against Iraq in March 2003. It does this by first, sketching out a conceptual framework of the arguments that raged over the main issues involved in the debate over the Iraq crisis, and then by analysing the different schools of thought that arose out of those arguments.

Part I: The lead-up to war and the controversy the war provoked

The lead-up to war

On 20 March 2003, the American military accompanied by their UK counterparts, invaded Iraq. This was the beginning of the Iraq War.

The invasion had been preceded by nearly 13 years of UN approved economic sanctions against Iraq going back to the Gulf War of 1990 to 1991. Throughout those intervening years Iraq had also been on the receiving end of a series of air strikes from the American and British military, most notably in September 1996 ('Operation Desert Strike') and December 1998 ('Operation Desert Fox'). The official justification for imposing sanctions on Iraq that American and British governments consistently gave throughout this time, right up to the invasion in 2003, was that they needed to bring pressure to bear on the Iraqi regime so that they would relinquish their alleged pursuit of a Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) programme that would have allowed Iraq to manufacture its own stockpiles chemical, biological, and nuclear weaponry. Under United Nations Security Council resolution 687 (passed April 1991), Iraq was required to permanently

relinquish and dismantle all its WMD programmes, destroy its WMD stockpiles, ensure that the range of its ballistic missiles did not exceed 150km, and, under the resolution, Iraq was also required to verify this to UN approved inspectors – the UNSCOM (United Nations Special Commission on Iraq) team, some of whom were based in Iraq on a semi-permanent basis. In exchange resolution 687 stipulated that sanctions would be lifted from Iraq.

According to senior members of the UNSCOM team, Iraq did not voluntarily relinquish its WMD programme, refused to fully co-operate with UNSCOM, routinely tried to deceive the inspectors and obstructed their efforts throughout the seven years from 1991 to 1998 (Butler 2003a; Pitt and Ritter 2002; see also Kampfner 2004: 21; Shawcross 2000).² For its part the Iraqi regime never believed that America would authorise the lifting of sanctions. Iraq later alleged that the CIA (the US Central Intelligence Agency) had infiltrated UNSCOM, and hence that America was misappropriating the inspections process to spy on them.

The inspections regime completely broke down in December 1998. Immediately afterwards America and Britain launched a series of bombing raids against Iraq (known as ‘Operation Desert Fox’). However, even sympathetic commentators (such as Hudson and Stanier 1999: 243-244) have criticised the operation on the grounds that there didn’t seem to be any clear objective to justify the bombing.³ The bombing raids didn’t lead to a return of the UN weapons inspectors. Economic sanctions remained in place after this.⁴

Then, in 2002, the United States sponsored an initiative to recommence UN weapons inspections in Iraq under United Nations Security Council resolution 1441. Officially the purpose of inspections remained the same as with resolution 687 – to verify the disarmament of Iraq’s WMD and mid-range missile programmes. The resolution was unanimously approved by all 15 Security Council member states on 8 November 2002, and inspections resumed later that month. UNSCOM was replaced by UNMOVIC (United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspections Commission) led by veteran Swedish inspector Dr Hans Blix. When the UNMOVIC team visited Iraq they were accompanied by inspectors from the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency), headed by Dr Mohammed El Baradei, whose remit was to address any outstanding nuclear issues. By the new millennium though, it was generally accepted that even if Saddam Hussein retained the ambition to build nuclear weapons, such a programme was now most likely to be a lower priority for the regime.⁵ Blix and El Baradei personally delivered three

reports each to the UN Security Council on 27 January 2003, 14 February 2003, and 7 March 2003.

By this stage however, and for reasons that will be outlined in due course, the prospect of war with Iraq had become extremely controversial. The upshot of this was that Hans Blix's presentations to the UN, which spoke most directly to the Anglo-American case for war, were subject to intense scrutiny and media coverage.⁶ What Koenig and MacMillan (2003: 1) say in relation to the first Blix report of 27 January – that it was so central to the case for war and yet also so ambiguous that it was 'immediately claimed by both anti- and pro-war advocates as further evidence for their respective cases' – could very well apply to the other two reports that he delivered.

The inspections process was suspended in March 2003 and inspectors left Iraq just prior to the outbreak of war on 20 March. On 1 May 2003 President Bush declared 'major combat operations' in Iraq to be over, although in the years since violence in Iraq escalated and the country went to the brink of civil war in 2006 and 2007. The levels of violence in Iraq have since declined. US forces formally retreated to urban areas of the country on 30 June 2009.

The controversy surrounding the prospect of war

Elite opinion

By the beginning of 2003, the International Community was seriously divided over the prospect of war against Iraq, with some nations, notably France, Germany, Russia, and virtually all Arabic nations⁷ making it very clear that they opposed war under the circumstances as they stood. In response to these divisions among nation-states, the Bush Administration published a list of 49 countries that had declared their support for American actions against Iraq (these 49 countries were referred to as the 'coalition of the willing').⁸ But that still left well over a hundred countries who had refused to support the invasion of Iraq in 2003, underlining just how divided the governments of the world were on the issue.

It was around this time that opposition to war began to ferment among a significant number of British MPs. Parliamentary opposition to the war culminated in the resignation of one member of the Cabinet (Robin Cook), two Ministers of State, and nine Parliamentary Private Secretaries (Cowley 2005: 124; DIS 2009). Furthermore, although the government comfortably won the final vote on the decision to resort to military force on 18 March 2003 with a majority of 179 votes,

139 Labour MPs, 16 Conservative MPs, the entire Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Party, as well as a number of MPs from the nationalist parties of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, all supported a rebel amendment stating that 'the case for war against Iraq has not yet been established, especially given the absence of specific UN authorisation' (cited in Cowley 2005: 110) – effectively voting against the government's decision to militarily intervene in Iraq.

It is important to appreciate that 'elite opinion' is not restricted to the opinions of elected representatives, but should be understood as encompassing the civil service, diplomatic opinion, and the military. In the case of the Iraq crisis, unease about the prospect of war could also be found within these three groupings.

Within the civil service the most high profile resignation was that of Elizabeth Wilmshurst. On the eve of the invasion Wilmshurst resigned as Deputy Legal Advisor at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, on the grounds that without an additional UN resolution specifically authorising the use of force the military option was 'unlawful' to the extent that it amounted to 'the crime of aggression' (BBC News 2005).

Among the diplomatic community, the most public expression of disquiet about Blair's foreign policy towards Iraq and the wider Middle East came when 52 'former British ambassadors, high commissioners, governors and senior international officials' criticised Blair's stance in a letter published in *The Guardian* on 27 April 2004 (Boyce et al 2004). They wrote that 'All those with experience of the area predicted that the occupation of Iraq by the coalition forces would meet serious and stubborn resistance, as has proved to be the case'.

Senior military figures on both sides of the Atlantic also expressed their opposition to military action for a number of subtly different, if related, reasons. In Britain, in March 2002 *The Observer* reported that 'Britain's military leaders issued a stark warning to Tony Blair ... that any war against Iraq is doomed to fail' and could lead to the military being 'bogged down in a perilous open-ended commitment' (cited in Rai 2002: 163). Around this time former Chief of Defence Staff Field Marshall Lord Bramall 'warned that invading Iraq would pour 'petrol rather than water' on the flames, providing more recruits for Al Qaeda'; and General Sir Michael Rose predicted that war would 'create instability and a lack of security' (both cited in Ibid.: 163). These arguments were echoed by other senior figures from across the Atlantic. On 24 September 2002, *The New York Times* reported that 'Three retired four-star American generals said today that

attacking Iraq without a United Nations resolution supporting military action could limit aid from allies, energise recruiting for Al Qaeda and undermine America's long-term diplomatic and economic interests' (Schmitt 2002). But the same report also found high-ranking supporters of war in the military (from Lieutenant General Thomas McInerney). That this was so, only serves to underscore that it was a case of there being divisions within the (US) military rather than unified opposition from it.

Media opinion

The national press in Britain were also divided over the case for military action. *The Guardian*, *The Mirror*, *The Financial Times*, *The Independent*, *The Independent on Sunday*, and *The Sunday Mirror* all argued against the invasion of Iraq in 2003 in their editorial columns. All the other national papers and their Sunday equivalents supported the decision to launch military action against Iraq in their editorials (Couldry and Downey 2004; Stanyer 2004). It is also worth noting that the country's newspaper columnists were divided over the decision to launch military action, as most national newspapers carried commentary by columnists who took different positions on the war.

Public opinion

According to polling conducted by MORI, 26 percent of the UK population supported military action against Iraq in mid-March 2003, compared to 63 percent who stood against it (cited in Lewis 2004: 297). Whereas 'just two weeks later' when the war would have started, MORI polling revealed that 56 percent of Britons supported the war, with 38 percent being opposed to it (Ibid.: 297).⁹ While this may, dubiously, be interpreted as reflecting a sudden rise in support for military action,¹⁰ it also shows that throughout the crisis, public opinion was split over the decision to invade Iraq.

The significance of the controversy surrounding the war

One of the key arguments to have emerged from Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis, was that media discourses tend to become more pluralistic and open up to a wider range of sources and perspectives whenever elite opinion, media opinion, and (although it may be less influential) whenever public opinion is divided on an issue.¹¹ As we have just seen the Iraq War met all three of these criteria.

This means that we must therefore be open to the possibility that rather than delegitimising opponents of the war in the manner of the ‘protest paradigm’ that was outlined in the previous chapter, the mediated discourses surrounding the Iraq crisis may yet turn out to have been relatively pluralistic and perhaps even receptive to the input from challenger sources, including the antiwar movement. However, for the antiwar movement to have been in a position to realise this potential would have depended on the nature of the media relations’ campaign(s) that they mounted, which is the subject of much of the second half of this thesis.

An inevitable war?

Finally in this section it is important to recognise, if we are to fully understand the Iraq crisis, that there is compelling evidence to suggest that President Bush and Prime Minister Blair had already *committed* themselves to the decision to go to war against Iraq twelve months before the invasion actually began (Clarke 2004; Miller et al 2004: 42; Morrison 2005; Terry 2007: 31). In particular, the evidence for Blair’s determined pursuit of regime change by military means comes from a series of leaked documents dating from the first half of 2002 that were subsequently published in *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Sunday Times*, particularly, and from the memoirs of Britain’s former Ambassador to Washington Sir Christopher Meyer (see Morrison 2005). Of especial interest here is the ‘extremely sensitive’ memo, originally dated 23 July 2002 and later printed in *The Sunday Times*, documenting a high powered meeting on Iraq chaired by the Prime Minister in which Sir Richard Dearlove, the then head of MI6, declared that “Military actions was now seen as inevitable ... the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy” (cited in Ibid.: 3). And, also noteworthy in this regard, is the curious way that Britain and America failed to show any belief in or commitment to the UN Weapons Inspections process in late 2002 and early 2003 (Ibid; Rai 2003). The charge is not made for the sake of being polemical – arguments about the rights and wrongs, wisdom or folly, and the consequences of the war can still be had whilst admitting that the British and American governments had decided to pursue a particular course of action. Nor is this information introduced into the discussion to create the impression that war was inevitable from early 2002 onwards. Rather the point about the determination of the British and American governments is made to underscore the enormity of the challenge facing the antiwar movement as they endeavoured to try to stop the war.

Part II: The nature of the controversy

This part of the Chapter outlines the competing arguments and interpretations of the crisis that dominated public discourse during the lead up to the invasion. It begins by saying a few words about the ‘hearts and minds’ metaphor that has proven to be so durable throughout the Iraq crisis and the wider ‘war on terror’ because the metaphor has the virtue of teasing out both the moral and intellectual dimensions of the controversy. But since the ‘hearts and minds’ metaphor ultimately proves to be inadequate it is dropped in favour of an approach that builds on Frame Analysis theory, which was introduced in Chapter 2. The purpose here is twofold: first, to outline the different interpretations, or ‘packages’ as I call them, that arose over the various aspects of the controversy surrounding the crisis; second, to then show how these different interpretations coalesced into a number of competing ‘schools of thought’.

Hearts and Minds

Ever since April 2003 and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein’s Ba’athist regime in Iraq it has been commonplace for politicians, armchair military strategists and generals to pontificate and argue over the need to win the battle for ‘hearts and minds’ in Iraq in order to manage the occupation of the country.¹² In addition though, there has also been another, if possibly less common, coinage of the term to refer to the nature of the domestic and international controversy surrounding the war in Iraq,¹³ and this is the usage of the term that I intend to concentrate here.

The ‘hearts and minds’ metaphor draws our attention to the truism that the war engaged public opinion in the UK (and around the world) on a moral, perhaps even emotional level, all the way through to embracing a set of arguments that took on a highly rationalised set of considerations – thereby engaging both the heart and the head. Amongst other matters, ‘moral/emotional’ arguments centred around such questions as whether the war was really necessary; and arguments about the number of people likely to be killed in war – specifically, would more people be killed through launching military action, or ultimately would more people be killed by leaving Saddam Hussein in power? By contrast the keywords and phrases of a ‘rationalised’ discourse spoke the language of strategy, security, and the geopolitical complexities of the Middle East. The ‘hearts and minds’ metaphor also has the great virtue of reminding us that in any propaganda campaign, whether making a case for or against war, success is not just a matter of winning over people’s (passive) consent; propaganda campaigns typically also aspire to consolidate those views by having them rooted in a strong and widely shared sense of conviction (Taylor 1998 Ch.1). That

then is another sense in which the battle to persuade was a battle for the heart as well as the head. As both a short cut to highlighting the multidimensional nature of the controversy over the Iraq War, and as a headline for grabbing our attention, the 'hearts and minds' metaphor has much to commend it.

Yet there are problems with the metaphor. The pre-war question of Iraq's putative (and, as it turned out, non-existent) Weapons of Mass Destruction programme, for example, may at first seem to belong to the 'rationalised' set of security orientated discourses. Yet the issue could also be phrased in an emotive way by stirring up fears among Western publics. Indeed many critics of the war alleged that this is precisely what happened (*New Statesman* 2003a, 2003b).

Furthermore, as an analytical concept the distinction between hearts and minds lacks precision. One might question whether the distinction between rational and moral argumentation is entirely valid in the first place; whether that distinction might be hierarchical; and whether it could be prone to establishing misconceptions. On the first point, is ethics not a branch of philosophy? And can't morality and our emotions be discussed in a rational manner? On the second, the implicit hierarchies depend on our disposition. For those rooted in enlightenment thinking rational arguments would be privileged; for those of a romantic disposition it would be the other way round; while there are others who refuse to fully identify with either camp. So, in a direct challenge to Jurgen Habermas's highly rationalised normative ideal of the public sphere (1989), critics, such as Cottle (2006: 47-49) argue that an emotional engagement with political issues is, up to a point, healthy for public debate. Finally, and building on this line of reasoning, the supposed distinction between hearts and minds is problematic because it risks characterising rational arguments as heartless, and moral arguments as possibly rash and ill-thought out.

A more productive alternative can be found from within frame analysis theory and research, specifically the 'packaging' approach most closely identified with Gamson and Modigliani's (1989) research.¹⁴ This approach offers a more useful and precise way of conceptualising the various controversies over the Iraq conflict without resort to categorisations that may be prone to a priori value judgements. Moreover, Gamson and Modigliani's 'packaging' approach is particularly useful for present purposes because builds on and applies frame analysis theory, which, as explained in Chapter 2, has the virtue of emphasising contestation between ideas.

Frame analysis and the Iraq crisis

Gamson and Modigliani's (1989) research investigates the public debate over nuclear power during the first four decades of post-war America. They do not start from a position of taking a stance on the vexed question of whether or not nuclear power is a 'good thing', and nor do they attempt to resolve that matter throughout the course of their article. Instead they start from the observation that discourses on nuclear power are replete with a range of 'metaphors, catchphrases, visual images, moral appeals, and other symbolic devices' (Ibid.: 2). According to their reasoning, we experience these not as disparate elements without connection, but as a cluster of ideas *packaged* together. At the 'core' of the 'package', holding the cluster together, lies the frame, defined by Gamson and Modigliani as 'the central organising idea ... for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue' (Ibid.: 3).¹⁵

Academics have yet to reach a consensus about whether framing 'is simply a metaphor' or whether framing amounts to something more than that (Deacon et al 2007: 162). Nonetheless as a metaphor the most appropriate is that of the framework of a building: it structures the building's overall shape and gives some indication as to its likely purpose, but tells us nothing about the inner furnishings of the building. In other words, frames are concerned with the overall principles guiding the formation of different interpretations of the issues in the public domain rather than being preoccupied with the details of policy proposals. It is however, possible to be a little more specific about how these principles function. Entman (1993) points the way. In the case of the social problems and foreign policy challenges, which is where most framing research has been concentrated, Entman argues that frames work to '*promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation* for the item described' (Ibid.: 52 original emphasis). Meanwhile Iyengar (1991), has, through empirical research, drawn attention to the personalisation of public issues. This adds to our understanding of how frames suggest moral judgements and treatment recommendations, because the overriding questions become a matter of identifying who is responsible for having created these problems in the first place and also who is responsible for solving those problems. Finally, in a society that is, according to the 'risk society' thesis (see Beck 1992; Giddens 1999), increasingly conscious of the dangers it faces and so in consequence organised towards averting those dangers and being able to cope with them should they arise, questions about the assessments of the risks involved may well be a part of the 'problem definition' aspect of framing. These insights from Entman, Iyengar, and the 'risk society' thesis then, ought to be among the core framing questions capable of making packages cohere.

Strictly speaking, it may well be that ‘packages’ of the kind that Gamson and Modigliani suggest are artefacts of the research – devised rather than identified by the researchers. Be that as it may, it ought not to preclude the possibility of the proposed ‘packages’ having an ecological validity that is, at the very least, of sufficient fidelity to serve as useful heuristic devices, thereby allowing us to explore the various positions on any given controversy.

When Gamson and Modigliani identified/constructed a series of ‘packages’ outlining the various interpretations of the nuclear power issue and contributions to the debate over it, they argued that *some* ‘packages’ inevitably lend themselves more readily to one side of the argument than others. The idea of nuclear power as ‘progress’ for example, is generally seen as making a case for nuclear power, whereas the ‘soft paths’ package emphasising environmental concerns often forms the basis of arguments against nuclear power. It would, however, be a mistake to reduce the ‘packages’ to that level. Far more valuable is that we should understand the various positions involved. One of the great virtues of this model is that frames can be taken to imply ‘a range of positions, rather than a single one, allowing for a degree of controversy among those who share a common frame’ (Ibid.: 3). After all, it is so often the case that differences of opinion will break out within political parties or the same school of thought. At other times though, different positions may well be based on different ‘packages’, often leading to a situation where interlocutors will seem as though they are talking past each other.

In line with Gamson and Modigliani’s objectives, the ambitions of the remainder of this chapter are first, to identify the different ‘packages’ in the debate over the Iraq War including by giving due consideration to the questions that Entman’s and Iyengar’s research and the ‘risk society’ thesis prompt; second, to explore how they build up and contribute to the different positions or ‘schools of thought’ on the war; and third, to then consider how these different ‘schools of thought’ relate to each other thereby mapping out the terrain of the debate in the controversy.

Principles for the development of frames on the Iraq War

As Gamson and Modigliani point out, ‘packages’, in the sense that they conceptualise them, are not simple matters of for-or-against as polarised arguments can and will be played out within the parameters of a single package. Like nuclear power, the Iraq War was a multidimensional controversy taking in a number of different issues. In the schemata I propose in this paper, the issues involved have been condensed down to four areas of contestation/concern: security,

international law, morality, and opportunity. When discussing the controversy it has proven to be fruitful to divide each area into for-and-against arguments thereby leaving us with eight distinct ‘packages’.

The emergence of these different ‘packages’ needs to be understood as something of an evolutionary process. ‘Packages’ will often trade in, be built on, and be traceable through, pre-existing political philosophies regarding international affairs. At the same time however, many of the main protagonists should be understood as having contributed towards the *construction* of these ‘packages’, as they attempted to interpret the issues, their causes, make moral evaluations etc., even if they only did so with a view to either arriving at or reinforcing a pre-determined ‘treatment recommendation’ in relation to the crisis.

Given the complexities of the issues it is not surprising that we should have seen the emergence of a number of distinct ‘schools of thought’ on both sides of the argument, as people interpreted, weighed up, and emphasised the different ‘packages’ in different ways. On the pro-war side differences of opinion and emphasis emerged over what the best reasons for justifying the war were, what they hoped it would achieve, and what they felt the priorities were. Likewise on the antiwar side different shades of opinion were identifiable over what the main arguments against the war were and thus which arguments they should emphasise. These were the things that made the different ‘schools of thought’ distinctive. This is what moves our understanding of the debate surrounding the Iraq War beyond the one-dimensionality of the pollster’s ‘for-or-against’ question, as well as taking our understanding past long-standing clichés about ‘hawks’ and ‘doves’, which are inadequate labels because they fail to explore the objectives and the reasoning behind those positions.

The different packages

First of all let us outline the eight different ‘packages’. The frames were identified inductively through a process of immersion in the literature and materials of the actors involved, just as Gamson and Modigliani (1989) did and as is commonplace with this kind of research (Deacon et al 2007). In my case it has also been complimented by interview research (see the next chapter for more details).

Area of concern: Security

Package: Pro-War Security orientated arguments

The pro-war security package was premised on the notion that the Western world faced a real threat that could only be dealt with militarily. The threat was said to come from both Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) – the existence of which was (according to this package) not in doubt during the run-up to the invasion or immediately afterwards, *and* also from Al Qaeda. 'Neo-Conservative' advocates of this package were also adamant that there were links between Saddam's Iraq and Al Qaeda. Officially the British government, being more doubtful on the matter, tried to side step that question.

Uniting these different interpretations of the security package however, was an unashamedly hawkish attitude. This didn't just apply to the threat posed by Al Qaeda or an allegedly WMD armed Iraq, but to all potential adversaries. 'Extremism', 'terrorism', and 'rogue states' were not antagonised by injustice emanating from the influence of the Western world. Instead, it was argued, that those aforementioned 'enemies of freedom' were born of and emboldened by displays of weakness by the West, particularly the United States (see Carruthers 2004; Lemann 2003: 264).¹⁶ The only qualification to this that was sometimes admitted was that the absence of democracy in the Arab world might have been a recruiting sergeant for 'terrorism' and 'extremism'. At this point the pro-war security orientated arguments joined with pro-war moral and opportunity packages (to be outlined shortly) to make the case that war on Iraq will encourage democracy, or at least a move towards more open societies, throughout the Arab world.

Figure 4.1:

	Pro-War Security
Problem definition?	Threat is real, security (re)established through military action
Causal interpretation?	Enemies emboldened by displays of weakness
Moral Evaluation?	(Not necessarily applicable. Best addressed under morality)
Who is to blame?	Saddam, Al Qaeda
Who has the solution?	A US led 'coalition of the willing'
Risks?	Less than allowing a WMD armed Saddam
Treatment Recommendation?	Invasion to achieve disarmament through regime change

Package: Antiwar Security orientated arguments

Advocates of the antiwar security package were far more uncertain and, as a collective, divided on the question of whether or not Iraq possessed any WMD. Nonetheless, the predominant position on the matter among those who articulated this package was that the best way to a) find out, and b) to prevent Iraq from ever acquiring them in the future was through UN led weapons inspections and monitoring. Links between Iraq and Al Qaeda meanwhile were strongly doubted.

Also key to understanding this package is the argument that invasion and occupation can only sow the seeds of anarchy and resentment thereby acting as the best recruiting campaign for Islamic 'terrorism' there could possibly be. Some predicted that the anarchic chaos of post-war Iraq would breed more 'terrorists' from within just as a swamp breeds mosquitoes (Chomsky 2002). Post-invasion one of the most commonplace metaphors has been that the presence of US forces occupying Iraq have, in effect, acted as a magnet attracting 'terrorists' from across the Middle East and perhaps even further a field (*Guardian* 2003b). Furthermore, a recurrent line of reasoning running throughout antiwar argumentation, both before and after the invasion, has been the claim that British involvement in military action against Iraq would provoke, and indeed has provoked, a terrorist backlash.¹⁷ Instead, or so advocates of this package argued, we would do far more to combat 'extremism' by building peace, most urgently by attempting to resolve the Israel-Palestine dispute (Chomsky 2002).

Looking to the longer term, the reasoning underpinning this package held that global security must be established collectively by working through a system of international law and the UN (although some may wish to see reform of those institutions). This was regarded as the only practical way to ensure that the 'ownership' of WMD remained severely restricted so as not to fall into hands of either 'terrorists' or 'rogue states' (Butler 2003b). The 'package' asserted that by contrast, to abandon the principles of international law by launching a pre-emptive war could only erode our moral authority and through that our ability to act in times of crisis. Taken on its own the morality of this package could be regarded as self-interested. From the point of view of some antiwar radicals this was problematic because they often preferred to build their case around purely moral objections to military action. As we shall see however, other opponents of the war interpreted this package in ways that (they felt) sat more comfortably alongside their moral objections to the war.

Figure 4.2:

	Antiwar security
Problem definition?	Threat may be real but is containable. War will provoke terrorism, and may lead to a prolonged occupation.
Causal interpretation?	(Not necessarily applicable. The focus is on the risks and alternatives)
Moral Evaluation?	(Not necessarily applicable. Best addressed under morality)
Who is to blame?	No blame is necessarily ascribed under this package
Who has the solution?	UN weapons inspectors
Risks?	Of provoking terrorism, of being sucked into an avoidable war and a prolonged occupation.
Treatment Recommendation?	Continued inspections

Area of concern: International Law

Package: International law interpreted from a Pro-war perspective

Not all proponents of the invasion of Iraq held international law in high regard, but there were some elements of pro-war community who specifically made a case for the invasion of Iraq on the basis of their interpretations of international law. At a minimum they argued that the invasion was justified under international law on the basis of Iraq's failure/refusal to fully co-operate with the inspections process. In some cases they also argued that the authority of the UN rested on taking decisive action against Saddam. The various reports by Hans Blix and the Mohammed El Baradei to the UN Security Council were interpreted in this light, while any moves towards co-operation and disarmament that Iraq may have made, such as their dismantling of Al-Samoud missiles, were seen as being no more than superficial gestures.¹⁸

At a more general level, some advocates of this package argued that security and human rights could only be secured through the UN and international law.

Figure 4.3:

Pro-War International Law	
Problem definition?	An obligation to disarm Iraq under International law
Causal interpretation?	Saddam's non-compliance with UN resolutions calling on him to disarm
Moral Evaluation?	Saddam's breach of International Law
Who is to blame?	Saddam
Who has the solution?	A US led 'coalition of the willing'
Risks?	A greater risk than war would be that Saddam's refusal to disarm undermines the UN and International Law
Treatment Recommendation?	Invasion to uphold authority of UN and International Law

Package: International Law interpreted from an Antiwar perspective

Just as there were differences of opinion and emphasis from within the pro-war community as to how much regard ought to be paid to international law and over how much respect it deserved, so too we find the same degree of ambivalence among antiwar opinion when taken as a whole.

For those opponents of the invasion who incorporated international legal concerns into their arguments, one narrative stood out above all others: the war was illegal. That, they insisted, was and remains the opinion of most international lawyers and the UN Secretary General through subtly phrased admissions (BBC News 2004). Resolution 1441 said Iraq would face 'serious consequences' if they did not comply with the UN inspections process. Whereas the standard phrase for authorising the use of force is that 'all necessary means' will be used if Iraq was declared to be 'in material breach' of the inspections process, which, as opponents of the war also pointed out, was a phrase that Hans Blix never once used in reports to the Security Council.

In response to pro-war interpretations of international law, this package conceded that although 17 UN resolutions had been passed against Iraq only one authorised force and that was in relation to a condition that had already been met, namely the 'liberation' of Kuwait 12 years previous. Opponents of the war argued that to resurrect a 12-year-old resolution on conditions that had already been met was itself an abuse of international law (Byrne and Weir 2004).

For proponents of this package these arguments were more than a technicality. They mattered because governments cannot be allowed to operate outside of systems of international law, picking and choosing laws when they suit government purposes, discarding them when they don't. Secondly, if every time a member of the Security Council had a dispute with another country, they could seize upon any one of the 1400 plus (now over 1900) UN Security Council resolutions, single-handedly declare the other country to be in material breach and use that as an excuse to grant itself the right to wage war, the UN would change from being an institution designed to establish peace in the world, to one granting a carte blanche right to Security Council members to go to war whenever they liked against whoever they liked.

Figure 4.4:	
	Antiwar International Law
Problem definition?	War was illegal, according to both the letter and the spirit of the law
Causal interpretation?	(Package does not concern itself with causal matters)
Moral Evaluation?	US/UK Government's acting outside the law. Unacceptable precedents. (See morality)
Who is to blame?	(Package does not specifically concern itself with questions of blame)
Who has the solution?	The UN/International Law
Risks?	Launching war under these circumstances shows government operating outside the law, and the UN ceasing to be an institution for upholding peace
Treatment Recommendation?	At a minimum, no war without UN authorisation

Morality

Package: Pro-War moral arguments

Saddam Hussein and the Ba'athist regime he led had an appalling human rights record, had murdered hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, ruled through fear, routinely practiced torture, launched a war against Iran in 1980 and (temporarily) annexed Kuwait in 1990. This much was beyond dispute and well documented in successive reports by organisations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.¹⁹ The pro-war morality package argued that in the light of all this 'regime change' through war was the only way to rid the world and above all the Iraqi people of this tyranny. These arguments were not just informed by a sense of moral outrage against the regime, but also by a utilitarian ethos. It was admitted that innocent people will inevitably be killed by invasion, but the number will ultimately be less than leaving Saddam and the Ba'athists in power, or so supporters of military action argued (e.g. Cohen 2003).

Advocates of the war also argued that whatever ones misgivings about the war, people should rally round and support the troops once military action commences. Many supporters of the war regarded this as a moral imperative.

Package: Antiwar moral arguments

Moral arguments against the war can be presented as falling into three categories: the consequential, arguments that revolved around concerns about the precedents military action in this case might set, and arguments from first principles.

Consequential moral arguments against the war revolved around opponents' predictions about the likely consequences of military action. The most commonly expressed of these was the prediction that the war will make the world a more dangerous place, by fuelling 'terrorism' across the world, conflict throughout Iraq and the wider region, or that the war would increase racism domestically. In many ways it could be argued that these arguments amount to a conscientious reworking of the antiwar security package, with the all important difference that rather than present security arguments in terms of self-interest and the dangers of 'terrorist' blowback for *us*, they cast the matter in terms of the war's likely consequences for the people of Iraq and the Middle East, and also for the future.

Many opponents of the war had particularly strong concerns about the doctrine of pre-emptive warfare that the Bush Administration advanced to justify an attack on Iraq when there was no basis for supposing that Iraq posed an immediate threat to the West. Antiwar voices, and even some of its supporters (see Hari 2003), regarded the doctrine as dubious, dangerous, and, they contended, without precedent in modern history. What would happen they asked, if the Iraq War were to legitimise the doctrine and thereby set a precedent for future pre-emptive wars? This was the second category of moral objectives to the war. Clearly there are overlaps here with the antiwar international law package.

Arguments from first principles treat certain actions as being morally right and others as simply wrong without regard to their consequences or the precedents they set. Questions and debate about how this can be so, and whether matters of right and wrong must ultimately refer the consequences or precedents set by those actions are far beyond the scope of this study. For our purposes, it is important to be aware, that in news reports, activists' own pamphlets and speeches,

as well as personal interview testimony conducted by this author, opponents of the war often articulated any one of the following narratives as being intrinsically powerful arguments against the war on their own terms. There was a strong sense of opposition to killing people; opposition to war under any circumstances for pacifists, opposition to war under these circumstances for others; the war was seen as an unprovoked attack upon a sovereign state; as unnecessary; as a means of humiliation against Muslims; as imperialist; as having an ulterior motive, which for most people meant a desire to seize Iraq's oil; and as hollow and hypocritical given past Western support for Saddam and/or its continued support for Israel which was also in breach of a number of UN resolutions. Again many of these narratives can be connected to consequential and precedent orientated concerns, and from there to some of the other antiwar packages.

It is worth noting that none of the opponents of the war interviewed for this research ever built their arguments around open support for Saddam Hussein.

Opportunities

Package: Pro-War opportunities

In many ways the pro-war opportunities package must be seen as an extension of the pro-war security package. Whereas the security package argued that force is necessary for the protection of Western societies and interests thereby safeguarding the status quo, the pro-war opportunities package went further arguing that war would have hugely beneficial consequences. In its staunchly American version, the package made the case that war would *extend* American primacy and power rather than simply consolidate it. Other advocates of the war saw it as advancing any one of a number of opportunities:

- War would pressurise Israel into accepting a peace deal with the Palestinians, since Israel would no longer be able to argue that Saddam's support for and funding of the PLO made any deal impossible (Fishburn 2002).
- The removal of Saddam from power and the establishment of democracy in Iraq would set a contagious example throughout the Middle East (Ibid).
- More cynically still, others argued that the war would allow for a reduction in world oil prices. Rupert Murdoch even went so far as to predict \$20 for a barrel of oil. "That's bigger than any tax cut in any country" he is reported to have said (quoted in Greenslade 2003).

Figure 4.5:

	Pro-war opportunity
Problem definition?	The problem presents an opportunity to extend American interests in the region
Causal interpretation?	Saddam's continued presence and defiance is seen as an obstacle to realisation of those interests
Moral Evaluation?	(Not necessarily concerned with morality)
Who is to blame?	Saddam
Who has the solution?	America
Risks?	Fulfilment of these objectives reduces risk/ makes the world safer
Treatment Recommendation?	Invasion for the sake of regime change

Package: Antiwar opportunities

Curiously opponents of the war often argued precisely the same things: the war was about oil and extending American power. Far from being attractive options they were considered a nightmare scenario, especially the extension of American hegemony. Opponents of the war also regarded these objectives as morally bankrupt. Questions of problem definition, causal interpretation, and who and what is to blame can be fused together under the headings of US imperialism, oil dependency, and pro-Zionism as an all-encompassing answer to each point.

The frames applied: the different 'schools of thought'

This, as I see things, is a rough outline of the main points of debate that arose during the run-up to the war and that have carried on ever since. Needless to say, the model represents a tidied up version of the different arguments since in reality they were usually more complex, detailed, and arguably in each case, contradictory than is presented here. But the fact remains that in the lead-up to the war when the issue stood at the top of the news agenda, few people could have entirely escaped exposure to these arguments. This means that each of these different packages would have been weighed up and interpreted by individuals and political parties. None of the main protagonists in the debate had the luxury of staying silent in relation to any of these four main areas of contestation. Moreover for them it was not enough to have a potentially inconsistent ad hoc set of arguments; they needed to be woven together into a consistent and persuasive 'school of thought' as they saw it. The result was the emergence of six main different 'schools of thought'

on the Iraq War – three in favour, three against, (not counting those who were undecided on the matter).

I have labelled the three pro-war schools of thought as ‘Neo-conservatism,’ the ‘Official’ line, and ‘Liberal Hawks’; the three antiwar schools are ‘Antiwar Realists,’ ‘Liberal Doves’ and ‘Antiwar Radicals.’

‘Neo-conservatism’

‘Neo-conservatism’ could be distinguished from other pro-war voices by its enthusiasm for and faith in the virtues of American leadership and its apparently sincere belief that this works for the benefit of the whole world on the grounds that America is the only power on Earth able to create security in our world (Cheney 2003; Donnelly 2000; Kagan and Kristol 2003). Reluctant to openly regard itself as an imperial project, as its critics chastise it for being, this perspective asserted that global security is guaranteed by the protection that only America can create by driving state tyranny and state sponsored terrorism from the world thereby paving the way for democracy. Thus for the neo-conservatives the war on terror is both a moral calling and an opportunity for advancing their vision. This necessitates a pro-active rather than simply reactive approach to warfare. Hence the doctrine of ‘pre-emptive action.’ ‘Neo-conservatism’ drew heavily on the pro-war versions of the security, opportunity and morality packages, but little, if any regard, is paid to the dictates of international law and the UN.

From the left, centre and even the centre-right, critics point to instances of hypocrisy and insincerity of this vision as not all tyranny and/or support for terrorism is so vigorously pursued; the dangerous implications of the pre-emption doctrine, and of abandoning any allegiance to any form of international law. In general, these criticisms have tended to manifest themselves in the negative coverage that neo-conservatism has been met with in elite European newspapers (Tzogopoulos 2006).

The ‘Official’ view

Referring to the ‘Official’ view of the British government, this view could admit no contradictions, shortcomings, or cynicism in the case for war. Here the war was regarded as moral for ridding the Iraqi people of Saddam Hussein, legal because of Iraq’s putative non-cooperation with the UN weapons inspectors, and has made Britain and the world more secure by removing the threat a WMD armed Iraq was said to pose. These arguments were limited to making a case

for the Iraq War and the wider war on terror. They were not connected to the broader vision for the world that *radically* departed from existing structures. In other words, this school of thought embraced the pro-war security, international law and morality packages, but, publicly at least, denied that the temptations of the more cynical aspects of the pro-war opportunities package even existed. For example, Tony Blair always dismissed the idea that the war was all about oil as nothing more than a ‘conspiracy theory’ (*Guardian* 2003a).

The ‘Liberal Hawk’ view

The ‘Liberal Hawk’ view was mostly articulated by a number of journalists and print media political commentators, hailing from the left to the centre ground politically (with, inevitably, different shades of emphasis between them). In the UK this meant people like Nick Cohen (of *The Observer* and, in 2003, the *New Statesman*), David Aaronovitch (at *The Guardian* in 2003, now at *The Times*), Johann Hari (*The Independent*); stateside it meant commentators like Thomas Friedman (of *The New York Times*) and Christopher Hitchens. They saw military action in terms of being a war against Saddam Hussein not Iraq, justified on the basis of his appalling human rights record. Some were perhaps more sceptical than others about certain aspects of the official case for war, notably the claims about WMD in Iraq and the possibility of there being links between Ba’athist Iraq and Al-Qaeda, but in any case they rarely ever made those the central tenets of their arguments. In sum, the arguments in the pro-war morality ‘package’ alone were held to be sufficiently compelling to make the case for war (see Hari 2003). In a strange sort of way then, they may well have had more in common with the ‘neo-conservatives’ than the ‘official’ line.

Antiwar voices

The three antiwar ‘schools of thought’ are best characterised as existing along a continuum from the ‘Antiwar Realists’, through the ‘Liberal Doves’, to the ‘Antiwar Radicals’, depending on how far they were exercised by the dictates of realpolitik at the Realist end through to how far they were exercised by supposedly principled and moral considerations at the Radical end. They still amount to different ‘schools of thought’ because of the variations in emphasis that they give to the different antiwar ‘packages’.

‘Antiwar realists’

‘Antiwar realists’ were not the most vocal of opponents to the war. They included people like former UK Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, former US National Security Advisor General Brent

Snowcroft and others who were generally on the centre-right, as well as a number of senior military figures. Their argument was that first and foremost the war was at best a huge and unnecessary risk, at worst a mistake that would be counterproductive as a means of combating terrorism and would undermine regional stability in the Middle East (Clarke 2004; Roberts 2003; Snowcroft 2003). As was mentioned in Part I of this chapter, former Chief of Defence Staff Field Marshall Lord Bramall 'warned that invading Iraq' would create 'more recruits for Al Qaeda' (cited in Rai 2002: 163). Such sentiments are typical of 'antiwar realist' thinking. Likewise in September 2002, US General Wesley Clark warned that any war on Iraq would undermine efforts against Al Qaeda and maybe even "supercharge" recruitment for the terrorist network (cited in Schmitt 2002). In other words, their arguments tended to be built around the premises of the 'antiwar security' package, although they did incorporate arguments from the antiwar morality package regarding soldiers' lives being unnecessarily endangered.

They tend to be supportive of other aspects of the 'war on terror'. It just so happens that the Iraq War was regarded as a counter-productive move as part of the fight against terrorism.

'Liberal Doves'

This position is best exemplified by the Liberal Democrat Party's opposition to the Iraq War. They shared many of the 'antiwar realist' concerns about the war, articulating many of the same arguments about its likely consequences for national and international security. The two most significant elements to their case that distinguished them from the antiwar realists, were first, that they were more vocal in their opposition to the war, for instance partaking in marches against it before the start of military action, but not once it had begun; and second, that they also rooted their arguments more strongly in the legal objections to the war registering their concern about the implications of the war for International Law and the UN.

Their stance on other aspects of the 'war on terror' was and remains a qualified one. Most 'Liberal Doves' including the Liberal Democrats, supported the Afghanistan War for instance. But it has not been uncommon for them to raise objections against other aspects of the 'war on terror' such as extraordinary rendition and Guantamano Bay.

'Antiwar Radicals'

The 'antiwar radicals' were the mainstay of public opposition to the war, as represented by the Stop the War Coalition and the majority of locally based antiwar groups from across the country.

In many ways they stood for people's understanding of the term 'the antiwar movement'. While there was little in the central plank of 'antiwar realist' and 'liberal dove' positions that the mainstream of the movement would actually disagree with and indeed they too often articulated the antiwar legal and security packages, this was not where the emphasis of their arguments lay. For them, the Iraq War was not simply a mistake; it was a fundamentally immoral and unprincipled. Their arguments were also strongly rooted in an anti-imperialist discourse that drew on elements of the 'antiwar opportunities' package, which would have been unthinkable for the 'antiwar realists', and something that the 'liberal doves' were cautious about emphasising. It is also worth noting that the 'antiwar radicals' were much more sceptical about the existence of the WMD in Iraq than either of the other two antiwar positions. Furthermore, their arguments went beyond opposition to the Iraq War, to encompass objections to the entire 'war on terror', criticism of Israel's occupation of Palestine, and of America for being an imperialist power, as they would see things.

Finally, some of the more radical elements within the movement were inclined to reject the validity of the 'antiwar security' and 'international law' packages, being mistrustful of the UN seeing it as a handmaiden of US imperialism (Ali 2003), and were also wary of the self interested morality inherent in the 'antiwar security' package. Instead they preferred to build their case near solely on the basis of the 'antiwar morality' and 'opportunities' packages.

These six 'schools of thought' are significant not simply because they represent six different ways of looking at the issues involved in the controversy, but because as the main protagonists in the debate they were the ones who drove the arguments onwards vigorously promoting their 'packages' as they attempted to persuade public opinion.

Undecided opinion

Lastly there was one more body of opinion that was surely significant, encompassing a large section of the public even if it didn't amount to a 'school of thought' as such, and that was undecided opinion. In many ways this is something of an anomaly among the protagonists within the debate, because unlike all the other 'schools of thought', which pushed their respective lines to some degree, agnostic opinion did not. It was not that as individuals they held no views on the matter or regarded the Iraq crisis as unimportant, just that they saw the debate as more finely balanced. More significantly, their views did not coalesce around any single 'package' of argumentation.

No doubt many agnostics could be found on the Labour backbenches. Journalist John Kampfner's account of how the Labour party hierarchy right up to Tony Blair set about persuading reluctant Labour MPs to vote for the war in the days and hours leading up to the House of Commons vote on military action on 18 March 2003 is illuminating:

Some were told this was about saving the integrity of the UN. Some were given the full moral case against Saddam, emphasising his human rights record. Some had the specific line on WMD. Some were asked if they really wanted to reward the perfidy of the French. Some were reminded of the domestic political implications, that the government could be in peril. Some were told that their protest was futile. (Kampfner 2004: 306-307).

In some cases the whipping was successful, in some cases it wasn't. The point is that the agnostic uncertainties did not revolve around any single issue or area of concern. As a result opinion that fell into this category cannot be said to add up to any particular school of thought.

Framing and the media research agenda

The model outlined above, I believe, provides a template for thinking about and navigating our way through the arguments that raged over the Iraq War. In addition, the 'packages' and 'schools of thought' that have been outlined here turned out to be a useful compliment to the content analysis study, the results and discussion of which are presented in Chapter 9 and 10.

This concludes Part I of this thesis, which has been concerned to outline both the theoretical and political issues involved, along with the questions they provoke. Chapters 2 and 3 aimed to show that when elite and media opinion are divided on an issue, challenger sources have, in recent times, occasionally managed to take advantage of that state of affairs so as to secure favourable media coverage and even, in some cases, successfully promote their own preferred framings about an issue through the media. This last chapter has shown, amongst other things, that elite and media opinion were indeed divided over the Iraq crisis. What remains to be seen is whether challenger sources, particularly the antiwar movement, were able to take advantage of this situation to make their case against the war as effectively as possible. Part II of this study takes up that challenge by presenting and explaining the results of the empirical investigations into how the locally based antiwar groups set about engaging with the local press. It also presents the

results of research into how the war was reported in the local press, before proceeding to consider the connections between the two.

End Notes

¹ Part II of this chapter is an adapted version of my paper 'Surveying the Battlefield: Mapping the different arguments and positions of the Iraq War debate through Frame Analysis', *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* 2008, 5(3) 69-90.

² Although one leading inspector, Scott Ritter, later claimed that in spite of the Iraqi regime's attempts at deception and obstruction, the inspections process had, in effect, managed to bring Iraq's chemical and biological programmes to an end, had left behind tamper proof monitoring equipment in former suspect sites, and that even if there were any remaining stockpiles of chemical or biological agents they would have degraded by 2002 (Pitt and Ritter 2002).

³ Hudson and Stanier (1999: 243-244) criticise the mission, 'Operation Desert Fox', on the grounds that it wasn't clear what the purpose of the mission was. They ask:

- Was it to destroy the stockpiles of WMD Iraq supposedly had, yet which the inspectors couldn't find?
- Was it to 'force Saddam Hussein to grant access to the monitors'? – 'This seemed to be a very unlikely outcome,' they quip.
- To topple Saddam?
- To punish his intransigence?
- Or to deflect attention away from the Lewinsky affair that had embroiled the Clinton Presidency (pp.243-244)?

⁴ Sanctions against Iraq were formally lifted on 22 May 2003.

⁵ It is true that President Bush laid great stress on the prospect of Iraq acquiring nuclear weapons in his State of the Union address of 28 January 2002, when he declared that "The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa" (cited in Duffy and Carney 2003), but this was soon dropped as part of the official rationale for war because the intelligence supporting it was regarded as being too unreliable. The then Director of the CIA, George Tenet, said, "Those 16 words should never have been included in the text written for the President" (cited in Ibid.). Also telling in this regard, is that the then Secretary of State, Colin Powell, did not incorporate this claim into his presentation to the UN on 5 February 2003 when he made a case against Iraq (Ibid.). Furthermore, Mohammed El Baradei had already, effectively, dismissed the claims in his presentation to the Security Council on 27 January 2003: "We have to date found no evidence that Iraq has revived its nuclear weapons programme since the elimination of the programme in the 1990s" (cited in Ismael 2007: 47).

⁶ El Baradei's presentation was less central to the case for war for reasons outlined in End Note 5, and also because as Koenig and MacMillan (2003: 1) observe, El Baradei's report left little room for pro-war interpretations.

⁷ With the exception of Kuwait, all 22 members of the Arab League declared their public opposition to the Iraq War (BBC News 2003b).

⁸ The Bush Administration released a list of the 49 countries that made up the 'coalition of the willing' in a press release on 27 March 2003. (Available at <http://georgebush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030327-10.html> accessed 10 August 2009).

⁹ ICM polling for *The Guardian* found that on 14 March 2003, 38 percent of the UK population were supportive of the decision to go to war and 44 percent were opposed. One week later on 21 March, the same polling organisation found that 54 percent of British people now supported the war compared to 30 percent who remained opposed (cited in Murray et al 2008: 8). While the figures presented here are different from those in the MORI surveys (which may in part reflect differences in question wording, as well as differences in the timing of the surveys), the sudden surge in support for the war is consistent with the transformation that the MORI surveys revealed.

¹⁰ As Lewis (2004) observes, an important caveat ought to be introduced that can partially explain the apparent leap in support for the war, in that the two questions asked by the MORI polls were not identical: 'The question in mid-March asked people if they would support a war *if* there were no proof from weapons inspectors that Iraq was hiding weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and no UN backing; the later question contained no such conditions' (2004: 297-298 original emphasis). Although Lewis goes on to argue the leap in support was in many cases the result of people wishing to declare their support for the troops rather than the mission. He further speculates that people's attitudes may have changed as a result of the different framings adopted in the news coverage: Pre-war debates about the case for war were a major theme of reporting at the time; once the invasion began the reporting was framed around the question of military progress.

¹¹ Without falling for naïve ideas about the popular sovereignty of the press Curran (1998) argues that newspapers must *to some extent* be sensitive to public opinion.

¹² On 15 June 2004, Republican Congressman and Chairman of the Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations, Christopher Shays declared that "The United States and its Coalition partners are attempting to win the hearts and minds of the people in Iraq...." [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/hearts_and_minds_\(Iraq\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/hearts_and_minds_(Iraq)) (accessed 23 June 2009). The term was also in currency among armchair strategists e.g. Koch (2003) 'Hearts and minds' key to US Iraq Strategy', and Dejevsky (2009) 'It's a war for our hearts and minds' in relation to the war in Afghanistan. While the fact that the term entered the language of the military in both Britain and America as was evident from the way that senior military figures expressed their concerns and articulated their reasoning through their adoption of the term. Examples include:

- "We have a very considerable hearts and minds challenge", Chief of General Staff (UK), General Sir Mike Jackson, quoted in Norton-Taylor and McCarthy (2003);
- 'The goal of "winning hearts and minds" among local people in Iraq and Afghanistan is unrealistic and "almost ridiculous"', former SAS officer Lieutenant General Greame Lamb said in March 2008 (Hickley 2008);
- The case of a US Army Colonel who subtitled his reflections on the occupation as *An American Soldier's Battle for Hearts and Minds in Iraq* (King 2006);
- And the emphasis on General Petraeus' counterinsurgency strategy was that it should "take, hold and build" in order to win the "hearts and minds" of the population and thus win the war' (Nester 2009).

¹³ Variants on the phrase can be found in the titles or subtitles of the following books:

- *American Idol after Iraq: Competing for Hearts and Minds in the Global Media Age*, (Gardels and Medavoy 2009) referring to how American popular culture, and in particular Hollywood, promotes America's image to both itself and the rest of the world.
- *Losing Hearts and Minds: The Coalition, Al Jazeera and Muslim Public Opinion*, (Tatham 2006) which is mainly focused on Arabic reactions to the Iraq War and how Arabic media influenced Arab public opinion.

Also worthy of note is novelist Ian McEwan's article first published in *The New York Observer* on 21 February 2003 (and reproduced in (Sifry and Cerf 2003) entitled 'Hawks have my head, doves have my heart, guess which wins?' which speaks most directly to the debate about the case for invasion from an Anglo-American standpoint.

¹⁴ There are other ways of designing framing research. See Tankard (2003).

¹⁵ If Gamson and Modigliani's definition of framing bears some resemblance to the definition that I propose in Chapter 2 it is because their definition influenced mine, as conceded in Chapter 2.

¹⁶ By this I mean that Carruthers and Lemann both identify this line of reasoning within elements of pro-war thinking, particularly those associated with the Bush Administration. I do not mean to imply that either of them endorses this argument.

¹⁷ Rai (2006) provides compelling evidence the Iraq War in particular (and British Foreign Policy more generally) were, at the very least, contributory factors in motivating the four suicide bombers who struck London and killed 52 people on the morning of 7 July 2005.

¹⁸ In his report on 7 March 2003, Blix was able to report that Iraq had destroyed 34 Al Samoud missiles because they were found to have a range that exceeded the permitted 150km range.

¹⁹ Amnesty International's report 'Iraq: People come first' (2003) lists no fewer than 33 reports that Amnesty International published between 1975 and 2002 registering concern about various human rights abuses in Iraq ranging from torture, to disappearances, to extrajudicial killings among many other matters for concern. This is not meant to imply that either Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch supported the decision to go to war. Amnesty International has a long-standing official policy of staying neutral in discussions about military action. Human Rights Watch however, did weigh into the debate after the invasion and came out against the argument that the Iraq War met the test of 'humanitarian intervention' (Roth 2004).

Part II: Research

Part II

Having outlined the theoretical parameters of this thesis, the study is now well placed to see how far the questions raised and the paradigms addressed in those chapters could be said to have applied in the case of the contemporary antiwar movement in the UK and their dealings with the media. Part II begins then, with an outline of the methodologies employed by this study.

Chapter 5: Methodologies

The research for this thesis is primarily based on survey research, interview testimony, and content analysis. Like all methodologies these three have their strengths as well as their weaknesses. The virtue of multi-method research however, is that if an appropriate combination of methods are selected, it should be possible to counterbalance the weaknesses and blind spots of one method with the strengths and insights from others (Deacon et al 2007; Halloran 1998). Here I shall examine each methodological approach one by one.

The Survey

The purpose of the survey research was threefold:

- To provide a snapshot of the antiwar movement and its attitudes towards, and dealings with, the media.
- To initiate contact with antiwar groups. The most important question here was: Would you be prepared to participate in future research? Those groups that answered 'yes' were in some cases interviewed shortly thereafter; those whom answered 'no' were not contacted again (with one exception).
- To provide a basis upon which provincial newspapers were selected for content analysis research. More will be said about this in the discussion on content analysis.

The results were gathered from a combination of a long survey conducted online featuring 58 questions (some of which were optional) using the SurveyMonkey website (<http://www.surveymonkey.com>), a shorter online version of the same survey consisting of 12 questions (using the same online system), and the same version of the shorter survey but distributed by post. In total there were 105 responses to the survey out of 207 potential

respondents. Full versions of both these surveys can be found in Appendices 2.1 and 2.2 respectively. The surveys were conducted between February and June 2006.

Of the three objectives for the survey, the last two objectives treat the survey as a means towards an end. The first one however, aims to deliver a more accurate set of data, much of which formed the basis of the discussion in Chapters 6 and 7. In consequence, this requires a rigorous understanding of the survey methodology.

Surveys are vulnerable to falling into four types of error and each must be avoided so as to yield accurate and meaningful results. The four types of error are: coverage error, sampling error, measurement error, and non-response error.

Coverage error

Coverage error arises when the sample used for the survey does not accurately reflect or ‘cover’ all the characteristics of the population it is supposed to represent. Any results produced would therefore be unreliable (Dillman 2000; Salant and Dillman 1994). This is a potential shortcoming with online surveys, since only 57 percent of all UK homes were connected to the Internet in 2006,¹ meaning that many members of the population under investigation will be denied access to the survey. This would however, appear to be less of a problem for a survey of the antiwar movement. The sample list was based on the list of all the locally based groups that could be found on the Stop the War Coalition’s website (<http://www.stopwar.org.uk>) in early 2006. This, as I shall argue in the next chapter, was (and is) probably the most comprehensive list of antiwar groups available in the UK. As of February 2006 there were 357 local groups in the UK, of which 346 claimed to have email addresses – amounting to a high proportion of Internet penetration. Of those 346 it soon emerged that 207 had live email accounts. This probably represents most of the extant locally based antiwar groups that were active in early 2006. For the purposes of this survey the chances of coverage error were further minimised by surveying this entire population of 207 groups.

Sampling error

Sampling error results from sampling only some of the units from the population in question. This means that the more units there are and the more units that respond the lower the chances of significant error. This is the only type of error that can be statistically calculated (Dillman 2000; Salant and Dillman 1994).

The online survey conducted for this research overcomes the first of these potential problems by surveying the entire population of locally based antiwar groups within Internet access (the vast majority of local groups) in the UK.

On the basis of receiving 105 responses out of 207, it was calculated that the results for my survey were 95 percent likely to have been accurate to within 7 percent statistical accuracy.

Measurement error

Measurement error arises from asking poorly worded questions that are either unclear or which 'lean' towards a particular set of answers, and/or that offer a range of ill thought out options to choose from. Were this to happen the survey would yield an imprecise or meaningless set of results (Dillman 2000; Salant and Dillman 1994).

One of the advantages of Internet based surveys is that it is possible to randomly alter the order of the answers when a range of options is available. Obviously it makes no sense to randomise the choice of answers if they form a sequence from, say, 'strongly agree' through to 'strongly disagree'. But when confronted with a question (from the long version of the survey) like 'Has the group ever been involved in opposing and/or organising debate in relation to any of the following issues or causes? Tick all that apply', there is wisdom in randomising the order in which the answers are given. The reason why we might want to do so, is because if respondents were taking a less than fully serious attitude towards the questionnaire they might be inclined to tick all the answers that apply until they feel they've given enough answers (Dillman 2000: 234). But by randomising the choices the survey design can at least negate this possibility.

Non-response error

Non-response error occurs when a significant proportion of the people who did not respond, would, in all likelihood, have had different characteristics and thus given a different set of answers from those that did (Dillman 2000; Salant and Dillman 1994). This becomes a problem when the survey yields a low response rate, but the response for my own survey was just over 50 percent.

Each of these principles apply to all types of survey, including online and mail surveys, which were the two types of survey embarked upon for this research.

The Interviews

There were 38 antiwar activists and 8 journalists interviewed for this research. There was also one journalist who responded to questions by way of an email exchange. In every case the interviews were semi-structured, averaged 75 minutes in length, and lasted between 11 minutes and over 3 hours. 44 of the interviews were conducted by telephone; the other two interviews were conducted face-to-face. Each interview was recorded with the interviewee's permission, and then transcribed – more or less word for word, but leaving out hesitations.

The activist interviewees were selected from the survey. As a rule of thumb, only a selection of those respondents to the survey who declared that they were prepared to participate in future research were contacted, although a representative from a group who had initially said that they were unwilling to participate in future research later agreed to be interviewed after having been persuaded.

A full list of interviewees, the groups they represent or the newspapers they write for, along with the date and times of the interviews can be found in Appendices 3.1 and 3.2. The numbers given to the interviewees in Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 11, merely reflect the order in which they are quoted in the dissertation. They have no bearing on the order in which they were interviewed or the alphabetical order of either their names or the name of the groups to which they belong. This protects the anonymity of the respondents, which is something that they were promised.

The Content Analysis

Content analysis is best suited to quantifying the manifest features of media output. Methodologists used to argue that content analysis was objective (e.g. Berelson 1952 referenced in Deacon 2007: 118; Hansen 1998: 95), but more recent reflections on the method are wary of making such elevated claims. Content analysis is the product of decisions made during the design stage about what the object of enquiry ought to be: decisions about what to count, how large a sample to have, and how to categorise the data (Deacon et al 2007: 132). Nonetheless, it is still possible to be rigorous and consistent in categorising data according to predetermined criteria, thereby allowing researchers to claim the mantle of having conducted systematic research

(Hansen 1998: 95). This also makes it imperative to outline the procedures by which the research is constructed.

In recognition of the fact that the media are not monolithic it was deemed appropriate to conduct content analysis based on a number of weekly and evening newspapers. But given the intense controversy surrounding the war; given that, as argued in Chapter 2, the media can be most appropriately conceptualised as political actors in their own right; and given that the national press were evidently partisan on this issue (see Couldry and Downey 2004; Stanyer 2004), we cannot, at this stage, discount the idea that sections of the local press were partisan advocates in the crisis, being either sympathetically disposed towards, or against, the antiwar movement.

There were roughly 1300 provincial newspapers in the UK in 2003 (Bell and Alden 2003: 27). Randomly sampling half a dozen local papers could conceivably yield a sample of papers that were unrepresentative of the provincial press newspaper market, either for being strongly in favour of military intervention in Iraq or against it, or for being disproportionately in favour of the antiwar movement or unrepresentatively hostile towards it. To guard against this prospect the six weekly and evening papers that were used in this study were purposely selected on the basis of the activists' responses in the survey and interviews. One question from the survey was particularly important. It asked activists: 'How would you assess the way that local media in your area reported on the activities YOUR group engaged in as part of your opposition to the Iraq War?' with respondents being able to select one answer from a range of five options:

- Solely or mainly favourably;
- Neither favourably nor unfavourably – somewhere in the middle;
- Solely or mainly unfavourably;
- Wide range of treatment here;
- Not applicable/unfamiliar with the coverage from this particular outlet.

After the survey results had come in and a range of activists interviewed (to double check their responses and that they were referring to the main provincial papers in their areas), it was possible to select six newspapers to cover the range of responses from the survey. There seemed little purpose in researching the 'not applicable' category. No papers were selected to represent the 'wide range of treatment' category, on the basis that the activists who gave this response held remarkably similar views on the media to those who said that the local press in their area treated

them ‘neither favourably nor unfavourably [but] somewhere in the middle’. The principle behind this sampling criteria however, is that it should cover the supposed outer tendencies of (local) news reporting (known as ‘theoretical sampling’ [Deacon et al 2007: 393]) meaning that it should encompass newspapers that activists believed were either ‘favourably’ or ‘unfavourably’ disposed towards their group.

The six papers selected for this research were *The Manchester Evening News*, and *The Leicester Mercury* (both Evening Papers), and *The Slough Observer*, *The Slough Express*, *The Bury Free Press*, and *The Enfield Gazette* (all of which are Weekly publications).

Their circulations were/are as follows:

- *The Manchester Evening News*: 158,000 (Bell and Alden 2003: 29)
- *The Leicester Mercury*: 99,000 (Ibid.: 29)
- *The Slough Observer*: 65,542 (Willings Press Guide 2009: 61)²
- *The Slough Express*: 52,200 (Benn’s Media 2009: 209)³
- *The Bury Free Press*: 30,000 (Ibid.: 209)⁴
- *The Enfield Gazette*: No data available.

In spite of these differences in circulation and frequency of publication, it soon became apparent from the Content Analysis research that there was a commonality to the editorial stances taken by each publication in relation to both the Iraq crisis itself and the conditionality of what constituted acceptable forms of dissent. (A finding that is examined in more detail in Chapter 9.) Furthermore, it was also evident that the same themes and actors appeared, albeit with varying degrees of frequency, in each of the different papers. (Once again Chapter 9 details these findings.) For these reasons a judgement was made that a saturation point had been reached with respect to many of the key aspects of the research agenda by sampling just six provincial newspapers.

The timeline for the research ran from 1 January 2003 to 31 January 2004. While it would have been tempting to par the research down to a few isolated dates, such as 15 February 2003 (date of the largest antiwar demonstration), and 20 March 2003 (date of the outbreak of the war), one must question how far ‘episodic collective outbursts’ (Bennett 2003: 22) of this kind are representative of the broad mass of antiwar activism that preceded and followed those two dates.

For this study, which aims to take a more holistic view of antiwar activism and the way it was reported, such an approach would have been inadequate.⁵

The research recorded every single news report, opinion essay, editorial, or letter from those six papers during the timeline of the research that mentioned the Iraq War, the prospect of it, opposition to the war, or the activities of opponents of war in the article's heading, subheading, opening paragraph or that was on a page dedicated to any one of those subjects. It is unlikely that this sampling procedure will have captured all references to the crisis in those papers during that period, since it is probable that many fleeting references to the crisis slipped through the research net. Indeed one content analysis study of national press coverage of the Iraq crisis found that roughly half of all articles mentioning the crisis did so only fleetingly (Tumber and Palmer 2004: 77), which gives an indication of the potential incompleteness of my study. Nonetheless, given that there were also many articles in my sample that mentioned the war only fleetingly, it is hoped that most reports that dealt *substantially* with the issue were noted.

One of the most immediately obvious comparative differences to emerge concerned the varying amounts of coverage the different papers devoted to the crisis and opposition to it in their reporting:

- *The Manchester Evening News*: 799 units of which 620 were news reports
- *The Leicester Mercury*: 830 units of which 665 were news reports
- *The Slough Observer*: 94 units of which 68 were news reports
- *The Slough Express*: 88 units of which 58 were news reports
- *The Bury Free Press*: 62 units of which 56 were news reports
- *The Enfield Gazette*: 33 units of which 18 were news reports (see Table 9.1 from Chapter 9).

Evidently the two evening papers devoted far more coverage to these matters than the weekly press did. Given this discrepancy, it was judged appropriate to code:

- 1) All reports from the weekly press that met either criteria for inclusion;
- 2) All reports from the two evening papers that focused on opposition to the war or any of the activities of the antiwar groups;

- 3) And to systematically sample every eleventh report from either evening papers that focused on the Iraq crisis, but which did so without mentioning organised opposition to the war.

Evidently this sampling procedure is weighted towards an examination of the antiwar movement. To compensate, all discussion of overall trends in reporting is based on an extrapolation from those figures. In total 380 news reports were coded, as were a further 126 letters, editorial, columnists essays, and features, although apart from the editorial commentary, these have not been included in the analysis in this dissertation.

The coding schedule, supporting information, and coding sheets are presented in Appendices 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 respectively.

Beyond the detailed presentation of the coding schedule however, it is necessary to outline the methodological procedures by which the research sought to reveal the main features of local news coverage and commentary. Specifically, the research was intended to map the main sources quoted and referred to in the coverage, the main themes of the coverage, and the amount of attention that the reports commanded. More detailed commentary about these can be found in Appendixes 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3.

The next chapter examines the social and political compositions of the locally based antiwar groups. It is mainly based on research from the survey and interview data.

End Notes

¹ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfrdir/inta0806.pdf>

² 2009 figures for *The Slough and Windsor Observer* series.

³ 2009 figures for *The Slough Express* series.

⁴ 2009 figures for *The Bury Free Press* series.

⁵ Although Bennett (2003) makes essentially the same point, he does so in relation to the US anti-globalisation movement's uses of the Internet.

Chapter 6: The sociology of the locally based antiwar groups in Britain

One of the central tenets of Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis was that news coverage arises from the interactions between the news media and their sources. Chapter 8 examines the news media's side of the interaction, while the next chapter considers the reasons why the sources with which this study is most concerned – i.e. the locally based antiwar groups – sought access to the local media, the extent to which they prioritised this objective, and how these groups organised themselves to deal with the local media. But in order to fully understand the media relations of the local antiwar groups it is necessary to know who these groups were. That is where this chapter comes in, since it aims to sketch out the various tendencies and tensions across the local base of the antiwar movement in Britain.

As a first step towards sketching out this profile it is imperative to outline a few basic details concerning their sizes and how they were organised in 2003. The chapter then proceeds to argue that all groups can be placed within one of three ideal-typical categories depending on their histories and formations. The second half of this chapter takes its cue from recent developments in social movement theory, which recognise and focus on the tensions in social movements (see Chapter 3 and also Zirakzadeh 2006). In the case of the UK antiwar movement, including at the local level, we find potential fissures can be found between activists' different interpretations of the crisis, and their attitudes towards both the national Stop the War Coalition (STWC) and non-violent direct action. My research has found that many groups made an effort to compromise between different factions in the name of maintaining their unity and through that the size and the breadth of the movement. The next chapter builds on these foundations to consider how the degree of unity or otherwise in the local antiwar groups, and how that unity was achieved, might have had an impact on their capacity to communicate through the mainstream local media.

The locations, informality, sizes and formations of local antiwar groups

The general consensus among activists and commentators alike is that the antiwar movement peaked on 15 February 2003 (Gillan 2006: 222; Shaw 2005; Sifry 2003; Donovan 2003). According to some estimates, between 300 and 600 protests across 75 countries took place on that day, with the numbers involved ranging from 10 to 15 million people (Gillan 2006: 213; Sifry 2003: 486; Sloboda and Doherty 2004). In the UK, 90,000 people gathered in Glasgow, while the best-informed estimates for the number of people marching in London on that day range from 1.25 million (Doherty et al 2003) to 1.4 million (Shaw 2005: 133).¹ The routes taken by the

London marchers (it had two separate 'official' starting points), its final destination (Hyde Park), the list of speakers to address the rally at its end point, and the preceding negotiations with the Metropolitan Police, were all organised by the STWC in conjunction with its principle co-organisers the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) (Murray and German 2005). Additionally *The Daily Mirror* actively promoted the demonstration during the days leading up to it. Yet the success of the demonstration also relied upon the involvement and co-organisation of over 450 other organisations (Vidal and Wilson 2003) – mostly locally based antiwar groups – who were responsible for drumming up support for and participation in the demonstration in their respective local areas, and for arranging the transportation (usually by coach) to London and then back again. Table 6.1 shows the numbers of coach loads of demonstrators that a sample of groups took to London on 15 February. Survey research of the 15 February marchers found that 63 percent of participants went with fellow members of a local peace group (Sloboda and Doherty 2004). Admittedly, the same survey also found that 63 percent of people attended the demo in the company of their friends and neighbours (peoples' social networks overlap), 38 percent went with their partner, and 42 percent went with other family members (Ibid.). But it seems more than likely that the support, promotion and the organisation of transport by the local groups made a very sizeable contribution to the turnout on the march, as well as to building the movement beforehand and sustaining it ever since. One of the reasons why this research has been pitched at the local level has been in recognition of the significance of this.

At the time of writing (July 2009), the Stop the War Coalition's website (www.stopwar.org.uk) lists 109 locally based groups in mainland Britain. Whilst there is no reason to suppose that all groups whose remit includes antiwar activism are listed on the STWC's website, it is probably the most comprehensive list of locally based antiwar groups publicly available in the UK.

In May 2005, (shortly after the start of this research) there were 397 groups listed on the STWC's website. By the following February, the number of listed groups had dropped to 357, from which, it soon emerged, just 207 had live email accounts. This population of 207 groups was the basis for the survey research conducted from February to May 2006 (see previous chapter). As of June 2008 there were 181 local antiwar groups around the country.

The decline in the number of groups in the four years from the middle of 2005 to mid-2009 is emblematic of the decline in the levels of activism from the highpoint of February and March

2003. After that, the antiwar movement became less active, less high profile, shrunk in terms of the number of people involved, and some local groups switched the focus of their activism. Several interviewees confided that after the start of the war morale within groups often waned, the number of people attending public meetings dropped off, and that they generally organised fewer public meetings in the second half of 2003 compared to the first half of that year.² Some interviewees even described the groups of which they were members as existing as if in a state of 'hibernation' by the time interviews were conducted for this research. For their part, the Chair and Convenor of the national STWC have conceded that a sense of exhaustion and demoralisation set in after the start of the war (Murray and German 2005: 212). After the invasion phase of the crisis it was also common for local groups, to varying degrees, to orientate the focus of their energies away from concentrating solely on the Iraq War to consider a wider range of issues that were of concern. According to the online survey over three-quarters of the local groups branched out to focus on the war in Afghanistan and the Israel/Palestine conflict; 68 percent raised concerns about anti-terrorist legislation/civil liberties and/or ID cards; and just over half of all groups addressed issues relating to the Make Poverty History campaign, the Arms Trade and Nuclear Weapons. The key though to understanding the shift from being an antiwar activist group to being a social forum, is that an activist group is in one way or another primarily orientated to affecting political change, whereas a social forum is primarily dedicated to raising the awareness and/or understanding of particular issues among the activist community.

The list of locally based groups from the STWC's website tells us that all major towns and cities in England and Wales had at least one local antiwar group. Indeed large cities, especially London, had several such groups. There was however, a noticeable gravitational pull towards London and the South East on the STWC's website since the further we move away from that corner of the country the weaker the concentration of antiwar groups listed becomes. Some groups from Scotland were listed on the STWC's website, but a more comprehensive overview of the antiwar movement in Scotland would have been better represented by the Scottish Coalition for Justice Not War. In Northern Ireland opposition to the war tended to be confined to the nationalist communities with public opinion there divided along sectarian lines (Rolston and McLaughlin 2004).

Table 6.1

A sketch of the size, activism and activities of the local antiwar groups

(The information in this table is based on both the survey and interview research.)

<u>Name of group</u>	<u>Size of committee / staff</u>	<u>Attendance at Public meetings</u>	<u>Email lists</u>
Greater Manchester CND	14	See NMAW	300 to 400
New Forest Peace Group	8 to 10	40	10 to 12
Wandsworth STW	16 to 20	Hundreds	200 to 300
Suffolk4peace	10	10 to 200	150
North Manchester Against Wars	20 to 30	Mid Hundreds	2000 to 3000
Tower Hamlets STW	10 to 15	Low Hundreds	Hundreds
North Lincolnshire STW	3	25	150
York Against the War	10 to 15	/	500
LSE Staff Against the War	5 to 6	Low Hundreds	100
The Raging Grannies	10	NA	NA
Coventry STW	10	Mid Hundreds	500
Knighton Action for Peace and Justice	2	Low Hundreds	80
Norwich STW	10 to 12	/	335
Chesterfield STW	6	Low Hundreds	350
Tavistock Peace Action Group	6 to 8	Low Hundreds	150
Oxford for Peace	10	/	250 to 300
Peace Moves Coalition	3	60+	200
Blackpool STW	10 to 12	50+	70
Bolton CND/STW	5 to 6	Mid Hundreds	100
Merseyside STW	/	/	/
PAGI (People Against Global Imperialism)	2	See Merseyside STW	NA
Hastings Against War	8 to 10	100	40 to 50
Bath STW	5 to 10	Low Hundreds	Didn't know
Slough4peace	6	Low Hundreds	115
Leicester Campaign to Stop the War	/	Mid Hundreds	/

Table 6.1: Continued

<u>Name of group</u>	<u>Coaches to London on 15 Feb</u>	<u>Main positions</u>	<u>No. of activities held from Jan to Jun 2003</u>
Greater Manchester CND	See NMAW	Ch, Sec, Tr	NA
New Forest Peace Group	2	Informal	1 to 5
Wandsworth STW	NA (London based)	Ch, Tr,	6 to 10
Suffolk4peace	3	Ch	1 to 5
North Manchester Against Wars	87 + train	Con, Ch, Sec, Tr, 2 X PRO, Web	1 to 5
Tower Hamlets STW	NA (London based)	Con, Sec, Tr	1 to 5
North Lincolnshire STW	3	Sec, Tr, rotating Ch	6 to 10
York Against the War	/	Informal	11 to 20
LSE Staff Against the War	NA	Ch, Sec	11 to 20
The Raging Grannies	NA	Informal with Tr	6 to 10
Coventry STW	12	Tr, Ch, Sec	1 to 5
Knighton Action for Peace and Justice	1	Informal	1 to 5
Norwich STW	19	Ch, VC, Tr	1 to 5
Chesterfield STW	6	Ch, Sec	1 to 5
Tavistock Peace Action Group	4	Tr, Rotating Ch	/
Oxford for Peace	42*	/	1 to 5
Peace Moves Coalition	6	Informal	1 to 5
Blackpool STW	2	Informal	/
Bolton CND/STW	/	/	1 to 5
Merseyside STW	20	Con, Sec, Tr, PRO	1 to 5
PAGI (People Against Global Imperialism)	NA	NA	None
Hastings Against War	1	Informal	1 to 5
Bath STW	9	Informal	6 to 10
Slough4peace	4	Informal	11 to 20
Leicester Campaign to Stop the War	27	TR, Ch, PRO	1 to 5

* In conjunction with two other groups from Oxford.

Key:

Public meetings: Low Hundreds = 100 to 300. Mid Hundreds = 400 to 600.

Main positions: Ch = Chair, Tr = Treasurer, Sec = Secretary, Con = Convenor, PRO = Press Relations Officer, VC = Vice Chair, Web = Web designer

Table 6.1 lays out some of the key data from a cross section of antiwar groups based on 38 interviews with activists conducted from June 2006 onwards. The fact that these interviews took place over three years after the invasion of Iraq demands a note of caution regarding the numbers and why they ought to be taken as approximations. Activists' memories of the numbers of people

involved in public meetings or the number of coaches they took into London for the 15 February demo tended to be a little hazy. The other reason why we can expect a measure of imprecision with these figures stems from the informality of these groups and their activities. No group ever kept a record of the number of people attending public meetings for instance.

The 'main positions' column shows that about a third of the groups were so informal that they had no designated positions on their central organising committees, just committed individuals who took it upon themselves to establish and run the groups. Among those groups that had designated positions the most common were chairperson, treasurer, secretary, convenor and media spokesperson (in that order). The responsibilities associated with each role are much the same as would be expected in any other organisation – the chairperson chairs the meetings, the treasurer looks after the financial side of things and so on. With the exception of just three groups (Greater Manchester and Distinct CND, Yorkshire CND, and Merseyside STW), all the people occupying these roles volunteered themselves for these positions without their nomination being contested by anyone else. The two regional CND groups were organised on the basis of having a committee of ten to fourteen people elected by the regional membership supported in both cases by two full time staff to take on the Convenor and Treasurer roles. Merseyside STW was the only group to have directly elected positions.³ When interviewees were asked about the size of the core collective of people who kept the local group running, the most commonplace answer was 'about ten to twelve people.' Evidently then, even in the most formal groups, not everyone who played an active role in sustaining them occupied a designated position. Furthermore the fact that these answers tended to be given as a range (e.g. 'from about six to eight' or 'about ten to fifteen') and the uncertainty implicit in the word 'about', also serves to underscore their informality.

Extrapolating the figures from the table suggests that there was only a weak association between the numbers attending the largest public meetings, the number of people on their email lists, and the number of coaches full of demonstrators they took to London on 15 February. By these measures we can see that as a generalisation, and perhaps not surprisingly, the largest groups came from the largest cities. Nonetheless these inconsistencies hint at three of the observations about the groups that became apparent during the course of the empirical research. First, that the groups varied in their levels of talent and commitment, although it would not be appropriate for this thesis to attempt to evaluate those matters. Second, that different groups concentrated on different types of activity. And third, groups – or more accurately in most cases, group leaders –

varied according to the extent to which it was a priority for them to maximize and sustain the size and breadth of their groups.

Before we consider these last two matters however, it is important to study the histories, the circumstances, and the socio-political compositions of the different local groups. To this end we may usefully divide them into three categories: 'Virgin Activist' groups, 'Network' groups, and 'Pre-9/11' groups.

'Virgin Activist' groups

Roughly a quarter of all groups, if we can reliably extrapolate from the number of groups interviewed, were 'Virgin Activist' groups. The label is not intended to suggest that the people who established these groups had never been involved in any form of political activism beforehand. Most, for example, had previously been on marches, or they may have had some contact with new social movements such as the peace/antiwar, anti/alter-globalisation,⁴ environmental or social justice movements/campaigns. So to describe these groups as 'Virgin Activist groups' is to indicate that the people involved in setting them up were without any previous experience of convening and organising political activism. At a personal level, people tended to be strangers prior to the formations of these groups.

Politically, opinion within the typical 'Virgin Activist' group ranged from the centre-left (Labour and Liberal Democrats Party supporters) through to the far-left (e.g. members of the Socialist Workers Party), and in some cases encompassed people who regarded themselves as anarchists. Members of the Muslim community were also usually involved, and these groups often had typically established contact with local Mosques. This kind of group was most commonly found in towns. Slough4peace, Suffolk4peace, and Enfield Stop the War would all be fitting examples from Table 6.1.

'Network' groups

The 'Network' groups are so-called because many groups, around half of the number interviewed, were to a significant degree, rooted in longstanding left-wing politics. By this I mean that many of the founding figures of these groups had, in recent years, either been involved in so-called 'single' issue campaigns and new social movements, or they were members of far-left political parties, most commonly the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). In some cases they had been involved in both types of political activism. The case of the formation of the Norwich Stop the

War Coalition was typical of this tendency. It was established in response to the Afghanistan War with input from people who had been centrally involved in the “Norwich Landmine Group, Norwich Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Norwich Socialist Workers Party, Norwich Quakers, Norwich District Peace Council [and] North Norfolk Palestinian Solidarity Campaign.”⁵ Other organisations that often played a key role in establishing and sustaining local antiwar groups included local branches of the Green Party, various socialist parties and organisations, and occasionally the trade unions. So while all the ‘Network’ groups were formed after 9/11 (of necessity in order distinguish them from the ‘Pre-9/11’ groups) there was usually a lengthy prologue to the launch of those groups rooted in pre-existing networks of ‘left-wing’ activism. Other examples of this type of group include the Leicester Campaign to Stop the War, North Manchester Against Wars, and the national STWC.

As might also be expected, some of the people who got involved in these groups were new to political activism, and like the ‘Virgin Activist’ groups the ‘Network’ groups also had connections with local mosques. The difference however between the two types of group, is that whereas the ideal-typical ‘Virgin Activist’ group was formed on the basis of a purely voluntary association on behalf of the individuals involved, the convenors of the ‘Network’ groups purposely brought the ‘single issue’ and far-left networks together for the sake of building the antiwar group. (Here it ought to be acknowledged that some groups were easier to place within one of these categories than others were.) Nonetheless the intention of these ‘Network’ groups, including the national STWC, was to establish as broad a coalition as was possible, bringing in people from as far across the political spectrum as opposition to war against Afghanistan and then Iraq would allow for, irrespective of past disagreements they may have had or levels of personal animosity.⁶ Network connections of this kind served to swell the size of the movement and its breadth both demographically and ideologically. Supporters of this approach held that without these network connections the antiwar movement would not have been as ubiquitous, long lasting or as active as it has been.

As was the case with the ‘Virgin Activist’ groups, initial contact with other like-minded people was most commonly established by calling a local public meeting, often held in a town hall, church, Friends Meeting House (Quakers), or in a room at a local university. From there the scale of local involvement in the group usually snowballed through leafleting shoppers in their local high street, holding public meetings, enhancing their media profile etc, with the levels of activism

of most groups typically peaking somewhere between 15 February and the start of hostilities on 20 March 2003.

'Pre-9/11' groups

According to the survey, 29 groups out of 105 (or 28 percent of groups) were established prior to 9/11. These include seven CND groups, five Green Party groups, and one trade union group. Together with the remaining sixteen groups not affiliated to any of those organisations they are the 'Pre-9/11' groups. As might be expected, more people, again many of them new to political activism, got involved with these groups as the prospect of wars against Afghanistan then against Iraq became apparent. Meanwhile the groups themselves also became more active, and diverted more of their time and resources to antiwar activism after 9/11.

This descriptive overview of the formation of the different types of antiwar groups underscores the need to situate our understanding of opposition to the war in the context of social movement theory, firstly, because, as we have just seen, opposition to this war grew out of previous social movements, and secondly, because for reasons that shall be explored forthwith, the antiwar movement did indeed amount to a movement.

Understanding social movements

Chapter 3 identified six characteristics that were particular to social movements. I also argued that it is appropriate to speak of 'an antiwar *movement* that is distinguishable from organised party political or pressure group activity on the one hand, and a widely felt but atomised sense of anger about an impending war on the other' on the grounds that all six criteria that were characteristic of social movements applied in the case of the opposition to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Here I shall explain why it is that the opposition to the Iraq War constitutes a social movement.

The six criteria identified in Chapter 3 were:

1. *Social movements are informally structured* (Anderson 1997: 77; Stammers and Eschle 2005). In Chapter 3 I argued that this was the most distinctive characteristic of social movements, because it distinguishes social movements from pressure groups, political parties and trade unions more clearly than any of the other five criteria. Interestingly, a lot of the people who were close to the leadership of the STWC were also conscious of the informality

of the antiwar movement, showing an awareness of the distinction between the movement and the organisations involved: “It’s a new movement, out of anyone’s control. It’s like a tidal wave. The people organising it are not in control. It has its own momentum,” Andrew Burgin of the STWC told *The Guardian* on the eve of the 15 February demonstration (quoted in Vidal and Wilson 2003).

2. *Social movements often involve a plurality of organisations working together* (Stammers and Eschle 2005; Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993: 115). The aforementioned case of the Norwich Stop the War Coalition, in which a number of political parties and pressure groups played an active role, was fairly typical of most ‘Network’ and ‘Pre-9/11’ groups. Similarly the national STWC is supported by fourteen Trade Unions, CND and the Muslim Association of Britain (both pressure groups), has members of the Labour Party, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the Socialist Party, the Green Party, and Respect on its current Steering Committee, along with three MPs, three former MPs and one MEP.
3. *People voluntarily become involved in social movements* (Gillan 2006: 24). As we have just seen this clearly applies in the case of all types of locally based antiwar groups.
4. *Social movements express a desire for radical social change. Their political ambition extends far beyond policy orientated campaigning* (Anderson 1997: 77; Gillan 2006: 24; Zirakzadeh 2006: 4). In the case of the antiwar movement it would be most accurate to say that elements of them who had been involved in far-left politics or some of the new social movements desired radical social change. It does not necessarily apply to everyone involved.
5. *Social movements are extra-institutional in the sense that the people involved are ‘non-elites’ lacking ‘routine access’ to the decision-making processes* (Anderson 1997: 77; Zirakzadeh 2006: 4). This applies to the antiwar movement because although some parliamentarians were involved, none were government ministers during the run-up to the invasion.
6. *As part of their repertoire of affecting change, social movements will often go beyond institutional means such as lobbying and petitioning, to engage in mass demonstrations and even non-violent direct action (NVDA), which can be illegal depending on the actions in question* (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993: 115; Gillan 2006: 24; Zirakzadeh 2006: 4). Some within the antiwar movement, including at the local level, did indeed resort to extra-institutional means of activism.

Having established that opposition to the Iraq War in the UK did indeed coalesce into an antiwar movement, the next section is well placed to consider how the political diversity of the movement threw up a number of challenges for that movement.

The challenge of political diversity within social movements and how it relates to the antiwar movement

Since the end of the second World War academic observations of social movements, whether from afar or based on ethnographic research, have gone through three distinct phases with a fourth now emerging (Zirakzadeh 2006). The first two phases need not detain us here, except to note that in what is admittedly a slight simplification, academics assumed that each discrete social movement was broadly united in its strategy and political vision. Since the 1970s however, a third approach to the study of social movements has come to doubt the validity of assumptions about their internal unity, focusing instead on the diversity of activists' political viewpoints and the processes of identity formation within social movements. For instance, at the point of first getting involved in a social movement it is likely that individuals will share some of the objectives and strategic preferences of the movement, but it is also likely that they will retain ideas from the time before their involvement in the movement – ideas which may well be at odds with parts of the movements' philosophy (Ibid. see also Gitlin 1980). However, from Zirakzadeh's point of view, while the recognition of internal movement diversity and potential division is valuable, social movement research took a wrong turn by focusing on identity formation within the movements when it would have been more productive to have studied the 'power struggles [and] expedient compromises' by which internal clashes within movements are resolved (Ibid.: 242). That, in essence, is the basis of his call for a fourth approach to the study of social movements. He labels this 'discord theory'.

The framework is a useful one for understanding the UK antiwar movement for two reasons. First of all because as we have already seen the local groups were often forged by bringing people of different political persuasions, parties and social movements together in opposition to the prospect of wars against Afghanistan and Iraq. This was very much the case with the 'Network' groups, and it also applies to the 'Virgin Activist' groups to a lesser extent. Second – and this even applies with the 'Pre-9/11' groups – there were, almost inevitably, always tensions between individual members over strategy and political objectives. However whether the emphasis upon 'discord' is entirely right is another matter, because as I wish to argue, it is more appropriate to regard most locally based antiwar groups in the UK as 'compromise coalitions'.

Overall we find that there was a combination of unity on some matters and the possibility of dissension on other matters over which some form of compromise had to be reached. As would

be expected of antiwar groups, all were fully unified in their opposition to a war against Iraq (at least with regards to circumstances as they stood in early 2003). But differences of interpretation and the principal reasons for opposing the war could sometimes be detected within the groups. True, no group ever split over these differences, but the matter still merits an in-depth discussion because of its potential impact on the way the groups were able to communicate through the media. In addition to that, this research has also found that more strongly held differences of opinion could be identified – both within individual groups and across the movement as a whole – over activists' views on the national STWC. Furthermore, sharper divisions still could be found over the kinds of activism that group members felt they should concentrate on.

Before exploring each of those three areas it is worth remarking that the divisions between 'moderates' and 'radicals', that earlier studies of the anti-Vietnam War movement on both sides of the Atlantic identified (see Halloran et al 1970; Gitlin 1980), would appear to be surprisingly absent in the case of the contemporary antiwar movement. Interviewees tended not to express their grievances with other sections of the movement in those terms.

Interpretations of the Iraq crisis

When, in interview testimony, activists were asked to state the principal reasons why group members were opposed to the war, their main objections were:

- A sense of opposition to killing.
- The notion that the war was illegal under international law.
- The claim that the war was imperialist.
- A conviction that the evidential basis for war was unfounded. This was often retrospectively expressed in terms of the case for war having built on a pack of lies.⁷
- The suspicion that there was an ulterior motive – usually with reference to oil, although occasionally activists said they believed that the war was for the benefit of Israel.
- The idea that the case for war was hollow and hypocritical in the light of past Western support for and armament of Saddam Hussein.
- And the gut reaction that “war solves nothing”.⁸

During the course of these interviews activists usually cited two or three reasons for being against the war. Only occasionally did they limit their answers to a single objection.

When expanding upon their answers, some interviewees divided them into moral/humanitarian objections to the war, (e.g. straightforward opposition to killing, or the argument that the case for war was hollow and hypocritical), and political objections, (e.g. claim that the war was imperialist, or that it had an ulterior motive). This at once affirms and yet also qualifies the characterisation of the Antiwar Radical camp that was outlined in Chapter 4 as being preoccupied with issues of morality. On the one hand moral concerns were cited more frequently than any other kind of concern, on the other, moral concerns had to share the podium with legal and political objections to the war. Furthermore, the prevalence of the legal case against the war suggests that shades of the Liberal Dove positioning spilt over into the reasoning adopted by activists in many locally based antiwar groups.

Absent from this list were security orientated concerns, even when phrased in conscientious terms of the kind outlined in Chapter 4, e.g. that the war would make the world a more dangerous place. To be sure activists did occasionally allude to this idea in passing during the interviews, but it would not be appropriate to claim that it was top of the list of activists' primary motivations for involving themselves in the antiwar movement. (Or at the very least they wouldn't admit to that).

In a minority of cases the different perspectives that group members had could be related to the different political associations in those groups. So one activist noted that in his group there were:

People, [who] from a very humanist point of view, didn't want people to die in an unnecessary war.... There were other people from CND ... opposed to it because of the threat of nuclear weapons, things like that. Trade Unionists could see a position where they say 'hang on, we've been involved for years in the civil service or local Government where we've been having cuts in our services and yet they seem to find enough money to launch another war.'⁹

Or, to take the example of another group with a slightly different composition, it was possible to identify three tendencies within the group: people from what he referred to as a "democratic tradition" who were "very upset about it being illegal" because that "didn't fit in with their notion of democracy", pacifists who were opposed to all wars, and the radical left whose principal objection to the war was that it was imperialist.¹⁰ In a comparable way Gillan's (2006) study of the Sheffield Against the War group and the anti-globalisation movement in Sheffield, also identified a close correlation between activists' analyses of the Iraq crisis and their prior political persuasions. So for example, 'Radical Socialists', associated with Trotskyite political parties such as the SWP, followed the Marxist orthodoxy of understanding war as imperialist aggression,

(which clearly corresponds to the observation from the interviewee just cited); anarchists emphasised the hypocrisy and hollowness of the case for war.

Yet the majority of interviewees were not inclined to relate whatever differences of interpretation they identified in their groups to whatever party political or ideational loyalties that individuals in those groups may have had. Furthermore some interviewees even went against the grain of the implicitly predictive tendencies outlined above. So for example there were some people who were evidently steeped in a radical socialist background – they spoke of having long been involved in socialist causes and campaigns, and/or were members of Trotskyist political parties – who volunteered the idea that “they don’t like killing”¹¹ as their main objection to the war. Reciprocating this, there were people who came from life-long pacifist backgrounds who shared an anti-imperialist understanding of the crisis: “basically most of us by now are anti-imperialist if you’ve been working at this for long.”¹²

According to my data then, this principle of linking activists’ prior political persuasions to their interpretations of the war was only applicable in a minority of cases. Moreover we find that there was a broad acceptance of the principle that there were many legitimate objections to the war and several valid interpretations of it. In part this may be accounted for with reference to the observation that whatever differences could be identified were seen as non-contradictory. But since the radical left has a history of being notoriously fractious – something which many interviewees drew attention to, as have a number of (sympathetic) commentators (e.g. Monbiot 2001b, Younge 2001) – that may not be enough to fully explain why so many groups have survived as long as they have. Instead the resilience of the movement needs to be seen in the context of a determination by those involved to forge and sustain as broad and as large a coalition as would be possible. To this end many group leaders purposely minimised the number of ‘manifesto statements’ that the group stood for and often framed their group’s particular demands in such a way as to allow for a flexible interpretation of them. This tendency was commonplace across the movement irrespective of the ideology and political background of the local leaders. So in the words of one SWP stalwart:

We wanted the biggest, most inclusive organisation that we could get, and therefore we would make the demands very basic and very minimal. So we weren’t for example, having a discussion of policy on terrorism, and policy on Islamic fundamentalism, and policy on this that or the other. Nor indeed were we saying you need to have this or that political affiliation to be part of this organisation.¹³

Similarly, a representative from a group that grew out of a local branch of CND explained:

There were so many things we could agree on, we could put by the couple of things that we wouldn't necessarily all agree on, and just continue to concentrate on the peace work, and antiwar work. But still keep ... the anti-nuclear things on the back burner and not ignore them. But if we found a situation where somebody was quite happy to get involved in work to get the troops out of Iraq or Afghanistan, but maybe thought that nuclear power stations etc. weren't the worst thing in the world ... we could still feel that ... we had more than enough to work well together.¹⁴

Other activists justified their approach to coalition building in numerical terms. For example:

You unite around the 80 percent or 90 percent you can agree on. You leave the other 10 percent [or 20 percent] for some stage in the future when it's essential to have that debate.¹⁵

There was however a price to be paid for this approach to coalition building: it often entailed the stifling of internal debate in groups. To that extent, as Gillan observed in the case of Sheffield Against War, 'unity may have been a false construction' (2006: 231). As one of Gillan's interviewees put it:

We were operating on the basis that we were against the war ... but we didn't necessarily talk about what the alternatives were ... or even if anybody [thought] that the war might be a good idea. There's often not much scope for those kinds of conversations, because it doesn't feel safe enough ... nobody wants to feel that they're the odd one out. (Gillan 2006: 231).

This extract clearly echoes the underlying assumptions of Noelle-Neumann's 'Spiral of silence' theory (see McQuail 1994: 361-363).¹⁶ From my point of view however, the most noteworthy aspect of the quotation is not the suggestion that some people involved in the antiwar movement might have thought that the Iraq War was a 'good idea' – something I never encountered (why would a supporter of the war be involved in opposition to it?), but the failure to discuss alternatives to the war. Because there was a tendency, across many groups, to shy away from what one of my interviewees referred to as "policy orientated"¹⁷ discussions about what ought to be done in relation to the putative crisis of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and/or the matter of the well-documented and appalling human rights record of the Saddam Hussein/Ba'athist regime. Other interviewees complained about what they saw as the national STWC's tendency to "fudge" difficult matters relating to the Iraq crisis and issues beyond that so

as to maintain a semblance of unity rather than resolve them through reasoned dialogue.¹⁸ And in one case a member of a small group that was part of a larger 'Network' group, felt that they never got a fair hearing in group discussions and even described their marginalisation in terms that implied bullying: "we found ourselves receiving nothing but smearing and contempt and laughter about how we were insignificant ... and that was very, very painful."¹⁹ As Zirakzadeh has observed, one myth about (progressive) social movements is that the scope of debate within them is virtually limitless, whereas in reality the range of permissible opinion in internal discussion has usually been purposely capped by movement leaders (2006: 241).

With reference to reflections on how the avoidance of any kind of policy orientated discussion limited the contribution that groups could make to media debate through news reporting and letters to the local newspapers, another interviewee explained:

There was only agreed positions on the basics really: that the war was bad, that the western army shouldn't be killing people etc. etc. But there was no consensus on the nature of the resistance or the role of the UN and things like that. So it wouldn't have been possible for us to try and get into the paper that the UN should do something because we didn't agree. So ... that was a bit of a stumbling block, because we couldn't put out statements, detailed statements about things because we couldn't be sure that everyone in the coalition would agree with it.²⁰

Evidently the passage suggests that there was a price to be paid for the group's attempts to forge some kind of unity. The matter will be explored in more depth in the next chapter.

Differences of opinion over the role of the national Stop the War Coalition:

The long version of the online survey (see Appendix 2.1) sought to gauge the attitudes of the locally based antiwar groups towards the national STWC. It asked respondents for an assessment of the group's attitudes towards the 'political leanings and inclusiveness' and the 'organisation, guidance and advice' of the Coalition. The results were as follows:

Table 6.2:

In general terms, what is your group's view of the POLITICAL LEANINGS and INCLUSIVENESS of the STWC?

(73 responses)

- 18 groups (25%) – Wholly positive
- 26 groups (36%) – Generally positive
- 11 groups (15%) – Mixed
- 12 groups (16%) – Generally negative
- 2 groups (3%) – Wholly negative
- 4 groups (6%) – Don't know/Do not feel qualified to say

Table 6.3:

In general terms, what is your group's view of the ORGANISATION, GUIDANCE and ADVICE of the STWC?

(72 responses)

- 18 groups (25%) – Wholly positive
- 26 groups (36%) – Generally positive
- 14 groups (19%) – Mixed
- 8 groups (11%) – Generally negative
- 2 groups (3%) – Wholly negative
- 4 groups (6%) – Don't know/Do not feel qualified to say

It is important to acknowledge that the population sample of the survey was taken from the national STWC's website, and so, on the grounds that groups that were favourably disposed towards the Coalition would be more likely to want to associate themselves with it, we might expect the results to lean in the Coalition's favour. Nonetheless a sizeable proportion of the respondents were evidently dissatisfied with the Coalition.

When asked to explain their responses to the survey in the follow up interviews, activists' answers tended to cluster around three narratives, which I shall characterise these as the 'praiseworthy', the 'ambivalent', and the 'critical'. Unlike in the previous section, these viewpoints very often did correspond to the political orientation of different members.

'Praiseworthy' narratives lauded both the effectiveness and the inclusivity of the STWC – qualities that these respondents saw as mutually reinforcing. The following example is among the most effusive:

I think what amazed me about the way in which Stop the War worked was that they didn't make mistakes. And I think in general the political guidance was absolutely superb because the people who were leading it ... were absolutely clear that this was a non-sectarian organisation.... I think that was absolutely key to the size and success of the movement.²¹

'Ambivalent' responses distinguished between the two questions in the survey. One interviewee who praised the "phenomenal" "organisational skills" of the STWC and the "splendid demonstrations" they put on, was still reticent about the political orientation of the Coalition for being "marginally politically motivated" – a reference to the oft repeated claim that the STWC is dominated by the SWP and as such is a front organisation for them.²² These usually coincided with a 'mixed' or sometimes '*generally* positive' response in the survey. Although in other cases a 'mixed' response in the survey turned out to mean that opinions on the STWC were divided within groups.

'Critical' narratives, which usually sought to justify and explain a negative evaluation in the survey, rarely ever cast the STWC as inefficient, but instead interpreted the question about the Coalition's organisation (Table 6.3) as referring to what they saw as a lack of internal democracy within the organisation. In the survey for instance, one respondent wrote:

We regret that we have been unable to continue our cooperation with the stop the war coalition but we find their methods authoritarian [and] non-cooperative.²³

When expanding on this answer in interview testimony, blame was ascribed to the role of the SWP, which was seen as having a dominant influence in the national Coalition, and as a party deficient in matters of internal democracy. In this way then, negative responses to the two questions were fused together. The other major criticism of the STWC that people had, including this interviewee, concerned the STWC's perceived lack of enthusiasm for Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA).

Differences of opinion over attitudes to non-violent direct action

This was the most divisive issue both within and between groups – more so that attitudes towards the Stop the War Coalition, and certainly more so whatever differences of interpretation over the Iraq crisis: "There were more differences in our approach to protesting against the war ... than what we believed about the war itself," said one interviewee.²⁴

For the sake of simplicity it is possible to divide individual attitudes to NVDA among antiwar activists into ‘enthusiasts’ and ‘sceptics’. It is important to stress that the ‘sceptics’ were not opposed to direct action. Instead they doubted that it could have ever been that effective and/or believed that it was inappropriate for the contemporary antiwar movement, e.g. “I’m not opposed to civil disobedience” but it is not part of the “strategy for the sort of group that we’re trying to build.”²⁵ While in the case of those involved in political parties, direct action was deemed inappropriate for fear that it might undermine their standing with the public: “You want to be seen as a credible political alternative to ... Labour, [and] sometimes people might see direct action or that sort of activity as being a sign of immaturity in the party.”²⁶ By contrast, ‘enthusiasts’ had a far more optimistic view of its potential, believing that NVDA could be an effective way of pressurising the government perhaps even to the point of having had a “chance of actually stopping the war.”²⁷

Upon analysing interviewees’ views on the question of civil disobedience/NVDA, it was evident that the ‘enthusiastic’ tendency would appear to have won out in roughly 30 percent of antiwar groups; the ‘sceptical’ tendency predominated in 20 percent of groups; which leaves 50 percent of groups in which opinions about NVDA were more evenly divided. In those 50 percent of ‘evenly divided’ groups, potential tensions were usually resolved – even if that was usually after discussions of varying degrees of intensity – by arriving at a situation whereby some people within the groups concentrated on NVDA while others concentrated on marching, organising public meetings and in some cases lobbying. In some cases this strategy had to be learnt: “Whereas previously people had said direct action is all we should do; other people said marching is all we should do; other people would say lobbying MPs is all we should do.... I think people are realising that actually you can use all those methods quite successfully.”²⁸

As was the case with attitudes towards the national STWC, opinions on the merits or otherwise of NVDA correlated to activists’ prior political perspectives. Socialists, particularly members of the SWP, tended to be ‘sceptics’; anarchists (or people who declared that their sympathies leant in that direction without necessarily fully embracing the label) tended to be ‘enthusiasts’. Gillan (2006) also identified these trends of association in his study of antiwar and anti/alter-globalisation activism in Sheffield.

More importantly though, the fact that these tensions were (nearly always) resolved is testimony to the determination of the antiwar groups to avoid internal splits. This is why it is appropriate to

talk of these groups as ‘compromise coalitions’. Similarly, when it came to organising public meetings and demonstrations, the choice of speakers in each case so often revolved around the need to hold the coalition together and draw in as broad a constituency of support as would be possible. As one interviewee explained, the broad range of speakers invited to address public meetings that his group organised was “always” the result of the desire to “strengthen the coalition”:

To put it crudely we would always attempt to have someone from the radical Left, someone from the mainstream Labour Party, somebody who represented in some way the Trade Unions, and someone who represented in some way the major religious forces in the area, which does mean in this case someone from a Bengali or a Muslim background – though not always a religious leader from those communities.²⁹

Or as one other interviewee explained in relation to having had the same experience:

Essentially internal movement considerations drive whether or not.... If somebody can’t talk for toffee but their organisation’s backing the thing they get three minutes at the mike.... But relations within the movement are very much about we need everyone we can get. It doesn’t matter if we’re going to have some terrible speeches to stand through because he’d turning up with his mates from Corby [nearby town], that’s what has to happen.³⁰

In summary then, antiwar activism often revolved around the need to maintain the momentum and whatever degree of unity groups had obtained. Indeed it would appear that for many groups this was their top priority.

Concluding remarks

If differences of opinion and attitude towards NVDA, the national STWC and interpretations of the Iraq crisis rarely actually split groups apart³¹ because of, what was in general, a collective determination among opponents of the war to set aside their political and tactical differences as far as was possible, these fissures could still have a corrosive impact on the size and the breadth of the movement in more subtle ways. In some cases individuals ended their involvement with the local group after disagreements over tactics, or because of the politics the groups adopted on issues that may or may not have been directly related to the Iraq War. In other cases groups refused to work with other local groups of different political orientation. So for example in one town, an anarchist orientated antiwar group, decided to drastically limit their involvement with a

nearby 'Stop the War' group because the anarchists regarded the STW group as being too heavily dominated by the Socialist Workers Party.

The next chapter investigates how the locally based antiwar groups set about engaging with the local media in their respective areas. It builds on the ideas outlined in this chapter and particularly the notion that the groups are sustained through sociological and idealogical compromise so as to consider how those things shaped their communication strategies and messages.

End Notes

¹ These estimates for the number of people marching in London on 15 February 2003 are based on polling survey conducted during the week after the march. As ever, there is always the possibility of error, even when dealing with calculated assessments. See Vidal 2003.

² This was evident from the following extracts from interviews:

- "We found for example that during the early part of the occupation it became far harder for us to campaign.... And certainly there was a phase of a few months certainly, maybe six months after the end of the war, where the sort of arguments and positions we were putting were quite a minority position." (Activist Interview 1).
- "There was a lot demoralisation actually after once the war started. People were kind of drifting away." (Activist Interview 2).
- "... the fact that we had a big demonstration, and the war wasn't stopped by that big demonstration – I think people wondered where do we go from here, and the group dissipated a little bit, but not to a great extent." (Activist Interview 3).

³ North Manchester Against Wars, Bolton CND/STW and other groups within the Greater Manchester area have since established the umbrella organisation of the Greater Manchester Stop the War Coalition, which has an elected Steering Committee.

⁴ Opponents of globalisation often prefer to describe their stance as one of alter-globalisation to signal that they are not opposed to all aspects of globalisation, and particularly not the interactions between people, culture and ideas. Their quarrel is with the economic dimension to globalisation and the workings of International Finance Institutions like the WTO, IMF and World Bank. Looking at the issues behind the distinction in more depth it is possible to discern more complex and subtle arguments over international trade and finance. See Gillan 2006 and Hardt 2002.

⁵ Activist Interview 4.

⁶ Activist Interview 5; Activist Interview 6.

⁷ It is indeed the case that many antiwar radicals were sceptical about the British and American government's claims regarding Iraq's putative WMD capacity and claims about there being links between Iraq and Al Qaeda even more so. But the 'proof' that these claims were unfounded and thus (or so their logic ran) the basis for alleging that these claims were nought but lies only came after the end of the war. Hence the claim that the war was actually based on lies, whatever its validity, ought really to be seen as a 'post-war' justification for opposition to the war, not as an explanation for pre-war reasoning.

⁸ Some of these reasons frequently appeared in comments by activists in newspaper coverage.

⁹ Activist Interview 7.

¹⁰ Activist Interview 8.

¹¹ Activist Interview 5.

¹² Activist Interview 9.

¹³ Activist Interview 5.

¹⁴ Activist Interview 10.

¹⁵ Activist Interview 11.

¹⁶ The underlying assumption is that people fear isolation and that as a consequence they are afraid to express unpopular views. To this end people continually monitor their environment to ensure that the views they express are in line with the prevailing climate of opinion. If they feel their views are in a minority they will conceal them; if they think their views are in a majority they are far more willing to express them. Thus those views that are supposedly popular gain ground and those views that are thought to be unpopular retreat even further back. Hence the 'spiralling' effect.

It ought to be acknowledged though, that in Noelle-Neuman's original formulation people were said to monitor the mass media in order to assess their environment and how their views related to the prevailing climate of opinion, and that this creates the mainstreaming of political opinion. This is where the parallels break down and why I was careful to draw attention to just the underlying assumptions of the 'Spiral of Silence' thesis.

¹⁷ Activist Interview 6.

¹⁸ Activist Interview 11. Pickerill's (2008) research lends support to this charge, as her research found that most non-Muslim elements in the antiwar movement were reluctant to discuss issues of religion and Islam with Muslim members.

¹⁹ Activist Interview 12.

²⁰ Activist Interview 13.

²¹ Activist Interview 5.

²² Activist Interview 14.

²³ Survey respondent 1. Corresponds to Activist interview 21.

²⁴ Activist Interview 15.

²⁵ Activist Interview 1.

²⁶ Activist Interview 16.

²⁷ Activist Interview 17.

²⁸ Activist Interview 15.

²⁹ Activist Interview 18.

³⁰ Activist Interview 6.

³¹ During the course of this research I have only encountered one such example of a group facing irreconcilable differences between different political factions. They split as a result.

Chapter 7: Activists' engagements with the media

Chapter 3, which explored research relating to the 'interactions between social movements and the mainstream media', identified two of the key arguments from past research that are particularly pertinent to this chapter. One was that past research showed that many previous social movements, including antiwar movements, trade unions and other organisations that would usually be seen as politically 'on the Left', often believed that the mass media were inclined to either ignore, or unfavourably represent, them and the causes they espoused. The other phenomenon that Chapter 3 drew attention to was the potential prospect of the 'spurious amplification' (Blumler 1989) of media work for social movements and pressure groups. That is, any given organisation's need to access the news media and channel their messages through it, is said to change that organisation's priorities and activities, and perhaps even their social composition and sense of identity, as Gitlin (1980) found to have been the case with the Students for a Democratic Society as they campaigned against the Vietnam War in the 1960s and '70s.

While these two findings are not necessarily incompatible with each other, it is not automatically obvious how and why both could simultaneously apply to any single movement. Ryan (1991) teaches that challenger groups have to work very hard to secure access to the news media. Given the effort required then, one wonders why, if social movements and pressure groups had such low expectations of the media, those organisations would prioritise their relations with the media to the extent that media relations altered those groups so drastically? We should not then, necessarily expect that all of the findings from previous research apply to the utmost degree in the case of locally based antiwar groups. So in place of speculation, this chapter examines, one by one, each aspect of the different findings from previous research:

- Part I explores how locally based antiwar groups assessed and accounted for the coverage they received from the local press;
- Part II is an examination of what they hoped to achieve from gaining access to the news media;
- Part III considers how far activists' engagements with the news media could be said to have influenced their priorities, activities, and the arguments they made.

Part I: How activists assessed and accounted for local press coverage

On the basis of past writings evidencing unfavourable media representations of social movements and protesters (e.g. Gitlin 1980; Halloran et al 1970; Keeble 1986; Tilly 2004: 85), and also on the basis of evidence about the relations between social movements and the media typically being characterised by a considerable degree of mutual misunderstanding (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993; Gitlin 1980), it might be supposed that a large measure of suspicion and even hostility towards the mainstream media would run throughout the contemporary antiwar movement. The basis for this expectation receives wider support from an awareness of the bitter experiences that 'the Left' in the Labour Party and Trade Union movement had with the media throughout the 1970s and '80s (see Curran and Seaton 1997; Curran et al 2005; Manning 1996),¹ as well as from commentary by contemporary antiwar activists (e.g. Miller 2005: 214; see also Gillan et al 2008: 26-29) and on some antiwar websites.² Moreover, it might be supposed that this attitude of suspicion/hostility would translate into a line of reasoning whereby activists regarded any engagement with the mainstream media as nothing short of futile.

Yet the evidence collected for this research suggests that the reality of the situation is actually a good deal more complicated in the case of the contemporary antiwar movement. First of all, survey and interview testimony conducted for this research found that while suspicions of the mainstream media pervaded the movement, the intensity with which such suspicion and hostility was felt varied considerably. Second, the research also found that activists often distinguished between different media outlets, including between local and national media. Third, and most significantly of all, there does *not* appear to have been a strong association between the assessments that activists made of the local press and the matter of whether or not they made the strategic decision to prioritise media relations. Each of these points deserves to be explored in more detail, starting with attitudes within the movement towards the mainstream media.

Movement attitudes towards the mainstream national media

The long version of the online survey asked activists for assessments of the different national newspapers and broadcasters in the UK. Although the majority of respondents felt that in each case *The Sun*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Daily Telegraph*, and *The Times*, gave the antiwar movement 'unfavourable' coverage, and more respondents were inclined to describe coverage of the antiwar movement on BBC News, ITV News, and Sky News as 'unfavourable' than 'favourable', 'neutral', or 'wide ranging', other media were felt to be more receptive. Forty-six percent of

respondents felt that the *Daily Mirror* gave the antiwar movement ‘favourable’ coverage, just as 48 percent described the coverage in *The Independent* as ‘favourable’. Additionally, coverage in *The Guardian* and on Channel 4 News was most commonly described as ‘neutral’.

The survey results also revealed that, with only one exception, all the respondents made discriminating judgements about the evaluative nature of the coverage of the antiwar movement and its activities in the different news outlets. In other words, nearly all survey respondents recognised that there was a degree of diversity in the UK media landscape. That this was so hints at the widespread, although by no means universal, sense from the interviews that there were sections of the media that could potentially be responsive to opponents of the war. For many activists one of these potentially responsive sections of the media included the local press, as this chapter shall illustrate.

It was out of this recognition of the potential utility of the media that the majority of groups – 78 percent according to my own survey research – declared that dealing with the media to have been one of the ‘main areas of activity’ that their ‘group was involved in as part of’ their ‘opposition to the war in Iraq’. That being said, no interviewee ever said their group regarded dealing with the media as their collective number one priority.

Even the respondents who didn’t declare the media to have been one of their *main* priorities still usually attached some importance to mediated communications. The only regular exceptions here were University groups, whose campaigning tended to be campus oriented with the result that they usually concentrated on student media, and one respondent to the survey who regarded *all* mainstream media outlets as steadfastly closed to, and unfavourably disposed towards, the antiwar movement. From this, she reasoned in a subsequent interview, that there were no mainstream media outlets worth bothering with.

Movement attitudes towards the local press

The first indication of the (potential) importance of the local press that I intend to discuss here comes from the survey data. Both the online and offline versions of the survey asked respondents to identify those sectors of the media they received the most coverage from.

Table 7.1:

What do you get the most coverage from? (Tick up to three boxes).
(96 responses):

75 groups (78%) - Local newspapers
45 groups (47%) - Local radio
37 groups (39%) - Internet
17 groups (18%) - Regional TV
12 groups (12%) - Other
4 groups (4%) - National newspapers
3 groups (3%) - National radio
2 groups (2%) - National TV

The survey results in Table 7.1 could easily be misread as suggesting that local groups had a preference for dealing with local newspapers. What the Table actually shows is that for the local dimension of the antiwar movement, when taken as a whole, the local newspapers were the most productive media format for generating a substantial amount of coverage for, and about, the antiwar movement. For this reason alone, it is apposite that the content analysis research should be concentrated on the local press rather than other sections of the media. The table also shows far greater utility of locally based media (press and radio), ahead of regional media, which in turn stands ahead of the national media.

However, Table 7.1 on its own tells us nothing about how local groups assessed the nature of the coverage they received from the local press. When the survey enquired into this matter, the results were as follows:

Table 7.2:

How would you assess the way that the local press in your area reported on the activities YOUR group engaged in as part of your opposition to the Iraq War?
(100 responses)

29 groups (%) – Solely or mainly Favourably
41 groups (%) – Neither favourably nor unfavourably – somewhere in the middle
9 groups (%) – Solely or mainly Unfavourably
8 groups (%) – Wide range of treatment here
13 groups (%) – Not applicable/Unfamiliar with the coverage from this particular outlet.

(Five of the groups in this last category were university-based groups who had little contact with the municipal press).

More will be said about what activists meant by each of these assessments shortly. But if our expectations were that the antiwar movement would regard the local press – which is part of the mainstream media – as automatically predisposed towards giving unfavourable coverage of the antiwar movement, then the data presented in this table confounds those expectations. Only 9 percent of locally based antiwar groups felt that their local press gave them unfavourable treatment.

Furthermore, although the survey asked activists for assessments of the individual (mainstream) titles and broadcasters in place of asking for an assessment of all national mainstream media outlets collated together, upon aggregating all the results for the national media together it becomes apparent that the local press was, on the whole, seen as more sympathetically disposed towards the antiwar movement than the national media outlets were.

Table 7.3:

Overall assessments of the mainstream national media compared to the local media:
(The ‘Overall aggregate’ column is based on aggregating the survey results of individual titles and broadcasters together).
Both sets of figures are given in percentages.

	Overall aggregate	Local Press
Favourable	12	29
Somewhere in between	19	41
Unfavourable	40	9
Wide Ranging	10	8
Not familiar	19	13

Excluding the ‘Not Familiar’ answer, statistical analysis reveals a Chi-Square value of 74.2 with 3 degrees of freedom. When the analysis also excludes the ‘wide-ranging’ answer a Chi-Square value of 73.4 emerges with 2 degrees of freedom. Both of these results are statistically significant (Deacon et al 2007: 109), which means that activists clearly felt that the local press were more favourably disposed to them than the national media were. However, the differences in activists’ perceptions of the local press and the national media (as a general category) are particularly strongly accentuated in relation to the matter of ‘unfavourable treatment’: While the table shows that activists were nearly two-and-a-half times as likely to regard the local press as ‘favourably’ disposed towards them than the national media typically were, the table also reveals that more than four times as many activists regarded the national media as inclined to present ‘unfavourable’ coverage of them and their activities when compared to the local press in their

respective areas. This sense that dealing with the local press was more productive than engaging with the national media was a theme that found its voice in additional comments that were made in the survey, and also continued on into the personal interviews, as a selected sample of extracts indicate:

Box 7.1:

Comments from interviewees and survey respondents indicating a preference for the local over national media:

The local media did give us a fair crack of the whip, which I don't think we can really say about the national media.³

Personally one thing I realized [whilst campaigning against the Iraq War] is that actually there are certain things where national coverage isn't the be-all and end-all. And I've come round to thinking that what is ideal is to have lots and lots of local positive coverage rather than national. I'm not saying national coverage isn't important. But for some issues you've just got to accept the fact that they're not interested.... We're never going to get the coverage in the national papers that we deserve really.⁴

The local journalists who wrote the stories were fine and they would cover it. The editorial – particularly in the *Gazette*, which is quite a conservative paper – would be the war is a good thing. Which actually shows that you can manage to get coverage even in the Tory press – *I don't think that applies nationally* – but at a local level you can do (Emphasis added).⁵

To break into national media in particular is extremely difficult. And a lot of work goes into it that nobody ever sees. [This was felt to be in contrast to the relative ease of access for the local media].⁶

We never really used our local media properly. They are usually good, trustworthy, generally independent people. National media and national journalists and columnists are so far up their own arse or are indebted to their 'owners' (government or corporate) that they are rarely trustworthy.⁷

It is important to appreciate though, that activists' assessments of the media coverage they received from the local press in their areas, whether respondents regarded press coverage as favourable, unfavourable, or anywhere in between, would appear to have had only a modest degree of influence on the extent to which they prioritised their media relations. Cross-tabulating activists' assessments of the media with their responses to the question of whether media relations were a priority for their individual group suggests only a weak association between the two factors. Table 7.4 presents this data:

Table 7.4:

Activist's assessments of the treatment of their group cross-tabulated
against declarations of whether media relations were a priority
(99 responses)⁸

Did the group declare media relations to be a priority?	How would you assess the way that the local press in your area reported on the activities YOUR group engaged in as part your opposition to the Iraq War?					Totals
	Favourable	Somewhere in the middle	Unfavourable	Wide ranging	Not Familiar/ Not Applicable	
Yes	25	32	6	8	6	77
No	4	9	3	0	6	22
Totals	29	41	9	8	12	99

Statistical analysis of this data reveals a Chi-Square value of 3.896 and 3 degrees of freedom when we exclude the 'Not Familiar/Not Applicable' answer, and a Chi-Square value of 1.776 with 2 degrees of freedom when excluding the 'wide-ranging' answer. Neither of these results is statistically significant (Deacon et al 2007: 109). This means that it would not be appropriate to conclude that there is a direct relationship between activists' assessments of the local press and the extent to which they prioritised media relations. Looked at another way, the majority of groups that registered 'somewhere in the middle', 'wide ranging' and even 'unfavourable' assessments of the local press still prioritised media relations to the extent that in most cases it was one of their main activities. The challenge though is to explain why this was so. As a first step towards doing so it is necessary to know which sections of the media activists targeted the most.

Targeting the local media

Twenty-two of the 34 groups represented in the interviews prioritised their dealings with the local press, whilst also having contacts with local radio. Ten of the remaining 12 groups preferred to concentrate their media work through the local radio, whilst making some attempt to forge relations with the local press in their areas. This leaves two groups for whom engagements with the media were never a priority, and indeed who never attempted to initiate contact with either the local press or local radio. As mentioned previously, one was a university-based group who felt it inappropriate to have any contact with the provincial media, preferring instead to concentrate on campus based activism. The other group's rejection of the media could be related to their radical

politics: they choose to have nothing to do with any form of mainstream media on the grounds that they 'did not seek to legitimise the 'mainstream' media' as they explained in the survey.⁹ If we may be allowed to adapt Grant's (1989) schemata for understanding different types of pressure group so that the categorisations that he identifies refer to approaches towards dealing with the media rather than lobbying politicians, the second of these groups would certainly qualify as 'outsiders by choice'. No other group interviewed for this research would fall into this category so unequivocally.

When dealing with the local press, all 32 groups that attached at least some importance to dealing with the local media concentrated their press work on dealing with the paid-for papers (whether evening, morning, or weekly) rather than the freesheets, on the grounds that, "if people have paid for it [i.e. the local paper] they're more likely to read it", in the words of one interviewee.¹⁰ Indeed the freesheets were regularly dismissed throughout the interviews.

However, even though activists' assessments of the mainstream media would appear to have had little bearing on whatever level of strategic importance they attached to dealing with the media, activists' explanations for the assessments still shed a good deal of light on their understandings of the local press. This includes questions about the ways in which, and the reasons why, most local groups understood the local media to be potentially accessible to them as they campaigned against a war on Iraq. For this reason their justifications for their assessments of the local press that they gave in the survey merit a more detailed consideration. This next section is based on the responses to follow up questions asked during the interview stage of the research.

Explaining the different assessments that activists gave in the survey

Nearly all interviewees spoke about their local press with some degree of familiarity and authority. (Even though, as far as I was able to discern from the interviews, only one person from one of the groups represented in the interviews ever went to the trouble of systematically monitoring the media coverage they received.)

Solely or mainly favourable coverage

Activists who felt they received positive coverage from their local papers typically spoke (or wrote) of their sense of satisfaction with the reporting they generated in terms of the amount of coverage they received, and the tone and substance of those reports. As one respondent to the survey wrote, 'I think we have been very successful in getting frequent and positive coverage

when we wanted it.’¹¹ This sums up the views of many activists in this category, who shall hereafter be referred to as ‘favourable’ interviewees. A notable feature of ‘favourable’ interviewees was that none of these respondents came out with caveat laden statements of the kind that said that while they were satisfied with the way in which they were reported when they got in the papers they nonetheless often struggled to get a decent amount of coverage in the first place or vice versa.

‘Somewhere in the middle’, and ‘wide ranging’:

The sixteen interviewees who, in the survey, categorised the overall treatment of their activities in their local press as being ‘neither favourable nor unfavourable but somewhere in the middle,’ expanded upon and explained their answers in ways that were remarkably similar to the answers given by the two interviewees who classified their local papers’ treatment of them and their activities as being ‘wide ranging’. Hence explanations of the two assessments are discussed together. From this point onwards, interviewees who fell into this category will often be referred to as ‘somewhere in the middle’ and ‘wide ranging’ interviewees.

On a literal reading of these two options, it might be supposed that the ‘somewhere in the middle’ category suggests a half-way house evaluation along the lines of say the local press giving these groups no more than a modest amount of coverage pitched equidistantly between the favourable and the unfavourable, in contrast to the ‘wide ranging’ answer which might imply a divergent mix of favourable and unfavourable news reporting. But in fact, this turns out not to have been the case. Instead these eighteen interviewees representing either the ‘somewhere in the middle’ or ‘wide-ranging’ survey responses, variously distinguished between the quantitative amount of reporting they generated and the qualitative dimensions of that coverage; were able to identify changing patterns in the coverage they got; and on occasions even made distinctions between the different media formats, such as between the reporting of their activities in the news pages and editorial commentary on the war and opposition to it.

Five of these eighteen interviewees said that although they got a decent amount of coverage they shared a number of misgivings about the reporting they inspired. In some cases this manifested itself in a sense of frustration about the way in which political comments were excised from their reports:

Box 7.2:

Comments from interviewees expressing frustration at the depoliticisation of their comments in the local press:

Whenever we put a statement saying, a group spokesperson said today we believe this war is the result of capitalism or something like that they would easily trim that out – that would be one of the first casualties. ('Wide ranging' interviewee).¹²

Sometimes I would say quite strong comments for instance, and they never printed those; they were always kept kind of mild and tame. (Somewhere in the middle' interviewee).¹³

Sometimes when I send off press releases they put in the information about what's happening locally, but if I put in anything political like 'bring the troops home now' they tend to delete that bit. ('Somewhere in the middle' interviewee).¹⁴

There were however, other groups who assessed the coverage they received as either somewhere between favourable and unfavourable or 'wide ranging', who felt that they encountered an entirely different set of problems. Three interviewees declared themselves generally satisfied with the favourableness of the coverage they received but disappointed with the relatively small amount of it. Some interpreted this as a snub to the group, in the sense that activists felt that the local reporters had purposely minimised their contact with them. If this was so, it would be remarkably similar to the phenomenon of 'critique by exclusion' (Deacon 1999: 64), whereby journalists are thought to purposely avoid contact with certain groups on the grounds that they, as journalists, regard those groups as lacking in credibility for any one of a number of reasons (such as lack of competence on the group's behalf, or because their motives are doubted), with the result that such groups rarely ever feature in the news. Meanwhile other groups felt they observed fluctuations in the amount of coverage they received over time.

There were two other explanatory narratives worthy of note to have emerged from discussions with respondents who regarded the coverage they received as pitched somewhere between favourable and unfavourable coverage. Some groups felt they observed fluctuations in the amount of coverage they received over time, largely depending on whether the issue of the Iraq War was at the top of the news agenda. This is a theme I shall return to shortly. Meanwhile another subset of respondents justified their assessment by distinguishing between the news reporting of their activities, which was generally "quite fair", and the editorial commentary where the line was that "the people demonstrating against it [the war] were a bit naïve." The paper's attitude was that "we know better" rather than being "a nasty attack on the group".¹⁵ This simultaneously reaffirms

and yet also qualifies ideas, set forth in Chapters 2 and 3, about the importance of media pre-disposition. It reaffirms those ideas to the extent that it suggests that the media will sometimes form their own opinions about issues and the campaigners involved regardless of the input from those campaigners. Yet it also qualifies the thesis by pointing to restraint on behalf of the paper in question for confining their views to the Op-Ed pages rather than allowing their views to spill over into news reporting.

In sum, there was no single narrative by which activists explained their assessments of the press coverage they received as being either ‘somewhere in the middle’ or ‘wide ranging’. Instead the research found that the interviewees distinguished between the different aspects of the coverage they attracted, how this sometimes changed over time, and variations they could identify between different sections of the same paper.

‘Unfavourable coverage’

There were typically two, often intertwined, grievances that ‘unfavourable’ interviewees registered in relation to the press coverage they received. The first grievance was that they hardly ever received any press coverage for the activities such as public meetings, or when leafleting the local high street. The second complaint was that they received an extensive amount of negative coverage for other activities they engaged in, principally for acts of civil disobedience.

Box 7.3:

Comments indicating the twin strands of ‘unfavourable’ coverage:

The civil disobedience stuff nearly always got in. It always did.... But when we try and hold a big public meeting – nothing; they won’t put it in.¹⁶

When we’re handing out leaflets – ‘This is an anti-war leaflet handout’ or whatever ... ‘This is collecting money for the medical aid for Palestine’, or ‘This is collecting money to help the Stop the War Coalition assist in making demonstrations and publicising the fact that this is wrong and it ought not to happen’ – there is no coverage of that at all. There is not an iota, not one word in the *Xxxx Free Press* [name of local paper]. But as soon as something controversial comes along that’s in there straight away.¹⁷

When we first started out I anticipated the press would be really interested so I was really a bit taken a back that they weren’t. I thought well what else can we do that might attract their interest. And we did this toppling of the George Bush statue and things like that that ... might gain a bit more publicity – and it did, a bit.¹⁸

It may well be that some of these comments betray a certain naivety about the ‘news values’ of journalism. ‘Deviance’, ‘dramatization’, or unexpectedness, are among the qualities of newsworthiness that journalists look for potential news stories (Ericson et al 1987: 144), and a stronger case can be made for saying that acts of civil disobedience meet those criteria than, for instance, leafleting the local high street does. The purpose of this section however, has simply been to outline the various explanations that activists had for the different assessments they made of the local press’s treatment of them and their activities.

Yet if we are to truly understand the reasons why there was such a weak association between activists’ assessments of the coverage they got and the prioritisation of media relations, it is necessary to go beyond descriptive reflections of their assessments of the coverage they received and turn to a consideration of *their* explanations for the workings of the news media. Broadly speaking, what emerged from the interviews and from comments made in the survey, were two competing understandings of the workings of the media that I, for analytical purposes, shall refer to as ‘over-determined’ and ‘conditional’ understandings. These are, to be sure, ideal-typical categories, that in reality existed on a continuum. But, comments by some interviewees and survey respondents would suggest that they belonged at one end of the spectrum, while comments by other activists placed them nearer the other end.

In outlining illustrative examples of these two understandings, the commentary that follows is intended to explain how activists thought about their dealings with the media. Their claims should not be treated as though they necessarily describe the reality of the workings of the local news media, or the way that local newswriters set about reporting on the Iraq crisis and the antiwar movement.

Explaining media coverage

‘Over-determined’ understandings of the media

Drawing ‘heavily on analyses of media power structures’, ‘over-determined’ understandings of the mainstream media hold that it is almost impossible for challenger sources to gain access to the mainstream media, on the grounds that the barriers to media access are more or less ‘impenetrable’ for challenger groups (Greenberg et al 2006: 136; see also Ryan 1991: 10). A handful of activists contacted for this research articulated grievances along those lines, as Box 7.4 illustrates:

Box 7.4:

Extracts from the interviews and survey responses illustrating ‘over-determined’ understandings of the media:

They [the local paper] have refused to take up our adverts for meetings. They’ve refused to cover various different protests we’ve done.... So I would say that our local paper, which is the *Xxxx Free Press* [name of local paper], are either not sympathetic to our cause, are either following government guidelines, or the editor has a political stance that he’s not prepared to cross. (‘Unfavourable’ interviewee).¹⁹

The local press is ... they’re never going to be supportive of something that the Left do – it’s always going to be negative coverage. (‘Unfavourable’ interviewee).²⁰

The media mainly reflects the opinions of its owners and established governing authorities. The Anti-war groups have little ability to use the media. What they do is governed by the individual journalists and the policies of the media owners and managers. (‘Somewhere in the middle’ survey respondent).²¹

...The media machine is structured around certain agendas and anything that attacks or criticises those agendas is ignored or belittled. (‘Somewhere in the middle’ survey respondent).²²

Corporate media work mainly for profit motive or take ‘official/establishment’ side. (Expressed no view on the local media. Survey respondent).²³

Whilst it is true that a distinction can be made between the specificities of the first and second interviewees, in that the first complains about his group’s exclusion from the local news agenda whereas second interviewee’s grievance concerns the negativity of the coverage his group received, such distinctions are of little consequence, given that, as has been outlined above, exclusion and negativity were the twin strands of ‘unfavourable’ coverage. Also noteworthy, is that none of these quotations wastes any time in highlighting the political implications of their group’s relations with the press. According to the reasoning articulated above then, it is the belief that the media were acting in the unswerving pursuit of this political agenda that explains the ‘unfavourable’ press treatment these particular antiwar groups received.²⁴ Furthermore, there was the shared belief between the interviewees represented in Box 7.4 and also hinted at in the first two survey respondents quoted therein, that even if they, as activists, had been more imaginative and adept at dealing with their local press it would have made very little difference to either the nature or the amount of the coverage they received. So, consistent with this line of reasoning, only one of the five groups represented in Box 7.4 declared that dealing with the media was one of their main activities. Additionally, whenever any of these groups did decide to engage with the media, it was usually with a measure of weariness. Thus they would be considered ‘recalcitrant’

sources, in Gans' (1979) tripartite distinction between 'eager', 'agreeable', and 'recalcitrant' sources.

Also of significance, is that of the six interviewees representing groups who, in the survey, declared media relations *not* to have been one of their priorities, four could be said leant towards the 'over-determined' end of the continuum. Only one of those four interviewees was genuinely surprised by the negative treatment of his group in the local press; the other three interviewees not only predicted negative treatment from the local press, but would appear to have formed strong opinions about the media long before they began campaigning on the Iraq crisis. Typical in this regard, was the interviewee who, when asked if his "attitudes towards the media and media relations changed as a result of campaigning?" replied: "Not really, I studied media and so I knew what they were going to be like when I approached them".²⁵

However, whilst 'over-determined' understandings of the media are wise enough to acknowledge the presence of what are, for challenger groups, often genuinely 'formidable barriers to mass media access' (Greenberg 2006: 135 – genuine for reasons spelt out in Chapters 2 and 3), 'over-determined' understandings may also have the effect of cultivating a sense of despair about media relations with the result that activists fail to prioritise media relations to the same degree that they might otherwise have done. If it should turn out to be the case that activists had overestimated the impenetrability of the barriers to media access, (which is what the label '*over-determined* understanding' arguably implies), and if it should happen that those same activists fail to prioritise their relations with the media as a consequence, then they would have missed an opportunity to make use of the media and bend its powers so that the media could be of service to the cause of antiwar activism.

Greenberg et al (2006) contrast 'over-determination' with 'under-determination'. 'Under-determination' represents the belief that if challenger groups simply follow the basic unspoken rules of media relations – such as if they know how to compose a press statement and then release it at a time that is suitably in advance of the target journalist's deadline – then that should be enough for them to gain regular access to the media. Whilst 'under-determination' may be a valuable concept, and may indeed describe the attitude of some of the activists interviewed for this research, the concept revolves around judgements about what the most appropriate tactics to be used are, and as has been indicated elsewhere, that it not part of this research agenda. Rather I

would prefer to contrast ‘over-determined’ understandings of the media with, what I shall call, ‘conditional understandings’.

‘Conditional understandings’

Instead of seeing access to the news media as restricted to political elites and thus closed to challenger groups, ‘conditional understandings’ of the media see a wider set of factors affecting news media content and the related question of source access to the news media. These factors would include: a source’s ability to undertake ‘successful strategic action’ (Schlesinger 1990: 77), the state of elite unity/division on particular issues (Bennett 1990; Deacon and Golding 1994; Hallin 1986; Wolfsfeld 1997), and, arguably, the state of public opinion on the issue(s) in question,²⁶ amongst other matters. Each of these conditional factors will be considered shortly.

Additionally though, whereas those activists whose views accorded with ‘over-determined’ understandings of the media, tended to believe that the media were (near) solely driven by a political agenda, activists who articulated ‘conditional’ understandings of the media were less convinced by such instrumentalist reasoning. It is not the case that adherents of ‘conditional understandings’ necessarily believed the local press were apolitical, or fully pluralist, or inclined to be particularly sympathetic to the antiwar cause, so much as that those interviewees whose views were closer to ‘conditional’ understandings often believed that even if the press were acting in the pursuit of a political agenda that agenda could still sometimes be subverted. In the final part of this section, I shall argue that comments made by a small number of the activists who articulated ‘conditional understandings’ about the media, point towards an awareness that the local press carved out the basis by which acceptable and unacceptable forms of dissent were to be distinguished from each other.

Most of my interviewees leant towards this end of the continuum rather than towards ‘over-determined’ understandings.

Divisions within public and media opinion

As has been mentioned on a number of occasions throughout this thesis, particularly in Chapter 4, one of the distinguishing features of the Iraq War was that it should have proven to be so controversial, in that it divided both elite and popular opinion. Furthermore, as I shall argue at greater length in Chapter 11, it is likely that divisions within both elite and popular opinion had a significant influence on the nature of the media’s reporting of the controversy and the

oppositional activities it inspired. Curiously though, whilst there were many interviewees who reached for explanations that revolved around the state of popular division when asked to account for whatever modest degree of plurality they felt inclined to identify in local press coverage, no interviewee ever identified the state of elite division on the Iraq crisis as having been an influential factor in shaping the nature of the press coverage on the crisis. Sometimes the impact of popular division was expressed in terms that were specific to the issue of the Iraq War:

They [the local paper] changed over time as they tend to do depending on the public mood. So obviously once they become aware the conservative readership in itself is coming to sympathise with the antiwar theme then they [the local paper]... tended to lead on the type of activities we were organising. ('Favourable' interviewee).²⁷

On other occasions interviewees explained the papers accommodation of the antiwar perspective in terms of the local paper's need to be responsive to the mood of the local public.

I suppose it just reflects the mixture of people there are around here. ('Wide-ranging' interviewee).²⁸

I think XXXXXXX's [name of town] got a history of radicalism, so it might be that ... and that image of being slightly alternative.... So there is that kind of Left-Wing community here. ('Favourable' interviewee).²⁹

A variant on this theme of the local press being responsive to the public mood, is the notion that the local press were influenced by the national media.

The Daily Mirror was covering the antiwar demonstration weren't they? And they backed it; it was sort of massive support against the war. So it wasn't unusual for a local paper to pick up that mood, if *The Mirror* legitimised it in some way. ('Somewhere in the middle' interviewee).³⁰

... [C]ertainly some of the press, obviously *The Independent* being the main one, have actually taken an antiwar position right from the start and I think that always helps. ('Favourable' interviewee).³¹

This is not meant to imply that the local press directly followed the lead of either *The Mirror* or *The Independent* – for such an argument would suggest that the locals actively campaigned against the war which none of the interviewees felt was the case. Rather, the speculative reasoning here is that the 'antiwar' stance, which these two interviewees saw in *The Mirror* and *The Independent* respectively, influenced the local press to the extent that this stance legitimised opposition to the Iraq War in the eyes of much of the local press. Thus, these two interviewees in

particular, reasoned that the local press emerged as more comfortable in accessing antiwar viewpoints than might have otherwise been the case.

Sympathetic journalists

Another variant on the notion that the local media feel compelled to reflect the public mood, was that the range of opinions within newsrooms probably reflects the public mood anyway. As one interviewee put it, journalists “reflect the population as much as anything.... Most of them were opposed to the war, like most of the population was”.³²

More commonly though, most activists believed that they had identified a handful of sympathetically disposed journalists within each local media outlet who they felt they could approach when they wanted to promote events they were organising, and who would also occasionally initiate contact with the activists. Some groups believed that these sympathetic journalists were relatively few in number at their local newspaper:

... You do get the odd journalist ... you do get Left journalists don't you? And we had one guy at the [local] *Telegraph* and one guy at the [local] *Observer* who would fight our corner as journalist. So we did get a lot of news items in those papers ('Somewhere in the middle' interviewee).³³

They [the local paper] have a journalist there ... who is very sympathetic to lots of things CND do and the antiwar movement. And we could always be sure that if we had a public meeting ... he could always slip something into a small space somewhere. (Somewhere in the middle 'interviewee').³⁴

Other groups believed the majority of reporters at their local paper were inclined to be sympathetic to the antiwar movement:

We found loads [of sympathetic journalists at the local paper].... On the whole most journalists were very sympathetic – we have very good personal relationships with them. ('Favourable' interviewee).³⁵

That antiwar activists were able to identify and were prepared to concede that there were a number of sympathetic journalists within their local media outlets is significant for two reasons. First, it suggests that there were openings within the media system that activists could exploit in order to advance their cause. Second, such observations go against the grain of the Marxist orientated argument that media workers are necessarily hostile to any 'left-wing' campaign. The line of reasoning in this argument is that since journalists tend to come from the middle classes

they will invariably represent the interests of that class, and thus will strive to maintain the status quo (Herman and Chomsky 1988: xii). This was, for instance, an argument that found expression in comments by Nell Myers of the National Union of Miners, who said, after the coal dispute of 1984-1985, that she regarded journalists as “our enemies’ front line troops” partly for this very reason (cited in Manning 1996: 7).

Fluctuations in the levels of interest in the antiwar movement

However, regardless of whether or not interviewees believed the local press were responding to the state of public or media opinion, or whether activists argued that local newspapers were staffed by individuals who were inclined to be sympathetic to the antiwar cause, there was a feeling among some activists that the local media’s interest in the Iraq War, and antiwar activism in particular, varied considerably across time. As shall be discussed in due course, one of the most telling indicators of this was that the local press should initiate contact with the local press. When pressed for an explanation in interviews, activists said they believed that local press interest in their activities to have been indexed to the profile of the antiwar movement nationally as measured by the size and frequency of national demonstrations against the war. As one activist put it, local press interest in the group of which he was a part was ‘quite fickle actually’:

I think when Stop the War and the war in general was in the news, I think they did come to us and say, ‘what you up to at the moment?’ Or if we go to them they print our stuff. But when things aren’t like that they do ignore us quite a lot – especially more recently. (‘Somewhere in the middle’ interviewee).³⁶

This particular interviewee went onto to say that he felt he observed the same phenomena with the regional television broadcasters: “I think Meridian have done some stuff for us, but only when it’s really newsworthy, or when it’s already in the news.” As Box 7.5 indicates, other interviewees tilted towards a similar explanation for the same observed tendencies in local press coverage, even if some interviewees and respondents to the survey felt that the local press only ever reluctantly took an interest in their group’s activities:

Box 7.5:

Comments indicating how activists saw local press interest in local antiwar activism as being indexed to national antiwar events, particularly demonstrations:

It [press coverage] is patchy: sometimes they do cover stuff and sometimes they don't. On one of the demonstrations after 15th Feb, the *Echo* [abbreviated name of local paper] actually sent an embedded journalist on one of the coaches, and he went up and down the coach [asking people] 'what are you doing here? Why are you here? Why have you chosen to protest?' ('Unfavourable' interviewee).³⁷

... when there was something [relating to the Iraq War] that was getting national coverage – they [journalists] would ring us. ('Somewhere in the middle' interviewee).³⁸

[The local newspaper] didn't particularly report on the antiwar movement, except when it felt it needed to. ('Somewhere in the middle' interviewee).³⁹

Reporting ebbs and flows in relation to the bigger national issues. ('Somewhere in the middle' Survey respondent).⁴⁰

As can be seen from the Box 7.5, some of these interviewees declared, in the survey, that press treatment of their respective groups had been 'unfavourable' while others said that press treatment of their group amounted to being somewhere between favourable and unfavourable coverage, so it would not be correct to suppose that these explanations for 'patchy' coverage were aligned solely to one particular assessment. (Except that none of these particular interviewees regarded press coverage of their respective groups as 'favourable'). But given that nearly all groups remain as opposed to the occupation of Iraq as they were to the initial invasion and most embraced a multitude of causes (see the previous chapter), antiwar activists often expressed their frustration that neither they, nor the occupation, nor any of those other issues, received as much media coverage as the Iraq crisis and their opposition to military action did in early 2003. "I can't actually pinpoint for you the time, but I know there was a time when there was less national coverage" observed one ('favourable') interviewee.⁴¹ (Tumber and Palmer [2004: 120] document that there was significant drop-off in the amount of national media coverage devoted to the Iraq crisis from June 2003 onwards⁴²). Similarly another interviewee complained that "once the war was over, Iraq fell down to about to fifth" in the news agenda, giving the hypothetical but plausible example of a scenario wherein "thirty Iraqis got killed today and so many killed last month", but "you don't hear about it" in the news.⁴³

There were however, some activists who were inclined to interpret the fluctuations in media coverage, and particularly the media's sudden interest in the antiwar movement at around the time of the 15 February demonstration, as a deviation from the 'natural' political orientation of

the press. When asked in the survey: 'Have your attitudes towards the media and media relations changed as a result of campaigning on this issue and if so please elaborate' one respondent wrote:

Not really, the media in general is only interested in reporting what happens at the top of society, but can suddenly get interested in grass roots campaigning, when it seems to be making an impact.⁴⁴

Yet while it would be disingenuous to suppose that the presence of the term 'not really' in this answer masks a seismic shift in attitudes, it does seem reasonable to suppose that it hints at a subtle shift in perspective. Moreover, according to these comments, the scale of opposition to the war pushed the press away from its default position whereby the media can 'only' be expected to report on 'what happens at the top of society'. Expanding upon this answer in a subsequent follow-up interview, the respondent replied:

There's a certain critical mass I guess, and that protest on February the 15th is a classic case, that they [the media] suddenly realised that this was going to be very, very big. We sent down 27 coaches from XXXXXXXXXX [name of town].... They [the local press] *started ringing us*, to ask what's going on, how many people will be going, etc. etc. can we have an interview? So there was a certain point when they suddenly decided it's a story they can't avoid. (Emphasis added). ('Unfavourable' interviewee).⁴⁵

So in addition to the local press taking more of an interest in the activities of the local antiwar groups, the local papers were, according to this quotation and also according to a number of others like it (one of which featured in Box 7.5), occasionally inclined to initiate contact with the antiwar movement.

Box 7.6:

Comments indicating that many activists felt they observed occasions when the local press initiated contact with their group

... if there was a national event on, *we had phone calls*. ('Somewhere in the middle' interviewee).⁴⁶

It [press coverage] is patchy: sometimes they do cover our stuff and sometimes they don't. On one of the demonstrations after 15th Feb, the *Echo* [abbreviated name of local paper] actually *sent an 'embedded journalist' on one of the coaches*. ('Unfavourable' interviewee).⁴⁷

I think when Stop the War and the war in general was in the news, I think *they did come to us and say, 'what you up to at the moment?'* ('Somewhere in the middle' interviewee).⁴⁸

Emphasis added in each case to highlight the fact that journalists sometimes initiated contact with the local antiwar groups.

The fact that sections of the media should be inclined to contact sources may be a matter of routine for elite sources, but as Ryan (1991: 195) points out, for the media to initiate contact with challenger organisations is an indicator of their enhanced legitimacy. Overall however, the evidence collected from the survey would suggest that even if a significant proportion of groups could recollect occasions when the local media were the ones who actively made the effort to contact the local antiwar groups, such occasions were relatively rare even during the first half of 2003 when the issue of the Iraq crisis was highest up the news agenda (see Chapter 9 and Tumber and Palmer 2004). When activists were asked, in the on- and off-line versions of the survey, whether the groups with which they were involved initiated contact with the media, or whether they found themselves responding to contacts from the media, *during ‘the six months from January to June 2003’*, the results were as follows:

Table 7.5:

Casting your mind back to the six months from January to June 2003, did you tend to initiate contact with the media, find yourself responding to contact from the media, or do both in roughly equal measure back then?

(94 responses)

53 groups (56%) – Tended to initiate contact with the media

9 groups (10%) – Tended to respond to requests for comment & information from the media

32 groups (34%) – Both in roughly equal measure

This means that only a minority of groups, 10 percent, felt that they were most often responding to contacts from the media even when the Iraq crisis dominated the national news agenda. Furthermore, even those groups who found that media outlets were contacting them, (either predominantly so or to a degree that was roughly equal to the number of times they initiated contact with the media), were still conscious of having had to work to get to that position: “We have a fairly good rapport with the local media. It’s taken a fair bit of time to build up obviously I must admit” conceded one (‘favourable’) interviewee.⁴⁹ Establishing decent relations with the local media however, was more than just a matter of persistently contacting them, as will be discussed in this next section.

Successful strategic action

Consistent with the thesis that the news must be understood as a product of the interaction between the news media and their sources, (a thesis that was argued through at length in Chapters 2 and 3 of this study), this section takes an overview of activists reflections on how they engaged with, and sought to entice, the local news media. In the process of doing so this section identifies two divergent strands within the local base of the antiwar movement. On the one hand there were activists who felt that the ‘successful strategic action’ (Schlesinger 1990: 77) on their behalf resulted in what was, from the activists’ perspectives, a more positive calibre of local press coverage. On the other hand there were other activists who lamented their failure to fully prioritise their dealings with the local media.

The online version of the survey asked the optional question: ‘Do you think you made any mistakes in your media relations and if so please elaborate?’ 46 respondents replied and their responses can be grouped under the five headings:

Table 7.6:

Response categories to the survey question: ‘Do you think you made any mistakes in your media relations and if so please elaborate?’
(46 responses).

- 19 respondents (41%) – No mistakes (includes responses such as ‘not really’ and ‘nothing of any real consequence’).
- 14 respondents (30%) – Yes. Answers pointed to organisational problems and a failure to prioritise media relations.
- 6 respondents (13%) – Yes. Respondents gave anecdotes of one-off mistakes.
- 4 respondents (9%) – Answers place blame on the media. (Respondents who gave this answer may not have understood the question.)
- 3 respondents (7%) – Don’t know.

It is the first two of these categories that are of greatest relevance for present purposes.

Aside from the anecdotes of one-off mistakes, such as the case of one group who fared badly in a debate with an MP on talk radio due to their lack of debating experience, most of the mistakes that survey respondents and interviewees identified revolved around the related matters of failing to prioritise their dealings with the media by not incorporating media work more centrally into their activism, not being sufficiently well organised/structured to meet that challenge, and not (always) being proactive enough in their contacts with the media. Box 7.7 reproduces extracts from the survey that highlight the failure to be proactive in particular:

Box 7.7:

A sample of survey responses to the question ‘Do you think you made any mistakes in your media relations and if so please elaborate?’

Yes, treating it as an add-on. (‘Unfavourable’ survey respondent).⁵⁰

Not following up press releases promptly, not attempting to engage with/discover sympathetic or interested correspondents. (‘Unfavourable’ survey respondent).⁵¹

We should have been more consistent with sending out press releases and organising the writing of letters to the local papers. (‘Unfavourable’ survey respondent).⁵²

However, whereas these survey responses, particularly the last two examples quoted, lament the failure to be sufficiently proactive and consistent in initiating contact with the local media, follow-up comments from the interviews explained this shortcoming not in terms of individual laziness on anyone’s behalf but in terms of the groups to which they belonged not being either sufficiently or appropriately organised so as to meet the challenge of dealing with the media on a regular basis.

Box 7.8:

The ‘mistake’ of not being sufficiently or appropriately organised to meet the challenge of working with the local media:

I think it made me realise how important it would be if the group could be organised enough to actually have someone doing media work. I mean ... to get someone really on top of it.... I think in retrospect it would have been good to prioritise that more, that media thing. (‘Somewhere in the middle’ interviewee).⁵³

It’s actually a weakness of our group that we don’t have a strong media person and that we haven’t had a media workshop to have more of us better informed. (‘Favourable’ interviewee).⁵⁴

What I think would have been good, would have been to have a more consistent spokesperson who could have built up a relationship with ... the key journalists on the local paper and the radio stations.... I’m not really advocating a department of spin ... just a more consistent approach to getting the message across would have helped. (‘Unfavourable’ interviewee).⁵⁵

The extracts in Box 7.8 are also noteworthy for highlighting instances where activists were candid enough to acknowledge that their failure to organise themselves so they could most productively deal with the media had direct consequences for the nature of the coverage they received. A variant on this was the occasional tendency to blame less than fully successful media

coverage they received on either a certain lack of ability or a lack of confidence in dealing with the press:

They [the local paper] weren't brilliantly helpful to us. Now I would also say that's probably because we weren't particularly brilliant at using the press and giving them what they wanted. ('Somewhere in the middle' interviewee).⁵⁶

The radio – we probably would have done more [of], if we were prepared to have live spokespersons ready to go when the radio wanted you. It's a case of us not having enough people willing and confident enough to be the spokesperson. ('Favourable' interviewee).⁵⁷

However, just as these interviewees felt that they could explain the nature of the less than fully successful coverage they received in terms of their own shortcomings in dealing with the media (regardless of the precise terms in which they identified those shortcomings), there were other, usually 'favourable' interviewees, who didn't believe that they made any particularly significant mistakes in dealing with the media and held that the way in which they dealt with the media partially accounted for the success they enjoyed.

I think we found that we were getting good coverage, certainly during the whole the Iraq War – then and its immediate aftermath – then we were getting good coverage in terms of everything that we were doing. *But we were being very proactive in sending them press releases that they could use etc.* (Emphasis added). ('Favourable' interviewee).⁵⁸

Likewise the aforementioned respondent to the survey who, as a representative example of what activists regarded 'favourable' coverage as being, declared that 'I think we have been very successful in getting frequent and positive coverage when we wanted it',⁵⁹ also, in that comment, strongly implies they were in command of their coverage. While numerous interviewees from other groups felt that the 'rapport' they had established with the local media served to enhance the amount of, and the favourableness of, the coverage they received. But beyond being 'proactive' and establishing a 'rapport' with the local press, many of the interviewees understood that 'successful strategic action' also hinged upon understanding news values, the working routines and pressures of journalists, and, as Gans (1979: 117) argues, of being prepared to work in accordance with those values and routines.

I think a large part of it [gaining the media's attention], just comes down to understanding what journalist's will be interested in covering. ('Favourable' interviewee).⁶⁰

Understanding their processes, what they're going through, where you can push and where is their weak points, you know. It's like you understand how they work and how they operate and how you can get your way in, allows you then to work more effectively. ('Somewhere in the middle' interviewee).⁶¹

In adopting this line of thinking towards their engagements with the (local) media, activists can be seen as moving towards a more 'professional' understanding of media relations.

Press officers and public relations staff will often comment that one of the essential attributes for doing their kind of work effectively is a good understanding of how news journalists do their job and the pressures or constraints associated with making the news. (Manning 2001: 50).

But beyond the matter of understanding the requirements of the news media, activists recognised that in order to ensure that the media took an interest in their activities, they, as activists, had to be prepared to stage activities that were rich in news values (the most regularly cited news value being the need to localise stories) and be prepared to promote those activities in accordance with the rhythms of news work. Perhaps the most succinct compression of these principles came from the activist who declared that successfully engaging with the local press was a matter of "understanding what makes a good story, because my belief is that essentially journalists are very busy ... and the less work they have to do the better.... In some ways you have to create stories for them." ('Favourable' interviewee).⁶²

As can be seen from this discussion, most groups who believed that their own engagements with the media successfully enhanced both the amount and the quality of the coverage they received, usually also declared that they received 'favourable coverage' from the local press in their areas. Yet one of the most noticeable characteristics from among the interviews with activists who declared that they received 'favourable' coverage from their local press, was the complete absence of any reflection on how the 'favourable' coverage they believed they got might have also been contingent upon politics they advocated and the nature of the actions they undertook. There were however, a minority of interviewees, who typically registered 'somewhere in the middle' or 'wide ranging' assessments of the way the local press in their areas treated them and their activities, who did believe that in certain respects non-hostile coverage was contingent upon how they expressed their opposition to the Iraq War. The next section explores this matter.

The politics of conditionality

As was mentioned in Chapter 3, Gitlin's study of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), showed how the organisation's recognition that the news media were guided by a set of news values that revolved around sensationalism and exceptionalism coaxed the movement 'irreversibly towards the realm of spectacle' (1980: 160) so as to maximise the amount of media coverage they received. However while many of those interviewed for this research also recognised the same qualities of sensationalism and exceptionalism in journalists' collective sense of news values, many interviewees not only expressed their disdain for those values, but were also wary of being goaded 'irreversibly towards the realm of spectacle', displays of militancy, and expressions of radicalism, because the contemporary activists were fearful of both the media's and the public's response. For one group the temptations of 'spectacle' were most acutely felt when they realised that press interest in their activities was waning:

... Because the press they got very complacent – it's just the Xxxxxxxx [name of group] performing again, but I just felt that we needed to make it more radical I suppose. But because I was in a minority it didn't happen, but I was always thinking about it. ('Somewhere in the middle' interviewee. Note: this particular group's most regular activity was street theatre to spread the antiwar message. No other group did this on a regular basis).⁶³

When asked if being "more radical, perhaps more confrontational would have got more media coverage?" the interviewee concurred that it might have done but at the cost that "the public might have been less indulgent of us". However whereas this interviewee's concerns about displays of militancy revolved around the fear that militancy would undermine public sympathy for the group, another interviewee who applied a comparable line of reasoning did so in relation to concerns about how displays and expressions of militancy could have an adverse influence on the media's reporting of their events. Of particular concern to this interviewee were how "over-enthusiastic" statements, such placards denouncing Blair as a 'Fascist' would play with the media:

There's always that worry that somebody from the media could come along, get involved ... and just focus on that one small part of the thing [i.e. the 'Blair is a Fascist' placards].... That is something that you do hear about in other areas of the country. ('Somewhere in the middle' interviewee).⁶⁴

In this way the interviewee shows an awareness of the media's tendency towards 'malevolent metonymy' (Hackett and Zhao 1994: 513) because it takes the negative image from isolated incidents and projects the image as though those isolated incidents were representative of the

movement as a whole.⁶⁵ If this expectation about the media's inclinations is correct (and the evidence from Chapters 3 and 10 lends strong support to its general thrust), it reinforces the idea, repeatedly articulated throughout this thesis, that the media police the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable forms of expressing dissent (or between the 'sphere of legitimate controversy' and the 'sphere of deviance' in Hallin's [1986] terms). Interviewees who recognised that the media can play this role sometimes came close to expressing the idea in terms that were remarkably similar to 'over-determined' understandings of the media. Comments by the aforementioned 'unfavourable' 'over-determined' interviewee who declared that "the local press is ... never going to be supportive of something that the Left do",⁶⁶ are not so different from another interviewee who had a slightly more 'conditional' understanding of the media and yet who was convinced that the media had a "total hatred of anything socialist".⁶⁷ The only difference between the two interviewees, is that in spite of being a committed socialist who was convinced that the local press would never give any support to a socialist campaign, the second interviewee nonetheless believed that the local press could still be of service to the antiwar cause to the extent that they were "quite prepared to cover antiwar sentiments".

It ought to be acknowledged that the ideas in this section were drawn from just four interviews out of 38. Most interviewees seemed to have been unaware of, or given precious little thought to, the role of the media in, effectively, establishing the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable ways of demonstrating and expressing antiwar argumentation. But if these particular interviewees are right to suppose that the nature of the coverage their group received was (partially) affected by the nature of their politics (i.e. were they radical or moderate?), and if, as the comments by these particular interviewees indicate, their own politics leant towards the more radical end of the political spectrum, then as discussed already in Chapter 2 in relation to politically radical challenger sources, they face the dilemma of how best to present their arguments. If they water down their radicalism in order to be palatable to the media, do they 'risk compromising the integrity and perhaps even the rationality of their own understandings and ideology' (Chapter 2)? Perhaps the only other option available to challenger sources, should they wish to preserve the complexity of their arguments, would be to 'remain outside the mainstream media' (Manning 2001: 200) – but that of course would seriously limit the size of the audience they could hope to reach. This chapter will return to this question later on, since the explanations that activists gave for the most commonly chosen course of action were linked to a wider set of considerations.

This discussion on antiwar activists' perceptions of the media has tried to illustrate the range and complexity of understandings about the media that could be found within the local base of the antiwar movement. There were activists who, on the basis of either their own experiences of the press coverage they received or didn't receive, or on the basis of a priori judgements about the nature of the mass media, (or perhaps a combination of both), believed that the local media were steadfastly closed and hostile to them. But such 'over-determined' understandings of the media would appear to have been in a minority on the basis of these interviews. It was far more commonplace to find activists who regarded the media's treatment of them and their activities as being contingent upon a wide range of factors that were believed to open up the prospect of regular and favourable coverage (or at least substantial coverage at certain times throughout the crisis). So for all the criticisms that elements from within the antiwar movement sometimes levelled at the media – it didn't give them enough coverage, it portrayed them in a negative light, the press stripped the political content out of their commentary, and lost interest in whatever the local antiwar group was doing once the antiwar protests faded from prominence in the national media etc. – most groups still felt that the local press (and radio) could still sometimes, and in some ways, be accessible to them and of use to them. This next part of the chapter is devoted to a consideration of the motives that activists had for seeking media coverage, and the uses they believed that coverage could serve for them.

Part II: Motives and uses that activists had for engaging with the media

The interview research inductively revealed that nearly all locally based antiwar groups that sought access to local press and local radio stations, (which as discussed earlier means 32 out of the 34 groups represented in the interviews), did so primarily for the purposes of, what I shall call, 'profile promotion', 'event promotion', and 'frame promotion'. Each of these terms, as well as how they related to each other and also to public opinion, needs to be explained at greater length. Only then will the discussion can be well placed to consider why it was that in spite of the reservations that antiwar groups usually had about the mainstream media they still, usually, attached *some* measure importance to their engagements with the media.

Profile promotion

There was a widespread understanding among the antiwar groups that they needed a “public face”⁶⁸ so as to raise local public awareness of their presence. The local media were thought to be one of the most effective vehicles for achieving this:

It’s mostly just to keep us in the public eye.⁶⁹

The way I see getting good media coverage is to try and maintain a profile.... We’ve been quite successful in that people know that there are these antiwar campaigns.⁷⁰

Indeed, in the light of what was perceived to be lack of interest in the antiwar movement from the national media, the local media were also thought to be (potentially at least) more responsive to the antiwar movement. As a representative from a city based group put it:

Obviously the national media were reporting the war, and going into detail, but they weren’t reporting the antiwar movement at all. So although we had quite a profile in some parts of the city, there were clearly places – other parts of the city – where they [i.e. the general public] wouldn’t ... necessarily know there was an antiwar movement at all. So part of it is getting the message out that there is an antiwar movement and that not everyone agrees with the political consensus between Labour [and the] Conservatives.⁷¹

The fact that the antiwar groups should aim to raise their profiles by using the local media in this way has certain affinities with Grant’s (1989: 81) suggestion that pressure groups are liable to take an interest in the media so as to enhance their ‘visibility’. Curiously though, for the locally based antiwar groups the objective of promoting the group was only very rarely ever accompanied by a concern that media access should enhance the credibility of the group. This matter will be discussed in more depth later on.

Event promotion

Activists also hoped that media coverage should enhance public attendance at/participation in events they were either organising or partaking in, be they public meetings, local demos or national demonstrations. “In terms of the press releases etc. we were very much focusing on events.... It [media coverage] was one of the best ways of spreading the word about what we were doing and the events we were organising”, said one.⁷² Another interviewee concurred when I put it to her that media coverage was at its most useful for “public announcements” of forthcoming public meetings.⁷³ Planned acts of civil disobedience did not usually receive advance

publicity through the mainstream media since the questionable legal status of these actions, such as road block protests, meant that activists felt it best not to ‘tip-off’ the authorities in advance.

Even groups who registered the local press’s treatment of them and their activities as ‘neither favourable nor unfavourable but somewhere in the middle’, still often felt that access to the local media could be of great benefit to the group because of its capacity to promote events they were either organising, or national demonstrations that they were trying to increase the attendance of. As one such interviewee explained in relation to radio interviews:

... [I]t did make a difference because if we advertised events on local radio then we knew that those events would be bigger ... if you’re on the radio at 6 o’clock and [then] at 7 o’clock five or six people that you’ve never heard of ring up for tickets at a demo then you can sort of guess they might have just heard it.⁷⁴

Other interviewees had similar experiences in relation to press coverage.

It must help advertise our activities. We definitely get people coming to meetings saying, I read about it in the *Xxxxxx Evening News* [name of local newspaper], I heard about it on the radio.⁷⁵

Again, as was the case with ‘profile promotion’, other writers identified a comparable – if not quite identical – set of motives to explain why challenger sources should seek access to the media. Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993: 116) for instance, argue that social movements aim to use the media to ‘mobilise’ their supporters, while Cracknell (1993: 9) identifies ‘invoking action’ as one of the key media related activities of environmental pressure groups.

Frame promotion

Antiwar activists sought access to the local agenda in print and on radio to articulate the “core arguments”⁷⁶ against the war so that those arguments reached a wider audience. In the words of one interviewee, “we weren’t just generally trying to raise awareness – we were trying to change minds.”⁷⁷ This is what is meant by ‘frame promotion’. Letters to the editor also served much the same purpose, but were a lower priority across the movement as a whole.

There are parallels between idea of ‘frame promotion’ and the motives that other writers have identified. For instance, Ryan (1991) argues that one of the main reasons why campaigning organisations seek access to the news media ‘is to turn news into a contested terrain. The news is

an opportunity for challengers, at a minimum, to point out that the establishment view is not the only or “natural” way to look at a problem and, at best, *to present an alternative*’ (1991: 4 emphasis added). Blumler (1989) argues that one of the reasons why pressure groups take an interest in and pursue media coverage is ‘to keep the group’s priorities and *definitions of key issues*’ in the media spotlight (1989: 351 emphasis added). For opponents of the Iraq War, frame promotion was not particularly concerned with turning the news into a contested terrain for its own sake, nor was frame promotion primarily about keeping the group’s priorities in the media spotlight, in spite of their previously acknowledged the frustration that activists felt about the declining newsworthiness of the Iraq crisis. Rather, for antiwar activists, frame promotion was a matter of using the media to present an ‘alternative’ set of ‘definitions of [the] key issues’ surrounding the Iraq crisis. ‘Alternative’ in the sense that they hailed from either the ‘Liberal Dove’ or ‘Antiwar Radical’ schools of thought that were outlined in Chapter 4 and which were therefore challenged the ‘establishment view’ (or the ‘Official’ or ‘Neo-Conservative’ schools of thought as I call them in Chapter 4).

The entanglement of different motives

Finally, in this section, it is worth remarking that most of the time when activists discussed their reasons for pursuing media coverage, they virtually never compartmentalised their reasons in the way that this discussion has done. The following extracts are illustrative examples of this:

It [the purpose of media coverage] would be to raise awareness that there was a group in XXXXXXXXX [name of town] campaigning against this [*profile promotion*], and really to encourage more people to get involved [*profile and event promotion*] ... and get the message out that there was a different way of looking at this [*frame promotion*].⁷⁸

You want to get over the message that the war is wrong [*frame promotion*] but you want to do it in order that you can build the protest against it [*event promotion*].⁷⁹

While another interviewee emphasised the strategic importance of “having a public face [*profile promotion*] and keeping the stories in the media from the right sorts of angles” [*frame promotion*], before conceding that “it’s hard to pick one tactic ... they’re very interlinked.”⁸⁰ Moreover, many interviews spoke of how they made a determined effort to fuse their political commentary (‘frame promotion’) with the promotion of either their groups or of forthcoming antiwar activities. One interviewee said that whenever he spoke on the radio or to the press, he always, as “the logical organisational conclusion” to his political commentary [*frame promotion*] tried to insert such lines as “and that’s why we need to keep campaigning” [*profile promotion*] or

“that’s why we need everyone to join [our demonstration]” [*event promotion*].⁸¹ Likewise another activist, who always diligently researched the latest developments in Iraq before speaking on local radio, explained how he also ensured that he used his appearances to promote either the group or some forthcoming activity:

Every interview I did personally, I certainly very, very consciously was aware of the next activity that was coming up whether that be national or local, or if they weren’t any specific activities I would try and get a contact number in at the end of it.⁸²

So whereas Environmental Pressure Groups have had their doubts about whether media coverage of the environment might have a tendency to do little more than cultivate a sense of ‘well informed futility’ about environmental issues (Cracknell 1993: 9), antiwar activists interviewed for this research generally attempted to avoid this pitfall through the way they aspired to use the local media to build and sustain their activism at the same time as articulating a coherent argument against the war. Indeed as far as the previous interviewee was concerned, activism and an antiwar understanding ought to be treated as inseparable: “I don’t think you can really divorce them.”

‘Neglected’ motives

In the preceding discussion I have been keen to highlight the parallels between the motives for seeking access to the media that I have identified in the case of the local antiwar groups and the motives that other writers have proposed for the same purpose from a wide range of challenger groups and organisations. Very often such differences as there were, were largely semantic. But in other ways, the differences were more significant.

Perhaps the most significant difference here, is that whereas other writers have argued that social movements and pressure groups seek access to the media for ‘validation’ (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993: 116), or for the sake of ‘claiming legitimacy’ (Cracknell 1993: 7), or some such variant on the idea,⁸³ there is no comparable entry in the taxonomy that I have produced for the antiwar movement. It simply does not seem to have been part of activist thinking that the local media could be of service to them in that way.⁸⁴

The other significant omission from my list concerns the way in which a number of writers – Blumler (1993), Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993), Gitlin (1980), and Grant (1989) among them – identified the media’s capacity to pressurise politicians as an important reason why social

movements and pressure groups are inclined to pursue access to the media. The logic here is that substantial and favourable media coverage of the movements/groups and their activities serves to validate challenger sources as important players on the political scene (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993: 116), thereby convincing policy makers of the breadth and importance of the support they have, and through that pressurise policy makers to take them, and their demands, seriously (Blumler 1989: 351). Yet only one group would appear to have understood the media's influence as working in this way, and even here the media were seen as only indirectly influential. This particular group sought to use the media to enhance the turnout at local demonstrations they organised, believing that "by getting people on the streets" they ratcheted up the pressure they brought to bear on politicians. Thereafter media coverage of their demonstrations was of secondary importance:

We weren't thinking Keith Vaz [Lab, Leicester East] will turn against the war because the [Leicester] *Mercury* might write a trenchant editorial against it. Keith Vaz will turn against the war if 10,000 march up Wellworth Road [in Leicester].... So the effect on policy makers was more remote than that.⁸⁵

Thus the ambition to use the media to pressurise politicians was only a very marginal factor in activist thinking about how they could use the media to enhance the effectiveness of their activism.

Public opinion

In Chapter 3, one of the main criticisms that I levelled against previous discussions on the reasons why movements and pressure groups sought media coverage was that past discussions failed to give sufficient thought to the significance of public opinion.

In the case of the Iraq crisis, public opinion can, for the sake of present purposes, be divided up into four strata.

- Those already actively involved in the antiwar movement.
- Those of an antiwar persuasion but who are not involved in the movement's activities – whom Ryan (1991) might term 'inactive supporters' of the movement.
- Those who were undecided about the case for war.
- Pro-war opinion

‘Internal’ discussions among those already involved in the antiwar movement tended to be mediated either by direct conversations or through the various forms of Computer Mediated Communication, and so will be considered in due course under discussions of the ‘new media’. At the other end of the public opinion spectrum, it was never a priority for the antiwar movement to attempt to convert ‘pro-war’ opinion:

Frankly it is unlikely that a local peace group is going to change the minds of anybody who felt that the war was a jolly good thing.⁸⁶

I don’t think I would ever fool myself that I would be appealing to those people [referring to people who were ‘vehemently pro-war’].⁸⁷

That leaves the locally based antiwar groups concentrating most of their efforts on the ‘inactive supporters’ and undecided opinion. Most interestingly of all however, is that locally based antiwar activists should have been targeting different sections of public opinion when they engaged in the different media related objectives.

When activists were promoting events their efforts were aimed at the ‘inactive supporters’ of the antiwar cause, as well as people who were already involved in the movement. The fact that activists recognised that the media had such power to not only ‘advertise’ antiwar events, but also to successfully entice people previously from outside the movement to participate in those events was alluded to in the two lengthier extracts that have already been quoted under ‘event promotion’. Another interviewee however, was more specific in her reflections about how antiwar activities related to the divisions within public opinion:

I think that the various events that we organised were attended by those who had already made up their minds, rather than the waverers.... I think that most people who had a high level of interest in the war had already decided what their position was. Those who didn’t feel strongly about the war probably wouldn’t have been motivated enough to go along to a meeting to find out about it in the first place.⁸⁸

While another expressed his desire to reach out to the ‘inactive supporters’ in terms of establishing a degree of solidarity with them:

You see these people who don’t get involved with us, they don’t go to meetings, they don’t go to demonstrations, they don’t do anything, don’t even write letters, but they are very much opposed to it, and you can see the anger there. And personally, when I’m writing letters or doing something I think well I’m trying to appeal to

those people. To say well actually you're not alone; there are all these people who feel the same way.⁸⁹

By contrast, whenever antiwar activists used the media to voice their own preferred set of understandings about the Iraq crisis ('frame promotion'), their efforts were mainly aimed at persuading 'undecided opinion' to support their cause. The argument for concentrating on converting 'undecided opinion' was that any shift in public opinion towards an antiwar stance had the capacity to "get the people who have the political power scared" in ways that getting people "on the streets" did not.⁹⁰ As I argued in Chapter 3, one of the most serious weaknesses in previous literature on the interactions between the media and social movements (and pressure groups) has been the failure to consider whether public opinion had any bearing on the ways in which social movements went in pursuit of a media agenda. In this section I have attempted to redress this oversight in relation to the local antiwar groups, by relating the objectives that have been identified, particularly 'frame promotion' and 'event promotion', to the different strands of public opinion that opponents of the war were aiming to appeal to each case.

Summarising the argument laid out in this chapter thus far, it has been shown that in spite of the deep sense of mistrust that many in the antiwar movement had about the national mainstream media, and in spite of their reservations about the local media and the complaints that activists often made about the local press or radio, most organised opponents of military action at the local level still felt that there were ways and circumstances in which local press and radio coverage could be of service to the antiwar cause. This was why the vast majority of groups attached at least some importance to dealing with the local media.

Previous research examining the interactions between social movements (or pressure groups) and the media has highlighted the potential for 'spurious amplification' (Blumler 1989) whereby the pursuit of media coverage is said to influence the priorities and activities (Ibid.) and perhaps even the social composition and sense of identity of social movement organisations (as Gitlin 1980 argues, see Chapter 3 for a more detailed exposition.) Given these findings from previous research, questions must be asked in this research whether the same phenomenon of 'spurious amplification' can be identified in the case of the contemporary antiwar movement. Yet unlike say, the case of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), who underwent a series profound changes *as a direct consequence* of their engagements with the media (Gitlin 1980; refer back to

Chapter 3 for more details), the evidence collected for this thesis would suggest that the local base of the antiwar movement was *not* fundamentally changed as a result of incorporating mass media activism into their campaigning. The remainder of this chapter explores why this is so. Two complimentary narrative strands stand out. The first reason that will be discussed is that the movement also communicated through a combination of ‘new media’, ‘alternative media’, and non-mediated formats, which served to lessen the movement’s dependency on the mainstream mass media. The other reason relates to the internal politics of the locally based antiwar groups. Each of these strands merits a more detailed consideration.

Part III: The influence of the mass media on the locally based antiwar groups

The partial retreat from dependency on the mass media

Uses of and preferences for new media

Attitudes towards Computer Mediated Communication among the activist community are generally devoid of the suspicions that they reserve for the mainstream media. In fact many activists in the antiwar movement have enthusiastically embraced the new media in order to realise at least some of the objectives that they might have previously been dependent on mass media coverage for. Comments about the media by the person ‘with internet responsibilities’ at the national Stop the War Coalition may lean towards an ‘over-determined understanding’ of the mass media, but they still go some way towards capturing this twin sense of disillusionment with the mainstream media and the belief of so many opponents of the war that they had found an alternative means of getting their message across.

It’s very difficult to get the mainstream media to relate to us at all.... I don’t expect anything from them [the media] anymore. So if we get something that’s just a bonus. And the reason why it doesn’t trouble me anymore is because we do definitely *have our own networks*. (Quoted in Gillan et al 2008: 26-27 emphasis added).

The ‘networks’ in question exist both on and offline. Offline networks include the connections between the different parties and organisations that made up the antiwar movement, as well as the social networks inside locally based antiwar groups (as described in Chapter 6). Online networks are the various forms of new media.

Websites, email listings, electronic bulletin boards are of service to the antiwar movement when they are used to ensure that members and sympathisers of the antiwar movement are kept informed about forthcoming events ('event promotion'), as is primarily the case with the Stop the War Coalition's website (www.stopwar.org.uk) (Gillan et al 2008: 63) and for many of the local antiwar groups around the country. Comments such as "Email lists are really important for us publicising our events now – I can't understand how we ever did anything without them" were typical.⁹¹ Indeed 'event promotion' is something that Internet based communication is almost uniquely well suited for. Naomi Klein (2000) writes:

The Net is more than an organising tool – it has become an organising model, a blueprint for decentralised but cooperative decision making. It facilitates the process of information sharing to such a degree that many groups can work in concert with one another without the need to achieve monolithic consensus (which is impossible, anyway, given the nature of activist organisations). And because it is so decentralised, these movements are still in the process of forging links with their various wings around the world, continually surprising themselves with how far unreported little victories have travelled, how thoroughly bits of research have been recycled and absorbed. (Klein 2000: 396).

Note how there is also the suggestion in that last sentence that the websites and Internet based forms of communication can also boost the morale of the activist community in ways that the mainstream media would not be expected to do.

Furthermore weblogs, websites and online alternative news sites can also serve the 'frame promotion' needs of the movement by providing those involved with news of the latest developments from Iraq as seen from an antiwar perspective. To some extent this is true of the Stop the War Coalition's website, but is probably even more true of the website for Justice-Not-Vengeance (www.j-n-v.org), a UK based anarcho-pacifist group (Gillan et al 2008: 63).

While activists never spoke about their embrace of the 'new media' in ways that could be related to the objective of 'profile promotion', it is still the case that there is something of an elective affinity between the antiwar movement and the various forms of new media because the new media can be used to at least partially realise the movement's 'event promotion' and 'frame promotion' objectives. Up to a point then, this makes the movement less dependent on the mainstream media than would have otherwise been the case.

An additional reason why the antiwar movement and the wider activist community prefer the 'new media' to 'old media' (and this is alluded to in the comments by both Klein and the person just quoted from the STWC) is because people in the movement, or those closely associated with it, created so many of the websites and bulletin boards, and authored many of the news reports and weblogs used by the movement. The result is that people in the movement believe they can trust CMC in ways that they feel unable to do with the 'old media' of print and broadcasting (Gillan et al 2008).

However, it is important to keep a sense of perspective here so as not to fall for some of the more technologically determinist hype surrounding the Internet in relation to political activism: left-wing campaigners have, for many years now, relied upon a wide variety of alternative and non-mediated forms of communication to promote their activism and disseminate their respective framings on issues beyond the immediate confines of the organisation(s) to which they are affiliated.

Alternative and non-media communication

For many years now there have been a considerable number of offline alternative and leftist publications (albeit with online presences) (Atton 2002) affiliated, to varying degrees, to any one of a number of the groups that comprise the national Stop the War Coalition. Examples here include *Socialist Worker* (Established 1968), *Morning Star* (Est. 1930), *Peace News* (Est. 1936), and *Schnews* (Est. 1994). The dividing lines between movement and media are rather hazy at this point given the overlapping of political affiliations. Each of these publications regularly reports on developments relating to the ongoing crisis in Iraq from an antiwar perspective and carries publicity for forthcoming events that are either organised by sections of the antiwar movement or which may be of interest to those in the movement, thereby fulfilling the event and frame promotion functions just as online communication can.

The antiwar message was also disseminated through a whole plethora of non-mediated communication formats. The most commonplace of these was handing out leaflets in the local high street or outside the train station – usually to promote forthcoming demonstrations and public meetings.⁹² Without too much of a stretch one might also include public meetings and demonstrations in and of themselves as non-mediated forms of communication for getting antiwar messages across to a wider public. The leaders of the national Stop the War Coalition have also cited the examples of specially designed T-shirts adorned with antiwar logos and slogans, theatre,

pop concerts, and feature and documentary films, as vehicles getting the antiwar message across to a wider public ('frame promotion') whilst bypassing the traditional media channels of press and broadcasting (Murray and German 2005: 109). In summary then, the antiwar movement sought to get its message across through a combination of new media, 'alternative' media, and non-mediated channels.

Yet we may still ask how much difference new media, 'alternative' media, and the various non-mediated forms of communication combined made in the 'battle for the hearts and minds' of UK public opinion? The prevailing assumption among activists interviewed for this research was that the majority of the people who visited antiwar websites, or read 'alternative' publications were most likely to have been opposed to the Iraq War all along. Just as interviewees were also able to confirm, based on their own firsthand experiences, that the majority of people who turned up at public meetings or who took leaflets from them in the local high street, came from the antiwar constituency in the sense of being either actively involved in the antiwar movement or 'inactive supporters' (Ryan 1991) of it. This means that alternative media, new media, and non-media forms of communication had a limited ability to a) spread antiwar interpretations to a wider public (i.e. 'frame promotion'), and b) raise a wider public awareness of the movement and its activities (i.e. 'profile promotion' and 'event promotion'). As one interviewee conceded, leafleting the high street had a very limited ability to raise the profile of the movement:

Although we had quite a profile in some parts of the city, there were clearly places – other parts of the city – where ... unless they [the general public] walked into town on a Saturday morning they wouldn't necessarily know there was an antiwar movement at all.⁹³

What this means is that so long as activists were serious about 'frame', 'event', and 'profile promotion' they were dependent on the mainstream (local) media. Hence the relatively high degree of importance that activists attached to their dealings with the mass media in spite of their criticisms and reservations about it. However, whilst those involved in the local dimension of the antiwar movement may have wanted to promote their preferred framings on the issues as much as they wanted to promote their events and their group's profile, nearly all interviewees felt that they enjoyed far more success in 'profile' and 'event promotion' than they did in 'frame promotion'. The next section is dedicated to a consideration as to why this was so.

The difficulties in using the mainstream media for ‘frame promotion’

Activists gave a variety of explanations to account for the difficulties that they felt they typically encountered whenever they attempted to use the local press and radio to articulate their interpretations of the Iraq crisis or their objections to military action. In some cases activists’ comments, such as those that featured in Box 7.2, implied a belief that the local newspapers had a policy of refusing to reproduce any overtly political commentary:

Sometimes when I sent off press releases, they [the local paper] would put in the information about what’s happening locally. *But if I put in anything political* like ‘bring the troops home now’ they [the local paper] tended to delete that bit. (Emphasis added).⁹⁴

Whenever we put a statement saying, a group spokesperson said today we believe this war is the result of capitalism or something like that they would easily trim that out – that would be one of the first casualties.⁹⁵

Meanwhile, another interviewee’s observation pointed towards an explanation rooted in news values, and specifically the news media’s interest in personalities rather than complex political issues (which is something that studies of ‘news values’ have also drawn attention to, see Galtung and Ruge 1999; Harcup and O’Neill 2001).

[We] wanted to use the press to discuss the issues, but found that all the press wanted to talk about was the group.⁹⁶

However, the most commonplace explanation for the difficulties that groups faced in promoting their preferred framings through the media, revolved around the argument that the ‘limited carrying capacities’ (Hilgartner and Bosk 1988) of (local) news reporting made it virtually impossible to articulate any political argument at a length necessary to establish a preferred set of framings:

It’s just not feasible in four or five sentences to make some of those more complex arguments. I suppose the venue for that was some of the meetings, the public meetings that took place.⁹⁷

It would be quite hard to get a very reasoned argument, articulating the full reasons against the war, into a press release.⁹⁸

However, whilst it may well be that all three explanatory narratives (a resistance to political statements, the news values, and the ‘limited carrying capacities’ of the local press) all make a

significant contribution towards explaining the difficulties in ‘frame promotion’ that antiwar activists encountered, I would argue that those difficulties were also compounded by the compromises necessary to sustain the locally based antiwar groups. As the representatives of ‘compromise coalitions’, sometimes potentially fractious ones (see previous chapter), media spokespeople had to be wary of not alienating significant shades of opinion within their groups. Furthermore, the wider the range of opinion within each group was, the greater the challenge that was bestowed on the media spokespeople.

The fact that these coalitions were comprised of people with different ‘primary reasons’ for opposing the war – for some their primary objection was that the war was illegal as they saw it, for some it was imperialist, and some approached the war from a pacifist perspective etc. – was not in itself problematic because most people involved in these coalitions could agree on the legitimacy of each of the other points even when they would have preferred to emphasise a different set of arguments against the war (see previous chapter). Instead spokespersons for these ‘compromise coalitions’ were at their most constrained when confronted with questions about policy options, their interpretations of events, and their views on some of the unfolding developments.

... [T]here were only agreed positions on the basics really – that the war was bad, that the western army shouldn’t be killing people etc. etc. But there was no consensus on the nature of the resistance or the role of the UN and things like that. So it wouldn’t have been possible for us to try and get into the paper that the UN should do something because we didn’t agree. So that was a bit of a stumbling block, because we couldn’t put out statements – detailed statements about things – because we couldn’t be sure that everyone in the coalition would agree with it.⁹⁹

Similarly the media spokesperson for this particular group (no official title was conferred upon him) was acutely conscious of not having a license to give his own “comprehensive and self-referential take on what I think is happening.”¹⁰⁰ As he was at pains to point out and illustrate through what were sometimes tongue-in-check examples, had he used (or abused) this position of responsibility to promote his own “ultra-left hobbyhorse” and come out with statements like “no war but the class war” (interviewee’s example) then that would “obviously [be] a good way to get someone else to be the person who speaks to the *Xxxxxxx* [name of local paper] next week.” Ultimately this interviewee was acutely conscious of being answerable to the local coalition, specifically in the form of other members of its organising committee, so that even though no one ever criticised anything he said to the local paper or radio station, he remained constantly alert to

the dangers of antagonising opinion within his group. The media relations' strategies of other groups operated according to the same principle regardless of whether or not responsibility for dealing with the media was delegated to a sole individual or shared by the group members on a rotational basis:

There are a couple in the group who are more radical but they wouldn't be seen as the general point of view – so they wouldn't put in exactly what they thought. They would tone it down to the Xxxxxxxxxx [local] community. So it's quite wide-ranging really.¹⁰¹

I think we were quite ethical in a sense anybody that spoke didn't try to represent their own views. I spoke, and I did it in terms of Stop the War.¹⁰²

What this means, is that just as decisions about who should speak at public meetings and demonstrations were orientated towards the need to hold the various political factions within the movement together (see previous chapter), so too we find that spokespeople for the movement also had a responsibility to ensure that their statements to the media revolved around that same objective, which is to say that the spokespeople had a responsibility to ensure that their statements never antagonised opinion within their groups. It is important to appreciate here, that in all of the quotations that illustrate this principle activists only admit to restraining themselves for the sake of reflecting a collective version of the group's viewpoint, rather than restraining themselves for the sake of being palatable to the media. No group admitted to changing their message in order to appeal to the media, and only one activist admitted restraining their politics for the sake of being more acceptable to the public:

We have to come across as moderate people you see. I would love to burn as many American flags as I can see really! Dying to myself really! But I know that it's probably a cleverer thing not to.... It's actually feeding people at the rate they can take it.¹⁰³

However, whilst there is no evidence from the interviews and the survey data of any group having altered its message so as to be palatable to the local press, this chapter has shown, in the discussion on 'the politics of conditionality', that a handful of activists, represented by 4 out of 38 interviews, were wary of the potential dangers of partaking in *acts of militancy* because they were concerned about the potentially negative nature of the coverage militant behaviour might lead to. Thus it would appear that in some cases, concerns about media coverage were weighed in the balance when it came to questions about what activities they did in ways that did not apply to the matter of what they said.

The most significant finding here though, was that the socio-political character of the groups inhibited their ambitions to use the media and particularly their ability to articulate their interpretations and policy alternatives relating to the Iraq crisis through the media (i.e. to engage in 'frame promotion'), because the compromises that sustained the groups as coalitions, which as was shown in the previous chapter applied to all locally based antiwar groups, also compromised their capacity to forge and sustain a comprehensive line of argument.

The findings from this research also mean that for the majority of groups the sociological imperative to sustain themselves was a higher priority than engaging with the media. Thus it would not be appropriate to conclude that the ways in which the local antiwar groups engaged with the local media in their areas had any significant influence on their actions, or their priorities or their public statements. In this way the local groups were quite different from say, the Students for a Democratic Society as that organisation campaigned against the Vietnam War. The evidence gathered for this research then, would suggest that the 'spurious amplification' thesis did not apply in the case of locally based antiwar groups.

In this chapter it has been shown that for the antiwar movement the decision about whether or not to engage with the local media bore little relation to their assessments of the way that the press treated them, because in most cases activists had a 'conditional' set of understandings about the workings of the media, combined with a specific uses that they felt the local media could serve for them. Several factors may have constrained their ability to use the local media to promote their own preferred understandings of the Iraq crisis through the local press, including the sociological compromises that sustain these groups.

End Notes

¹ Although some of my interviewees from the local groups were occasionally critical of the Labour Left and the Trade Unions, their criticisms came from a position of sympathy and loose identification. This attitude could also be found among the leadership of the Stop the War Coalition (See Murray and German 2005: particularly pp.200-201).

² See for instance East Grinstead Stop the War Coalition's website (www.grinsteadstopwar.tk), accessed 12 June 2009. Meanwhile the Stop the War Coalition's website (www.stopwar.org.uk) is also frequently laced with criticisms of the mainstream media, and includes, as do many other antiwar websites, links to

MediaLens' website (www.medialens.org.uk) which carries a plethora of articles strongly critical of the mainstream media. Yet at the same time, the STWC website also regularly features commentary from journalists writing in *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and the *New Statesman*.

³ Activist Interview 6.

⁴ Activist Interview 15.

⁵ Activist Interview 7.

⁶ Activist Interview 19.

⁷ Survey respondent 2. No corresponding interview.

⁸ There is a discrepancy in the numbers between Tables 7.2 and 7.4 in that 7.2 is based on 100 responses, whereas 7.4 is based on 99. Evidently one respondent to the question in 7.2 didn't respond to the question in 7.4. It should also be acknowledged, that the two questions in the cross tabulation fall short of being perfectly aligned – media relations may refer to dealings with local radio, regional television news or interacting through the internet, and not just dealings with the local press. Nonetheless it is still the case that most groups still channelled most of their communications strategies through the local press.

⁹ Survey respondent 3. Corresponds to Activist Interview 12.

¹⁰ Activist Interview 20.

¹¹ Survey respondent 4. Corresponds to Activist Interview 9.

¹² Activist Interview 21.

¹³ Activist Interview 22.

¹⁴ Activist Interview 23.

¹⁵ Activist Interview 7.

¹⁶ Activist Interview 3.

¹⁷ Activist Interview 14.

¹⁸ Activist Interview 4.

¹⁹ Activist Interview 14.

²⁰ Activist Interview 24.

²¹ Survey respondent 5. No corresponding interview.

²² Survey respondent 6. No corresponding interview.

²³ Survey respondent 7. No corresponding interview.

²⁴ This is not meant to imply that in Greenberg et al's (2006) original formulation, people who hold to 'over-determined' understandings of the media always believe that media outlets are necessarily structured so as to pursue a particular political agenda. Rather I mean to suggest that the activists interviewed for this

research whose understandings were consistent with ‘over-determined’ believed they saw a political agenda at work.

²⁵ Activist Interview 16.

²⁶ Research that has addressed the question of whether public opinion has any influence on the ways in which issues are framed in news reporting has concluded that the influence of public opinion is likely to be limited on the grounds that journalists know very little about the public and their views, preferring instead to rely on their own assumptions, biases, and contacts when writing about public opinion (Ericson et al 1987; Gans 1979; Lewis et al 2005; Schlesinger 1978). Having said that, there are exceptions. Once it becomes obvious to journalists that a policy proposal is either unpopular or divides public opinion, research suggests that journalists do take the state and strength of public opinion into account when preparing for and writing their news reports. Deacon and Golding’s (1994: 175) study of the Poll Tax in the UK illustrates shows that journalists were aware of the unpopularity of the tax and factored that into their reporting of the issue. While studies of the Iraq War have shown that journalists were sensitive to the divisiveness of the issue and that this affected the way they reported on the conflict (Lewis 2004).

²⁷ Activist Interview 25.

²⁸ Activist Interview 26.

²⁹ Activist Interview 15.

³⁰ Activist Interview 7.

³¹ Activist Interview 11.

³² Activist Interview 7.

³³ Activist Interview 5.

³⁴ Activist Interview 25.

³⁵ Activist Interview 15.

³⁶ Activist Interview 23.

³⁷ Activist Interview 3.

³⁸ Activist Interview 10.

³⁹ Activist Interview 18.

⁴⁰ Survey respondent 8. Corresponds to Activist interviewee 27.

⁴¹ Activist Interview 28.

⁴² My own research, presented in Chapter 9, shows that the overall local press coverage of the Iraq crisis dropped off sharply in the second half of April 2003, although there were significant differences between the Evening and Weekly newspapers.

⁴³ Activist Interview 29.

⁴⁴ Survey respondent 9. Corresponds to Activist interview 13.

⁴⁵ Activist Interview 13. Corresponds to Survey respondent 9.

⁴⁶ Activist Interview 10.

⁴⁷ Activist Interview 3.

⁴⁸ Activist Interview 23.

⁴⁹ Activist Interview 11.

⁵⁰ Survey respondent 10. No corresponding interview.

⁵¹ Survey respondent 11. Corresponds to Activist Interview 4.

⁵² Survey respondent 9. Corresponds to Activist interview 13.

⁵³ Activist Interview 2.

⁵⁴ Activist Interview 28.

⁵⁵ Activist Interview 13.

⁵⁶ Activist Interview 18.

⁵⁷ Activist Interview 28.

⁵⁸ Activist Interview 30.

⁵⁹ Survey respondent 4. Corresponds to Activist Interview 9. End note 11.

⁶⁰ Activist Interview 30.

⁶¹ Activist Interview 27.

⁶² Activist Interview 15.

⁶³ Activist Interview 22.

⁶⁴ Activist Interview 10.

⁶⁵ It ought to be acknowledged that comments denouncing Blair as a Fascist were also rejected on political grounds: “‘Blair is a warmonger?’ We will agree with you on that one. ‘Blair is a Fascist?’ Well no, and Fascism was a bit worse even than what Bush and Blair can come up with”, said the interviewee.

⁶⁶ Activist Interview 24. See End note 20.

⁶⁷ Activist Interview 11.

⁶⁸ Activist Interviews 3 and 25.

⁶⁹ Activist Interview 23.

⁷⁰ Activist Interview 1.

⁷¹ Activist Interview 13.

⁷² Activist Interview 30.

⁷³ Activist Interview 31.

⁷⁴ Activist Interview 5.

⁷⁵ Activist Interview 10.

⁷⁶ Activist Interview 30.

⁷⁷ Activist Interview 6.

⁷⁸ Activist Interview 2.

⁷⁹ Activist Interview 5.

⁸⁰ Activist Interview 25.

⁸¹ Activist Interview 27.

⁸² Activist Interview 5.

⁸³ Blumler (1989: 351) argues that one of the key reasons why pressure groups take an interest in the media to counter bad publicity. Whilst not the same as using the media to proactively enhance one's legitimacy, this does suggest that pressure groups have at least some concern for their reputations.

⁸⁴ My initial expectation was that groups would seek to use the media to establish/enhance their legitimacy. But I could find no commentary to support this in the interview transcripts.

⁸⁵ Activist Interview 6. As it happens Vaz voted for the war anyway, but the quotation still outlines the thinking behind their strategy.

⁸⁶ Activist Interview 30.

⁸⁷ Activist Interview 15.

⁸⁸ Activist Interview 30.

⁸⁹ Activist Interview 15.

⁹⁰ Activist Interview 6.

⁹¹ Activist Interview 17.

⁹² The on and off-line surveys conducted for this research, found that 90 percent of groups declared that leafleting their local high street was one of the main activities they did as part of their campaigning against the Iraq War. Along with organising local demonstrations this was the most commonly undertaken activity for the local groups.

⁹³ Activist Interview 13.

⁹⁴ Activist Interview 23.

⁹⁵ Activist Interview 21.

⁹⁶ Activist Interview 22.

⁹⁷ Activist Interview 10.

⁹⁸ Activist Interview 30. This interviewee also agreed that a local public meeting was a more suitable vehicle for raising substantive issues surrounding the war.

⁹⁹ Activist Interview 13.

¹⁰⁰ Activist Interview 6.

¹⁰¹ Activist Interview 2.

¹⁰² Activist Interview 7.

¹⁰³ Activist Interview 9.

Chapter 8: Matters of professionalism and legitimacy:

The role of the newswriters

This chapter explores questions of how reporters, editors and columnists on the weekly and evening newspapers sampled in the content analysis studies of the next two chapters, set about reporting on the Iraq War and opposition to it in their respective localities. So whereas the previous chapter enquired into the reasons why the antiwar movement took an interest in attracting the media's attention and how they went about the business of engaging with the media, this chapter serves as a necessary counterweight to the previous one by examining the reasons why the local media took an interest in antiwar activism and how journalists set about engaging with opponents of the war.

As will be shown in this chapter, the newswriters interviewed for this research all contended that they approached stories regarding the Iraq War and opposition to it according to the same criteria that they would apply to any other story in the weekly or evening press. It follows therefore, that it is the occupational values, the pressures, and the working routines of journalism rather than the peculiarities of the Iraq War as an issue, that must lie at the heart of any investigation concerning the ways in which the journalists *set about* reporting on the war and the oppositional activities it inspired. This approach is fully consistent with the maxim that 'It is the organisation of news, not events in the world, that creates news' (Ericson et al 1987: 345). Fittingly then, the focus of this chapter is on the 'organisation of news' and particularly on how journalists' sense of their own 'professionalism' shaped their assessments of the legitimacy of the antiwar movement. Much of this chapter is focused on the matter of 'professionalism' in journalism simply because the journalists interviewed for this research tended to justify the way they approached reporting in ways that chimed with many of the same themes that can be found in classic statements of 'professionalism' in journalism. Having said that, this professionalism was laced with a hint of tabloid populism in that the press were keen to capture people's emotional responses to the war.

'Professionalism' in journalism is a complex subject in need of further elaboration and doing so will take up the first part of this chapter. The second half will be given over to a discussion of the newswriters' assessments of the legitimacy of the antiwar groups they encountered in their areas, and how those assessments were rooted in journalists' sense of professionalism and its attendant obligations.

Professionalism

‘Professionalism’ in journalism is itself a hazy concept lacking any precise definition (Hallin 1996: 245; Curran 1996: 100; O’Sullivan et al 1994: 244).¹ In spite of this, academic and practitioner accounts of journalism are replete with certain recurrent ideas that are said to establish the professional credentials of journalism. Some of these ideas fall under the heading of certain technocratic competences, such as accuracy in reporting, the ability to swiftly verify facts, and the ability to work under pressure filing reports in advance of deadlines (Allan 1999: 21-26; Curran 1996: 99; Dueze 2005: 447; Elliot 1977: 149). The value of these competences is that they enhance autonomy (from the state, their sources, proprietors, and to a lesser degree from their senior colleagues within the newsroom), and that these competences enable ‘objectivity’ in reporting, since journalists can and do fall back on justifications rooted in their ‘professional’ obligations to be ‘objective’ when arguing against external and internal encroachments on their work (Ericson et al 1987; Hallin 1996; Tuchman 1972; Tunstall 1971). Ultimately these twin virtues of autonomy and ‘objectivity’ are celebrated for serving the best interests of the public by providing them with the kind of accurate, reliable and relevant information required for citizenship (Hallin 1996; Allan 1999: 21-26; Singer 2003; Dueze 2005: 447; Curran 1996: 98-100; Elliot 1977). These ideals, of ‘objectivity’ and public service, both merit more detailed examination.

Objectivity

As a normative ideal, ‘objectivity is’, according to Lichtenberg (1996: 225), ‘a cornerstone of the professional ideology of journalists in liberal democracies.’ It is important because ‘Our most fundamental interest in objectivity is an interest in truth. We want to know how things stand in the world, or what happens, and why’ (Ibid.: 227). These are lofty ideals. In part the grandiose nature of these claims partially explains why notions of objectivity in journalism have long since fallen from favour among academics (Ibid.). In recent years it would appear that journalists too have grown more reflexive about their working practices, to the point where, in the UK at least, most are wary of claiming that their work is necessarily objective (see Lloyd 2004: 20; Hampton 2008).² On the basis of the interviews conducted for this research, it would seem that while local journalists are also reluctant to claim the mantle of ‘objectivity’, they are still inclined to maintain that they strove for and attained the ‘impartial’ presentation of factually accurate information. As it happens some theorists argue that ‘impartiality’ and ‘factuality’ are, when combined together, the core components of ‘objectivity’ (see Gunter 1997: 14). So the fact that journalists would appear to be reluctant to piece these elements together and make the case that they practice ‘objectivity’ is not without an element of irony. Furthermore, ‘factuality’ and ‘impartiality’ can

also be problematic concepts. ‘Factuality’ hinges upon the presentation of a *relevant* selection of facts (Ibid.: 14), but it may be a matter of judgement as to which facts are relevant. ‘Impartiality’, meaning ‘not taking sides’ in any given controversy so that no obvious preference is expressed for either side (Franklin et al 2005: 109; O’Sullivan et al 1994: 144), may be possible in the context of a news report, but choices still have to be made as to which sources will be allowed to contribute to the reports in the first place. Moreover through, the choices that journalists have to make in relation to their sources is more a complex matter than the simple choice between inclusion and exclusion; it is also about the way those sources are treated. Thus the question for journalists becomes a matter of whether they are to extend ‘due impartiality’ to their sources, i.e. whether those sources are to be accorded dispassionate and balanced treatment, or whether their actions and viewpoints are to be reported on but only as deviant activities or perspectives. This was the basis for Hallin’s (1986) distinction between the ‘sphere of legitimate controversy’ and the ‘sphere of deviance’. Even so, since the journalists interviewed for this research justified their work on the basis of ‘factuality’ and ‘impartiality’, this chapter proceeds by taking those concepts seriously.

Public service

In many ways the ethic of ‘public service’ in journalism represents the ultimate justification for professionalism. As Hallin (1996) explains, the principle behind the ideal has always been that journalists would ‘serve the public as a whole, and not particular interests, such as the partisan causes journalists championed in the nineteenth century, or the narrow commercial interests of advertisers and owners’ (1996: 245).³ This necessitates autonomy from vested interests, including proprietors, other divisions within the news organisation such as advertising, and from sources. And regardless of whether advocates of professionalism prefer to justify their work in terms of ‘impartiality’ or the seemingly grander concept of ‘objectivity’, the avoidance of partisanship inherent in Hallin’s (1996) definition of public service means that, in some ways at least, the ideals of public service and impartiality/objectivity compliment each other well. This brings a measure of unity and consistency to concept of professionalism.

It can hardly go unnoticed that claims to professionalism connote high status in society. So if journalists are to be regarded as professionals, particularly by themselves, what consequences, if any, does this have for their attitudes towards ‘ordinary’ members of the public and the ways in which they set about serving that public?

According to research that was conducted in previous decades, media professionals had a paternalistic attitude, arguably even a condescending one, towards the general public, in that they regarded themselves as better placed to judge the public interest than the general public (cf. Elliot 1977: 152). Some would say that this attitude could also be found among local journalists in previous decades, but has fallen from favour in the years since. Interviewed in 1997, Keith Parker, the former editor of *The Wolverhampton Express and Star*, claimed that “forty years ago, thirty years ago, papers covered a lot of local politics, and national politics”, “these days” newspapers tend to concentrate on “what they think their readership will be interested in rather than what they think their readers should be interested in” (cited in Pilling 1998: 187). The intensified commercialism of the press in recent decades, which has also been evident at the local level (see Franklin and Murphy 1991; 1998; Franklin 2006b), has often been held to be responsible for this shift towards a more populist stance (Pilling 1998). However, the evidence uncovered as part of the research for this thesis, suggests that whilst it is possible to detect a trend towards a more populist attitude to readers than traditional readings of the local press would imply, the tendency is only discernible to a modest degree. To claim that we have arrived at the point of some kind of ‘populist professionalism’ (which in any case would be something of a contradiction in terms) would be an exaggeration.

Elements of professionalism in the local and regional press

This section seeks to establish that, with the arguable exception of local journalists’ attitudes towards public opinion, all of the key elements of professionalism that have been outlined so far apply in the case of the local journalists interviewed for this research. Indeed, the interview extracts selected in support of this argument are often also noteworthy for being laced with recurrent motifs about what was and was not a ‘part of their job’, ‘role’ or ‘business’.

Separating fact from opinion and not taking sides

Nearly all the newswriters interviewed for this research declared themselves to have been opposed to the decision to invade Iraq in 2003. Yet this, they insisted, was just a ‘personal opinion’ to be bracketed off from their ‘professional’ obligation to report local developments surrounding the war in a detached manner:

It wouldn’t have affected the way I reported, but I was firmly against the war.⁴

On a personal level I had great sympathy with them [referring to opponents of the military action], but my personal views don’t really come into it. *In a work capacity* it’s very different.’ (Emphasis added).⁵

Note how this last interviewee explicitly justifies the expurgation of her ‘personal views’ on the grounds that they ought not to intrude into her work related responsibilities.

Only one exception emerged in the interviews. One journalist, working for a small weekly paper, conceded that his reports on antiwar activities probably reflected his own antiwar views – not to the extent of turning the paper into a mouthpiece for antiwar sentiment, but rather to the point where “the things we chose to report on rather reflected our views.”⁶ Tellingly, the reporter felt he was able to get away with slanting the reports in a modest antiwar direction precisely because the publication he worked for “wasn’t the most professionally run paper.” Again, the clear implication is that the constraints and obligations of ‘professionalism’ militate against partisanship in news reporting.

Most of the reporters and editors interviewed indicated that they believed they had an obligation not to take sides, and instead to present a balanced account of the debate(s) surrounding the war:

... when we are reporting issues like that [referring to local opposition to the war] we would tend to report them in quite an *impartial* way. (Emphasis added).⁷

The use of the term ‘impartial’ in this example rather than ‘objective’ is noteworthy. This tendency was commonplace throughout the interviews since none of the journalists who partook in this research ever sought to justify their work as though it was ‘objective’. This suggests that they had some degree of reticence about claiming that their work is necessarily ‘objective’.

It has often been remarked that those media outlets that strive to practice objectivity most vigorously do so either because those obligations are imposed upon them by the state (as is the case with public broadcasters), or because the commercial imperatives of the marketplace in which they operate necessitate objectivity. The latter is the case news agencies (Hamer 2006; Boyd-Barrett 1980), the press in America (Schudson 1978; Soloski 1999) and the local and regional press in the UK. Unlike the national newspaper landscape in the UK where the press are in competition with each other, local and regional newspapers enjoy monopoly market conditions in their areas of circulation (except perhaps at the fringes of those circulation areas). In practice, this means that whereas the national papers can appeal to partisan interests and viewpoints, market forces compel weekly and evening newspapers to represent the broad spectrum of opinion, if not necessarily all shades of it, in their circulation areas (Aldridge 2007: 58; Franklin and Murphy 1991). This much, including the comparisons with the national press, was well understood by those working for the provincial press:

We try not to be political. Whereas if you were talking to someone from *The Sun* they would write their stories from a particular political point of view. As a local paper we don't tend to do that because aside from everything else *it's not useful to us*. Our role is to inform the local people and to provide stories that are interesting to everyone, that is XXXXXXXXXX [name of town] based. It's not to appeal to the Tory people in XXXXXXXXXX, it's not designed to appeal to the Labour people in XXXXXXXXXX, it's designed to try and appeal to anyone who lives here. So we don't like to come down on one side or the other. (Emphasis added).⁸

Our readers are a mixture of people who read *The Telegraph*, *The Mail*, *The Star*, *The Sun*, so we have to go somehow right down the middle, and try and appeal to everyone simultaneously.⁹

However, when it comes to the reporting of emotionally charged controversial issues like the Iraq War, it is no mean feat to "appeal to everyone simultaneously." A more realistic ambition would be to try to avoid aggravating large sections of the paper's readership. The ambition is still explicable in terms of the political economy of the media, with the general principle being that:

If the news were to be reported in an overtly political or ideological manner, the market would be ripe for competition from news organisations that held opposing political or ideological points of view. By reporting the news objectively, reader loyalty to a newspaper is not a function of the ideology of that newspaper (Soloski 1999: 311).

Or, as one interviewee frankly put it, "At the end of the day the media can't afford to piss off its readership, or its viewing or listening public."¹⁰ This is not to suggest that the pursuit of objectivity leads to reporting that is ideologically pure or without any ideological inflections. Indeed as I shall argue in Chapter 10, that is very far from the case. The key to retaining reader loyalty however, is to avoid '*overtly* political or ideological' reporting.

Accuracy and the importance of verification:

Another notable feature of the interviews was that the journalists placed great stress on the need to accurately record the 'material facts' (Tuchman 1972; 1978) of events relating to the war and the controversy it generated – questions of who, what, where, when, why and how. So for example, whenever a journalist was reporting on an antiwar march they usually had very clear ideas about what they would and would not say in that report.

I wouldn't necessarily say this is a brilliant march I want to join it. That's not my business. My business is to say this march is taking place, this is who's organised it, and this is what it's all about.¹¹

In keeping with their reverence for facticity, all claims had to be verified, if necessary through double-checking them.

Summing up the evidence presented thus far, we can see many of the key tenets of professionalism – the separation of fact from their personal opinions, ‘not taking sides’ in the controversy, the importance of accurately recording facts, and the need to double-check those facts – coalesced together in the local journalists’ self-justifications for their approach to reporting.

Informing the public

As Curran (1996: 98-100) points out, notions of ‘professionalism’ have been championed (by official policy orientated reviews on both sides of the Atlantic) as a means of offsetting the market’s tendency towards monopoly on the grounds that ‘journalists’ commitment to higher goals – neutrality, detachment, a commitment to truth’ is the best guarantor of a ‘pluralism of opinion and information’ (Ibid.: 99). Applied to the case of the Iraq War, this analysis would examine the reasons for the war, its likely consequences, morality, implications for international law, and possible alternatives amongst the core areas of concern. Yet the evidence, presented in Chapters 9 and 10, shows that this kind of analysis was largely absent from local press coverage. One interviewee was particularly candid in her assessment of the shortcomings of the local press in this regard:

I think lack of detail ... superficial analysis is common to the local media on any issue to be honest.... The local media – they just don’t cover anything with any degree of depth.¹²

In part this “lack of detail” may be seen as an inevitable product of the brevity of local news reports, which, according to the interviews, were typically limited to between 400 and 600 words, “so there just wasn’t the physical space to report things in great detail.”¹³ This however, only begs the question as to why more space was not made available to explore issues in greater depth. After all, the outbreak of a war is hardly a trivial matter. Many commentators would no doubt be inclined to blame the intensified commercialism of the press for the increased trivialisation, tabloidisation and the lack of detailed analysis in local press coverage (Franklin and Murphy 1991; 1998; Franklin 2005; 2006a), whilst also being wary of presenting a rose tinted view of the past, since the research into the local press in previous decades tends to puncture the myth of there having been a golden age of local investigative journalism (see Murphy 1976). At the same time however, it is important to appreciate that the reporters felt able to fully justify the practice

of keeping away from analysing and evaluating the controversy over the war. As one journalist (who happened to have been embedded with troops in Iraq during the war) explained when reflecting upon the *modus operandi* of the local news reporting, there were an abundance of politicians and commentators, including in the national press, who were more than willing to address the various controversies over the war.

There were plenty of reporters ... in London, America, elsewhere reporting on the political consequences, the rights and wrongs of it.... I didn't really see it as my role to get into the rights and wrongs of the war.... There were plenty of politicians who had their say on that one. And there was plenty of reports on that.¹⁴

Hence the local evening and weekly press felt little obligation to provide any significant degree of additional analysis and evaluation regarding the various aspects of the war and its possible alternatives preferring instead to concentrate on providing factual information about the various aspects of the crisis, whether that be pre-war diplomacy, reports about military progress on the battlefield, or reports of demonstrations against the war.

Additionally, it is important to recognise that first and foremost the purpose of local newspapers is to report local news. National and international stories can sometimes be found in the pages of the evening and weekly newspapers, but, exceptional events aside, only when those stories 'have a local angle' around which reporters can construct the report and that situates the local community within the larger (inter)national story (Franklin and Murphy 1991: 60; Rolston and McLaughlin 2004: 192-193; Tunstall 1996: 71).¹⁵ This had implications for the kinds of issues surrounding the war that they were inclined to address:

We naturally wanted some sort of local slant on it, so whether something's legal on a global basis isn't as relevant to us as a letter attacking for instance, the conduct of one of the MPs who voted in favour of it. That has more local relevance.¹⁶

The evidence presented so far suggests that for all the effort that local journalists made to ensure accuracy and impartiality in their reporting, they were reluctant to grapple with the numerous controversies involved in the crisis. Yet this is only part of the story, because whilst the reporters steered clear of the high politics surrounding the war, there were other ways in which the reporters and editors immersed themselves in the issue. Specifically, they strove to capture peoples' emotional responses to the war, including the emotional responses of its opponents. This

was readily apparent in journalists' reflections on the way they set about reporting the antiwar demonstration on 15 February 2003.

We just felt that we wanted to give people a chance to say why they were there rather than a technical, possibly rather dry piece about legalities of the war and the arguments surrounding the inspections regime. We just wanted to show people's strength of feeling rather than get into technical arguments.¹⁷

Expressing matters in terms of the flawed but still fruitful metaphor of 'hearts and minds' that was assessed at the start of Chapter 4, the focus of the reports on the march, was, according to these reflections, on the way opponents of the war felt about it in their 'hearts'.

Furthermore, if one of the distinguishing features of a tabloid agenda is an emphasis on an emotional rather than a rational engagement with public affairs, this characterisation is fully consistent with a tabloid approach to reporting. Despite the undeniable fact that the tabloids are frequently derided, as has been well documented by Sparks and Tulloch (2000), and that the tabloidisation of the media is so often lamented including at the local level (e.g. Franklin 2005; 2006b), an emotional engagement with public affairs can be defended on public service grounds.

Today, with widespread concern about decreasing political participation and increasing political apathy, maybe emotional appeals are what is needed? Political participation builds not only on rational processing of information, but also emotion, engagement and sometimes even outrage – something that tabloid journalism can possibly provide. (Örnebring and Jönsson 2004: 284).

It may well be then, that if the local press could be said to have made an important contribution to the public debate over the Iraq War, that they did so by engaging with the battle for people's hearts rather than their minds.

Finally, there was an emphasis throughout all the interviews on trying to capture and draw attention to ordinary people's voices and not just institutional viewpoints. As one journalist explained as he reflected on the way he set about reporting on the 15 February demonstration:

We just decided that we could make the point better about the motivations for a lot of the people there by stressing their ordinariness.¹⁸

Other manifestations of this general ambition to act as a tribune for the people were evident from the way that the reporters spoke of their desire to "reflect people's responses to how their lives

are affected by local government decisions”¹⁹ on local government stories, or on say, housing development stories:

If you wrote a story that just said that a developer was going to do this ... well that’s not the complete story, the complete story is what people think about it.²⁰

It is not entirely clear whether these comments mark a shift away from the paternalistic attitudes of professionalism that were discussed earlier, and towards a more populist set of attitudes that would regard the public as the ultimate arbiters of wisdom, but there are good grounds for being sceptical about any claims of there having been such a radical shift in journalistic practices. First of all, the comments speak of trying to capture and ‘reflect’ peoples’ views so they get a public airing, not of elevating them to a sacred level as though they were unquestionable articles of wisdom. Second, even a more modest interpretation of these findings – that the local media have a tendency to privilege ordinary members of the public ahead of local elites – is likely to prove a misreading. Research by Ross (2006) has shown that ordinary members of the public (identified on the basis that their occupation was not specified) accounted for a total of 24 percent of sources quoted in news articles from a (different) sample of regional newspapers, compared to a combined total of 45 percent for business people, local councillors, local government employees, police officers, MPs and prospective Parliamentary candidates. As one stridently antiwar regional newspaper columnist explained in defence of this general principle, (but without reference to Ross’s 2006 research):

People with a democratic mandate are always going to get a longer say in the media, and to be honest I don’t really disagree with that.... Just because you’ve organised a demo why should you have any more say than somebody who lives next door to you who hasn’t? Whereas MPs have got a democratic mandate.²¹

The empirical research outlined so far has illustrated the ‘professional’ principles by which the journalists set about reporting on the war and opposition to it. Most importantly, this research shows that the newswriters were prepared to give a voice to those who were opposed to the war without disparaging those views. Even the reporter who was the most sceptical about the antiwar movement still believed that they “had a legitimate view” that deserved to be heard.²² Yet believing that opposition to the war was fair comment and having a measure of personal sympathy with the antiwar cause, is not the same as saying that as professionals, the reporters regarded locally based antiwar groups as legitimate sources worthy of a regular input into news reports. This raises several important questions that we shall now turn our attention to and then return to in Chapter 11. In the minds of journalists, how much legitimacy did the local antiwar

groups have? What did their legitimacy derive from? Were there any factors that compromised the legitimacy of these groups? Lastly in this chapter, we shall consider if the journalists' assessments of the way the antiwar groups set about media relations' activities had any bearing on the way they were reported in the press.

The question of legitimacy

Newswriters' assessments of the legitimacy of the antiwar groups stemmed from the perception that the movement's overall stance on the war (i.e. being opposed to it) had widespread public support, while the perceived legitimacy of the movement was constrained by concerns about its political make-up, on the grounds that several journalists suspected many of those in the movement as hailing from the far-left. In consequence there were times when newswriters felt obliged to limit the involvement of the antiwar groups on grounds that their far-left politics did not represent the views of the local population at large. So here again, one of the overriding preoccupations of the newswriters was that they should voice the viewpoints, sentiments and concerns of ordinary members of the public rather than sectional interests and ideologies, which is what the far-left would be taken to represent. There would not appear to have been any significant differences between the papers in this regard. Summing up the nuances of this situation, one reporter commented:

On a local newspaper you're always slightly wary of going 'the usual suspects' about any story, and some of them were 'the usual suspects'. But there were enough people coming forward to get a sense that there was a big proportion of the local population against the war.²³

The expression 'the usual suspects' was, in this context, generally recognised as a code for far-left groups, who if not necessarily dominated by the Socialist Workers Party, were at least taken to have similar politics.

The journalists interviewed for this research had a collective sense that the antiwar movement carried widespread support in relation to the prospect of military action against Iraq in early 2003. This had repercussions for both the way they set about reporting on opposition to the war and extent to which they accessed antiwar opinion:

We made a judgement I think that there were such a significant number of people going down [to London for the 15 February march]... to justify us going.²⁴

My instinct was that the local population was more antiwar than the rest of Britain as a whole. So if the three [local] MPs were in favour of the war it was only natural that

you would go to someone who has an opposing view.... It was a fair journalistic standard practice to go to those people [i.e. opponents of the war] for quotes and ... stories.²⁵

It is particularly significant that this interviewee justified the decision to access antiwar viewpoints as “fair journalistic standard practice” only because the antiwar case reflected the opinions of a large section of the local population. The clear implication of this extract is that if antiwar sentiment had represented no more than a small section of (local) public opinion, opponents of the war would have received far less access to this particular paper.

Additionally though, it is important to appreciate that the extent to which journalists could be said to have either embraced the antiwar movement on the grounds that the movement’s views represented those of the general populace, or kept their distance from the antiwar groups out of a certain wariness of the far left, fluctuated throughout the Iraq crisis of 2003. As we shall see in Chapter 10, the legitimacy and support of the antiwar groups was at its apex around the time of the 15 February demonstration and yet had plummeted by the time the war started. Opinion poll data also shows that public support for the war drastically increased after the start of hostilities (Lewis 2004; Murray et al 2008: 8). But since the newswriters made no reference to the polls during their interviews it would not be appropriate to conclude that they consciously altered the tone of their reports so as to mirror the state of public opinion. Instead the newswriters had a vague, impressionistic sense of how the legitimacy of oppositional groups was contingent upon the level of popular support for their activities. Tellingly, journalists often claimed to have an ‘instinct’ for the state of public opinion. This means that in common with previous investigations by Ericson et al (1987), Gans (1979), Lewis et al (2005), and Schlesinger (1978) into the matter of how journalists relate to and handle public opinion, the evidence gathered for this research also suggests that journalists tend to rely on their own assumptions and contacts when filing reports about political issues, rather than allow their reporting to be steered by the findings from opinion polls.²⁶

Having made the judgement that it would have been inappropriate to ignore the antiwar movement, the newswriters dealt with the antiwar movement in much the same way as they would with any source. They fell back on the time-honoured practices of aiming for accuracy, double-checking facts, and by aspiring to write reports that are of interest to a wide range of people:

Obviously we as journalists, we make sure we know the vested interests of *any particular group* and bear that in mind when we're reporting stories – when we're dealing with factual information. We always double-check everything that we report.... As a local newspaper we try not to come down ... according to any political agenda really. We try and report things that other people will be interested in, regardless of the politics of the matter. (Emphasis added).²⁷

One of the most noteworthy features of this quotation – and this is particularly borne out with the phrase “any particular group” – concerns the way the antiwar groups were not regarded as unique among sectional interest groups. Instead the journalists had clear ideas about how to respond to and report on the activities and positions of any partisan group. In no cases were these based on ‘official’ guidelines. (If their newspaper’s in-house stylebook addressed questions of how to deal with radical political groups at all, the reporters all seemed remarkably vague about their details). Instead the ‘rules’ for dealing with partisan groups were based on a ‘vocabulary of precedents’ (Ericson et al 1987), that served to establish what to do in the future and in seemingly new situations on the basis of how similar stories were reported, and how similar sources were dealt with, in the past (see also Tuchman 1997). On this basis then, one would expect to see the journalists revive the delegitimising narratives of the ‘protest paradigm’ that was outlined in Chapter 3 when covering protests against a war on Iraq. Yet, as has also been stressed on several occasions throughout this study, the unprecedented scale of elite, popular and national media opposition to military action in Iraq, distinguished it from previous international crises. This means that it may well be that the conclusions reached by earlier studies of public protest did not apply in this case. This in turn would mean that journalists’ interpreted the stock of knowledge and understandings embedded in the ‘vocabulary of precedents’ very differently from what they would appear to have done with earlier controversies, and thus that there is a good measure of flexibility over whether or not they report on protests in line with the ‘standardised roles’ of protesters being eccentric and unrepresentative troublemakers in the manner of the ‘protest paradigm’. But empirical content analysis has to be conducted first before we would be in a position to comment further.

Newsworkers reflections on their relations with the antiwar groups

According to their recollections, the newsworkers claimed that stories relating to antiwar activities were as likely to have originated from the antiwar group having initiated contact with the news desk, as the reporters were to have generated the story by making first contact with the antiwar groups. In this regard stories relating to opposition to the war were no different from most other categories of local news stories, where this “six of one, half a dozen of the other”²⁸ split between the sources and reporters initiating contact was fairly typical.

There was also common advice for any would-be sources as they set about engaging with the local press, which was that it was not a good idea to be “too pushy”. Sources that aggressively demanded to be in the paper and written up in favourable terms were, according to the newswriters, likely to find that their approach backfires.

If people get too pushy then you just turn your back. It works against them.²⁹

The best way to not get in the paper is to try and push the paper ... if you're pushy we just tend to conveniently forget that you ever rang.³⁰

It is important to note that none of the reporters ever described the antiwar groups in their respective areas as being particularly “pushy”. But for the news staff there was an important principle at stake: “we decide what we put in the paper.”³¹ Without necessarily realising it, this also amounts to an assertion of autonomy.

It should immediately be pointed out that there might well be an element of self-justification in proclaiming this principle, and in the case of the local press it is only likely to be partially true. For instance, studies of relations between local government and local media have concluded that the former can usually generate a substantial amount of favourable coverage in the local press and rarely ever face any impediments to access or awkward questions from the local press (Harrison 2006). Moreover, it is almost tautological to say that politically powerful sources have more power over the media than subaltern, oppositional groups, and as Chapters 2 and 3 pointed out, challenger sources are particularly vulnerable to being reported on in a negative manner. Yet as those two earlier chapters were at pains to argue, there is nothing pre-determined about the way the media handle political controversies.

Conclusions

The thesis shall return to a consideration of the principle that newswriters are the ones who decide which sources to include in their news reports in Chapter 11 where reporters' and editors' reflections on the coverage they produced will be examined. But if in some respects the ‘gatekeeper’ metaphor is an appropriate one to describe the way the local media both facilitated and controlled the reporting of locally based opposition to the war, the newswriters themselves would also like to think that they deserved (although did not necessarily expect³²) to be thought of as ‘honest brokers’ whose reporting was guided by the principles of ‘professionalism’ in journalism that I have outlined in this chapter. So in spite of journalists having a certain wariness

about the political composition of the antiwar movement, there was a general agreement among the journalists interviewed for this research that in the case of the Iraq crisis the antiwar cause had widespread support. Consequently the local newswriters felt confident that those involved in the antiwar movement represented something more than just sectional interests. The strong implication from the interviews with the reporters was that if the antiwar movement's representative status had been different (i.e. if they were seen as representing sectional interests rather than as speaking for a large proportion of public opinion), then the principles of 'professionalism' in journalism would have resulted in less frequent access to the news media and less favourable representations in the local press. On the basis of these comments then, it might be predicted that those who marched against the war on 15 February 2003 for example, were accorded a measure of 'due impartiality' in the local press in that antiwar voices were heard without being disparaged. However, questions such as this need to be tested through content analysis research, which is what the next two chapters undertake.

End Notes

¹ Doubts even remain among practitioners and scholars alike as to whether journalism even qualifies as a profession at all (see Hallin 1996: 245; Singer 2003: 145).

² Thus the quote from Lichtenberg (1996: 225) that 'objectivity is a cornerstone of the professional ideology of journalists in liberal democracies' cannot apply in all cases. Hampton (2008) notes that journalists working for the BBC and Reuters are exceptions to this generalisation in that they aspire to, and are expected to, practice objectivity in journalism.

³ Although certain aspects of these ideals of public service apply to public service broadcasting (PSB), the statutory obligations of PSB in the British context distinguish it from the more informal understanding of 'public service' as part of the ethos of professionalism.

⁴ Journalist Interview 1, Reporter, Evening Paper.

⁵ Journalist Interview 2, Reporter, Evening Paper.

⁶ Journalist Interview 3, Former Reporter, Weekly Paper.

⁷ Journalist Interview 2, Reporter, Evening Paper.

⁸ Journalist Interview 2, Reporter, Evening Paper.

⁹ Journalist Interview 1, Reporter, Evening Paper.

¹⁰ Journalist Interview 4, Columnist, Evening Paper.

¹¹ Journalist Interview 2, Reporter, Evening Paper.

¹² Journalist Interview 4, Columnist, Evening Paper.

¹³ Journalist Interview 3, Former Reporter, Weekly Paper.

¹⁴ Journalist Interview 5, Former Reporter embedded with troops in Iraq during the invasion, Evening Paper.

¹⁵ A few qualifying notes ought to be made at this point. First of all, evening newspapers, including the *Manchester Evening News* and the *Leicester Mercury*, will often have 'World News' page featuring reports on national and international affairs. These reports are usually supplied by the Press Association (see Hamer 2006). Second, exceptional events that will 'make the news' even when there is no (obvious) local connection include things like the death of Dr David Kelly. This was the front-page lead story in the *Leicester Mercury* on 18 July 2003 even though the story had no local or regional connection to the Leicester area. Third, one of the themes that will be developed in Chapters 9 and 10 is the way the local press reports of oppositional activities situated local opposition within a national context.

¹⁶ Journalist Interview 3, Former Reporter, Weekly Paper.

¹⁷ Journalist Interview 1, Reporter, Evening Paper.

¹⁸ Journalist Interview 1, Reporter, Evening Paper.

¹⁹ Journalist Interview 6, News Editor, Weekly Paper.

²⁰ Journalist Interview 1, Reporter, Evening Paper.

²¹ Journalist Interview 4, Columnist, Evening Paper.

²² Journalist Interview 7, Former Reporter, Weekly Paper.

²³ Journalist Interview 3, Former Reporter, Weekly Paper.

²⁴ Journalist Interview 1, Reporter, Evening Paper. This particular journalist accompanied antiwar marchers down to London so as to file a first hand report on the march.

²⁵ Journalist Interview 3, Former Reporter, Weekly Paper.

²⁶ Occasionally though, there are exceptions to this rule. See Footnote 26 from the previous chapter.

²⁷ Journalist Interview 2, Reporter, Evening Paper.

²⁸ Journalist Interview 7, Former Reporter, Weekly Paper.

²⁹ Journalist Interview 6, News Editor, Weekly Paper.

³⁰ Journalist Interview 1, Reporter, Evening Paper.

³¹ Journalist Interview 1, Reporter, Evening Paper.

³² "You find that people completely misunderstand things and believe that you are the devil incarnate." Journalist Interview 7, Former Reporter, Weekly Paper.

Chapter 9: Content Analysis Study I:
Local news reporting and commentary on the Iraq crisis

This chapter examines the ways in which the local press covered developments relating to the Iraq crisis and the controversy it provoked in news reports and editorials from the pages of a selected sample of provincial newspapers. It is important to appreciate, that as far as possible, this chapter purposely excludes analysis of the antiwar movement. The nature and character of local press coverage of protests and public meetings that were organised by opponents of the war, along with any discussion of the contribution that the antiwar movement made to debates surrounding the decision to commence military action are dealt with in detail in the next chapter.

The newspapers studied were the *Manchester Evening News (MEN)*, the *Leicester Mercury*, the *Slough Express*, the *Slough Observer*, the *Bury Free Press*, and the *Enfield Gazette*. As explained in Chapter 5, these six papers were selected to encompass the variety of responses to the survey question: ‘How would you assess the way that the local media in your area reported on the activities YOUR group engaged in as part of your opposition to the Iraq War?’ with respondents able to select one of five responses. On the basis of the responses received the *Slough Express* and *Slough Observer* were selected to represent the ‘solely or mainly favourable’ response; the *MEN* and *Enfield Gazette* represent the ‘neither favourable nor unfavourable – somewhere in the middle’ response; and the *Leicester Mercury* and *Bury Free Press* were selected to represent the ‘solely or mainly unfavourable’ response. As explained in Chapter 5, that no paper was selected to represent the ‘wide range of treatment’ response since ‘the activists who gave this response held remarkably similar views on the media to those who said that the local press in their area treated them ‘neither favourably nor unfavourably [but] somewhere in the middle’’ (quoting from Chapter 5), and because the most important criteria in selecting the sample was that it ‘should cover the supposed outer tendencies’ of news reporting (Chapter 5; see also Deacon et al 2007: 393). I also explained that there seemed little sense in researching the ‘not applicable’ category.

The purpose of this chapter and the contribution of content analysis research

Qualitative content analysis is best suited to quantifying the ‘manifest’ features of media output (Deacon et al 2007: 118; Hallin 1986: 113), including news reports and editorials, which are the foci of this chapter. In a frequently invoked metaphor making the case for content analysis, the strength of the method is said to be that it can provide us with a ‘map’ of the general features and

patterns of media coverage (Deacon et al 2007: 119). Like a geographical map, a content analysis 'map' can only ever present a cartographic portrait of that which it is intended to chart. In the case of the geographic map these features may be nations, geological formations, vegetation, population density and so on. In the case of the content analysis 'map' of this chapter, the intention is to chart the ebb and flow of reports relating to the Iraq crisis throughout 2003 and early 2004, the sections of the newspapers those articles appeared in, along with any comparative differences across time and between the newspapers. However, the presentation of statistical data alone would be of little value for this research were it not connected to the wider questions about the plurality and orientation of press coverage, and particularly when that coverage focused on the controversy surrounding the decision to launch military action, which is, after all, at the core of this thesis. These wider questions must encompass 'the choice of topics and highlighting of issues, the range of opinion permitted expression, and unquestioned premises that guide reporting and commentary, and the general framework imposed for the presentation of a certain view of the world' (Chomsky 1989: 11). Yet after examining the 'choice of topics', 'the range of opinion', 'the unquestioned premises', and the 'frameworks' employed in news reporting, as well as the boundaries of what might be termed the 'sphere of legitimate controversy' (to adopt Hallin's [1986] phrase), one is forced to conclude that provincial press news coverage in the UK at least, is less predictable than Chomsky's 'propaganda model' would have us believe.

This chapter is divided into three parts. Part I is purely descriptive, detailing the number of articles that appeared in each of the papers, how much coverage of the Iraq crisis there was at various stages throughout the year, and the sections of the papers those articles appeared in. Part II of the chapter examines the editorial commentary relating to the Iraq crisis, giving due consideration to the ways in which editorials established the 'sphere of legitimate controversy' in relation to both the crisis and opposition to military action. Part III studies the news reporting of the crisis and the controversy surrounding it. Of particular interest is the question of how far the treatment of the controversy in news reports could be said to match the shifting boundaries of the editorials.

Part I: An Overview

The scale and timeline of the research

Previous content analysis research into the media's coverage of the Iraq crisis has tended to be restricted to the 'invasion phase' of the crisis, which at the outer limits can be dated from between

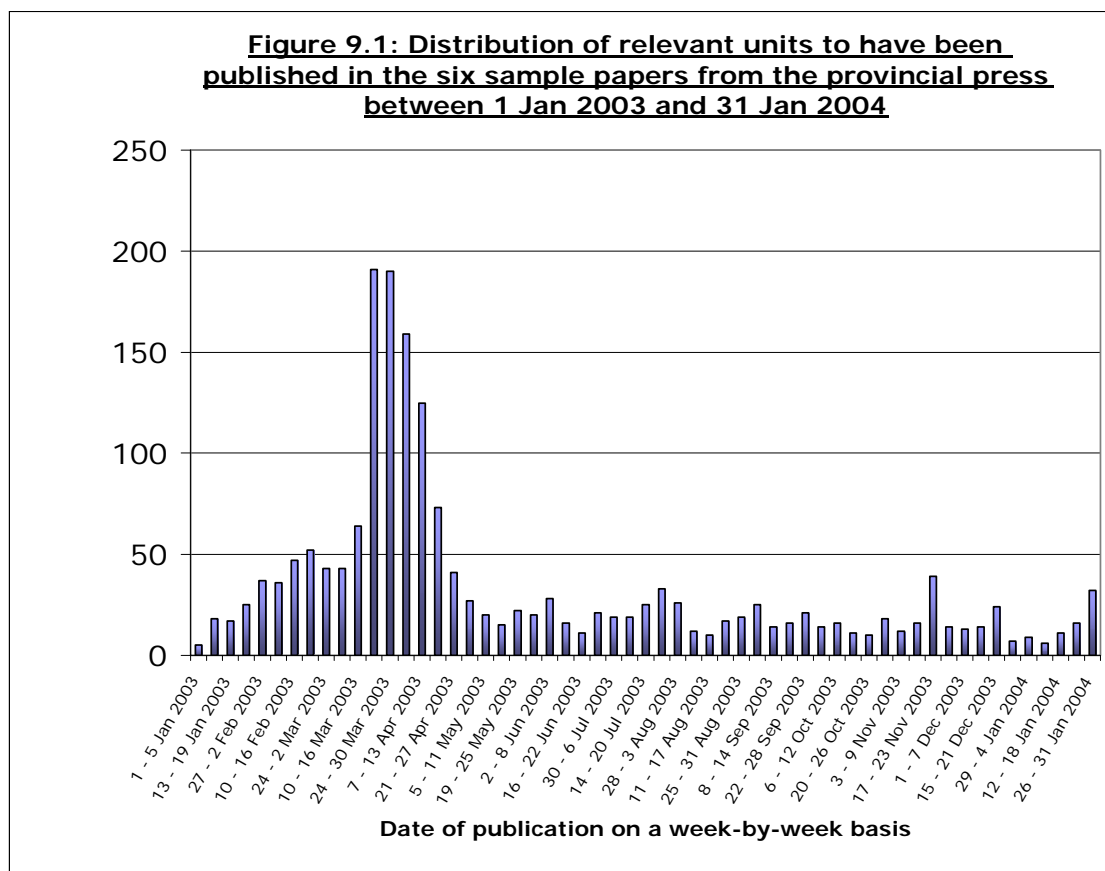
20 March and 1 May 2003 (Aday et al 2005; Dimitrova and Strömbäck 2008; Goddard et al 2008; Lewis and Brookes 2004a; 2004b; Lewis et al 2006; Ravi 2005; Richardson 2007). The only partial exceptions to are the studies conducted by Lehmann (2005) and Tumber and Palmer (2004).¹ One of the distinguishing features of my own research however, is that it takes a longer overview of the (local) media's coverage of the crisis, with the timeline for the research running from 1 January 2003 to 31 January 2004.² The advantage of doing so is first, that it becomes possible to chart the changing salience of the Iraq crisis as it rose up the news agenda and then sank back down again. More importantly, this longitudinal perspective allows us to investigate whether or not the narratives that preoccupied news reporting remained constant throughout the thirteen-month period of this research. To be more specific, is there evidence to show that the 'pre-invasion phase' of the crisis was characterised by relatively open debate about the rights and wrongs, or the wisdom or the folly, of military action and what the policy alternatives might be? And if this is the case, does the evidence also suggest that the media's treatment of the controversy during the 'invasion phase' of the crisis was characterised by a closing down of those debates as the media instead took on a 'cheerleading' role? Previous research by Bennett and Paletz (1994) and Wolfsfeld (1997) would predict as much; and these conclusions find support from some of the research on the Iraq crisis (Lewis and Brookes 2004a; 2004b; Lewis et al 2006).

Throughout the thirteen-month period, the *Leicester Mercury* published 830 reports, Op-Ed articles, and letters on Iraq crisis and the controversy it provoked, the *MEN* published 799 units on those matters, the *Slough Observer* published 94 units, the *Slough Express* 88, the *Bury Free Press* 62 and the *Enfield Gazette* just 33 units on these issues. This produces a total of 1906 units relating to the Iraq crisis and/or the antiwar movement from those six papers throughout the thirteen-month sample period. Given the contrast in the levels of output between the two evening papers (the *MEN* and the *Mercury*) and the four weekly papers (the *Slough Observer*, the *Slough Express*, the *Bury Free Press* and the *Enfield Gazette*), different coding criteria were adopted for the different papers. As explained in Chapter 5: 'All reports from the weekly press that met either criteria for inclusion' were coded, 'all reports from the two evening papers that focused on opposition to the war or any of the activities of the antiwar groups' were coded, and 'every eleventh report from either evening papers that focused on the Iraq crisis, but which did so without mentioning organised opposition to the war' was also coded. To compensate for the fact that this sampling procedure is weighted towards an examination of the antiwar movement, all discussion of the overall trends in the reporting of the crisis is based on an extrapolation from

those figures in which every report that falls into the third category is taken to be representative of an additional ten reports.

The rise and fall of the Iraq crisis as an issue in the local press

Based on a count up of *all* 1906 reports, editorials, features, articles by columnists, and letters to the editor to have addressed the Iraq crisis in the six sample papers throughout the thirteen months of this research, Figure 9.1 shows the distribution of all such ‘units’ combined to have appeared on a week-by-week basis.



As can be seen coverage shot up dramatically on the week beginning 17 March – the week when the invasion began. During that week the *Mercury* published a total of 84 units on the war and the opposition it inspired, the *MEN* published 81 units on those subjects during that week, the *Bury Free Press* eleven units, the *Slough Observer* published seven units, the *Slough Express* six units, and the *Enfield Gazette* published just two units. In each case, with the exception of the *Enfield*

Gazette, the number of units printed in that week marked a substantial increase on the previous week. In the case of the *Enfield Gazette* the number of units published was too few for an overall pattern of distribution to emerge. With the national press the amount of coverage devoted to the Iraq crisis began to decline in June 2003 (Tumber and Palmer 2004: 120).

The bar chart also shows that greatest concentration of coverage occurred from the middle of March to mid-April. 43 percent of all units in the sample period occurred between the week beginning 10 March and the week ending 20 April, and 35 percent of units could be found from between the week beginning 17 March and the week ending on the 13 April. Compared to the dramatic surge in the number of the 'crisis and controversy' units printed during the week beginning 17 March, the decline in the number of units dropped off less steeply over the course of the weeks beginning 7, 14, and 21 April. This was evident across all papers bar the *Enfield Gazette* – again because the number of units it published was too few in number for any clear pattern of distribution to emerge.

The sample newspapers went to press a total of 96 times in the six weeks from 10 March to 20 April 2003. During those six weeks reports about the Iraq crisis and/or opposition to military action 'made the front page' on 40 separate occasions and provoked editorial commentary 24 times. (All papers published at least one editorial every time they went to print.) For a time then, the Iraq War and the opposition it generated were firmly established near the top of the provincial press news agenda.

Figure 9.1 also demonstrates that those issues continued to be addressed even after the invasion period, because from then until the end of January 2004 the number of articles published in all the papers combined fluctuated between 6 and 39 articles each week, scoring an average of 18 articles per week.

Similarities and differences between the papers

One recurrent theme of this and the next chapter is that there were as many similarities between the papers as there were differences. In this section however, I intend to concentrate on the differences between the papers, and particularly the differences between the two evening papers and the four weeklies.

Comparing evening and weekly papers

It has already been shown that both the evening papers printed far more units about the crisis and related issues than their weekly counterparts throughout the thirteen-month period. On top of that the research found that whereas the weekly papers rarely ever reported on, carried Op-Ed columns, or published letters about the crisis and related issues after the declared end of ‘major combat operations’ on 1 May, the evening papers continued to feature far more coverage of those issues. From the week beginning 5 May until the end of January 2004, the *MEN* and the *Mercury* each published an average of eight units per week compared to the weekly papers which *between all four of them* published an average of just one unit every time they went to press.

To some extent, these differences between the evening and weekly papers in terms of the number of overall articles they published, can be accounted for by the simple fact that the evening papers went to press six times as often as their weekly counterparts. But since the evening papers published an average of two articles on the Iraq crisis every time they went to print from the beginning of January 2003 until the end of January 2004, compared to an average of 1.3 articles per print run in the weekly papers during the same period, the differences in the quantity of coverage between the two types of paper requires further explanation.

Evening newspapers, with their higher circulations (see the Appendix) and sub-regional ambitions, tend to regard national politics, and sometimes international politics, as part of their remit in ways that the more localised weekly papers tend not to. Evening papers are also better positioned to deal with breaking and developing news than their weekly counterparts are. And in common with many evening newspapers, the *MEN* and *Leicester Mercury* both featured regular ‘World News’ sections, whereas none of the weekly papers carried any such section. For the most part, these ‘World News’ sections rely upon, and in many cases reproduce, News Agency reports of national and international affairs.

Section of paper

There were also some interesting differences between the papers that cut across the distinction between the evening and weekly papers. Table 9.1 provides details of the number and proportion of articles devoted to the relevant issues to have been published in each section of each newspaper.

Table 9.1 The number and proportion of articles to have been published in
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each section of each newspaper

Newspaper	Front-page news		Inside pages news	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
<i>Manchester Evening News</i>	26	3.3%	392	49.1%
<i>Leicester Mercury</i>	42	5.1%	253	30.5%
<i>Slough Observer</i>	3	3.2%	65	69.1%
<i>Slough Express</i>	3	3.4%	55	62.5%
<i>Bury Free Press</i>	1	1.6%	55	88.7%
<i>Enfield Gazette</i>	2	6.1%	16	48.5%
	Average proportion	4.0%	Average proportion	43.9%
	World View, or Foreign News Section		Overall News	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
<i>Manchester Evening News</i>	202	25.3%	620	77.6%
<i>Leicester Mercury</i>	370	44.6%	665	80.1%
<i>Slough Observer</i>	0	0.0%	68	72.3%
<i>Slough Express</i>	0	0.0%	58	65.9%
<i>Bury Free Press</i>	0	0.0%	56	90.3%
<i>Enfield Gazette</i>	0	0.0%	18	54.5%
	Average proportion	30.0%	Average proportion	77.9%
	Letters		Regular columnists	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
<i>Manchester Evening News</i>	47	5.9%	45	5.6%
<i>Leicester Mercury</i>	122	14.7%	38	4.6%
<i>Slough Observer</i>	22	23.4%	1	1.1%
<i>Slough Express</i>	21	23.9%	4	4.5%
<i>Bury Free Press</i>	4	6.5%	0	0.0%
<i>Enfield Gazette</i>	13	39.4%	0	0.0%
	Average proportion	12.0%	Average proportion	4.6%

Table 9.1 continued:				
	Editorial commentary		Features	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
<i>Manchester Evening News</i>	57	7.1%	0	0.0%
<i>Leicester Mercury</i>	5	0.6%	0	0.0%
<i>Slough Observer</i>	3	3.2%	0	0.0%
<i>Slough Express</i>	4	4.5%	1	1.1%
<i>Bury Free Press</i>	1	1.6%	1	1.6%
<i>Enfield Gazette</i>	1	3.0%	1	3.0%
	Average proportion	3.7%	Average proportion	0.2%
Proportion = Proportion of articles per publication to have featured in each section.				

The table highlights the prevalence of the news sections of each paper. Amalgamating the news reports published on the front-pages, inside pages, and in the world news sections together produces a total of 1485 news reports – 1285 from the evening papers, precisely 200 from the weekly press. This means that over three quarters of all Iraq crisis, controversy and antiwar ‘units’ were news reports. The table also shows that, with the exception of the *MEN*, letters to the editor were the second most prevalent unit of analysis to have addressed the crisis in all of the sample papers, accounting for 12 percent of all published material.

There were evident variations in the extent to which each paper’s coverage and commentary was concentrated in those sections. Over 90 percent of published material in the *Bury Free Press* was news reporting, compared to less than 55 percent in the *Enfield Gazette*. By contrast the *Bury Free Press* published just four letters on the Iraq crisis compared to the *Enfield Gazette*’s fourteen letters. But it is worth keeping in mind that both those papers published the fewest number of units on the relevant subjects meaning that if each paper had published just a few more, or a few less, the proportion of articles in each category of the results would have been sharply different. This is less true of the other papers in the sample.

The other standout difference to emerge from the table is that the *MEN* published far more editorials on the Iraq crisis both in total and in proportion to its overall coverage than any of the other papers. In addition, that same paper also conducted 30 voluntary telephone surveys relating to the Iraq crisis throughout the sample period. Examples of questions here included: **British**

Troops: Are they ill equipped? (22 January 2003, p.18), **Iraq: Should inspectors get more time?** (28 January 2003, p.19) etc. to which readers were invited to register a 'yes' or 'no' answer. There was never any pretence that these surveys held any scientific validity.³

Overall, the sheer volume of news reports makes it possible to conduct a meaningful analysis what the main themes raised in news reports were, who the principle sources those reports referenced were, and how those reports dealt with the controversy surrounding the war. But this kind of quantitative analysis would not be appropriate for the editorials and syndicated columns given how few such articles there were in the sample. Nonetheless to refrain from the quantitative study of the Op-Ed pages is not to make a case for ignoring them.

Part II: Editorials

Editorials accounted for just 71 'units' out of 1906, or 3.7 percent of all published material to have appeared in all six papers in the sample period (see Table 9.1).

It has been said that editorial commentary is free from the burdens of complying with the norms of 'objective' news reporting (see the previous chapter), and hence that 'framing strategies should be most explicit in political editorials' (Eilders and Lüter 2000: 418). With the editorials studied for this research however, such a statement could only be said to be partially true, because whilst the editorials studied broke with the conventions of 'objectivity', they still usually acknowledged the merits of both sides of the argument. So rather than present a series of pro- or anti-war framings of the kind outlined in Chapter 4 there was a marked tendency to raise a series of questions about matters of security, international law, and morality, (but not, very often, opportunities), without fully endorsing the packages from one side or the other. In this way the editorials could be said to have attempted to establish the 'terms of the debate' (Hall et al 1978; Hall 1982). In addition though, the editorials laid out the changing parameters of acceptable dissent as the crisis evolved through its 'pre-invasion' and 'invasion' phases (the two periods when most editorial commentary was concentrated). Thus it shall also be argued that the findings of this research on editorial commentary support the hypothesis, articulated by authors such as Bennett and Paletz (1994) and Wolfsfeld (1997), that the role of the media in an international crisis changes as the crisis rolls through its respective phases.

As previously mentioned the *MEN* published far more editorials on the Iraq crisis than any of the other papers. Not surprisingly then, it was the first to comment on the Iraq crisis in an editorial (10 January 2003). The Manchester paper's commentary may be likened to a choir vocalist singing an introductory solo, later to be joined by a second voice (the *Leicester Mercury*, 7 February 2003) before the rest of the choir joined in to accompany them in March 2003. Throughout this time there was a remarkable degree of uniformity between the papers. To claim that the choir sang in perfect harmony would be to stretch this metaphor a little too far since there were differences of emphasis and in the expression of their arguments, but it was as if the editorials were all singing from the same hymn sheet most of the time.

A common thread running through the *MEN*'s articles in January and February was a preoccupation with what the crisis meant for Tony Blair's premiership (e.g. **Tony right to hang fire** 10 January 2003, p.8; **Blair losing the PR game**, 7 February 2003, p.8; **War may kill Blair's career**, 27 February 2003, p.8). To some extent this personalisation of the issue carried on throughout the year in the *MEN*'s editorial commentary (e.g. **Poor reward for Blair's loyalty**, 17 November 2003, p.8). As the crisis evolved however, the personalisation angle was soon joined by two additional themes in this and other newspapers: a focus on the processes of international diplomacy and the UN weapons inspections. Often the two themes were intertwined in the same editorial, (e.g. **Time is running out for Bush**, *MEN*, 28 January 2003, p.8), which moved from an analysis of Hans Blix's report at the UN Security Council the previous day to a consideration the challenges this posed for President Bush and others wishing to make a case for war. Blix is cast as a WMD agnostic providing 'neither answers – nor the proof demanded by sceptics – that Saddam really does possess weapons of mass destruction', but instead a 'series of unresolved questions.' Approving of their interpretation of Blix's analysis of the evidence, the *MEN* editorial then proceeded to reflect upon the political ramifications of Blix's report and particularly the challenge this presents to President Bush, which is now 'to "show proof to the world"' that Saddam has the aforesaid weaponry. The stance of the editorial is essentially agnostic. The editorial does not make a case against war or challenge the basis of the doctrine of 'pre-emptive warfare' to safeguard 'our' security; it demands to be convinced first of the evidence of Iraqi WMD and then of the necessity of military action. This theme was continued in the *MEN*'s final editorial of January, the self-explanatory **Case for war must be firm** (29 January 2003, p.8).

It may well be that this stance would fail to satisfy the most ardent opponents of the war, but there was still a gentle subversion of the news agenda running through many of these editorials. The **Time is running out for Bush** editorial subverts the *MEN*'s report from the same day **Bush: Time has run out for Iraq** (p.6). Likewise when the then UK foreign secretary asserted a link between Iraq and Al Qaida (**Straw: Iraq and Al Qaida linked**, *MEN*, 5 February 2003, p.6), the *MEN*'s editorial that very same day flatly contradicted the claim: **No link to Al Qaida** (p.8). Indeed that editorial then went on to articulate the suspicion that 'an invasion of Iraq would have much less to do with the war against terror than finishing the business of the 1990-91 Gulf conflict and securing available oil reserves.'

Editorial commentary was at its most resistant to the official line from early February to early March, as titles like **Powell fails to make the case for war** (*Leicester Mercury*, 7 February 2003, p.12), **Frightening rush to war** (*Leicester Mercury*, 6 March 2003, p.12) indicate. See also **Stars won't stop the war** (*MEN*, 21 February 2003, p.8) where the US administration's reasoning that the 'antiwar' stance taken by France, Germany and Russia 'makes war more likely' is denounced as 'a classic piece of doublethink.' In addition to attacking the way the British and American authorities set about making the case for war, many editorials from around this time also identified a series of risks that supported the antiwar side of the argument, whether they were referring to the risk of waging an illegitimate war (**Powell fails to make the case for war**, *Leicester Mercury*, 7 February 2003, p.12), or the risk of increased terrorism: war may be inevitable, but so 'as a consequence is our exposure to terror at home and abroad' (**Stars won't stop the war**, *MEN*, 21 February 2003, p.8). Throughout the pre-invasion phase of the crisis, while there was a tendency to leave the problem definition of Iraq's WMD as an open question, there was a strong resistance to other aspects of the pro-war argumentation coupled with the identification of a series of risks that often supported an antiwar case. At the same time however, there was a consistent tendency across a number of editorials to point the finger of blame at Saddam Hussein for allegedly failing to co-operate with the weapons inspectors, for pursuing his WMD ambitions and for being a menace to his own people and the wider Middle East. It thus becomes almost impossible to tie these editorials down to any one of the packages outlined in Chapter 4. Instead the framing of the Iraq debate that emerges from the editorials when read in the round and without much difference between the papers, articulated aspects of both sides of the debate. In short, there was, in general, a reluctance to fully embrace one side or the other in the debate over military action.

The one other theme that made a prominent appearance during the ‘pre-invasion phase’ of the crisis, was that military action was without *widespread* public support. This was categorised as a theme in four of the twenty-three editorials in the sample and mentioned in passing in a significant number of other editorials.

It has been claimed that editorial commentary will often aspire to speak on behalf of the public (Hall et al 1978: 63). Yet that is only possible in cases when a consensus is thought to exist among the paper’s readership, and that clearly did not apply in the case with Iraq crisis of 2003. It is possible though to adapt Hall et al’s (1978) observation and see the editorials as trying to appeal to as wide a spread of opinion as possible.

As time rolled on into the mid/late March and war came to be seen as near inevitable, the chorus, still more or less singing in harmony, segued into a different song. At this point the papers began to insist that whatever misgivings they and members of the public had about military action, ‘we’ all now have an obligation to ‘support the troops’ (e.g. **Now it’s time to back our troops**, *MEN*, 19 March 2003, p.8; **Supporting our troops is now vital**, *MEN*, 21 March 2003, p.8; **It’s time to support out troops**, *Bury Free Press*, 21 March 2003, p.14; and **Dark days as war replaces negotiations**, *Leicester Mercury*, 20 March 2003, p.12: whatever our ‘misgivings ... this must not stop us giving our troops our unequivocal support’). More detailed reflections on what it actually means to declare support for the armed services have concluded that the intention encompasses a multitude of positions, ranging from commentators who argued that the general public were obliged to support the war effort in order to show their support for the troops, while other commentators argued that the best way to support the troops was not to send them into an unnecessary war (Burridge 2005). But because the editorials failed to spell out precisely what they meant by the term there was a good deal of uncertainty surrounding their meaning.

It is important to be aware that throughout the crisis the editorials laid down a series of markers as to what were and were not acceptable antiwar arguments. The ‘French answer’ to the WMD question of increased and more intensive inspections was praised for its sound ‘logic’ (**Powell fails to make the case for war**, *Leicester Mercury*, 7 February 2003, p.12). By contrast the front page of the *Daily Mirror* from 29 January 2003, **Blood on his hands**, featuring a concocted photograph of Tony Blair with gaudy red blood dripping from his hands, was ‘condemned’ by the *Manchester Evening News* (**Case for war must be firm**, *MEN*, 29 January 2003, p.8). But it was also noticeable that around the mid/late March time a more sharply defined set of proverbial lines

in the sand were being drawn marking out the boundaries between acceptable, questionable, and unacceptable forms of dissent. Doubts about the necessity and consequences of the war were understandable and could even form the basis of legitimate contributions to debates surrounding the crisis; active but lawful opposition to the war (of which a legal demonstration would be one such example) was frowned upon; civil disobedience, and in particular school children taking time off school to protest against the war, was strongly disapproved of in some papers particularly the *Leicester Mercury* (e.g. **Pupil protest raises serious questions**, 10 March 2003, p.12; **Petition not truant protest**, 18 March 2003, p.12). Although other papers, namely the *Enfield Gazette* and the *Slough Express*, were more relaxed about the issue of dissenting school children. This matter will be discussed at greater length in the next chapter. For present purposes it is important to underscore that the editorials were often sceptical about, although not necessarily completely opposed to, military action, while being strongly insistent that the public should 'support the troops' once war came, with divisions between the papers emerging over some of the more radical means of expressing opposition to the war.

Deacon writes, 'no matter how infrequently they appear, editorials provide invaluable insights into both the general politics of a newspaper and its internal political dynamics' (2008: 119). This is not to suggest that a paper's editorials and reporting will *always* pull in the same direction, but it is reasonable to anticipate that the concerns and the priorities – i.e. the issues of newsworthiness – and the rolling markers for dissent that were laid down in the editorials will be loosely reflected in the reporting of most issues surrounding the Iraq crisis. Indeed research has shown that 'comparisons among specific news organisations often find that the overt editorial policies of a newspaper find expression in the selection of events that receive attention in the news sections' (Oliver and Maney 2000: 469). This is why the discussion of the editorial commentary has been a necessary precursor to any examination of news reporting.

Part III: News Reporting

Differences between the papers

The impression given so far throughout this chapter is that such differences as have been identified between the papers were matters of presentation rather than political leaning. The *MEN* might have carried more editorials on the crisis than any of the other titles, and it also conducted a series of voluntary telephone surveys on key issues surrounding the controversy, just as the *Enfield Gazette* carried a greater proportion of letters on the subject than any of the other papers,

but, as has just been argued, the editorial columns of each of the six papers tended to articulate the same concerns and reasoning throughout the crisis – certainly in relation to the controversy over military action, slightly less so with regards to opposition to the war. However, what goes for the editorial commentary doesn't necessarily apply to news reporting. A comparison between the ways in which the news reporters dealt with the Iraq crisis and the controversy it provoked reveals some noteworthy differences between the titles.

Table 9.2: How the different newspapers engaged with the controversy surrounding the Iraq crisis⁴

The number and proportion of reports from each paper to have engaged with the controversy in the following ways.

<u>Evaluative Orientation</u>	<u>Total/ Average</u>	<u>Newspaper</u>					
		<i>Bury Free Press</i>	<i>Enfield Gazette</i>	<i>Leicester Mercury</i>	<i>Manchester Evening News</i>	<i>Slough Express</i>	<i>Slough Observer</i>
Report or actors in it mainly or solely make case in favour of military action - All Reports	145 9.7%	5 8.9%	1 5.6%	100 14.9%	34 5.5%	2 3.4%	3 4.4%
Report or actors in it mainly or solely make a case against military action - All Reports	177 12.0%	11 19.6%	10 55.6%	61 9.3%	55 8.9%	23 39.7%	17 25.0%
Mixed implications, or the report features both sides of the controversy - All Reports	191 12.9%	4 7.1%	6 33.3%	56 8.4%	112 18.1%	6 10.3%	7 10.3%
Descriptive acknowledgement of the controversy, but without entering into it - All Reports	79 5.3%	2 3.6%	1 5.6%	19 2.9%	53 8.5%	2 3.4%	2 2.9%
No mention of the controversy surrounding the war - All Reports	893 60.1%	34 60.7%	0 0.0%	429 64.5%	366 59.0%	25 43.1%	39 57.4%

While it may seem as though these five separate Evaluative Orientations represent self-evidently different approaches to handling the controversy surrounding the Iraq crisis, it is worth underscoring that these categorizations refer only to the manifest orientations of the individual news reports. Subtle nuances hinting at a pro- or an antiwar stance were variously coded as 'mixed', 'descriptive', or as making 'no mention of the controversy' depending on their textual

features, rather than as being ‘in favour of’ or ‘against’ military action. Moreover, to categorize a report as ‘in favour of military action’, or as ‘against’ it, or as ‘mixed’ or ‘descriptive’ tells us nothing about the frames adopted and the reasoning given (if any) to justify any particular stance. Such textual features will be explored later on in this and the next chapter.

Table 9.2 shows that in four of the six publications the majority of news reports made no mention of the controversy surrounding the crisis. The *Slough Express* produced the greatest number of antiwar reports, and that over 40 percent of its reports avoided any mention of the controversy. So the only paper to seriously buck the trend here was the *Enfield Gazette* – the paper that published the fewest number of reports on the Iraq crisis.

The second column from the left shows that overall, provincial press news reporting was relatively balanced between ‘pro-war’ and ‘antiwar’ orientated reports, albeit with a slight tilt towards an antiwar direction. Yet with the exception of the *Leicester Mercury*, the columns for all the other papers suggest a strong tendency to lean in an antiwar direction. Accounting for this apparent discrepancy is not difficult. The *Leicester Mercury* published more than three times as many news reports as all the weekly newspapers put together (see Table 9.1), and so the net result is that although news reporting overall still leant in an antiwar direction, it only did so to a modest degree. Other aspects of the data however, are less easy to explain. To do so it is imperative to analyse and understand the interactions between reporters and sources because, as has been argued throughout this thesis, that relationship can have decisive impact on the outcome of media content such is the power of certain sources including potentially even non-official news sources like the antiwar movement. The fact that the reporting, in the aggregate, leant even slightly in an antiwar direction; the variations in the degree to which most of the papers could be said to have adopted an antiwar stance (in most cases); as well as the discrepancy between the variety of treatment between the papers as suggested in Table 9.2 and the relatively high degree of consensus to be found in the editorials, are all matters that can only be fully addressed (in Chapter 11) once the relations between (antiwar) sources and the media workers have been explored. Nor would it be appropriate to assume that each publication’s treatment of the antiwar movement and the level of input each title would allow from antiwar activists was consistent throughout the duration of the crisis. As has already been hinted at in relation to the discussion of the editorials and, as shall be explored in greater depth in the next chapter, the acceptability of protest against military action not only varied from paper to paper, but was also contingent upon the proximity of

military action, the kinds of oppositional activities they engaged in, and, arguably, the nature of the groups opposed organising any protests.

Differences across time

The other axis along which important differences emerged was temporal. The extent to which the publications engaged with the controversy surrounding the war and the ways in which they did so, fluctuated as the crisis rolled through its various phases. Table 9.3 presents a longitudinal overview of this aspect of the data.

Table 9.3 How news reports engaged with and handled the controversy surrounding the war:

	Number and Calculated proportion of reports overall	Number and Proportion of reports during the pre-invasion phase of the crisis (01/01/03 - 19/03/03)	Number and Proportion of reports during the invasion phase of the crisis (20/03/03 - 02/05/03)	Number and Proportion of reports during the post-invasion phase of the crisis (01/05/03 - 31/01/04)
Report or actors in it mainly or solely make a case in favour of military action	145 9.7%	68 19.7%	41 7.0%	36 6.5%
Report or actors in it mainly or solely make a case against military action	177 12.0%	73 21.1%	43 7.4%	61 11.0%
Mixed implications, or the report features both sides of the controversy	191 12.9%	93 26.9%	48 8.2%	50 9.0%
Descriptive account or acknowledgement of the controversy, but without entering into it	79 5.3%	29 8.4%	29 5.0%	21 3.8%
No mention of the controversy surrounding the war	893 60.1%	83 24.0%	422 72.4%	388 69.8%

The table highlights the disengagement from the controversy surrounding the crisis once military action was underway. In the ‘pre-invasion phase’ more than two-thirds of reports addressed the debate in one way or another – either by making a case for or against it, or by presenting both sides of the argument, with a further 8.4 percent acknowledging the controversy. In proportional

terms however, once the invasion started all of these interventions in the debate were squeezed, as around 70 percent of news reports after 20 March 2003 made no mention of the controversy – a pattern that was largely continued into the ‘post-conflict phase’ of the crisis. Comparative analysis between publications found that this pattern of relative disengagement from the controversy was common to four of the six papers in the sample; the exceptions being the *Bury Free Press* and the *Enfield Gazette*. (In the case of the *Bury Free Press* the number of reports in making no mention of the war decreased slightly from 59 percent prior to the invasion to 54 percent during it. The *Enfield Gazette* was unusual for the absence of any reports that made no mention of the controversy, but it did carry just 18 reports altogether).

With the editorials, we have already seen that the commentary underwent a fairly clear-cut transformation from a relatively open engagement with the matters of controversy surrounding the crisis during the ‘pre-invasion phase’, to a situation where they closed down the scope of debate as the ‘invasion phase’ of the crisis kicked in. A finding, that I argued, supported a hypothesis laid out by Bennett and Paletz (1994) and Wolfsfeld (1997) in relation to the Gulf crisis of 1990 to ‘91. The findings presented in Table 9.3 however, can only support a qualified affirmation of Bennett and Paletz’s and Wolfsfeld’s hypothesis, because although the table shows there was an evident shift in the reporting away from an engagement with the controversies of the crisis once military action began, that change is best conceptualised as a change in tendency rather than a sudden and complete transformation, which is what the writings of Bennett and Paletz (1994) and Wolfsfeld (1997) would suggest. But a more detailed examination of the content of the reporting is needed before we can conclusively state this. So in order to explore this matter, and also in order to explore some of the evident differences in news reporting between the papers, it is necessary to investigate which themes were raised the most frequently in the reporting and also which sources were referenced most often in the news reports.

‘The range of opinion permitted expression’: Sources used in the news reports of the provincial newspapers

For the purposes of analysis it was possible to group the various contributors to the news reports, including those printed on the front pages and ‘World News’ sections, into 25 different categories. These categories are explained in Appendix 1. Based on the proportion of articles to have used these different sources in their reports, both in total and in the evening and weekly papers, Table 9.4 shows which sources were used the most.

Table 9.4: The number and proportion of reports to have evidently used the following sources, both in total and in the Evening and Weekly papers

		<u>All papers</u>	-
			-
			-
			-
		<i>Total</i>	Total
	Overall	<i>number of</i>	percent of
	rank	<i>articles</i>	articles
	order of	<i>referencing</i>	referencing
Sources referred to in news reports	sources	<i>said sources</i>	said sources
No Actors	/	319	21.3%
Serving British Military [Military]	1	253	16.9%
Senior members of UK government	2	152	10.1%
Washington and CIA	3	113	7.5%
Serving American Military [Military]	4	91	6.1%
The Media	5	73	4.9%
UN	6	70	4.7%
Pressure groups and charities	7	64	4.3%
Ordinary people	8	52	3.5%
France, Germany, Russia	9	51	3.4%
Iraqi government and Police	10	50	3.3%
Local Antiwar groups [Antiwar]	11	46	3.1%
Local business	=12	35	2.3%
Military Families	=12	35	2.3%
Local Councillors	14	32	2.1%
Iraqi refugees living in the UK	15	31	2.1%
Academic Writer, think tank	16	30	2.0%
Local MPs	=17	28	1.9%
Religious representatives	=17	28	1.9%
Protesters [Antiwar]	19	25	1.7%
STWC [Antiwar]	20	22	1.5%
The (British) Police	21	21	1.4%
National Antiwar others [Antiwar]	22	15	1.0%
Arab nation other than Iraq	23	11	0.7%
Ordinary Iraqis	24	10	0.7%
Former military	25	7	0.5%

Table 9.4 continued:

Sources referred to in news reports	Rank order of said sources in Evening papers	<u>Evening papers</u>	
		<i>Number of articles referencing said sources in Evening papers</i>	Percent of articles referencing said sources in Evening papers
No Actors	/	283	22.0%
Serving British Military [Military]	1	201	15.6%
Senior members of UK government	2	151	11.7%
Washington and CIA	3	113	8.8%
Serving American Military [Military]	4	90	7.0%
The Media	=5	70	5.4%
UN	=5	70	5.4%
Pressure groups and charities	7	61	4.7%
Ordinary people	12	24	1.9%
France, Germany, Russia	=8	50	3.9%
Iraqi government and Police	=8	50	3.9%
Local Antiwar groups [Antiwar]	=17	16	1.2%
Local business	=14	21	1.6%
Military Families	=14	21	1.6%
Local Councillors	20	14	1.1%
Iraqi refugees living in the UK	10	31	2.4%
Academic Writer, think tank	11	30	2.3%
Local MPs	=19	15	1.2%
Religious representatives	=17	16	1.2%
Protesters [Antiwar]	15	19	1.5%
STWC [Antiwar]	21	13	1.0%
The (British) Police	=19	15	1.2%
National Antiwar others [Antiwar]	=24	3	0.2%
Arab nation other than Iraq	22	11	0.9%
Ordinary Iraqis	23	10	0.8%
Former military	=24	3	0.2%

Table 9.4 continued:				
		<u>Weekly papers</u>		
		<i>Rank order</i>	<i>Number of</i>	Percent of
		<i>of said</i>	<i>articles</i>	articles
		<i>sources in</i>	<i>referencing</i>	referencing
		<i>Weekly</i>	<i>said sources</i>	said sources
		<i>papers</i>	<i>in Weekly</i>	in Weekly
Sources referred to in news reports			<i>papers</i>	papers
No Actors	/		36	17.0%
Serving British Military [Military]	1		52	24.5%
Senior members of UK government	=16		1	0.5%
Washington and CIA	/		0	0.0%
Serving American Military [Military]	=16		1	0.5%
The Media	=14		3	1.4%
UN	/		0	0.0%
Pressure groups and charities	=14		3	1.4%
Ordinary people	3		28	13.2%
France, Germany, Russia	=16		1	0.5%
Iraqi government and Police	/		0	0.0%
Local Antiwar groups [Antiwar]	2		30	14.2%
Local business	=5		14	6.6%
Military Families	=5		14	6.6%
Local Councillors	4		18	8.5%
Iraqi refugees living in the UK	/		0	0.0%
Academic Writer, think tank	/		0	0.0%
Local MPs	7		13	6.1%
Religious representatives	=8		12	5.7%
Protesters [Antiwar]	=11		6	2.8%
STWC [Antiwar]	10		9	4.2%
The (British) Police	=11		6	2.8%
National Antiwar others [Antiwar]	=8		12	5.7%
Arab nation other than Iraq	/		0	0.0%
Ordinary Iraqis	/		0	0.0%
Former military	13		4	1.9%

The latter stages of the chapter (and also the next chapter) will examine what some of these sources actually said in news reports, but in the meantime there are still several aspects of this table that are worthy of note.

First of all, the rank order of the sources (and so of course through that the percentages of reports using those sources) in the evening papers closely resembles the overall order (and percentages) of sources, whereas the rank order of the sources in the weekly papers has far less in common with the overall order (and percentages). This is because there were far more reports published in the evening papers compared to the weeklies (1285 units compared to 200).

Second, and following on from the first point, it is evident that some sources were cited much more frequently in one sector than the other. For instance, Table 9.3 shows that the evening papers were far more reliant on British government sources than the weekly papers, whereas the weekly papers never once referred to statements by senior figures in Washington or the CIA. Nor did any of the weekly papers sampled ever reference the viewpoints of the UN, Iraqi or any other Arabic nations, Iraqi refugees, Iraqi public opinion, or (UK based) academics, writers or think tanks. By contrast though, the categories of ordinary people and locally based antiwar groups featured far more prominently in the weekly papers than they did in the evening papers. This matter resurfaces in the next chapter and is discussed in more detail in the one after that.

Third, a case can be made for saying that I could have amalgamated some of these source categories together to create still larger categories. ‘Serving British Military’ and ‘Serving American Military’ can be fused together into one overarching ‘Serving Military’ category. This category would have featured in 21.7 percent of reports overall; 21.3 percent in the evening papers and 24.3 percent in the weeklies. It would have also been possible to create an even more inclusive ‘Coalition’ category encompassing ‘serving British military’, ‘senior members of the UK government’, ‘Washington and CIA’ and ‘serving American military’ sources. A ‘Coalition’ category would have featured in 35.7 percent of articles overall: 37.5 percent in the Evening papers and 24.8 percent in the weekly press. Combining the ‘STWC’, ‘Local Antiwar Groups,’ ‘National Antiwar others’, and ‘Protesters’ together to establish one larger ‘antiwar’ category would have changed the results more dramatically.⁵ This all encompassing antiwar category appeared in 6.7 percent of news reports overall, allowing it to claim fourth place in the rankings. But the disparity between the evening and weekly papers in terms of the prominence of the antiwar movement in their pages is, if anything, thrown into sharper relief by these new criteria. ‘Antiwar’ sources could be found in just 3.6 percent of reports in the evening papers to make it the sixth most frequently cited source there. Whereas in the weekly press ‘antiwar’ sources would, by these criteria, emerge as the highest-ranking category making an appearance in precisely 25 percent of weekly press coverage.⁶

Fourth, even though most of the sources on the list may be classifiable as ‘non-official’ sources, ‘official’ sources, which might otherwise be recognisable as the ‘coalition’ category, occupy the top four places on the list. On the one hand this may be seen as affirming notions that official sources dominate the news agenda. On the other hand, as we have just seen, these sources were only referenced in 35.7 percent of all reports – a modest figure that surely challenges ideas about official dominance.⁷

Finally, a series of tentative comparisons can be made between these results and those of other researchers who investigated the reporting of the Iraq crisis. The work of Goddard et al (2008) makes for the most appropriate point of comparison since they too sought to identify and measure the presence of the different actors in news reports, although their methodology and coding criteria were not identical to mine, which is why these comparisons must be treated tentatively. The timeline of their research is also different running from 21 March 2003 to 15 April 2003. For the purposes of my comments in this paragraph then, my analysis has been restricted to reports that appeared between those dates. Goddard et al (2008: 17-18) found that ‘political and/or military actors from the coalition were present in the vast majority of [Iraq War related news] stories’ in the national newspapers with little variation between them. To some extent my own research mirrors these findings in that the four ‘coalition’ categories (serving British military, senior members of the UK government, Washington and CIA, and serving American military) were also the four most frequently referred to sources in the provincial press overall (see Table 9.4) and also between 21 March and 15 April. But there is an important difference. In the national press coverage, according to Goddard et al’s (2008) research, ‘coalition’ sources featured in 87.3 percent of news reports between 21 March and 15 April, which is a far higher proportion of coverage than in the provincial press where 34.9 percent of reports referred to claims by those sources. An even greater discrepancy between national and provincial press coverage concerns the prevalence of the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein. Goddard et al (2008: 18) found that the Iraqi regime was referenced in 56.3 percent of national press coverage making it the second most regularly sourced actor according to their research. (Once again there was little difference between the papers in this regard). This is markedly different from the 2.2 percent of articles from the local press to reference the views and claims of the Iraqi regime. The difference in the prominence of Iraqi civilians was even greater still. Iraqi civilians were referenced in approximately 34 percent⁸ of national press coverage. Yet no mention of their viewpoints can be found in the sample of articles that formed the basis of my research between 21 March and 15

April. Differences of this kind underscore the importance of conducting separate research into provincial press coverage, because they show that we cannot assume that the findings from national press coverage will necessarily apply to provincial press coverage of the same issues and vice versa.

‘The choice of topics’: Themes raised in the coverage

Table 9.5 shows, in rank order, the salience of the twenty-one most commonly recurring themes raised in the news reports. Explanations for these source categories can be found in Appendix 1.

<u>Table 9.5: The number and proportion of reports to have evidently raised the following themes, both in total and in the Evening and Weekly papers</u>			
Themes addressed in news reports	Overall rank order of themes	<u>All papers</u>	
		<i>Total number of articles addressing said themes</i>	Total percent of articles addressing said themes
Military affairs	1	638	42.6%
Post Conflict	2	266	17.8%
UN	3	163	10.9%
The Antiwar movement	4	152	10.1%
Bereavement	5	144	9.6%
WMD	6	115	7.7%
Iraq under Saddam	7	112	7.5%
Morality	8	86	5.7%
Iraq's future	9	70	4.7%
Response of Iraqi people	10	67	4.5%
US/UK motives and intentions	= 11	54	3.6%
Terrorism	= 11	54	3.6%
Support the troops	13	52	3.5%
Deaths in Iraq	14	50	3.3%
UK public opinion	15	48	3.2%
Claims and predictions	16	45	3.0%
David Kelly/Hutton	17	42	2.8%
Previous Wars	18	35	2.4%
The Media	19	24	1.6%
Legality	= 20	16	1.1%
Consequences for peace...	= 20	16	1.1%

Table 9.5 continued:

Themes addressed in news reports	Rank order of said themes in Evening papers	<u>Evening papers</u>	
		<i>Number of articles addressing said themes in Evening papers</i>	Percent of articles addressing said themes in Evening papers
Military affairs	1	572	44.5%
Post Conflict	2	240	18.7%
UN	3	143	11.1%
The Antiwar movement	6	97	7.5%
Bereavement	4	121	9.4%
WMD	5	101	7.9%
Iraq under Saddam	7	92	7.2%
Morality	10	52	4.0%
Iraq's future	9	60	4.7%
Response of Iraqi people	8	61	4.7%
US/UK motives and intentions	13	44	3.4%
Terrorism	11	51	4.0%
Support the troops	18	30	2.3%
Deaths in Iraq	12	50	3.9%
UK public opinion	16	38	3.0%
Claims and predictions	= 14	41	3.2%
David Kelly/Hutton	= 14	41	3.2%
Previous Wars	17	32	2.5%
The Media	19	21	1.6%
Legality	21	10	0.8%
Consequences for peace...	20	13	1.0%

Table 9.5 continued:			
Themes addressed in news reports	Rank order of said sources in Weekly papers	<u>Weekly papers</u>	
		<i>Number of articles addressing said themes in Weekly papers</i>	Percent of articles addressing said themes in Weekly papers
Military affairs	1	66	31.1%
Post Conflict	4	26	12.3%
UN	= 7	20	9.4%
The Antiwar movement	2	55	25.9%
Bereavement	5	23	10.8%
WMD	9	14	6.6%
Iraq under Saddam	= 7	20	9.4%
Morality	3	34	16.0%
Iraq's future	= 10	10	4.7%
Response of Iraqi people	= 13	6	2.8%
US/UK motives and intentions	= 10	10	4.7%
Terrorism	= 16	3	1.4%
Support the troops	6	22	10.4%
Deaths in Iraq	/	/	/
UK public opinion	= 10	10	4.7%
Claims and predictions	15	4	1.9%
David Kelly/Hutton	20	1	0.5%
Previous Wars	= 16	3	1.4%
The Media	= 16	3	1.4%
Legality	= 13	6	2.8%
Consequences for peace...	= 16	3	1.4%

Several features of this table are worth commenting on.

First, as with the presentation of the different sources in the previous table, there are evident differences between the evening and the weekly papers in terms of the themes they addressed in their reports. For instance, the various issues that were classified as being matters of 'military affairs' were, by some distance, the most prominent themes raised in evening papers featuring in more than 44 percent of all reports. By contrast the same thematic category featured in just over 31 percent of articles in the weekly press. On the other hand reports dealing with the 'antiwar movement', whether in a descriptive or evaluative manner, were addressed in more than a quarter

of reports in the weekly papers compared to just over 10 percent of reports in their evening counterparts. The table also shows that the reporting of Iraqi deaths was only ever reported in the evening papers.

Second, when we observe the differences between evening and weekly press in the two tables, certain patterns of association emerge. Just as the weekly press tended to give more emphasis than the evening papers to the subject of the antiwar movement in their news reports (see Table 9.5), so too we find that the weekly press were far more likely to quote the views of antiwar sources than the evening papers were (see Table 9.4). By contrast the evening papers were far more likely to source military spokespersons in their stories and they also ran more reports themed around military affairs. As might be expected there were some stories quoting military sources that made no reference to military affairs and vice versa, but such examples were rare. To a lesser extent the same principle applied in the case of the antiwar sources and antiwar themed articles.

Third, Tables 9.4 and 9.5 reveal a stronger tendency to localise the issues in the pages of the weekly press compared to their evening counterparts. Local antiwar groups, ordinary (local) people, local councillors, and local business people all featured far more prominently in the weekly papers than they did in the evening papers. By contrast, the weekly press rarely, if ever, sourced 'international' actors that fell under the 'Washington', 'UN' or 'American military' categories who featured so prominently in the evening papers (see Table 9.4). Similarly when it came to the reporting of 'Military Affairs' in the weekly press, the reports were near exclusively based upon interviews with local military spokespersons or their families talking about their preparations for war, how they dealt with the stresses and emotional traumas that combat service brings for them and their families, and how they felt upon returning from duty. In the evening papers by way of contrast, 'Military Affairs' reporting contained accounts from the theatre of combat detailing the progress and obstacles faced by the armed forces in addition to the more homely focus of weekly press. In other words the reporting of 'Military Affairs' was more local in its orientation in the weekly press than the two evening papers.

Fourth, many important issues were either relatively or completely absent from the list in Table 9.5. Questions about the legality of the invasion of Iraq were rarely ever raised to any significant degree.⁹ The same is true of a whole range of issues including the war's (potentially adverse) impact on race relations in the UK, and past arms sales to Saddam's regime by Britain, America

and other Western powers.¹⁰ Other issues were ignored entirely in the sample. Questions about the impact of the war on refugees and whether the invasion would increase or decrease their numbers were never once addressed in any of the articles in the coded sample. Likewise, questions about Guantanamo Bay, and the nature of Neo-Conservatism were also entirely absent. And for all the claims made about Iraq's alleged WMD stockpiles the matter of whether or not war would be an effective means of countering the global proliferation of such weapons never once arose in any of the reports sampled. It is important to stress therefore, that local press reporting can only be said to have had a limited interpretative engagement with the issues bound up in the controversy over the war.

The final notable feature of the way these thematic categories is that in no case did the rise and then fall of any of them mirror the overall pattern of distribution shown in Figure 9.1. Rather it was most common to find a handful of them sharing the limelight during any one week. This is not surprising given that the crisis itself went through a number of phases with certain issues rising to the top of the political agenda and then fading from view.

- During the 'pre-invasion phase' of the crisis (1 Jan '03 to 19 March '03) reporting was dominated by the 'International Politics', 'Antiwar Movement', 'Morality', 'UK Public Opinion' categories, and to a lesser extent by the 'US/UK motives and intentions' and 'WMD' categories.
- Reports focusing on 'Iraq's future', calls to 'Support the troops', and 'the response of the Iraqi people' made their greatest number of appearances during the 'invasion phase' (20 March '03 to 1 May '03).
- While during the 'post-invasion phase' (2 May 2003 to 31 Jan 2004) reports addressed to issues bound up in the 'Post Conflict', and 'Bereavement' made their greatest number of appearances, as, to a lesser extent, did reports that focused on 'Terrorism', 'Deaths in Iraq', 'Claims and predictions', and the 'David Kelly/Hutton' affair.
- The 'Military Affairs' category was at the forefront of reporting throughout the entire thirteen months of the sample, but was particularly prominent during the 'invasion' phase.
- Questions about the legal status of the war also surfaced more or less evenly across all phases, although of course featured far less often (see Table 9.3).

Finally, each of the thematic categories had the *potential* for controversy in that supporters and opponents of military action could have seized on any one of them to make their respective arguments over military action. Yet, as has already been shown in Tables 9.2 and 9.3, fewer than half of all reports even acknowledged the controversy surrounding the war. This next section singles out four different themes that were reported that often *did* engage with the controversy over the war, and one that tended not to. The four ‘controversial’ issues fall under the headings of ‘WMD’, ‘Legality’, ‘UK public opinion’, and the ‘reaction of Iraqi people’, while the one ‘uncontroversial’ theme is that of ‘Military affairs’. The four ‘controversial’ issues are notable because of the way that each of them articulated certain assumptions about the crisis – sometimes in ways that supported arguments in favour of military action, and sometimes in ways that went against those arguments. The reporting of ‘Military Affairs’ by way of contrast, tended to be marked by an *apparent* disengagement from the debates surrounding the war.

The assumptions underpinning reporting:

The case of Iraq’s alleged Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

The accusation that Iraq was developing and retaining Weapons of Mass Destruction, or more specifically Chemical and Biological weaponry, was absolutely central to the ‘Official’ and ‘Neo-Conservative’ arguments for war – more so than arguments about human rights or Iraq having links to Al-Qaeda (see Chapter 4). Perhaps it is no surprise then that the issue should have featured so prominently as a ‘thematic category’ in the news reporting (see Table 9.5).

Leaving aside descriptive statements about Weapons of Mass Destruction, prior to the outbreak of the war the overwhelmingly dominant assumption, by a factor of over 20:1, was that Iraq possessed such weaponry. Likewise, in the immediate aftermath of the conflict, government ministers and other supporters of the war still felt confident in asserting the ‘official’ line. It was only with the passing of time and the failure to find any WMD that doubts about the issue, and assertions that Iraq had no WMD, came to feature far more prominently in the reporting.

Table 9.6 Press treatment of the WMD issue throughout the three phases of the crisis: The number of reports in which the following claims and assumptions prevailed			
	<u>Phase</u>		
	<u>'Pre-War'</u>	<u>'Wartime'</u>	<u>'Post-War'</u>
That Iraq has WMD	43	4	21
Uncertainty or mixed implications	0	0	15
That Iraq did NOT have WMD	2	1	16
Descriptive account of WMD issue	10	0	3

The growing uncertainty about this aspect of the case for war was also evident from the changes in editorial commentary on the issue. Prior to the outbreak of war, the *MEN*, which was always sceptical about the need for war in its editorials, nonetheless proceeded on the assumption that Iraq was harbouring WMD, e.g. **Moment of truth: Should we go to war now?** (*MEN*, 17 March 2003, p.16). Within six weeks of the end of the conflict however, confident assertions about the matter had been replaced with doubts, e.g. **Blair must set up Iraq inquiry** (*MEN*, 3 June 2003, p.8). This was however, the only editorial from any of the sample papers to either revisit the WMD question or to call for an inquiry into the war, so it would not be appropriate to claim that this editorial represented a wider re-engagement with the controversy over the war after it began.

The response of the Iraqi people

Local press reporting of the anticipated or observed response of the Iraqi people to the invasion of their country was strongly influenced by the sources quoted. Opponents of the war were adamant that the Iraqi people did not welcome the invasion of their country and often strongly attacked any suggestion to the contrary, e.g. “The idea that Iraqis were just waiting for this to happen is one of the most brazen, racist fantasies I have ever heard”, declared antiwar MP George Galloway (**Defiant MP crusades for peace**, *Slough Express*, 17 July 2003, p.4). While the suggestion that Iraqis did welcome the invasion was often more subtly phrased and were also often made by military sources, e.g. “The Marsh Arabs [of southern Iraq] are extremely welcoming. The commanding officer was welcomed into their homes and presented with tea, bread and vegetables”, Major Neil Sexton (**Troops ‘busy’ in south of Iraq**, *Bury Free Press*, 11

April 2003, p.11). Very few reports on this question contained statements that could be interpreted as 'mixed' or 'descriptive.' The impression given is that news workers themselves were reluctant to proclaim a verdict on this matter, preferring instead to allow others to have their say.

The state of UK public opinion

Out of the 48 news reports calculated to have addressed the matter of public opinion 31 held that public opinion was against the war compared to just two in which the claim was that public opinion was in favour of military action. Of the remainder, ten would best be described as 'descriptive' accounts of public opinion, and the remaining three classified as having reported a 'mixed' (i.e. divided) state of public opinion. Yet a closer reading of opinion poll data at the time would suggest a more complex and qualified set of attitudes among the British public towards the war (Sancho and Glover 2003; Lewis 2004). Finally, a quarter of reports to have made statements about public opinion were reports that revolved around the activities of the antiwar movement who invariably claimed that public opinion was on their side. Once again the sources referenced or quoted by journalists had a major bearing on the statements made in those reports.

The legal status of the war

Generalisations about the treatment of this matter ought to be regarded with a measure of caution in view of the fact that so few reports addressed the issue at any length (see Table 9.4). But when assertions about the legal status of the war made their way into press reports all sources referenced asserted that the war was illegal with the sole exception of an MP who held otherwise. In contrast to the press treatment of the 'response of the Iraqi people' and 'the state of UK public opinion', here there seemed to be no room for ambiguity or uncertainty: the war was held to be either legal or illegal. No editorials addressed this issue to any significant degree.

In summary

This discussion of the ways that these four issues – 'WMD', 'Legality', 'UK public opinion', and the 'reaction of Iraqi people' – were addressed in the news reports shows that although many of the assumptions underpinning these reports were indeed highly questionable, the politics of these assumptions did not always run in the direction that the determinist models of state-media relations would predict. It is true that in reports that focused on the question of Iraq's putative WMD stockpiles the dominant assumption was that Iraq had such weaponry and this, of course, was a staple of pro-war reasoning, and this assumption went mostly unchallenged during the 'pre-

invasion' phase of the crisis, which was when the debate mattered the most. But whenever the reports indulged in speculation about the 'response of the Iraqi people' doubts abounded, and whenever the reports raised the matter of either the legal status of the war or UK public opinion the most prevalent assumptions went against the grain of arguments for military action. So sometimes the assumptions pervading the reports on these matters tacitly or otherwise supported a case for war, sometimes the prevailing assumptions went against that case, and sometimes uncertainties reigned in local press reporting of these matters.

Military Affairs: the apparent avoidance of controversy

In this section I wish to argue that although there was an apparent tendency in the reporting of military affairs to avoid any engagement with the controversy surrounding the war, the reporting of military affairs was still rich in its implications for the way it built upon certain assumptions about the conflict and the military that, by implication, went some way towards establishing the boundaries between the spheres of 'legitimate controversy' and 'deviance' (Hallin 1986).¹¹

During the 'invasion phase' of the crisis, information about military affairs and the latest developments and obstacles on the battlefield, tended to come from two main sources: the Press Association, which the evening papers in particular were reliant on, and military spokespersons based back at the barracks. But in either case military sources were ultimately the originators of the information. The reliance on military affairs was also true of the two less common sources of information about military affairs: occasionally weekly papers reproduced reports in the national media (e.g. the *Slough Observer* reproduced articles from reports in *The Guardian*), and, in the case of the *MEN*, a reporter of theirs who was embedded with journalists out in Iraq.¹²

Anyone who imagines that the heavy presence of 'serving military' sources in the sample would translate into a series of overtly pro-war statements is very far wide of the mark. Out of the 138 times that military officers, from across a wide spread of rankings, were quoted only eight were recorded as expressing a willingness to go to war and none made any comments that could have interpreted as explicitly making a case for military action. Moreover, British and American military officers directly avoided confronting any aspect of the political controversy surrounding the decision to go to war, so that their views on the necessity and the legal status of military action, the weapons inspections process, arguments among parliamentarians and between nations, and the level of popular opposition to the war, could never be discerned from the pages of the provincial press. Occasionally there would be an acknowledgement that the war was

controversial, but that was never accompanied by any kind of detailed reflection on the reasons why. Most of the time though, military personnel often spoke about a wide spread of seemingly apolitical issues, including such matters as the emotional difficulties they faced as they set off for the Gulf and left their families behind, e.g. **Leaving loved ones ... heading for war**, (*Bury Free Press*, 21 February 2003, p.9). With such examples, it is as if the reports were intended to depoliticise the issue of the Iraq crisis.

The only qualifying exception to this tendency came when military personnel emphasised the humanitarian nature of the reconstruction-based work they were either doing or preparing for in a post-Saddam Iraq. Examples here include 'British forces have said taking Iraq's southern city of Basra has now become a military objective in order to get humanitarian aid to civilians there' (**Now vital that we capture Basra, say top brass**, *MEN*, 25 March 2003, p.4); and the proclamation that although the allies had many strategic reasons for capturing 'Saddam Hussein International Airport' on the outskirts of Baghdad, the "most important" of these was that "we secured it for the future of Iraq" (US Brigadier General Vincent Brookes, **Troops storm Saddam Airport**, *Leicester Mercury*, 4 April 2003, p.8). In a comparable way, and as we have already seen in the section 'the response of the Iraqi people', military sources also often declared that they were welcomed by the Iraqis. Once again, this serves to underscore the idea of a benevolent and beneficial mission that was a staple argument of all the pro-war schools of thought.

A far more common tendency with 'military affairs' stories was an emphasis on the degree and effectiveness of the training they had undergone in preparation for their departure. Examples here include: "The men have been well trained and well equipped and are ready for war," Squadron Leader Rob Williams, and "This is what our job is. This is what we train for day in, day out – now it's just a matter of folks doing their jobs," Staff Sergeant Chuck Marsh, both from **'We will do what we have to do'** (*Bury Free Press*, 21 March 2003, p.5); as well as "We haven't done all this training for nothing," Lance Corporal Glyn Brooker, **Reservists called up** (*Leicester Mercury*, 14 February 2003, p.5). The recurrence of the 'this is what we've trained for' line, or some such variation on it in papers from different parts of the country, invites speculation as to whether the line was specially prepared for soldiers for occasions when they would be talking to the press by the Public Relations Officers at the Ministry of Defence, but the hypothesis cannot be proven here. More importantly though, for all that the line is seemingly without political content, it is in fact rich in its political implications. To claim that the soldiers are 'well trained', 'well equipped', and 'ready for war' sounds reassuring. To state that going to war is not only part

of their job but also the culmination of their training makes military action seem as though it is part of the natural order of things. It is almost as if war validates their training.

If comments by full time and Territorial Army soldiers had the effect of masking the political controversy surrounding the conflict, the vast majority of the headlines of ‘military affairs’ news reports, particularly those relating to developments on the battlefield, shielded readers from the full horrors of warfare. Critical Discourse Analysis research by Richardson (2007) has drawn attention to the ways in which mainstream national newspaper headlines from the invasion obscured the agency of coalition forces fighting in Iraq so as to disguise the fact that those forces were killing people. **Missiles hit Red Crescent maternity hospital** (*Independent*, 3 April 2003), **Maternity Unit bomb kills three** (*Daily Mirror*, 3 April 2003), **Rocket kills teenager in Iran** (*Financial Times*, 9 April 2003), are all examples from Richardson’s work (Ibid.: 201). He writes, ‘In each of these headlines, a metonym is used to shield ‘our’ agency: in each, the user of the object is replaced by the object itself’ (Ibid.: 201). My own research uncovered a number of instances of this same tendency in the headlines from the ‘military affairs’ reports in the provincial press:

- **Missiles hit Iran** (*Leicester Mercury* 22 March 2003, p.5)
- **Market deaths to dash hopes for a ‘clean’ war** (*Leicester Mercury* 26 March 2003, p.5)

More common though, was a tendency to disguise the brutality of war through the employment of various euphemisms. Examples here include:

- **Now vital that we capture Basra say top brass** (*MEN* 25 March 2003, p.4)
- **Allies smash Iraqi armour** (*Leicester Mercury* 27 March 2003, p.8)
- **Allies go in** (*MEN* 5 April 2003, p.1)
- **US troops repel Iraqi attack** (*Leicester Mercury* 8 April 2003, p.4)
- **Troops ‘busy’ in south of Iraq** (*Bury Free Press* 11 April 2003, p.11)

In each of these headlines, and many others like them, ‘allied’ forces either ‘capture’ cities, ‘smash Iraqi armour’, ‘go in’, ‘repel’ attacks, or are simply ‘busy’ in Iraq. Numerous other euphemisms were evident from the sample – all of which served to disguise bloodshed by coalition hands in wartime. Admittedly a handful of exceptions could be found, e.g. **US Marines**

kill seven Iraqis during protest (*Leicester Mercury* 16 April 2004, p.9), but such examples, where the headline emphasises that innocent Iraqis have been killed by coalition forces, were very rare. Beyond that the only time when words like ‘kill’ featured in headlines to describe coalition attacks when Saddam Hussein and/or his regime were the targets of coalition attacks, e.g. **Kill Saddam and regime will collapse** (*MEN* 20 March 2003, p.4). More importantly though, the strong tendency to obscure any suggestion of the deaths of innocent people by coalition forces contrasts strongly with the ways in which the agency, and thus the culpability, of Iraqi forces was flagged up in headlines. Examples here include: **Iraqis dirty tricks violate laws of war** (*MEN* 25 March 2003, p.4), **Iraqis in blitz on their own civilians** (*MEN* 28 March 2003, p.2). Richardson (2007: Ch. 7) was also alert to this point of contrast in national press coverage.

Radical critics of the media such as Herman and Chomsky (1988), Chomsky (1989), Edwards and Cromwell (2005), have long argued that while the mainstream media may sometimes doubt the wisdom of Western foreign policy, its overall benevolence is never questioned by the media. In some respects at least, the tendency to mask the fact that Coalition forces had been responsible for the deaths of many, many innocent people in Iraq reaffirms the general thrust of this aspect of the radical critique of the mass media since the essential goodness of ‘our’ side was so rarely ever called into question. The implicit message of the reporting is that **‘Our forces are not the baddies’**, to quote the title of a letter in the *Manchester Evening News* (3 April 2003, p.28). Yet if things were as straightforward as the radical critics claim why would defensive letters like the one just mentioned need to be written at all? Moreover it is important to distinguish between different degrees, and aspects, of ‘benevolence’, because even if the headlines and text of ‘military affairs’ articles steered clear of any disparagement or implied criticism of the conduct of Coalition armed forces, as I would argue was the case, that is quite a different matter from questioning the integrity and good intentions of British and American leaders when they took their countries to war. Nonetheless one narrative that was clearly outside the bounds of ‘legitimate controversy’ was any criticism of the conduct of the armed forces themselves.

In conclusion to this section, although at a superficial level the input from military sources and the assumptions embedded in headlines tended to depoliticise the Iraq crisis, the reporting was in fact highly political because the way it defined the parameters of acceptable controversy. In this way the reporting links back to the editorial commentary that emphasised the ‘support the troops’ line, because together both the reporting and the commentary underscore the unacceptability (as the papers would have it) of criticising British forces whilst in action.

Framing

Throughout this chapter there have been glimpses of how sources have shaped the political content of news reporting, whether it has been army personnel asserting that their reconstruction efforts were for Iraq's better future or antiwar MPs denouncing any suggestion that the Iraqi people welcomed the invasion of their country. But it is important to understand that the (potential) influence of sources extends beyond the capacity to smuggle the occasional viewpoint into news reports.

As was argued at considerable length in Chapter 2, the degree of influence a source has over the framing of the news agenda is an indicator of its power. To take this idea seriously it is imperative to sketch out some of the ways in which key news sources have taken advantage of the access to the press that they either secured through cultivating media contacts (as would be the case with antiwar groups), were granted by chance (as in vox pop interviews), or were deemed automatically entitled to by dint of their accredited position in the social structure (which, as argued in Chapter 2, is so often the case with 'government and established institutions' [quoting the Goldsmith's Media Group 2000: 35]). Attempts by the antiwar movement to project their frames onto news reporting and the obstacles they faced in doing so will be considered in the next chapter. For present purposes this chapter shall concentrate on the discursive and rhetorical strategies advocates of military action employed to make their case. I shall use Jack Straw's response to the 'Blix presentation' of 27 January 2003 (**Straw tells Iraq: Time is running out**, *Leicester Mercury*, 28 January 2003, p.9) as an illustrative example because it articulates so many of the key concerns of the 'official school of thought' that dominated pro-war argumentation. The *Leicester Mercury* report is worth reproducing in full:

Foreign Secretary Jack Straw today ratcheted up the pressure on Saddam Hussein with another warning that time was running out for the Iraqi dictator to avoid war and to give up his banned weapons.

He said the report yesterday by the chief weapons inspector Hans Blix showed that Iraq was now in "material breach" of its obligations to disarm under United Nations Security Council resolution 1441.

He said that it was now up to Saddam to present "credible evidence" that Iraq's chemical and biological arsenals had been destroyed and that he was actively co-operating with the weapons inspectors.

“What Iraq has to understand is that time is running out and if it does not comply with the requirements of the international community – which, by God, are shown to be fully justified – then serious consequences will follow,” he told a news conference at the Foreign Office.

“The world would be a much more dangerous place if we were to allow the world’s most aggressive rogue state to continue with its practices of concealment and deceit.”

It is worth stating, first of all, that this is the only report that the *Mercury* carried relating to Blix’s 27 January presentation. Second, Jack Straw’s opinion is the only one the article references. Third, his comments are preceded by neutral verbs like ‘said’ and ‘told’, rather than words such as ‘alleged’, or ‘claimed’ which would have clearly invited a greater degree of scepticism about Straw’s assertions. The net result is that Straw’s interpretation and contextualisation of Blix’s presentation went largely unchallenged within the *Mercury*’s coverage at that point. Yet as Koenig and MacMillan (2003: 1) point out, Dr Hans Blix’s presentation to the UN Security Council was at once so important and so ambiguous that it was ‘immediately claimed by both anti- and pro-war advocates as further evidence for their respective cases.’¹³ In which case, according to the normative ideals of media pluralism – that would insist that a variety of different perspectives on controversial issues be considered – the *Mercury* ought to have also included interpretations of the Blix address that looked at things from an antiwar perspective.

As might be expected from a senior member of the British government Straw’s interpretation articulates many of the key elements of the ‘official school of thought’, i.e. that military action would be moral, legal, conducted in response to a genuine threat to global security, and without cynical motive. Not all of those elements are present in this report as issues about morality and questions relating to the opportunities package are absent, but Jack Straw’s comments do articulate the concerns of the pro-war security and international law packages. The claim that Iraq has WMD and that those weapons pose a serious threat to world peace when in Saddam’s hands (‘The world would be a much more dangerous place if we were to allow the world’s most aggressive rogue state...’) is the key to the way pro-war security package defined the problem. In addition however, the pro-war international law package is also much in evidence, not least of all because of the way Straw’s insistence on Iraqi disarmament is phrased in terms of Iraq’s obligations under international law: Iraq must ‘disarm under United Nations Security Council resolution 1441’, then later: Iraq must “comply with the requirements of the international community.” So the problem then is not simply that Iraq is alleged to possess the means of posing

a threat to world peace as the pro-war security package maintains, but that Iraq is refusing to relinquish those weapons as stipulated under international law. Here we can see the various strands of the 'Official School of Thought' coming together.

As stated in Chapter 4, all the pro-war packages point the finger of blame at Saddam/the Iraqi regime (the two were invariably presented as interchangeable), and Straw's comments reiterate that. However it is noteworthy that the risk that Straw articulates is not that of the international law package (which held that the risks involved in allowing Iraq to dodge disarmament and inspections would have undermined the UN and International Law), but instead the risks of the security package: "The world would be a much more dangerous place." For this reason Straw's comments emphasise the security package more than the international law package.

Finally, we should be aware that at this stage Straw stops short of making a case for military action – 'time is running out' for Iraq he says. The then Foreign Secretary did not say that time had run out. The intention behind Straw's comments would appear to have been to underscore the gravity of the situation and establish the 'Official School of Thought' as the dominant paradigm by which the crisis was to be understood, rather than make a case for military action at that point. Nonetheless Straw also implicitly closes down the range of possible outcomes to immediate co-operation with, and disclosure to, the weapons inspectors followed by disarmament, or face 'serious consequences' i.e. war. A third policy option of prolonged inspections, lasting say, several months, is not an option that readers are encouraged to consider. Reducing policy options to either/or scenarios is a classic news management technique by which a case for military action has so often been made (see Bennett 1990; Entman and Page 1994).

It would not be appropriate to quantify the presence of either the packages or the schools of thought. Firstly because unlike themes which are either manifestly stated or not, the packages were often found to exist with varying degrees of clarity. Secondly because the schools of thought are not confined to the expression of one version of an argument, but instead have some degree of flexibility built into them such that any of the different strands of argumentation in any one of the schools of thought can be emphasised at any time. However, it is important to stress that whenever political or military officials were referenced in news sources it was very rare for either them or their claims to be derided in the news reports.

In spite of the difficulties of quantification, it was noticeable that nearly all advocates of military action stuck to one version or other of the ‘official package.’ The Neo-Conservative case was almost entirely absent, while the ‘Liberal Hawk’ case in its purest form was only ever articulated in letters to the editor, (e.g. **Iraqis are free after years of terrorism**, *Leicester Mercury*, 16 April 2003, p.13: ‘Millions of Iraqis have died under the reign of Saddam and have lived in terror for 30 years.... When they [coalition forces] liberated the capital Baghdad last week, you only had to look at the faces of the Iraqi people and you knew it was worth it’). But the research also found that while the majority of parliamentarians generally stuck to the ‘official package’, many of them gave particular emphasis to that package’s moral dimension, i.e. an emphasis on Saddam Hussein’s human rights abuses, at the expense of a focus on arguments about security and international law. This was particularly true of local MPs. So, for example, when the Slough MP Fiona MacTaggart (Labour) justified her decision to vote for the war she declared that, “The factors that *most influenced me* were my continued concern over 25 years about the murderous regime of Saddam Hussein” (**MP challenged to debate by anti-war protestors**, *Slough Express*, 3 April 2003, p.5, emphasis added). Enfield’s Labour MPs advanced a similar set of justifications/defences to explain why they voted for military action (see **Iraq – Why our MPs backed Blair’s stand**, *Enfield Gazette*, 6 March 2003, p.11). And furthermore, there were also occasions when the most senior politicians, right up to Tony Blair, stressed the moral case for war ahead of all the other strands of pro-war reasoning (see Blair 2003).

It may be true to say that these arguments inched in the direction of the ‘Liberal Hawk’ because of their emphasis on morality, but it is important to understand that there were certain dividing lines between the ‘Liberal Hawk’ and the ‘Official’ schools of thought. Whereas ‘Liberal Hawk’ commentators were known to have contempt for certain aspects of the case for war, none of the loyal Labour MPs, who voted for the war from the areas whose press I have sampled, publicly distanced themselves from the official line in any significant way. For example, the *Independent*’s Johann Hari – one of the best known ‘Liberal Hawks’ – argued that we should **‘Forget the UN: Saddam Hussein is the best possible reason for liberating Iraq’** (The *Independent*, 10 January 2003, p.16) and then proceeded to express his disapproval, contempt even, for ‘Bush’s dangerous arguments about “pre-emptive action” to justify this war.’ By contrast, in the aforementioned report from the *Slough Express* (**MP challenged to debate by anti-war protestors**, 3 April 2003, p.5) Fiona MacTaggart was quoted as saying, “I share the unanimous view of the Security Council that he [Saddam Hussein] does hold weapons of mass destruction and that he has failed to comply with peaceful disarmament requests” thereby

articulating the pro-war security and international law packages that Hari rejects. MacTaggart's argument is the 'official' one; it just so happens that she emphasised the moral arguments within it.

The absence of a 'Neo-Conservative' rationale is perhaps surprising given the prevalence of Washington sources (see Table 9.4), and this absence is only partially explained by the equally surprising fact that when figures like George Bush and Donald Rumsfeld were quoted their input was often restricted to just a few words. Moreover though, the unfolding narrative that dominated the news agenda during the 'pre-invasion phase' was that of the weapons inspections saga. So even the President of the United States was reported as making a case for war within the context of arguments about whether not the Iraq regime was co-operating with inspectors (e.g. **Bush: Time has run out for Iraq**, *MEN*, 28 January 2003, p.6; **Bush: We'll prove to UN that Saddam is lying**, *MEN*, 29 January 2003, p.2), rather than a Neo-Conservative rationale with its emphasis on the virtues of projecting American strength.

As a generalisation official sources and local MPs were fairly adept at taking advantage of the space granted to them in news reports to justify and promote their arguments over the war – usually the reasoning of the 'official school of thought' (although the matter cannot be satisfactorily quantified for reasons outlined above).

Concluding remarks

This chapter has shown that while a number of topics were discussed in relation to the crisis, the provincial press's engagement with issues of relevance to the controversy surrounding the Iraq War, can still only be regarded as a patchy engagement because many important issues were either absent or largely ignored. It has also been shown that while British and American officials emerged as the most referenced of all sources, they still only made an appearance in little more than a third of the reports devoted to the crisis. The chapter has also outlined that while it is true to say that when it came to the reporting of some issues the 'unquestioned premises' upon which the reporting hinged supported a case for military action, with other issues the assumptions upon which they were based challenged arguments for war. And the chapter has also illustrated that official sources and pro-war local MPs were able to successfully utilise the space available to them to promote and frame the controversy in line with the reasoning and concerns of the 'Official' school of thought.

The next chapter examines the packages and schools of thought adopted by the antiwar movement. It further investigates whether or not the various elements of that movement were as adept in using the space available to them to promote a coherent set of arguments against the war as advocates of military action were in promoting their case. In addition, the chapter also enquires into the conditionality of any success that the antiwar movement had in frame promotion.

End Notes

¹ Research by Aday et al (2005) was conducted 'from the first night of the war to a few days after the fall of the statue of Saddam Hussein' (2005: 4), Dimitrova and Strömbäck's (2008) research was conducted from 20 March 2003 to 1 May 2003, Goddard et al's (2008) research ran from 21 March to 15 April 2003, Lewis and Brookes (2004a, 2004b) and Lewis et al (2006) ran from 20 March to 11 April 2003, Ravi's (2005) research was conducted from the 5 February 2003 to 14 April 2003, while Richardson's research was concentrated during the 'first six weeks of the invasion' (2007: 197). By contrast, Tumber and Palmer's (2004) research systematically studied a select sample of coverage during the 'pre-invasion' and 'invasion' phases of the crisis – from November 2002 to 19 March 2003, and from 20 March to 30 April 2003 respectively. Whilst Lehmann's (2005) study was based on a study of how nine events dating from September 2002 to March 2003 were reported on.

² The original plan was to incorporate the reporting of the Hutton enquiry into the research, hence the decision to extend the period of research by one month, when I would have otherwise settled for research lasting one year.

³ These 30 surveys have been counted among the overall number of 'units' published by the *MEN*, thereby affecting calculations for the proportion of 'units' in each section to have been published by the paper.

⁴ The principle guiding the classification of the reports was that 'only open partisanship can be quantified with an degree of reliability' (Deacon et al 2007: 124). So the decision about whether a 'report, or actors in it, mainly or solely make case' either 'in favour of military action', or 'against military action', or whether the report is of 'mixed implications', or amounts to a 'descriptive account or acknowledgement of the controversy but without entering into it' or makes 'no mention of the controversy' depended entirely on the article's *overt* leaning. If, for example, an article focused on an army commander sending out reassuring messages about the military's preparedness for combat but stopped short of giving any justification for the war, that would not meet the standard of unambiguous partisanship required for an article to be considered 'overtly' 'in favour of military action'. Under such circumstances the report would have to be coded differently even though such statements are arguably pro-war in their implications.

⁵ In their research on the national press coverage of the antiwar movement, Murray et al (2008: 12) distinguish between 'protesters, voluntary human shields, anti-war politicians from the UK and US, anti-war celebrities' etc. who were defined by their opposition to military action, and such actors as 'UN inspectors, humanitarian groups, [and] French President Jacques Chirac' etc. who were critical of the war, 'but for whom such activity was not their primary role.' In creating this larger antiwar category in my own research, I too am applying the same principle as Murray et al which is why the antiwar category is restricted to the four groups.

⁶ If the combined 'Coalition' category had been used this combined 'Antiwar' category would have been pushed into second place in the Weekly press. It should also be noted that calculating the total number of reports to carry either the combined 'Military', 'Coalition' or 'Antiwar' sources meant being alert to those (relatively few) occasions when a report carried more than one type of military, coalition or antiwar source.

⁷ This is, of course, a fairly restrictive definition of what would count as an ‘official’ source. Arguments could be made in favour of including ‘The (British) Police,’ ‘Local MPs,’ ‘Local Councillors,’ ‘France, Germany, Russia,’ the ‘UN,’ and, perhaps most contentiously of all, ‘the media.’ Nonetheless, none of those categories could have been guaranteed not to depart from either the ‘Neo-Conservative’ or ‘Official’ schools of thought over military action.

⁸ Whereas Goddard et al (2008) give exact figures for the presence of coalition and Iraqi sources, they do not for Iraqi civilians. So the 34 percent figure comes from reading of the bar chart ‘Figure 2’ they presented in their paper (Goddard et al 2008: 16).

⁹ Many reports quoted people, most often opponents of the war, making statements about the legal status of the war, but these tended to be limited to short assertions such as ‘the war is illegal’ rather than be discussed at the required length of one sentence or more that would have allowed such statements to be counted as a theme.

¹⁰ For the record, questions of race relations were addressed in 0.5 percent of reports, while the matter of past arms sales to Saddam featured just 0.1 percent of the time.

¹¹ Most of the time, the ‘sphere of legitimate controversy’, refers to party political disputes, i.e. both within and between parties, when sections of the media feel obliged to exercise impartiality between competing claims and claimants. By comparison, the ‘sphere of deviance’ is reserved for people whose views are deemed to be beyond the bounds of rational argument or lawful politics (Hallin 1986: 117; see also Chapter 8 and 10).

¹² The *MEN* was one of four provincial English newspapers to have reporters embedded with the troops in Iraq. The others being the *Western Daily Express*, the *Ipswich Evening Star*, and the *Eastern Daily Press* (Keeble 2004: 50).

¹³ The chair of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Dr Mohamed El Baradei, also delivered a report to the UN Security Council on the same day, but this was less controversial. First, because El Baradei’s report, which focused solely on Iraq’s putative nuclear weapons programme ‘found no evidence’ that the programme had been ‘revived’ in the time ‘since the elimination of the programme in the 1990s’ and so left little room for pro-war interpretations (Koenig and MacMillan 2003: 7). Secondly, because the British and American government’s case against Iraq revolved around Iraq’s putative chemical and biological weapons programme, not the nuclear issue.

Chapter 10: Content Analysis II:

Local news reporting and commentary on the Antiwar movement

The previous chapter examined the salient characteristics of the way the provincial press reported on the Iraq crisis and engaged with the controversy surrounding the decision to launch military action. As far as was possible, the chapter restricted the scope of any discussion about the contribution that the antiwar movement made to that debate. In reality though the distinction was somewhat artificial because the antiwar movement were not simply passionately engaged in that debate, they also had a significant impact on the ways in which the provincial press reported on the crisis and the controversy. Sometimes this was a matter of protest becoming a subject for news reporting, and sometimes the reporting of public meetings in the local press was sufficiently detailed to allow opponents of military action to articulate their reasoning at some length. The point is, as I aim to explain in Part I of this chapter, that the Iraq crisis and any debate surrounding it would not have been reported on in the same way if military action hadn't provoked such active and widespread opposition as it did.

Part II of this chapter examines the ways in which the antiwar movement were represented in the pages of the local press, and how those representations may have either enabled or constrained the movement's capacity to promote their own preferred set of framings. Whether or not the antiwar movement or the reporting of it made any difference to the overall contours of public opinion is a matter beyond the scope of this study.

Part I: An Overview

Between them, all six newspapers published a total 143 news reports, letters, editorials, features and articles by columnists that were in one way or another focused on the activities of, or stance taken by, the antiwar movement. 126 of these 143 units, or 88 percent, were news reports. This included eight front-page reports and fifteen 'world news pages' reports. Of the remaining published units, twelve were letters, three were editorials, one was a features article and another one was an article by a columnist. Given the overwhelming dominance of news reporting here, it would not be appropriate in this chapter to discuss any of the other categories separately in the manner of the previous chapter's distinction between news reporting and editorials. Instead commentary on editorials is incorporated into the broader discussion.

These 126 news reports represent 8.5 percent of all reporting devoted to the Iraq crisis in the sample newspapers. For the national press the comparable figure was 6.1 percent (Murray et al 2008: 14), which is close to the 8.5 percent figure for local press coverage.

The significance of coverage of the antiwar movement

In spite of the finding that reports on the antiwar movement accounted for a modest 8.5 percent of all reports devoted to the crisis, the antiwar movement still had the capacity to shift the orientation of overall coverage. That this is so can be gleaned from comparing each paper's treatment of the controversy when there was no reference to the activities of opponents of the war to each paper's treatment when reporting of the antiwar movement was included.

<u>Table 10.1: How the different newspapers engaged with the controversy surrounding the Iraq crisis</u>							
The proportion of reports from each paper to have engaged with the controversy in the following ways.							
<u>Evaluative Orientation</u>	<u>Newspaper</u>						
	Total/ Average	<i>Bury Free Press</i>	<i>Enfield Gazette</i>	<i>Leicester Mercury</i>	<i>Manchester Evening News</i>	<i>Slough Express</i>	<i>Slough Observer</i>
Report or actors in it mainly or solely make case in favour of military action - All Reports	145 9.7%	5 8.9%	1 5.6%	100 14.9%	34 5.5%	2 3.4%	3 4.4%
And without reference to the antiwar movement	143 10.5%	5 10.9%	1 12.5%	99 15.6%	33 5.7%	2 6.1%	3 5.4%
Report or actors in it mainly or solely make a case against military action - All Reports	177 12.0%	11 19.6%	10 55.6%	61 9.3%	55 8.9%	23 39.7%	17 25.0%
And without reference to the antiwar movement	95 7.0%	3 6.5%	3 37.5%	44 6.9%	33 5.7%	4 12.1%	8 14.3%
Mixed implications, or the report features both sides of the controversy - All Reports	191 12.9%	4 7.1%	6 33.3%	56 8.4%	112 18.1%	6 10.3%	7 10.3%
And without reference to the antiwar movement	182 13.4%	4 8.7%	3 37.5%	55 8.7%	110 18.9%	3 9.1%	7 12.5%

Table 10.1 Continued		<u>Newspaper</u>					
<u>Evaluative Orientation</u>	Total/ Average	<i>Bury Free Press</i>	<i>Enfield Gazette</i>	<i>Leicester Mercury</i>	<i>Manchester Evening News</i>	<i>Slough Express</i>	<i>Slough Observer</i>
Descriptive acknowledgement of the controversy, but without entering into it - All Reports	79 5.3%	2 3.6%	1 5.6%	19 2.9%	53 8.5%	2 3.4%	2 2.9%
And without reference to the antiwar movement	59 4.3%	1 2.2%	1 12.5%	11 1.7%	44 7.6%	2 6.1%	0 0.0%
No mention of the controversy surrounding the war - All Reports	893 60.1%	34 60.7%	0 0.0%	429 64.5%	366 59.0%	25 43.1%	39 57.4%
And without reference to the antiwar movement	880 64.8%	33 71.7%	0 0.0%	426 67.1%	361 62.1%	22 66.7%	38 67.9%

Table 10.1 builds on Table 9.2 from the previous chapter. To recap, Table 9.2 showed how each paper, and all the papers combined, dealt with the controversy surrounding the crisis in the entirety of their reporting *including* in reports that focused on the activities of the antiwar movement. The figures from Table 9.2 are reproduced in Table 10.1 in regular print. Below that in Table 10.1, and in bold, are the figures for how each paper, and all the papers together, dealt with the controversy surrounding the war in all reports *except for those reports that focused on the activities of the antiwar movement*.

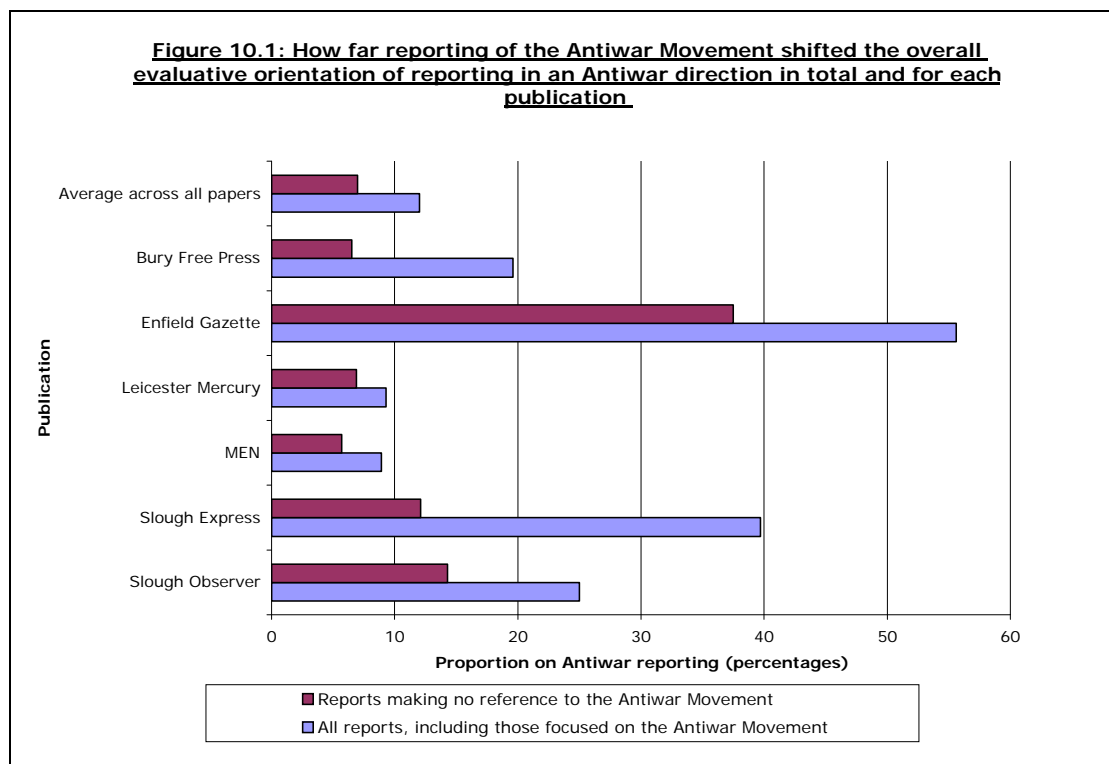
Table 10.1 shows that even though the reporting of the antiwar movement made up a modest 8.5 percent of all reporting, it can be seen from comparing the evaluative orientations of the reports that focused on the crisis *and* the activities of the antiwar movement with those reports that were just focused on crisis itself, that input from the antiwar movement had a statistically significant, if varied, influence in shifting the evaluative orientation of each publication, particularly in relation to the balance between pro- and antiwar reporting. So whereas the *MEN*'s reporting may be seen as perfectly balanced when focused on the crisis alone, the inclusion of reports about the war's opponents shifts the overall balance of the paper's reporting so that it tilts in an antiwar direction by 3.4 percent. The comparable figures for each of the other papers are given in Table 10.2:

Table 10.2: How the reporting of the antiwar movement and its activities was calculated to have shifted the reporting in an antiwar direction for each of the publications

<i>Bury Free Press</i>	15.1 percent
<i>Enfield Gazette</i>	25.0 percent
<i>Leicester Mercury</i>	3.1 percent
<i>Manchester Evening News</i>	3.4 percent
<i>Slough Express</i>	30.3 percent
<i>Slough Observer</i>	11.7 percent
Aggregate	5.8 percent

Applying the Chi-Square test to each of these calculations shows that, with the exception of the figures for the *Enfield Gazette*, all these figures are statistically significant.¹

Meanwhile Figure 10.1 graphically illustrates how far, in percentage terms, reports focused on the activism and promotional efforts of the locally based antiwar groups shifted the evaluative orientations for each publication and across all six papers in the sample as a whole.



Three observations can be made at this point. The first is that, at a minimum, the reporting of any newsworthy activities by the antiwar movement can be seen to have had a decisive impact overall in shifting the balance of coverage *towards* an antiwar direction if only through drawing attention to the fact of opposition to a war against Iraq. To that extent it may reasonably be claimed that the antiwar movement made a difference to provincial press reporting of the Iraq crisis, and this alone makes the study of the provincial press treatment of the antiwar movement imperative. But it is also worth returning to and expanding upon the point made in the previous chapter with respect to reading Table 9.2: that to be able to simply identify a particular orientation (e.g. an antiwar orientation) within any given news report tells us nothing about the frames adopted or reasoning advocated to justify that (antiwar) position. Thus it is important to appreciate that while the presence of reports about the activities of the antiwar movement can be said to have shifted the evaluative orientations of the reporting, it may well be that such news reports did so in a superficial manner only.

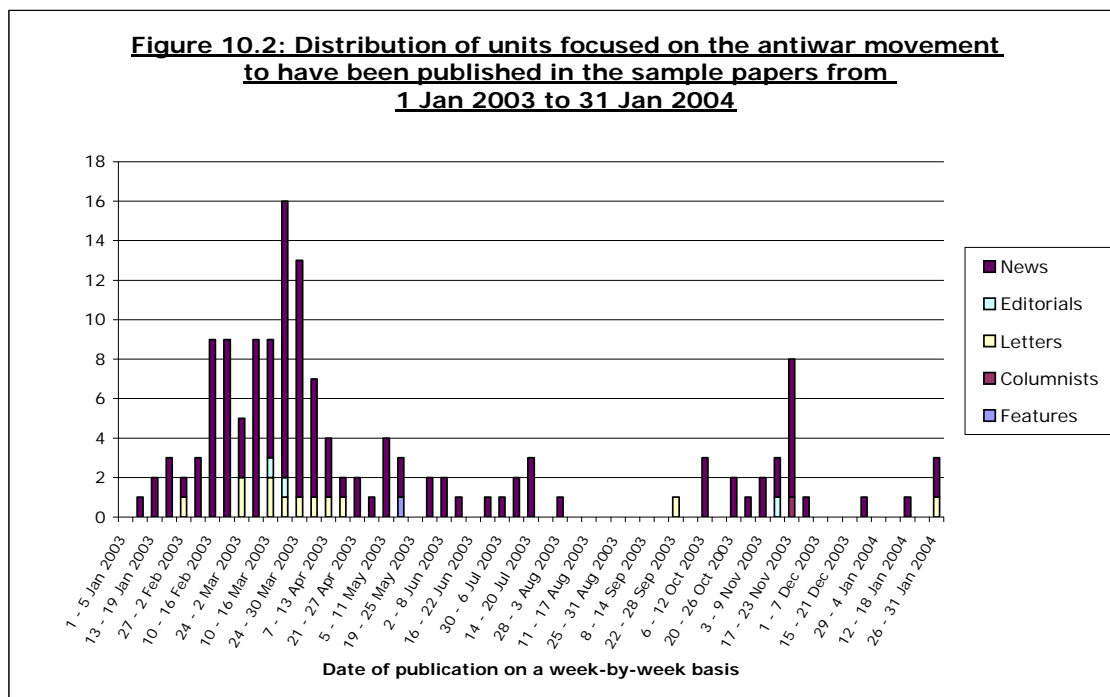
The second observation is that the extent to which the antiwar movement would appear to have had an influence on the orientation of each publication's coverage of the Iraq crisis varied from paper to paper. Comparing the two sets of data in Table 10.1, suggests that in the case of the *Bury Free Press*, the reporting of the antiwar movement shifted the balance of that paper's coverage from a 'pro-war' orientation to an 'antiwar' one. By contrast, with the *Leicester Mercury*, the activities of the antiwar movement had far less of an impact on the overall contours of its reporting. From this we may infer that in spite of the similarities in editorial commentary that were outlined in the previous chapter, there may well have been significant differences between the papers in terms of the ways in which they set about reporting on the activities of the antiwar movement and also in the ways in that they either incorporated input from that movement into their news reporting, or were resistant to what they might have regarded as manipulation by the antiwar movement. For this reason this chapter is keenly alert to the possibility that the different newspapers may have reported on the activities of the movement in sharply different ways.

Third, and following on from the second observation, it is evident from Table 10.2 that the antiwar groups had far less influence in shifting the evaluative orientations of the evening press, when compared to the weekly press, and particularly the *Enfield Gazette* and *Slough Express*. I shall return to explore this matter in more detail under the discussion of the 'differences between the papers'.

What the data cannot tell us however, is whether the presence of the antiwar movement shifted any paper's reporting in an antiwar direction outside of the context of reporting about the movement.

The rise and fall of coverage of the antiwar movement in the provincial press

Figure 10.2 outlines the fluctuating levels of coverage devoted to the antiwar movement in each of the unit categories – news, editorials, letters, articles by columnists and features.



The bar chart is noticeable for two features: first, for drawing attention to the dominance of news reporting in all the coverage of the movement; and second, for the overall pattern of distribution that emerges. In comparison with Figure 9.1 from the previous chapter, which illustrated a flowing rise-and-fall pattern of distribution for all local press coverage of the crisis itself combined with the reporting of oppositional activities, Figure 10.2 shows a more sporadic pattern of distribution for coverage that was about the antiwar movement. Furthermore, coverage of the antiwar movement was most concentrated during a slightly different time span from the overall coverage of the Iraq crisis. 54 percent of all 'antiwar movement' coverage could be found between 10 February and 6 April, whereas the overall coverage for the Iraq crisis was most

concentrated from between 10 March and 20 April. That said, it is noticeable and worthy of further discussion that the overall coverage and coverage of the antiwar movement both peaked during the week when the invasion began (17 March to 23 March 2003).

It is certainly the case that the antiwar movement was very active from 17 to 23 March, partaking in many protests and acts of civil disobedience. In terms of the numbers involved, 'invasion phase' protests culminated in the UK's largest ever 'wartime' demonstration on Saturday 22 March, when between 100,000 and 200,000 people protested against the war in London (Murray et al 2008: 8). But this number was still far fewer than the numbers involved in the demonstration on 15 February (see Chapter 6), which invites speculation as to what accounts for the increased newsworthiness of the antiwar movement from between 17-23 March, especially when none of the papers carried reports that were devoted to the 22 March demonstration? It is important not to fall into the trap of becoming preoccupied with the numbers involved in order to understand newsworthiness (Schlesinger 1978: 117), and instead appreciate that the newsworthiness of any particular story is contingent upon what else is happening at the same time (Halloran et al 1970: 193). It was because all things related to the Iraq crisis stood near the very top of the news agenda in the week when the invasion began (see previous chapter) that the arguments and activities of the antiwar movement were also at their maximum newsworthiness then. Hence it would not be appropriate to claim that the antiwar movement had an agenda setting power at this (or any other stage) in the crisis. Complicating matters further though, is that unlike the 'national' march of 15 February, many of the demonstrations, acts of civil disobedience and other activities that occurred during the week 17-23 March were locally based, and this would have further enhanced the newsworthiness of those activities for the local press.

Finally, Figure 10.2 also suggests that coverage of the antiwar movement underwent a resurgence in October and November 2003. This was largely because the *MEN* in particular devoted a considerable amount of coverage to President Bush's state visit in November.

Differences between the papers

In addition to differences across time there were also differences between the papers.

Table 10.3: The number and proportion of news reports focused on the Antiwar movement in each publication

Newspaper	Total number of reports focused on the antiwar movement	Proportion of Iraq War reports from each paper to have focused on the antiwar movement
<i>Leicester Mercury</i>	30	4.5
<i>Manchester Evening News</i>	39	6.3
<i>Slough Observer</i>	12	17.6
<i>Bury Free Press</i>	10	17.9
<i>Slough Express</i>	25	43.1
<i>Enfield Gazette</i>	10	55.6

Tables 10.1 and 10.3 show that although the two evening papers (the *MEN* and the *Leicester Mercury*) carried a significantly greater number of news reports on the activities of the antiwar movement than any of the weekly publications, when seen in the context of their overall coverage of the Iraq crisis, the evening papers devoted *proportionally less* coverage to the antiwar movement than the weekly papers did. This tendency towards a comparative neglect of any focus on the activities of the antiwar movement by the evening press vis-à-vis the weekly papers, was largely continued through to differences in the extent to which the papers accommodated input into their news reporting from the antiwar movement.

The previous chapter showed, in relation to the discussion of Table 9.4, that the combined category of ‘antiwar’ sources (encompassing locally based antiwar groups, the Stop the War Coalition [STWC], national figures known for their opposition to the war but only loosely associated with the STWC, and protesters unaffiliated with any particular grouping) were referenced in a total of 5.8 percent of all reporting relating to the Iraq crisis. What this masked however, were wide differences between the papers in terms of the extent to which their reporting referenced those avowedly antiwar sources. With the *MEN*, ‘antiwar’ sources combined contributed to 22 out of 620 news reports or 3.5 percent of all Iraq related reports. In the *Leicester Mercury* antiwar sources contributed to 24 out of 665 reports or 3.6 percent of Iraq crisis news reports. For the weekly papers the figures are:

- *Slough Observer*: 12 out of 68 reports or 17.6 percent of reports;

- *Bury Free Press*: 10 out of 56 reports – 17.9 percent;
- *Slough Express*: 24 out of 58 reports – 41.4 percent;
- *Enfield Gazette*: 10 out of 18 reports – 55.6 percent.

These findings, along with those from Table 10.2 and the third column from Table 10.3, suggest that in proportional terms there was a three-tier hierarchy between the papers in terms of both their focus on the antiwar movement and the level of input into news reporting that the antiwar movement secured. In the two evening papers the antiwar movement were relatively neglected; the *Slough Observer* and the *Bury Free Press* devoted a modest amount of coverage to the antiwar movement; whilst the *Enfield Gazette* and the *Slough Express* gave more extensive coverage to that movement. Moreover, Table 10.2 suggests that the coverage of antiwar activism had a far greater influence in shifting the overall evaluative orientations in an antiwar direction in the weekly press when compared to the evening papers. Overall then, the findings from Tables 10.2 and 10.3 suggest that when it came to the reporting of the antiwar movement, differences between the papers cannot necessarily be reduced to the previous chapter's distinction between the evening and weekly papers – and certainly not in the case of the weekly publications. For this reason the empirical discussion that follows is sensitive to the potential uniqueness of each paper's coverage.

The chapter now turns to consider how questions of representation, legitimacy, and contributions to mediated debate are intertwined with each other.

Part II: Representations, legitimacy, contribution

Representations and legitimacy

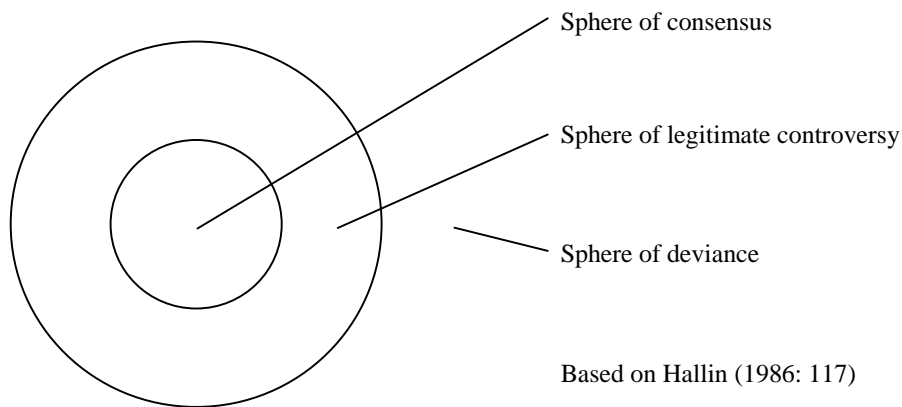
One of the central arguments from Chapters 2 and 3 in Part I of this thesis, was that the ways in which people, parties, campaigns, movements and all other political actors are represented in the media have the potential to directly impinge upon their perceived legitimacy. In turn, any political actor's legitimacy can be expected to heavily influence the level of access and nature of any contribution they are regarded as being entitled to make to any debate. From this position most sources will seek to take advantage of whatever access they have to affect their representations and enhance their legitimacy, as well as make their case on the issues at hand. Thus, representation, legitimacy, source access and the nature of any contribution sources make, revolve in a virtuous, but not unbreakable, circle.

However, when those chapters explored the nature of legitimacy for media sources, they were at pains to emphasise that for non-official sources whatever legitimacy they may sometimes acquire has nearly always been a hard-won and vulnerable 'resource'. As argued in Chapters 2 and 3, non-official sources have to work hard to secure legitimacy (and newsworthiness) in the first place. Then, whatever legitimacy (and newsworthiness) non-official sources may have acquired can be readily stripped from them, by variously denying non-official sources access to the media, framing them and their activities in a negative light, doubting the veracity of any claims they make, and by reproducing the dominant 'definitions of the situation' (Hall et al 1978; Hall 1982) in current affairs discussions and news reporting without giving equal weight to alternative framings that may reflect the understandings of non-official 'challenger' sources.² Simply counting the number of times the different elements of the antiwar movement were either quoted or mentioned in the press, only addresses the first of these criteria (i.e. the question of access to the media). It says nothing about any of the other indicators by which legitimacy may be assessed.

A useful model for taking the next step and charting the legitimacy of different actors and any changes that their legitimacy might undergo, comes from the work of Daniel Hallin (1986) with the model of the 'spheres of controversy'. Hallin's original model though, is not without its flaws, and so for the purposes of my own research it has proven useful to adapt the model to meet the needs of my own investigations into the legitimacy of the anti-Iraq War movement. First, I shall say a few words about Hallin's model; then I shall discuss my own adaptations to the model.

Hallin's model was designed to supplement his research into the American media's reporting of the Vietnam War. Specifically it was developed to categorise the different levels of legitimacy that different sources (senior politicians, the military, the anti-Vietnam War movement etc.) were accorded by the media.

Figure 10.3: Spheres of consensus, legitimate controversy and deviance

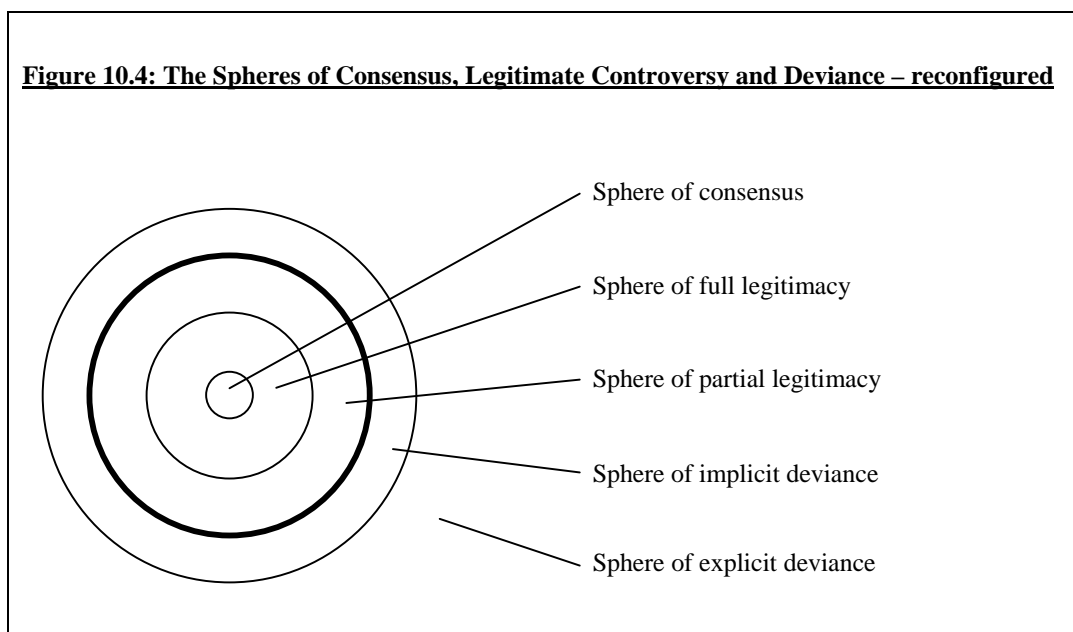


- The 'sphere of consensus' refers to such basic values as the acceptance of democracy and the rule of law (Hallin 1986: 116).
- The 'sphere of legitimate controversy', most of the time, refers to party political disputes – that is, both within and between parties (Ibid.: 117). It is important to appreciate that whenever disputes of this kind arise, the mainstream American media of the time of the Vietnam War felt obliged to exercise impartiality between competing claims and claimants.
- The 'sphere of deviance' is reserved for people whose views are deemed beyond the bounds of rational argument or lawful politics (Ibid.: 117). Throughout most of the duration of the Vietnam War the antiwar movement resided firmly within this sphere (Ibid.: 198). Furthermore, in contrast to 'elite' differences, the American media typically felt no obligation to report on the antiwar movement's activities in an 'objective' manner.

There is however nothing fixed about the boundaries between these different spheres. Hallin even describes them as 'fuzzy' and acknowledges 'internal gradations' between them (Ibid.: 117). Furthermore he also points out that these spheres can either expand or contract over time. In reasoning that chimes with the insights from Bennett's 'indexing thesis' (1990), which was explored in Chapter 2 of this study, a large part of Hallin's (1986) explanation for these changes lies in the breakdown of elite consensus over the Vietnam War. When elite opinion was united on the Vietnam War, as it was until 1968, the sphere of legitimate controversy was narrow; when the

elite consensus broke down about the wisdom (but not the morality) of the war, as happened in 1968, the sphere of legitimate controversy widened to match that.

There are however three modifications that can usefully be made to Hallin's model so as to adapt it to the purpose of this research. The first stems from the chief drawback with the model, which is that it has a very limited definition of the spheres leaving us with little in the way of guidance for deciding which spheres different actors reside in. It follows therefore that one must devise one's own criteria by which to distinguish between the different spheres, and these will be outlined shortly. Second the sphere of consensus was very small to non-existent in the case of the Iraq War. Third, in keeping with Hallin's aforementioned suggestion that there were gradations within the different spheres, decisions were made to distinguish between full and partial legitimacy, and between implicit and explicit deviance. The resulting model is:



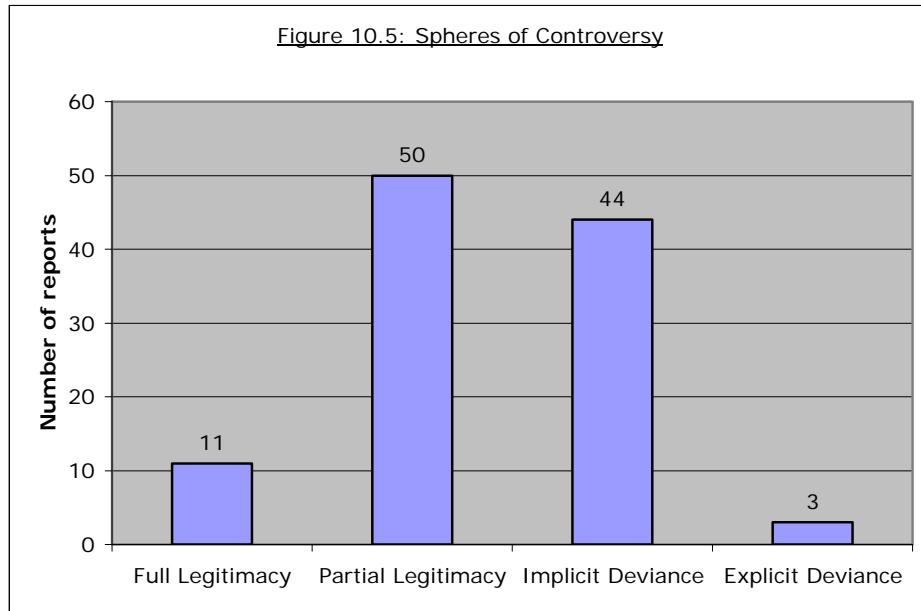
- The 'sphere of full legitimacy': Sources are granted the opportunity to outline their positions at some length so that they can promote their preferred framings and packages on issues without the *fundamental basis* of their reasoning being seriously challenged. It is evident from the way that senior politicians can take advantage of the space available to them to promote their own preferred framings of issues that they nearly always reside in this sphere. One example from the previous chapter that illustrates this point, would be the way Jack Straw's comments dominated the *Leicester Mercury's* reporting of the Blix

report to the UN Security Council on 27 January 2003 (**Straw tells Iraq: Time is running out**, 28 January 2003, p.9).

- The ‘sphere of partial legitimacy’: A source’s views may be treated as perfectly respectable but the source is denied the opportunity to impose their preferred framings on the discussion/news reporting because they are not granted, or do not seize, the opportunity to outline their reasoning at sufficient length to establish those framings. Instead their contributions to the debate may be limited to a few short assertions. It may be said that opponents of the Iraq War resided in this sphere when their activities were reported on without them being cast in a negative light and yet also failed to impose their own understandings of the crisis on news reporting.
- The ‘sphere of implicit deviance’: The source is reported in distinctly ‘cool’ terms but without being overtly condemned.
- The ‘sphere of explicit deviance’: The source’s activities are either overtly condemned or the reporting of their activities comes to define those activities as problematic. Although the distinction between these two spheres of deviance was developed independently from Murray et al’s (2008) research into national press representations of the antiwar movement, they draw the telling distinction between reporting would be expected to undermine the legitimacy of the antiwar movement through the ‘selection of information’, such as in a report that highlighted that the STWC Chairman was member of the Communist Party and was said to support North Korea, and negative characterisations through the ‘evaluative’ use of language, e.g. ‘barmy George Galloway’ from *The Sun*’s reporting (Ibid.: 13). ‘Implicit deviance’ was more often than not suggested through the ‘selection of information’. ‘Explicit deviance’ was established through the use of ‘evaluative’ language. Whenever reporting exhibits the characteristics of the ‘protest paradigm’ that was outlined in Chapter 3, the reporting may place protesters in either one of the deviant spheres depending on the strength with which the ‘protest paradigm’ is invoked.

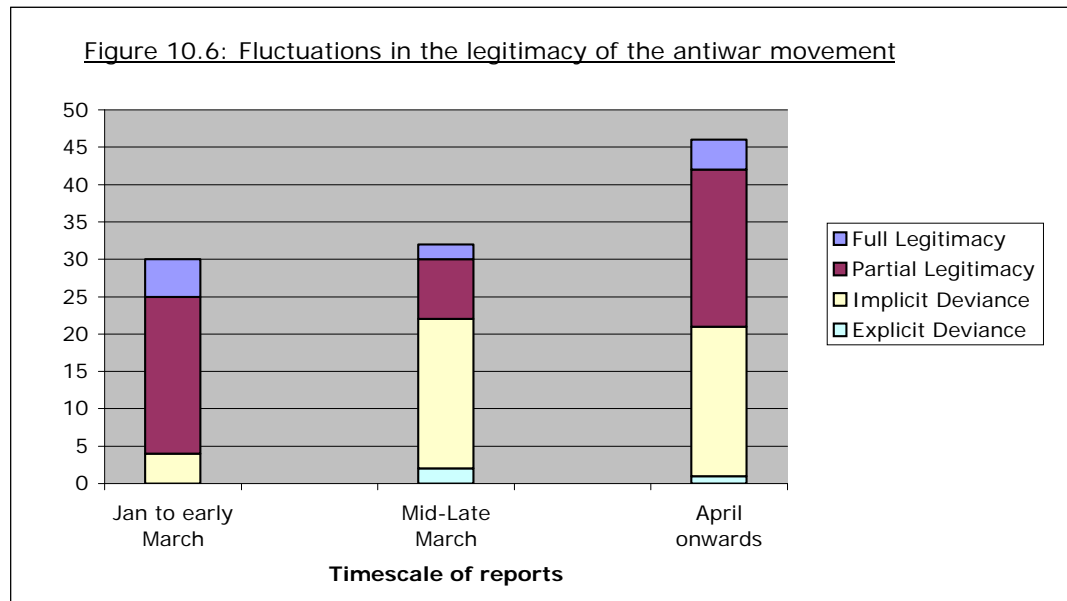
In practice applying these criteria was less straightforward than it might sound on the basis of the criteria outlined above, and it is difficult to entirely discount the charge that these were occasionally fine judgements, as there were a few reports that were hard to place since they often contained features of two of the spheres. Nonetheless judgements were made in most cases, and in the eighteen cases when this was not possible it was usually because the reports were too short

for any clear orientation to emerge. Overall, most reports were judged to have fallen into the spheres of partial legitimacy and implicit deviance, as Figure 10.5 shows.



The rarity of the ‘explicitly deviant’ classification is largely down to the local media’s tendency *not* to inject evaluative commentary into their news reports.

Of far greater significance however – and this is why the possibly ‘fine’ nature of my judgements is relatively unimportant – are the differences across time. Figure 10.6 shows the erosion of the legitimacy of the antiwar movement as the crisis led to the invasion, followed by some sort of revival of the legitimacy of the movement from April onwards.



The chart breaks with what has been the convention up until this point of dividing the timeline into pre-invasion, invasion, and post-invasion phases, with the timeline instead running from the beginning of 2003 to early March (specifically 9 March), from mid-March to late March (10 March to 30 March), and then from April onwards (or more accurately from the week beginning 31 March until 31 January 2004). The reason the timeline has been broken down in this way is simply to pinpoint the moments in time when the legitimacy of the antiwar movement changed. The table shows that up until mid-March a clear majority of reports cast the antiwar movement in a favourable light, with in fact only four of the thirty reports to have appeared then casting the movement as implicitly deviant, and none as explicitly deviant. Then on the week beginning 10 March, fully ten days before the invasion began, the legitimacy of the antiwar movement in the local press reporting plummeted, as from that time until the end of March the majority of news reports (20 out of the 32 to have appeared then) placed the movement in the ‘sphere of implicit deviance’ and a further two were judged to have cast the movement as ‘explicitly deviant’. From the beginning of April onwards however, the antiwar movement may be said to have clawed back a measure of legitimacy in the news reporting it received as the number of reports that were assessed as having placed the movement in the ‘sphere of full or partial legitimacy’ nudged past the number that placed the movement in one of the ‘spheres of deviance’ by a ratio of 25 to 21.

In addition to the differences across time there were also important differences between the papers in terms of the treatment of the antiwar movement. But because these differences between

the titles only became apparent from the middle of March onwards, the discussion of the various ways in which the legitimacy of the antiwar movement was either affirmed or denied is angled around the changes that took place over time.

January to early March

2003 started quietly for the antiwar movement. In January the six papers in the sample carried a total of just seven reports on the antiwar movement, and three of those reports were too short to be classified as belonging in any of the spheres relating to the controversy. It was only towards the end of January that momentum began to pick up for the antiwar movement, as four of the seven reports in January appeared in the last eight days of the month. The theme that began to emerge at this point was that the antiwar movement was building up a head of steam in the run-up to the 15 February demonstration.

The report **‘One million’ to join UK rally against war**, (*MEN*, 28 January 2003, p.7) conveys this sense of momentum being with the antiwar movement. A spokesperson for the Manchester branch of the STWC is quoted as saying:

“We have already booked 40 coaches to take people to London from across Greater Manchester and more and more people are keen to join in the rally.
“It is getting to the point where it is getting difficult to find coaches to cater for the number of people who want to go”

The report also hints at the diversity of support the movement has attracted stating that the demo is being supported by the ‘trade unions, Muslim Association of Britain and CND.’ And usefully for the organisers, the report provides details of forthcoming meetings in advance of the rally as well as the Stop the War Coalition’s website so readers can ‘find out more about the campaign or further pre-rally meetings.’

Other reports doubling up as publicity for the demonstration during this period also painted a picture of the opponents of the war having the wind in their sails. One such example is **Thousands from the country expected at demo**, (*Leicester Mercury*, 14 February 2003, p.5), the very title of which evidently assumes that the ‘demo’ was by this stage so well known that no further details were needed in the title to explain its purpose. Having said that, the page upon which this report was presented is placed directly below a report about ‘Volunteers [who were]

set to leave for the Gulf and possible war' (**Reservists called up**) so that gives a strong hint as to what the demo was about.

The only feature missing from these reports – and something that would have elevated these two from the 'sphere of partial legitimacy' into the 'sphere of full legitimacy' – was a reason why people should join the 15 February protest, or even just oppose the war. The only pre-publicity report that can be said to have gone some way to fulfilling this role, came from the *Slough Express*, **Stop the War heads to London**, (13 February 2003, p.11) when a local 'organiser' was quoted as saying, "We are trying to highlight the issue that innocent people are going to lose their lives" and who also 'pointed to proposals from the French, Russian and Germans, as 'concrete'' alternatives to war.

In general though, it was rare, even in favourably disposed articles, to find opponents of the war giving any sort of explanation as to why the war should be opposed and rarer still to find articles that countered pro-war logic with a set of alternative proposals for dealing with the issues thrown up by the Iraq crisis. This is why reports of the antiwar movement only occasionally ever – eleven cases out of 126 reports throughout the thirteen months – could be said to reside in the 'sphere of full legitimacy.' Nonetheless the antiwar movement had a degree of partial legitimacy during the first six weeks of 2003 and this continued through to the reporting of the rally on 15 February.

15 February

The antiwar demonstration that took place in London on the 15 February 2003 was covered in all six newspapers from the sample selection of papers at some point during the course of the following week. The two evening papers each devoted three reports to it, including one front-page news report on the day of the march in the *Leicester Mercury*, while the four weekly papers each carried just one report on the rally. There were a number of notable persistent features to the reporting of this event:

- There was an emphasis on the scale of the march, the diversity of the people and groups involved, and the fact that so many people who took part were supposedly new to marching;
- The reporting never once made mention of incidences of trouble at the demo;
- There were limits in the extent to which marchers who were quoted articulated detailed reasons against the war.

These characteristics go against the grain of the ‘protest paradigm’ that was outlined in Chapter 3. Combined they serve to place the movement in the ‘sphere of *partial* legitimacy’. Each of them needs to be dealt with in turn.

The scale and diversity of the march, and the ‘Virgin Marchers’

All eight reports on the march that were of any substantial length made mention of the number of people marching either by reference to the total numbers involved, e.g. **A Million say no to war on Iraq**, (*Leicester Mercury*, 15 February 2003, p.1), and ‘Hundreds of thousands took to the streets of London’, from **On the march for peace...** (*Bury Free Press*, 21 February 2003, p.9), or by finding a local angle focused on the number of local people involved, e.g. ‘About 1,000 from Leicestershire in protest’ from **United against war**, (*Leicester Mercury*, 17 February 2003, p.3), and **Thousands from north west join huge protest against conflict**, (*MEN*, 15 February 2003, p.3).

An accompanying theme, which some might argue would near inevitably follow from such a large scale rally, was an emphasis on the diversity of the marchers:

Yes the familiar names were there: CND, the Socialist Workers Party, various Islamic groups. And, yes, the same battered collection tins were rung by earnest girls wearing Peruvian knit-caps and expressions of righteous indignation. But alongside the veterans of Greenham Common and the poll tax riots marched those who had never marched before.

The women of mythical Middle England linked arms with young men with Liam Gallagher haircuts and Manchester City shirts. Men in tweed suits walked alongside cheerful old ladies.

(**Families walk against war**, *MEN*, 17 February 2003, p.7).

As this passage also states, many who partook in this demonstration had never marched before, and without any of the papers ever resorting to the day’s newly invented tabloid cliché of describing them as ‘virgin marchers’, the idea was still a persistent theme in four of the eight reports on the protest.

The significance of these findings is that they should go against the grain of the two of the most prevalent tendencies of the ‘protest paradigm’. First, as argued in Chapter 3, the ‘protest paradigm’ has traditionally set up an ‘us and them’ binary opposition by which protesters are cast

as being outside the bounds of ordinary society (Hackett and Zhao (1994: 514). Yet by drawing attention to the diversity and ordinariness of the marchers, the reporting of the 15 February demonstration presents an altogether different image of protest. The second point, which follows on from this, is that whereas ‘protest paradigm’ has a tendency to suggest that protesters are out of touch with public opinion (McLeod and Detemmer 1999: 6; see also Gitlin 1980; MacFarlane 2001), the reporting of the 15 February demonstration was very different because when ‘a million’ people take to the streets in protest they may reasonably be said to represent a significant proportion of public opinion.

The peaceful and ‘moderate’ demonstration

Studies of the reporting of previous demonstrations have drawn attention to the news media’s propensity to emphasise any incidents of violence at demos no matter how isolated those incidents were and structure their reports around those, rather than address the issues that inspired the protests in the first place (Halloran et al 1970; Cottle 1998; Deacon and Golding 1994: 130-135; Gitlin 1980; Hackett and Zhao 1994; Luther and Miller 2005; McLeod and Detemmer 1999; Murdock 1981). This, as was shown in Chapter 3, is a staple component of the ‘protest paradigm’. Yet the reporting of the 15 February demonstration stands as a rare exception to this general principle. With the provincial papers studied here, the reporting of the London demo was generally devoid of any mention of trouble or even the prospect of it. This was not because the rally was entirely blemish-free since according to the BBC there were ‘a handful of arrests for minor public order offences’ (BBC News 2003a). There were also, on the demonstration, a number of people carrying placards that hinted at the dark prospect of the 9/11 attacks having been an ‘inside job’ (personal observation). Yet none of the provincial papers mentioned this, preferring instead to make a note of the far more palatable ‘No War on Iraq’ and ‘Make Tea Not War’ slogans that adorned other placards (e.g. **A million say no to war on Iraq**, *Leicester Mercury*, 15 February 2003, p.1). The point here is not that an emphasis on violence and conspiracy theories would have been more representative of the behaviour and politics of most of the people marching – in fact they would not have been. Rather the point I wish to make is that the demonstration could have been reported on in a very different way, and according to the implicitly predictive tendencies of the ‘protest paradigm’ that is what we would expect.

The only exceptions to legitimizing portrayals of antiwar protest on this day came in two reports. One warning that ‘mass protests and civil disobedience will break out ... if Britain goes to war’ (**Unrest to spread**, *MEN*, 17 February 2003, p.7); the other a ‘World News’ section overview

of the protests from around the world: 'Police in Athens fired tear gas in clashes with several hundred anarchists who smashed store windows and threw a petrol bomb at a newspaper office' (**'No war in Iraq' plea goes across the world**, *Leicester Mercury*, 15 February 2003, p.9).

Clearly if the majority of news reports emphasised the number and diversity of the marchers involved and, two exceptions aside, made no mention or hint of disorder at the protests, then it would not be appropriate to claim that the reporting of the day's events placed the antiwar movement in either sphere of deviance. However the test of whether reports placed the movement in the sphere of full or partial legitimacy is whether press coverage allowed opponents of the war to articulate their reasons to justify their stance. At this point there was an intriguing difference between the evening and weekly papers.

Why protest? Reasons for being against the war

In addition to emphasising the diversity of the protesters, the reports from the two evening papers (the *MEN* and the *Leicester Mercury*) tended to focus on capturing people's reflections on the experience of attending the march. In other publications, notably the *Bury Free Press* and the *Slough Observer*, marchers were more often quoted giving their reasons why they regarded the war as wrong. So for example, the *Leicester Mercury*'s **A million say no to war on Iraq** (15 February 2003, p.1) was laced with quotations such as:

- "This is not the kind of thing I thought I would be doing on a Saturday. I am quite surprised to find myself here", and
- "I am a bit of a beginner when it comes to all this, but I cannot remember anything like it bringing so many people out into the streets"

The closest anyone in the report came to stating a case against the war was when a protester expressed her fears that "this war is going to have terrible consequences, and not just in Iraq." But the report stops short of spelling out what those fears are. Overall four of the six reports on the demo in the evening papers placed the movement in the 'sphere of partial legitimacy', two in the 'sphere of implicit deviance', and so none in the 'sphere of full legitimacy'.

By contrast, in the reports from the *Bury Free Press* (**On the march for peace...** 21 February 2003, p.9) and the *Slough Observer* (**Peace marchers join the great protest**, 21 February 2003, p.22) marchers were quoted articulating their concerns for the loss of innocent lives and their

conviction that the United Nations held the key to a peaceful resolution of the crisis. Perhaps the most succinct expression of these arguments came from the *Bury Free Press* report **On the march for peace...**: “I am appalled we are willing to bomb innocent people in Iraq and abandon peaceful negotiations [sic]. We should persist with the United Nations.” Statements such as this are of course very limited expositions of a particular point of view that fall far short of being definitive statements since questions about *how* ‘we’ – presumably referring to Britain and America – ‘should persist’ with the UN and ‘peaceful negotiations’ (which weren’t actually happening anyway although inspections were progressing) remain unanswered.

Curiously, none of the reports sampled quoted any of the speakers who spoke at the end of the rally such as Tony Benn, Charles Kennedy MP, and Jesse Jackson.

It is important however to be realistic about the amount of detail that press reports can be expected to carry, particularly when the reports are of demonstrations. As the Glasgow Media Group cautioned some years ago, the reporting of a demonstration ‘is not an obvious vehicle for the expression of rational argument’ (1985: 274). So any statement by opponents of the war laying out their reasoning for a full sentence or more, as in the **On the march for peace...** report, was placed in the ‘sphere of full legitimacy’. Moreover, the fact that the reports granted any significant degree of space to the protesters so as to allow them to express their objections to the war was in itself remarkable, because as was argued in Chapter 3, most previous reports of protest have focused on the spectacle of the demonstrations whilst relying on official framings and commentary to explain them. The result is that there has been a failure to explore the underlying grievances that lie behind demonstrations thereby making them seem ‘essentially ephemeral’ (Murdock 1981: 214). Yet neither of those tendencies – both of which are core components of the ‘protest paradigm’ – were evident in the local press’s reporting of the 15 February demonstration.

Overall, of the four reports about the march in the weekly press, two placed the movement in the ‘sphere of full legitimacy’, one in the ‘sphere of partial legitimacy’, and the last one was too short to be classifiable. So while the two evening publications gave a greater amount of coverage to the march, including the front page in the case of the *Leicester Mercury*, weekly press portrayals of the march granted the antiwar movement a greater degree of legitimacy than evening press reports did.

Throughout early 2003, in the period from the beginning of the year until about the 10 March, the (mostly partial) legitimacy of the antiwar movement was rarely ever challenged in local press news reporting and this remained more or less constant throughout that time, including from late February to early March. The four reports that treated opposition to the war as being ‘implicitly deviant’ were fairly evenly spread across this timeline, being dated 25 January, 15 February, 17 February, and 8 March.

The previous chapter argued that the editorials took an ‘agnostic’ position in the debates about the rights and wrongs, the wisdom or the folly, of military action. Such a stance would logically admit unease about the war was understandable and that opponents of any invasion deserved to be heard. The discussion in this section showed that this was indeed the case in relation to the demonstration on 15 February as opponents of the war were referenced in the local press on a fairly regular basis. This tendency also held true throughout the following three weeks.

From mid to late March

However, as time rolled on into the middle of March and the military option came to be seen as near inevitable, editorial commentary began to insist that members of the public should set aside whatever misgivings they may have about military action so as to ‘support the troops’ (see previous chapter). One interpretation of this observation would be to say that as Britain entered the war effort the local press now regarded any expression of dissent as tantamount to treachery. But such an interpretation would be too rigid, and is incompatible with the finding, presented in Figure 10.5, that during the three week period from 10 to 30 March, eight reports were deemed to have represented opponents of the war in a manner befitting of the ‘sphere of partial legitimacy’, and an additional two reports placed antiwar activists in the ‘sphere of full legitimacy’. All the same it is equally evident from Figure 10.6 that ‘spheres of legitimacy’ were tightly squeezed as the ‘sphere of implicit deviance’ expanded, and ‘explicitly deviant’ portrayals of the movement made their first appearance. In other words, Figure 10.6 suggests a dramatic decline in the legitimacy of the antiwar movement but not its exile.

In this section I shall argue that as the Iraq crisis entered this new phase there were five factors that in their different ways had a bearing on the degree of legitimacy that the antiwar movement was accorded in the local press. The five factors were: the nature of any dissent undertaken by the antiwar movement, the behaviour of demonstrators at these protests, the timing of any protests

organised, the politics of the paper in question, and the political radicalism of the groups organising oppositional activities. It could only ever be a matter of subjective judgement as to how much weight ought to be given to each of these five factors. In any case they all built upon and were intertwined with each other, so it would not be appropriate to even attempt to produce such a chart.

The interconnections between the different factors

Comparing the reporting of antiwar activism during the dates between 10 and 30 March with that of the 15 February demo could lead one to suppose that the press had switched their metaphorical lenses as the papers came to address a different set of questions about the activities of the antiwar movement. Whereas the reporting of the 15 February demonstration revealed an interest in the ‘ordinary people’ marching – particularly those who had never marched before – and was also curious to learn of their reflections on the experiential nature of their ‘first time’, there was, after the middle of March, little sense of the reporting attempting to individualise antiwar protesters. Whereas the reporting of 15 February allowed protesters to at least state their case against the war, (even if they were rarely ever granted the space necessary to actually justify their stance), from mid-March onwards protesters were portrayed as though they were simply animated by feelings they wanted to express. And whereas the reporting of the 15 February demo was near unique in the history of protest reporting because of the absence of the reporting of trouble or extremism (even though there was a small amount of unrest on 15 February and elements of extremism were on display for those minded to be critical of the movement), the majority of protests to have been reported on after 10 March, were, to varying degrees, characterised by an emphasis on trouble, disruption and inconvenience. Finally, the near monopoly that protesters and the antiwar movement had over commentary on their protests at around the time of 15 February demonstration and during the subsequent three weeks, evaporated from mid-March onwards as people who were critical of some of the protests taking place – particularly those in which school children publicly protested against the war during school hours, i.e. the so-called ‘truant protests’ – began to challenge the legitimacy of those protests in local press news reporting. These are all classic features of the ‘protest paradigm’ as it has been traditionally understood (see Chapter 3). But all this is only half the story.

As Wolfsfeld explains, the process of news creation is best understood as one ‘in which journalists attempt to find a *narrative fit between incoming information and existing media frames*’ (1997: 34 original emphasis). So while this proposition rejects the naivety of metaphors

about the media mirroring reality, it also means that so long as real world events are known about and considered sufficiently newsworthy to 'make the news', the nature of those real world events can be expected to have some bearing on news media content. Seen in this light it was always likely that certain types of protest that the antiwar movement partook in from the middle of March onwards, especially the truant protests, would be reported on as being a more contentious means of expressing antiwar sentiment than mass demonstrations that were largely trouble free and attended by over a million people.

Of course, none of the protests that took place in March came close to repeating the scale of the 15 February demonstration, but there were two large, trouble-free, protests that took place in Manchester and Leicester during that month attended by an estimated 12,000 and 1,000-2,000 people respectively (**12,000 in war protest**, *MEN*, 10 March 2003, p.2; **End this war**, *Leicester Mercury*, 29 March 2003, p.1; **Protesters in mass rally against war**, *Leicester Mercury*, 31 March 2003, p.2). These protests were reported on in a manner that went against many of the tendencies of the 'protest paradigm' and placed the movement in the 'sphere of partial legitimacy'. In each case mention was made of the size of the demonstration, the diversity of the marchers, opponents of the war were quoted stating their case but without arguing it through at length, and the articles did not report any incidents of trouble breaking out. On one level it is possible to account for the fact that the demonstrations were reported on in this way as simply stemming from the 'information' about them that the news workers received. At the same time though, newswriters would appear to have approached the reporting of any protests that took place from 10 to 30 March with a different set of 'media frames' in mind, since questions about the prospects of violence and civil disorder were usually mentioned or at least obliquely referred to. This much is evident from the way that information about the high levels of policing at peaceful marches was nonetheless regarded as being worthy of inclusion in the reporting. One example of this would be: 'A strong police presence marshalled the protesters as they proceeded into the city' (**End this war**, *Leicester Mercury*, 29 March 2003, p.1); or, to take another example, marchers walked 'under heavy police escort' (**City stops for peace rally**, *MEN*, 24 March 2003, p.7). So even though both these marches passed off without civil disruption, the reporting of them still traded on an understanding of an association between protest and disorder.

It is important to appreciate though, that this shift in the focus of news reporting from the middle of March onwards came not without warning. The *Leicester Mercury*'s editorial **Pupil protest raises serious questions**, (10 March 2003, p.12) ushered in a new phase in editorial commentary

on the Iraq crisis. From this point on in the crisis, editorials, whether they were specifically preoccupied with opposition to the war (as with **Pupil protest...**) or just commenting on it as they addressed the crisis more generally, sketched out some aspects of the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable forms of dissent. What was at stake during this hour then was not the legitimacy of antiwar opinions *per se* but the means by which dissent was expressed. The *Leicester Mercury*'s self-explanatory editorial **Petition not truant protest** (18 March 2003, p.12) captures the essence of the binary opposition with its title alone: if antiwar school children had organised a petition to Downing Street laying out their objections to the war that would have been perfectly acceptable; but 'illegal,' 'truant protests' could have 'no justification.' (The editorials had no comment to make on the acceptability of legal mass protests once military action was underway).

The attitude of many opponents of the war however, was often starkly different from that of the editorial writers. Whilst most opponents of the war declared that they too supported the troops, (and there were a number of instances from the news reports studied in this research where individuals associated with the movement declared such support), for many antiwar activists, particularly the more radical among them, there was a strong sense of conviction that they should still continue to protest against the war. In addition, the movement grew more militant in its activism in this hour, for this was the time when roadblock demonstrations and children taking time off school to protest against the war became a more commonplace means of expressing dissent. The result then, was something of a parting of the ways between what had previously been a semi-sympathetic local press and the locally based antiwar groups. Understanding this point is key to understanding the decline in the mediated legitimacy of the antiwar movement from the middle of March onwards.

Additional factors: The politics of the groups involved and the politics of the papers

However, the timing of dissent, the nature of it, and the behaviour of protesters, may not have been the only factors to affect the legitimacy that opponents of the war were accorded in local press reporting. Even though there was no hint of this in the editorials, I shall tentatively make the case in this section, that the reporting of the activities of certain types of antiwar group, particularly radical socialist groups, betrayed a distinct unease about those groups to the extent that whenever radical socialist groups had organised protests, (as distinct from having been merely involved in them), the reporting cast the protesters into the sphere of either 'implicit' or 'explicit deviance'.

Finally, it is important to be alert to the possibility of there being significant differences between the papers in their treatment of the antiwar movement. This applies both in terms of the stated opinions in their editorials regarding antiwar activism, and in the extent to which the portrayal of the various aspects and activities of the antiwar movement in news reporting were ‘indexed’ to the ‘guidelines’ laid out in editorial commentary.

Evidence

The manifestation of the ‘protest paradigm’ needs to be examined in more detail. To this end most of the discussion that follows is in relation to the so-called ‘truant protests’ that took place from the middle of March onwards. The ‘central organising idea’ (Gamson and Modigliani 1989: 3) around which reports of the ‘truant protests’ (and other acts of civil disobedience were structured) was a preoccupation with the trouble and disorder they resulted in. This is a classic feature of the ‘protest paradigm’ (see Chapter 3). The frame was flagged up through the titles of reports about these activities, and through the contributions that different sources made to these reports.

Titles and narratives

Examples of titles that drew attention to the inconvenience and disruption that many of the protests from around this time were said to be causing, include **Peace demo road chaos**, (*MEN*, 18 March 2003, p.2) and **City stops for peace rally**, (*MEN*, 24 March 2003, p.7). (Emphasis added in both cases). Meanwhile the image of dangerous and disobedient protesters found expression in the *Slough Express* report **Union flag torn down by young in war demo**, (27 March 2003, p.1): ‘... the children had to dodge their own headmaster who was waiting at the school gates ... there was a hint of menace in the air.’ (That this should have come from a paper whose editorial column declared that these protests do ‘not seem to offer any real cause for worry’ [**Unlike Iraq, we have the freedom to protest**, *Slough Express*, 27 March 2003, p.25] is an example of the occasional disconnect between editorial commentary and news reporting). Other narratives that convey the themes of trouble, inconvenience and disruption include:

- A fixation on the amount of trouble certain categories of protesters had landed themselves in. This was particularly true of school pupils who took time off school to voice their objections to the war. E.g. **Pupils arrested in Iraq protest**, (*Leicester Mercury*, 8 March 2003, p.1); and **Antiwar pupils face absenteeism probe**, (*Leicester*

Mercury, 11 March 2003, p.11), both of which detail the offences that eight young protesters had allegedly committed and were due to be charged over.

- And the reaction of the authorities to what the school pupils were doing. E.g. **Summit over threat of new pupil's strike**, (*Leicester Mercury*, 12 March 2003, p.4).

Sources and the contribution they made to the reports

An additional point of comparison between the reports on the 15 February demonstration and the reporting of protests that took place on the eve of the invasion, was that whereas the 15 February reports never, in the sample, featured counter commentary that indulged in barbed criticisms of the movement, the protests that took place three weeks later were often laced with comments by people who were critical of the protests and those who had taken part in them. This was particularly true in the case of the 'truant protests'. For example, the previously mentioned **Antiwar pupils face absenteeism probe**, (*Leicester Mercury*, 11 March 2003, p.11) draws on the quotations from college principles and local education authority figures without ever once seeking a counter quote from any of the protesters involved. Admittedly it was rare for reports about protests that took place at this time to be so one-sided, as other reports from this time usually contained input from the protesters themselves. But importantly, as Table 10.4 goes someway towards indicating, critics of the movement had a greater degree of influence over the news discourses surrounding oppositional activities than the protesters did. In this way the reporting is comparable to the reporting of previous protests, given that 'protest paradigm' reporting had a strong tendency to rely on official framings and sources (Chapter 3; see also Gitlin 1980; Luther and Miller 2005: 80; McLeod and Detenber 1999).

Table 10.4 contrasts the number of protesters to have been quoted in a sample of protest related stories from around this time with the number of 'authority figures' (head teachers, college principles, local authority spokespersons, police officers, and local councillors) quoted in the same stories.

Table 10.4: The ratio of quotation from protesters and their supporters to 'authority figures' and critics of the movement in a sample of reports from the eve of, and immediately after, the invasion				
Title of report	Publication and date	Number of quotes by protesters and their supporters	Number of quotes by 'authority figures' and critics of the movement	Attention score
Pupils arrested in Iraq protest	Leicester Mercury, 8/03/03	1	2	6
Antiwar pupils face absenteeism probe	Leicester Mercury, 11/03/03	0	3	5
Summit over threat of new pupils strike	Leicester Mercury, 12/03/03	1	3	4
Peace demo road chaos	MEN, 18/03/03	0	1	3
Protesters plan demo over Iraq War	Leicester Mercury, 18/03/03	1	0	1
Students rally against conflict	Leicester Mercury, 19/03/03	1	0	1
Antiwar marchers plan more demos	MEN, 20/03/03	0	3	4
Pupils join in antiwar demo	Leicester Mercury, 20/03/03	3	1	2
Walkout by town's pupils	Bury Free Press, 21/03/03	2	2	3
City stops for peace rally	MEN, 24/03/03	4	0	4
Union flag torn down by young in war demo	Slough Express, 27/03/03	2	2	6
Totals / average		15	17	3.55

Care must be taken here not to assume that the 'authority figures' necessarily took a pro-war stance. Rather they tended to be critical of the means by which opponents of the war had chosen to express themselves.

Table 10.4 shows that in five of the eleven reports, the number of quotes by 'authority figures' surpassed the number of times protesters were quoted in the reports; that in a further two reports input from both sides was numerically equal; and in four reports the number of quotes from protesters surpassed the number of quotes by 'authority figures'. If anything though, this table fails to fully capture the dominance of the 'authority figures'. For one thing 'authority figures' were often quoted at substantially greater length than the protesters. In **Walkout by town's pupils** (*Bury Free Press*, 21 March 2003, p.4) for instance, input from 'authority figures' totalled 121 words compared to the protesters' combined total of 76 words. For another, the table also shows that reports that quoted 'authority figures' more often than protesters, commanded more

attention than in reports for which the contribution of the different sources was the other way round.

The ‘attention score’ idea comes from Budd (1964). It is a device compatible with content analysis research methods for gauging the amount of attention that the presentation of news reports would suggest that they ought to command. Exact details about the operationalisation of this method can be found in Appendix 1, but for current purposes it is sufficient to note that the presentational features to look out for in any news report are its headline size, length, placement within the paper itself, position on the page, and whether it is accompanied by any photography. The more of these qualities a report has, the more likely it is grab the reader’s attention, and thus the higher its ‘attention score’ is. Table 10.4 shows that four of the five reports for which the number of ‘authority figures’ quoted surpassed the number of quotes given by protesters, had high ‘attention scores’ of between 4 and 6. By contrast, in three of the four reports where the number of protesters quoted exceeded the number of ‘authority figures’ the ‘attention scores’ were much lower, scoring either 1 or 2.

As mentioned above, head teachers, college principles, local authority spokespersons, and police officers, did not counter the protesters with a set of pro-war arguments, and it would not be appropriate to make assumptions about their politics on the basis of the binary opposition in Table 10.4. In fact they were at pains not to express any opinion about the decision to launch military action. Instead their commentary was pared down to an articulation of their concerns about the means by which antiwar school children had adopted to register their dissent. The (joint) statement from the headmasters in one town that “while we respect the wishes of students to express opinions on the Iraq situation, we cannot support a walkout from school” (**Walkout by town’s pupils**, *Bury Free Press*, 21 March 2003, p.4) was typical of this tendency throughout the ‘truant protest’ reports. The stated reason why the head teachers, in this and in other reports, raised their objections revolved around concerns for the ‘health and safety risks’ that the children were said to be putting themselves and the public in. The concern could easily be made to sound ridiculous. But the fact that the reports were framed around this concern, combined with tendency to use quotations from authority figures slightly more often, at greater length, and more frequently in reports that commanded more attention, served to establish questions about the trouble, disruption and inconvenience caused by the ‘truant protests’ as the core issues around which reports of ‘truant protests’ was framed, rather than debates about the rights and wrongs of military action in the Gulf.

The ‘authority figures’ collective capacity for frame promotion vis-à-vis that of the protesters was further enhanced by a tendency to describe the children protesting against the war as motivated simply by desire to ‘express their feelings’ (examples include **Antiwar pupils face absenteeism probe**, *Leicester Mercury*, 11 March 2003, p.11; **Walkout by town’s pupils**, *Bury Free Press*, 21 March 2003, p.4). Explaining their motivations in this way does a disservice to antiwar arguments because it downgrades the strength and solidity of their convictions by emphasising their subjectivity. A statement such as ‘we *feel* this war is wrong’ provides no basis for undecided opinion to join in with the antiwar camp. It will not shift public opinion at all – people will either *feel* the same way or they won’t – and merely *expressing* this feeling could never alter the course of events. What is more, in this way the reporting of the ‘truant protests’ echoed the reporting of demonstrations against the Vietnam War and the Gulf War, when the youthfulness of the protesters was equated with irrationalism and emotionalism in place of alternative ‘connotations of youthfulness, such as energy, freshness, [and] idealism’ (Hackett and Zhao 1994: 518). Yet opponents of the war didn’t always help themselves in this regard as there were a number of occasions when they too justified their stance in terms of a desire to ‘express their feelings’ (or some such variant on the phrase). (Examples could be found in **Students rally against conflict**, *Leicester Mercury*, 19 March 2003, p.2; **Candlelight vigil in war protest**, *Leicester Mercury*, 20 March 2003, p.6; **Citizens refuse to back down over war**, *Slough Express*, 27 March 2003, p.4).

A case study

This in-depth case study of the *Leicester Mercury*’s report, **Summit over threat of new pupils strike** (12 March 2003, p.4), is intended to shed some light on how the equation between protest and trouble was established through the selection of information about the nature of the ‘truant protests’. The case study then proceeds to give due consideration to the question of whether the political leanings of the groups organising the protests had any bearing on the degree of legitimacy they were accorded in the press. The report begins:

Education leaders are holding emergency talks with police and schools about how to deal with a further students’ strike planned for next week.

Measures suggested in the talks could include pupils being given detention or being excluded from school for short periods if they take part.

Hundreds of students skipped school to protest about the war with Iraq last Friday and eight were arrested.

Six people, including five of school age, were subsequently charged with offences including threatening behaviour, assaulting a police officer and possessing an offensive weapon.

Evidently the 'trouble' theme is established through the information selected in the report, with the notable inclusions here being – the arrest of eight young people, six of whom have been charged, (this repeats information from previous reports **Pupils arrested in Iraq protest**, 8 March 2003, p.1; and **Antiwar pupils face absenteeism probe**, 11 March 2003, p.11; both from the *Leicester Mercury*); the prospect of suspension from school for any pupils who partake in future 'truant protests' and, although it is not shown here, an accompanying photograph of five young males (presumably male on the basis of the way they are dressed) whose faces have been pixelated and who are being escorted by six police officers. Also of significance (although this aspect of the report has not been reproduced) is that the ratio of quotes from 'authority figures' to protesters stands at 3:1. As in other reports of the 'truant protests', 'authority figures' contribute to the establishment of the 'trouble' frame via a professed concern for 'the safety of [the] pupils' involved.

The lexical choices are also deserving of comment. The use of the word 'threat' in the title serves to reinforce the association between protest and disorder, when alternatives such as 'prospect' or 'likelihood' could have carried the same information but without invoking those negative connotations. By labelling the discussions between the police, schools and education authority as 'emergency talks' rather than simply describe them as 'talks' the opening paragraph establishes a sense of the urgency and seriousness that the 'threat' of the pupils' strike is said to represent.

In contrast to the 'protest as trouble' theme that is developed and articulated at length throughout the report, the controversies surrounding the Iraq crisis are, in this article, granted precious little attention throughout, being mentioned only in the second paragraph. At no point do opponents of military action so much as even state their case against it. As stated in Chapter 3, this emphasis on trouble combined with a failure to consider the underlying grievances that motivate protesters, are classic features of the 'protest paradigm'.

However, most significantly of all from the perspective of an interest in the legitimacy of the antiwar movement, the report goes on to incriminate the locally based antiwar groups as responsible for the nature of the protests they are planning:

Members of the anti-capitalist youth body the International Socialist Resistance, which led Friday's demonstration, and Leicester Stop the War Coalition met last night at the Secular Hall in Humberstone Gate to organise the next rally.

The coalition is planning a strike and walkout of school, college and university students on Wednesday next week for a 2pm demonstration at the Clock Tower in the city centre.

Both the coalition and the ISR are urging pupils to join a mass walkout of students and working people at noon on the day the war starts.

This extract, with its image of young radicals conducting clandestine meetings to sow the seeds of sedition, hints at a certain unease in the (*Leicester Mercury's*) reporting about the radical nature of many of the groups involved in the antiwar movement. A previous report from the same paper **Socialist group whipped up demo**, (11 March 2003, p.11), expresses a comparable degree of apprehension about the politics of the International Socialist Resistance group that was said to be behind the 'demo'. Could it be that title betrays the British media's long-standing hostility towards the radical left that has been well documented elsewhere (see Glasgow Media Group 1982: ch.4; Curran et al 2005)? Certainly to describe the group as having 'whipped up' the demonstration was a delegitimizing choice, because of the way it suggests emotionalism and manipulation. Other lexical choices, such as, 'organised' or 'promoted', would have been much more positive because they would stressed the hard work and organisation involved.

In summary to this section, the reporting of the 'truant protests' exhibited many of the characteristics of the 'protest paradigm', with its focus on the criminality of the demonstrators; the 'event orientation' of the reporting, particularly the failure to explore the underlying issues and making dissent seem irrational and 'essentially ephemeral' (Murdock 1981: 214); and, through a reliance on input from 'authority figures', the dominance of 'official' framings in covering the protests. It is true that there was little focus on either the spectacle of the protests or the appearance of the protesters – presumably because these aspects of the protests were unremarkable – while the question of whether or not the protesters represented public opinion was left to one side. But the contrast to the reporting of the 15 February demonstration, where the reporting often flatly contradicted the tendencies of the 'protest paradigm', is still striking. That this should be so is not entirely without precedent. Deacon and Golding's (1994) study of the oppositional activities against the 'poll tax' for instance, also identified a sharp distinction between legitimate grievances about the tax, and 'the dangerous sedition of marginal wastrels'

(1994: 132) who stirred up the non-payment campaign against the tax and whose protests turned to rioting.

It is important to appreciate though, that for all the criticisms that were levelled at the 'truant protesters' there was a measure of restraint to those criticisms in the reporting. Whereas Hackett and Zhao's (1994) research into Op-Ed commentary and letters to the editor during the time of the Gulf War of 1990-1991, found occasions when opponents of that war were regarded as traitors, or subject to 'dehumanising metaphors' by being labelled as 'simple-minded creatures' or the 'pigs of peace', and when critics of the peace movement argued that to be opposed to the war was tantamount to being opposed to democratic politics, nothing of comparable vehemence could be found in the local news reporting of any of the demonstrations that took place against the Iraq War. (Although letters to the editor sometimes came close to making those kinds of assertions). This is why so few reports from the sample of papers studied for this research placed the antiwar movement in the 'sphere of explicit deviance' (see Figures 10.5 and 10.6).

Legitimate and illegitimate ways of being 'antiwar'

The reports **Antiwar pupils face absenteeism probe**, and **Socialist group whipped up demo**, that cast the opponents of the war in one or other of the spheres of deviance, both appeared on the same page of the same edition of the *Leicester Mercury*. It is important though, to be aware of the fact that this was just one half of a double-page spread on the Iraq crisis headlined **Iraq crisis: country in turmoil** (p.10), where the paper sampled the views of nine of the ten MPs in the county on the crisis, and also carried a report on the local MP's resignation from the government over the crisis: **(MP's resignation 'will put pressure on Blair to avoid war'**, (p.10). Likewise the aforementioned **Summit over threat of new pupil's strike** (*Leicester Mercury*, 12 March 2003, p.4) was printed alongside a follow-up report on the MP's decision to resign (**Ex-agent not surprised by MP's 'war' resignation**, p.4) and directly above a report on local religious leaders' criticisms of the prospect of war (**Religious leaders unite to condemn military action**, p.4). None of these four reports that were focused on the crisis itself without mention of the antiwar movement regarded opposition to the war as unacceptable. The nine MPs whose views were sampled were divided on the wisdom of military action. Crucially though, in relation to the matter of how the *Mercury* handled the controversy, all nine MPs were given an equal amount of space to explain their respective positions, and the paper showed no preference for either the pro-war or the antiwar MPs in its placement and treatment of their comments. The MP who resigned from the government, Andy Reed, (Loughborough, Labour), is cast as a man true to his convictions

who has made a 'brave decision' in the words of a quoted Labour councillor, and whose decision was widely respected by fellow MPs even if not all agreed with him. While the religious leaders, representing the Muslim and Anglican faiths, were united in their opposition to the war. So when reports like **Antiwar pupils face absenteeism probe**, and **Summit over threat of new pupil's strike**, that articulated the classic preoccupations of the 'protest paradigm', are seen in the context of these other reports on the crisis it becomes apparent that it wasn't opposition to the war that was unacceptable, just certain forms of protest that were, particularly those protests involving school children taking time off school to make their objections known.

Another notable feature of all these reports from the *Leicester Mercury* that treated opposition to the war as being understandable, was the complete absence of any input from people involved or associated with the antiwar movement. Arguments against the war only ever came from MPs and religious leaders in the four reports.³ In this the *Leicester Mercury* was far from unique. In fact the only two occasions when any of the papers included commentary from the antiwar movement outside of the context of reports about their activities came when the MPs in Slough and Enfield voted for the war and the *Slough Express* and the *Enfield Gazette* both sought out counter-commentary from members of the local based antiwar groups.⁴ The fact that this was such a rare occurrence may be down to an oversight (journalists might not have even considered seeking out a response from the antiwar groups), or it may be because news workers had doubts about the legitimacy and representativeness of the antiwar movement, with the result that they purposely avoided them outside of the context of reports about their activities (the phenomenon of 'critique by exclusion', see Deacon 1999). But whatever the reason, it is an indication of the marginality of the antiwar movement.

Explanations as to why these two papers should have been the only ones to have sought out reactions from the antiwar movement to the ways the local MPs voted, will be explored in Chapter 11. But it is probably no coincidence that these two papers leant more strongly in the antiwar direction than any of the others, as discussed previously in relation to Table 10.1.

Differences between the papers

Most of the examples up until this point have been taken from the *Leicester Mercury* and the *Manchester Evening News*. In part this has been because as Table 10.3 showed those papers carried the greatest number of reports on the antiwar movement and the discussion has tried to reflect that. But it is important to be alert to the differences between the papers in terms of their

treatment of the antiwar protest. The most striking exception to the general tendency to cast 'truant protests' in deviant light came from the *Enfield Gazette's* report **All ages and all faiths united in condemning war** (27 March 2003, p.10).

The article begins: 'Hundreds of students walked out of several secondary schools and colleges in the borough to protest against the war in Iraq', and from this it might be supposed that such an introduction sets up the classic preoccupations of 'truant protest' stories that equate protest with trouble. Instead however, this report portrays the protesters as a legitimate force whose views deserve to be considered, and ponders whether the 'truant protest' phenomenon marks the beginning of a new kind of engagement with politics. First, the question of legitimacy.

Unlike most other lengthy reports on the 'truant protests' this one is completely without any counter quotations from 'authority figures' criticising this mode of protest. Instead all five sources with some input into the report are avowedly antiwar; two of them are quoted at considerable length (97 and 101 words each); and the report makes a point of establishing the sincerity of their convictions. One protester, for instance, is referred to as a 'devout Quaker'; another 'struggled on crutches to get to the protest.'

Additionally the title itself – **All ages and all faiths united in condemning war** – plays incredibly well for the antiwar movement. It creates the impression of an effortlessly unified antiwar movement, which it was not (for reasons outlined in Chapter 6). And it could be misread as implying that everyone, from 'all ages and all faiths' opposed the war, when it would have been far more accurate, if rather banal, to state that there were some people from all age groups and some people from each of the faiths who opposed the war.

However, the most unusual feature of all in this article is that it treats the occasion of school children walking out of school to object to the war, as the basis for considering the wider significance of the protests:

Many are now asking if the rallies herald a new spirit of rebellion within a population who feel that their politicians – such as Enfield's three MPs, who all voted in support of government policy on Iraq – do not satisfactorily represent their views.

The implication of this passage is that unresponsiveness of politicians has provoked people into more militant forms of engagement with politics. To say that the report endorses the 'truant

protests' would be an overstatement because there is a difference between explanation and justification, and because alleging that politicians have failed to represent the views of the public is a different matter from accusing them of failing to act in the public interest. All the same, the reasoning here could well form the basis of an answer to the *Leicester Mercury's* suggestion that opponents of the war should restrict their activism to petitioning the Prime Minister (**Petition not truant protest**, 18 March 2003, p.12). Moreover the report in the *Enfield Gazette* does not condemn the protesters. Instead it offers a different, more understanding, explanation for their actions than accusations that the protesters were simply motivated by a desire to cause mayhem or because they were 'instigated' by older pupils (as asserted by Councillor Joginder Bal quoted in **Union flag torn down by young in war demo**, *Slough Express*, 27 March 2003, p.1).

Qualifying legitimacy

As we have already seen with the example of the reporting of the mass protests held in Manchester and Leicester (with reports such as **12,000 in war protest**, *MEN*, 10 March 2003, p.2; **End this war**, *Leicester Mercury*, 29 March 2003, p.1; **Protesters in mass rally against war**, *Leicester Mercury*, 31 March 2003, p.2), not all expressions of antiwar dissent were treated as necessarily 'deviant' by the papers. Small-scale legal protests that didn't inconvenience the public, such as roadside protests aimed at encouraging motorists to express their opposition to military action by sounding their Klaxons in support of the protesters were treated as being partially legitimate, (e.g. **Touting for toots in an appeal against rushing into war**, *Slough Express*, 13 March 2003, p.4). Yet such legitimacy as opponents of the war may have acquired was usually only ever qualified and partial.

It has already been shown that the reporting of mass protests at this time betrayed a preoccupation with the association between protest and disorder even when there was no trouble to report on at the demonstrations. But in addition to that, questions about the purpose and effectiveness of the demonstrations were raised in a number of reports at this time. For example one report of an antiwar march noted the 'bemused response of shoppers and motorists' to the march (**City stops for peace rally**, *MEN*, 24 March 2003, p.7). In another example, this time the reporting of a roadside protest, mention was made of the fact that the demonstration was taking place 'despite the fact that military action had been under way in Iraq for more than a week' (**Citizens refuse to back down over war**, *Slough Express*, 27 March 2003, p.4). Even the *Enfield Gazette's* **All ages and all faiths united in condemning war** (27 March 2003, p.10) questioned whether the protests would 'make any difference' once the war had begun. Implicitly, these observations begged the

question of ‘what’s the point?’ Reporting on the protests in this way is very different from the reporting of the ‘truant protests’ with all the implied and explicit deviance that has been described earlier. But it still calls to mind Hackett and Zhao’s (1994) ‘marginal oddity’ frame that casts opponents of the war as a curious irrelevancy.

Finally, and just occasionally, quotations from protest organisations from around this time, hinted at a loss of confidence as though the protesters had lowered their sights, or as if they had to justify their stance. One organiser was quoted as saying:

“It was never meant to be a mass demonstration. We are just local people showing our concern at the speed all this is happening at. ...

“We just wanted to do something ourselves to show our opposition and let others join in if they wished to.”

(Toby Evans, **Touting for toots in an appeal against rushing into war**, *Slough Express*, 13 March 2003, p.4).

While comments by a member of the STWC at another demonstration had an air of desperation about them: “It is not us who are losing the argument. It is Blair and Bush” (Mark Krantz, **City stops for peace rally**, *MEN*, 24 March 2003, p.7).

From April onwards: A preference for public meetings

Protests against the Iraq War and then the occupation of Iraq continued throughout the year and beyond, but after the first few days of the invasion feelings of demoralisation took root and then spread throughout the antiwar movement at large – a point that the leaders of the Stop the War Coalition would concede (Murray and German 2005: 212). In consequence protests against military operations in Iraq became less common. No locally based protests from the areas sampled were reported after April, and from this it’s probably reasonable to assume that none happened.

This however, was not the beginning of the end of the antiwar movement. While some groups ran out of momentum and in at least one case collapsed through internal division, there were other groups who either stuck to the core mission of the STWC or evolved into social forums – or practiced elements of both. (Refer back to the end of Chapter 6 for more details). Even so, it is true to say that those groups that continued were less active from April onwards compared to what they had been in February and March. It is this, along with the declining newsworthiness of the Iraq conflict as an issue that at least partially explains the sharp decline in the number of

'units' devoted to the antiwar movement that can be seen in Figure 10.1. An additional factor, that may have contributed to the declining news presence of the antiwar movement, is that it is possible that the declining legitimacy of the movement during March 2003 translated into local news workers purposely excluding the antiwar movement from news discourses – the 'critique by exclusion' phenomenon (see Deacon 1999). But it is impossible to say whether or not this was the case, and none of the journalists interviewed alluded to having approached the locally based antiwar groups in their areas in that way.

The importance of public meetings

For those local groups that survived, in whatever configuration, public meetings tended to be the main public events that they organised. In fact, of the 25 public meetings held throughout the year 16 were staged from the end of May onwards. Of the rest, five took place prior to the invasion of Iraq, and four during the 'invasion phase' of the conflict. More generally, public meetings were very important to the antiwar movement throughout the entire duration of its campaigning. The surveys conducted for this research found that over 89 percent of locally based antiwar groups who responded to the surveys declared that public meetings were one of their most important (top five) activities. Furthermore the recurrent motifs that consistently ran through the interviews were a passion for raising awareness of the war and opposition to it prior to the invasion, and, in the 'post invasion' period, ensuring that the Iraq War and all the issues bound up in it – from the plight of the Iraqi people to the dubiety of arguments in favour of the war – not be allowed to slide down the public/media agenda.

This chapter has already argued that even under the optimal conditions of being represented in a manner that would have placed the antiwar movement in the 'sphere of full legitimacy', a demonstration 'is not an obvious vehicle for the expression of rational argument' (Glasgow Media Group 1985: 274). Nor for that matter, is a demonstration an 'obvious vehicle' for the presentation of the kind of factual information required for an understanding of complex issues. Comments from the interviews by antiwar activists showed some appreciation of this. Public meetings however, are an altogether different matter. Whether they were set up as debates between pro- and anti-war positions, or intended as a platform for the sole purpose of propagating antiwar views (as was more common for those organised by opponents of the war), these public meetings allowed the invited speakers to at least articulate their views at some length. Sometimes even, packages and schools of thought of the kind outlined in Chapter 4 emerged from the speeches made, depending on the level of consistency of their arguments. Hence the reporting of

public meetings was potentially invaluable for the antiwar movement because it was one of the few means of communication available to them that had the potential to disseminate more detailed arguments and framings about the conflict so that those arguments and framings reached a wider public. Realising that potential however, hinged upon:

- a) The amount of attention the reporting of the meeting commanded in the first place;
- b) That any arguments made be spelt out in sufficient detail so as to be comprehensible; and
- c) The degree of legitimacy accorded to the speaker(s) and those in attendance (which usually meant people opposed to the war to begin with).

To a significant degree, the first of these two factors were entangled with each other. The lengthiness of any article enhances the amount of attention it commands (Budd 1964) and also facilitates more detailed expositions of the viewpoints raised in public meetings. In addition, lengthier pieces tend to be more prominently placed within newspapers thereby enhancing the amount of attention they attract. For the provincial press to have taken local public meetings seriously, much depended upon the newsworthiness of the main speaker(s) at the meeting combined with the promotional talents and strategies of whoever happened to be organising the meeting.

Priorities, organisation, and promotional talent

Locally based antiwar groups varied in the extent to which they prioritized public meetings; some were better organised than others; and some were more adept at promoting public meetings than others. These matters cannot be assessed on the basis of content analysis alone, and in any case they were examined in Chapter 6. But these three criteria matter because to fall down on any one of them carried the risk that the local press would fail to take as much interest in the meeting as might otherwise have been the case.

Newsworthiness of speakers

In spite of the absence of any consensus on which factors ought to be on a 'list' of news values, there does seem to be agreement that the status of the people involved in events has the potential to enhance the newsworthiness of those events. This applies as much to public meetings as to any other occurrence.

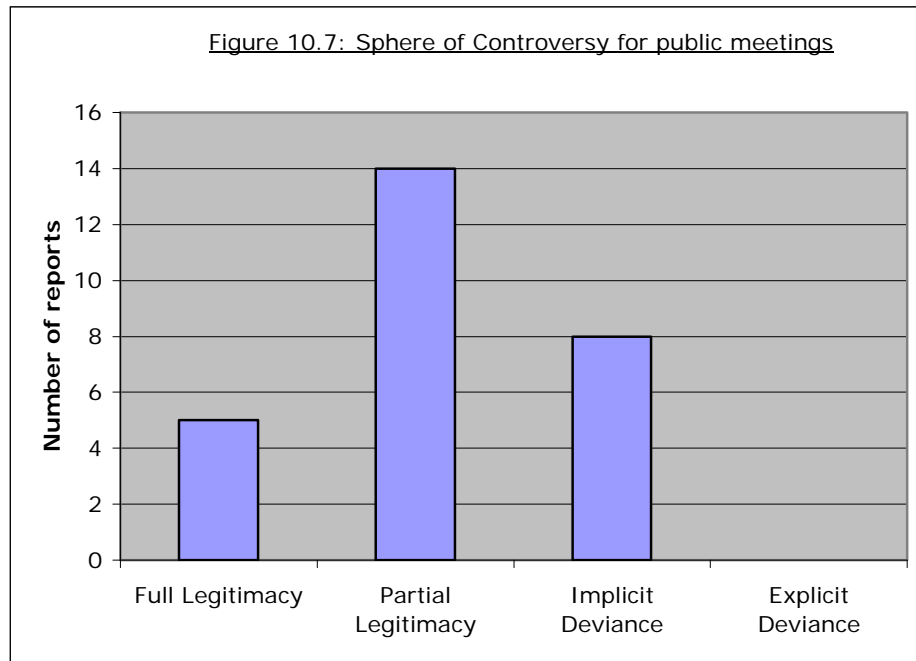
Galtung and Ruge (1999) said that news often focused on 'elite people'. Critiquing this, Harcup and O'Neill (2001) distinguished between a preoccupation with the 'power elite' and 'celebrities'. Yet the speakers who were invited to talk at public meetings in the selected localities – such as George Galloway MP, former MP and Cabinet Minister Tony Benn, former journalist kidnapped by the Taliban in the war on Afghanistan in 2001 Yvonne Ridley, former hostage Terry Waite, human rights campaigner Peter Tatchell, CND Vice-President Bruce Kent, and author and activist Milan Rai – didn't quite fall into either the 'power elite' or 'celebrity' categories. They would be best described as public figures; well known, to varying degrees, because of their politics, or, in the cases of Waite and Ridley, because they were thought to have a unique insight, born of unusual circumstances, of the issues involved in the debates surrounding the Iraq crisis.

The legitimacy of the speaker(s)

As I have argued was the case with the protests, (and Hallin [1986] also makes this point), the news media should be understood as the ones who police the boundaries between the different spheres of controversy because they have the capacity to either confer or deny legitimacy and credibility on the speakers in attendance at public meetings and the arguments those speakers outlined (see also Ericson et al 1989: 378; Wolfsfeld 1997: 3). However, in provincial press reporting the degree of legitimacy or otherwise accorded to different speakers varied considerably depending on the speaker's reputation. If the speaker is held in high esteem her views are more likely to be faithfully reproduced, even if, inevitably given the 'limited carrying capacities' of the news media (Hilgartner and Bosk 1988), any reproduction of her argument is only in summary form. If, on the other hand, the speaker is not so admired or seen as 'controversial', the report is more likely to be laced with any one of a number of features that chip away at the authority and/or legitimacy of the speaker and the claims he makes. It may be that the report is laced with expressions of doubt surrounding the speaker's claims, or the report implicitly questions his motives or sincerity, or that it draws attention to the past incidents of 'trouble' that the speaker has gotten himself into, and so on. Thus the question of whether the report focuses on the issues or the personalities involved is a key indicator of where the report places the meeting in the 'spheres of controversy'. Beyond taking this additional factor into account, judgements about where the reports of public meetings can be said to have placed the movement in the 'sphere of controversy' – full legitimacy, partial legitimacy, implicit deviance, or explicit deviance – should be made on the same basis as judgements about where reports of protests can be said to have placed the movement.

Results

Figure 10.7 shows the range in the degree of legitimacy that the retrospective and promotional reporting of public meetings attained throughout the thirteen months of the research. (Seven reports were too short for any overall judgements to be made).



Like the previous tables charting the legitimacy of the movement in protests, this table is also notable for the absence of explicitly deviant portrayals of the movement. But when this figure (10.7) is contrasted with Figure 10.5, which shows how the movement's activities were reported on across all activities, it can be seen that public meetings attained a higher measure of legitimacy than most other activities. In fact five of the eleven reports that placed antiwar activities in the 'sphere of full legitimacy' came from public meetings.

Also of significance is that 13 of the 16 public meetings that occurred were held in the aftermath of the invasion. Applying this fact to the insight that reports of public meetings were more likely to treat the movement in a manner that placed them somewhere in the 'sphere of legitimacy', provides the beginnings of an explanation for the results of Figure 10.6 which showed that the movement clawed back a measure of legitimacy from April onwards. However in order to fully understand why some reports of public meetings cast opponents of the war as 'fully legitimate',

when other reports represented the movement as ‘partially legitimate’, and others still placed the movement in the ‘sphere of implicit deviance’, more detailed case studies of each result are required. The discussion that follows also explores how ‘fully legitimate’ representations of the meetings allowed (antiwar) packages and schools of thought of the kind outlined in Chapter 4 to emerge through the news reports.

Case studies

Full legitimacy and the ‘Liberal Dove’ position

Waite says ‘no’ to war without UN backing, *Bury Free Press*, 7 March 2003, p.10:

When, at a meeting organised by the Bury Stop the War Group, Terry Waite spoke out against military intervention in Iraq without specific authorisation from the UN, the focus was near solely on Waite’s arguments. The report tells the reader very little about Waite: only that he is a ‘former Beirut hostage’ and that he lives in the nearby village of Hartest. In place of a biographical portrait, the vast majority of the report attributes to him a version of the ‘Liberal Dove’ case against the war fused with elements of the antiwar security and antiwar morality packages. The ‘Liberal Dove’ position is immediately established with the title and the opening paragraph: ‘FORMER Beirut hostage Terry Waite claims it would be ‘ludicrous’ for Britain and America to go to war against Iraq without the backing of the United Nations’ (original capitalisation). While the antiwar security and morality packages make an appearance further down the article:

He said he didn’t believe it had been proven, beyond reasonable doubt, that Saddam Hussein was about to attack the US and the UK and, in the long term, war would be a ‘total absolute loss’, creating enormous instability and an increase of terrorism in the world.
“If the US and UK go to war without UN sanctions, we don’t have a moral leg to stand on.”

This may not be the most complete statement of the Liberal Dove position that one can imagine since there are a number of missing links in the argument. Would a UN authorised war be a moral one? If so, why? And how would UN approval offset the threat of ‘enormous instability’ and increased terrorism? It is of course entirely possible that Waite addressed these points in the meeting and that they were excised from the report in the interests of brevity – a consequence of the ‘limited carrying capacities’ of the news media. All the same the extracts from the speech that have been quoted sketch out the priorities and aspects of the reasoning of the Liberal Dove case.

Full legitimacy and the 'Antiwar Radical' position

'Fenner gave the people hope', *Slough Express*, 6 November 2003, p.4:

Later on in the year the local antiwar in Slough, Slough4peace, held a memorial evening in honour of the town's former MP and CND's co-founder Fenner Brockway, with special guest speaker Tony Benn, an old friend of the late Mr Brockway. The report resides in the 'sphere of full legitimacy' for several reasons that go beyond the absence of delegitimizing features. The article notes the 'large crowd' in attendance; the standfirst hails the evening as 'a night to remember'; and above all, because it allows for the expression of ideas that made up one of the key schools of thought in the debate over the war – in this case the antiwar radical position – without disparaging that position. The key passage in the article in relation to this focuses on Fenner Brockway's politics and is worth quoting at length:

The relevance of his impressions of the world are *still frighteningly relevant*, no more so than in the preface of his book 'Inside the Left' where he wrote in 1947: "Behind the conflict in the Near East is OIL. Britain owns rich wells in Iraq ... Socialists ... [must] condemn the Oil Imperialism of Britain and America"

(Italics added to draw attention to the way the article commends the passage from Brockway's book). As was argued in Chapter 4 the antiwar radical school of thought is distinguishable from the other two antiwar schools of thought, (the Antiwar Realist and Liberal Dove positions), because of its emphasis on antiwar moral arguments and the way it drew on the antiwar opportunities package – the latter being something that the Liberal Dove and Antiwar Realist positions were wary of touching. To recap, the Antiwar Opportunities package raised objections to what many saw as the dubious motives for the war, i.e. oil, and the political doctrine underpinning Britain and America's approach to Iraq and world affairs more generally, i.e. imperialism. In short, the Antiwar Opportunities line of reasoning objected to the 'oil imperialism' that had driven Britain and America to war. Note: not all antiwar radicals were necessarily socialists.

The lesson from this example is that even the more radical arguments against the Iraq War could sometimes find a vehicle for expression in news reporting without being ridiculed, labelled 'extreme', having the veracity of any claims made doubted, or having the credibility of those articulating such views undermined by some other means.

Partial legitimacy

Author with revelations about Iraq will give a talk to Slough4peace next week, *Slough Express*, 9 October 2003, p.3.

The author in question is antiwar activist and current editor of *Peace News*, Milan Rai. Three ‘revelations’ are made in the course of the report, all of which are outlined at sufficient length to allow Rai to make his point, and this itself is an important feature of legitimizing reports. At the same time all three ‘revelations’ are prefaced by one or another turn of phrase that cast some doubt on the veracity of them. Emphasis has been added in each case to highlight the key phrases:

- ‘His recently published second novel, [sic] *Regime Unchanged*, *attempts to show* how UN weapons inspectors’ efforts to disarm Iraq peacefully were undermined.
- ‘*He claims* that since the end of the war, leading members of Saddam Hussein’s Ba’athist regime have been deliberately restored to power in Iraq.
- ‘Asked whether if it was distressing the [British] Government *appeared to ignore* opposition to the war in Iraq, he replied it was ‘very sad’ ... the UK parliament did not.’

It is important to appreciate though that these are strong claims, particularly the second allegation, and so it would be difficult for a journalist to reproduce them without introducing a note of doubt. In many ways then, phrases such as ‘he claims,’ ‘attempt to show’ and ‘appeared to ignore’ have the same function that Tuchman (1972: 670) attributes to the ‘judicious use of quotation marks’ in the case of the reporting of an anti-Vietnam War rally a generation earlier. They allowed the reporter to introduce ‘radical’ ideas into the text that may not have made it past the (sub)editor and/or may not have met the standards of impartiality expected of journalists. Hence it was judged most appropriate to categorise the report as casting the oppositional arguments laid out in it as residing in the ‘sphere of partial legitimacy.’

Implicit Deviance: The case of George Galloway

George Galloway MP was arguably the most high profile opponent of the Iraq War in the UK. According to his own website Galloway claims to have spoken at more than 2,000 public meetings since the attacks of 9/11.⁵ From May to July these included meetings held in Enfield (July 2003), Manchester (May 2003), Leicester (July 2003), and Slough (July 2003). He also spoke in Manchester in October 2003. The local press in each locality reported on all these meetings. None contained phrases like ‘barmy George Galloway’ (*The Sun* quoted in Murray et al 2008: 13) that would have been characteristic of ‘explicit deviance’. But equally there was always

a certain wariness about the man and his politics, so while four of the ten reports about public meetings featuring George Galloway presented him in a manner deserving of the 'sphere of partial legitimacy' the six other reports were being coded as 'implicitly deviant'.

Galloway was routinely introduced as 'controversial' (**Blair, you're a liar**, *Slough Observer*, 6 July 2003, p.6; **Standing ovation for MP's attack on Blair**, *Leicester Mercury*, 10 July 2003, p.4; **Say sorry and stay**, *MEN*, 25 October 2003, p.11), while the *Slough Express*'s **Defiant MP crusades for peace**, (17 July 2003, p.4) introduces him as 'the Labour Party's black sheep'. Four of the ten reports mentioned the *Daily Telegraph*'s allegations (first made on 22 April 2003) that he had solicited bribes from Saddam Hussein's regime, and two more of the reports referred to his then suspension from the Labour Party. (He was subsequently expelled). Descriptions and information of this kind can only serve to sow the seeds of doubt about the integrity and partisanship of the guest speaker.

Furthermore, with the exception of the *Leicester Mercury*'s **Standing ovation for MP's attack on Blair** (10 July 2003), all the reports, to varying degrees, focused on biographical portraits of Galloway. Given the 'limited carrying capacities' of local news reports, words expended on biographical portraits take away from the space available for setting forth detailed and coherent arguments against the war. The result was that Galloway's (antiwar radical) speeches were reduced either to a series of accusations, like that Blair lied for example (**Blair, you're a liar**, *Slough Observer*, 6 July 2003), or the reports implied that a George Galloway speech amounted to little more than a scattergun attack on a multitude of targets without there being any coherent thread linking them together. This extract from the *Leicester Mercury*'s **Standing ovation for MP's attack on Blair**, (10 July 2003) captures the essence of the latter approach:

He [George Galloway] went on to attack the Middle East peace efforts, the situation in Kashmir, the war on Iraq and its subsequent occupation, as well as the "sheep" who followed the Labour leadership in Westminster.

The result though, is that no coherent package of information or argumentation can be said to have emerged.

Concluding remarks

If one were to try to reduce the discussion in this chapter to a simple question of whether the antiwar movement got ‘a good press’ from the local newspapers, in the light of what has just been written, one could hardly expect a straightforward answer.

The basis of a qualified ‘yes’ would draw most heavily on examples of the reporting in the *Slough Express* and *Enfield Gazette*, as well as on the reporting of the 15 February demonstration and the three weeks either side. It would point out that the reporting of the 15 February demo went against the grain of the ‘protest paradigm’ for portraying the protest as a trouble-free event, and instead focused on the scale and diversity of the march and the ‘ordinariness’ of those who partook in the demo. And so long as protests didn’t inconvenience the public, many of the other demonstrations that took place from then until the run-up to the war were also portrayed as partially legitimate. Additionally a ‘yes’ answer could point out that even though protests turned out not to have been the most natural means of presenting a cogent and in-depth case against the war, public meetings fared better in promoting antiwar packages and schools of thought. More generally, opposition to, and unease about, military action in Iraq was treated as understandable in both news reporting and editorial commentary.

Against that, the basis of a qualified assertion that the antiwar movement did not receive a ‘good press’, would draw most heavily on the reporting in the *Leicester Mercury* and concentrate on the reporting from the middle of March onwards. The argument would see the ‘media frames’ as having shifted so as to seek out any incidents of trouble and thereby articulate the preoccupations of the ‘protest paradigm’. This means that whatever legitimacy the antiwar movement may have attained was a) short-lived, and b) conditional on the form that any protests took, the good behaviour of the protesters and the politics of whichever group had organised the protests. The ‘no’ argument would also make note of the near total exclusion of the antiwar movement from the debate surrounding the Iraq crisis outside of the context of reports about the movement and their activities. But, paradoxically perhaps, the most unflattering aspect of the reporting of the antiwar movement was that it should so rarely rise above being portrayed as a ‘*partially* legitimate’ contributor to debates about the Iraq crisis. When contrasted with local press treatment of official sources the significance of this difference is thrown into sharp relief. To say that official sources were generally placed within the sphere of full legitimacy is to say that, according to the criteria by which full legitimacy is distinguished from partial legitimacy, they had the power to impose their own preferred set of framings on understandings of the crisis. Thus when we contrast the

reporting of official sources with the antiwar movement it becomes evident that there is a hierarchy in which the antiwar movement is placed below officials and thus had far less influence in frame promotion.

Finally, it might seem as though there is a disconnection between some of the comments in Part I of this chapter that stressed the significance of the antiwar movement's influence in shifting the orientations of press coverage in an antiwar direction, and Part II of the chapter, where there has been an inclination to emphasise the limited and qualified nature of the antiwar movement's input into debates surrounding the crisis. Yet for reports to have been coded as 'antiwar' simply meant that they were aligned to that side of the argument, if only through the statements of the people quoted in them. It does not necessarily mean that the reports voiced a detailed and cogent case against the war. In fact, throughout all the articles in the sample the most frequently recurring antiwar comment, featuring 49 times, amounted to a general expression of opposition without going into any significant level of detail.

By contrast, or so I would argue, lengthy expositions of any one of the different packages against the war may well have had the power to change minds and thereby shift public opinion. But as I have sought to show in this chapter the presentation of in-depth arguments against the war were conditional on the legitimacy of those articulating such viewpoints, with the result that they only appeared in the pages of the local press on an infrequent basis.

End Notes

¹ The calculations by which the inclusion of reports of the antiwar movement and its activities can be said to have shifted the overall reporting for each publication in an antiwar direction, are not based on the calculated difference between the figures for 'Report or actors in it mainly or solely make a case against military action – All Reports' minus reports that 'make a case against military action without reference to the antiwar movement', because that assumes that reporting of the movement and its activities only ever shifted reporting in an antiwar direction. Rather the formula that was used was: ('Report or actors in it mainly or solely make a case against military action – All Reports' [Percentage figures from Table 10.2] minus 'Report or actors in it mainly or solely make case in favour of military action – All Reports' [Percentage] minus ('Report or actors in it mainly or solely make a case against military action' – 'without reference to the antiwar movement' [Percentage] minus 'Report or actors in it mainly or solely make case in favour of military action' – 'without reference to the antiwar movement' [Percentage])).

The Chi-Square calculations in each case were based on the numerical figures in Table 10.2. The calculation then amalgamated the 'Mixed implications' and 'Descriptive' figures with those that made 'no

mention of the controversy' together into a new 'neutral' category that was contrasted with the 'pro-war' reports on the one-hand, and the 'antiwar' reports on the other. The calculated Chi-Square values are:

- *Bury Free Press* – 2.8 with 2 degrees of freedom which is NOT statistically significant.
- *Enfield Gazette* – 27.0 with 2 degrees of freedom which is statistically significant.
- *Leicester Mercury* – 33.8 with 2 degrees of freedom which is statistically significant.
- *Manchester Evening News* – 114.7 with 2 degrees of freedom which is statistically significant.
- *Slough Express* – 24.6 with 2 degrees of freedom which is statistically significant.
- *Slough Observer* – 19.6 with 2 degrees of freedom which is statistically significant.
- In Total – 372.0 with 2 degrees of freedom which is statistically significant.

So with the exception of the *Enfield Gazette*, all results were statistically significant $p < 0.01$, meaning that there is a less than 1 percent chance that these differences could have arisen by chance (Deacon et al 1999: 108).

² As mentioned in Chapter 2, more recent conceptualisations of framing theory emphasise the active generation of meaning in much the same way as Hall's (1982) notion of the 'definition of the situation' does (Reese 2003: 10-11).

³ **Iraq crisis: country in turmoil, MP's resignation 'will put pressure on Blair to avoid war'**, 11 March 2003 (p.10); **Ex-agent not surprised by MP's 'war' resignation, Religious leaders unite to condemn military action**, 12 March 2003 (p.4), all from the *Leicester Mercury*.

⁴ The reports in question were **Iraq – Why our MPs backed Blair's stand**, *Enfield Gazette*, 6 March 2003 (p.8); **Your MPs vote for war**, *Slough Express*, 20 March 2003 (p.2).

⁵ www.georgegalloway.com/page.php?page=content/comingsoon.html Accessed 5 February 2009.

Part III: Summary and Conclusions

Chapter 11: Summary: Objectives and objectivity

A central premise of this study has been that news arises from newswriters, their sources, and the interactions between the two sets of actors. In this chapter I intend to build on this premise, by drawing together some of the key findings from the ‘empirical’ chapters that make up Part II of the thesis.

First, I wish to explore questions of how the ethos of ‘objectivity’ in journalism influenced the way that the local press engaged with the controversy surrounding the Iraq crisis, and particularly how it related to the legitimacy of the antiwar movement. Second, I shall explore how far the resulting coverage could be said to have met the media-orientated communicative objectives of the antiwar movement, namely ‘event promotion’, ‘frame promotion’, and ‘profile promotion’.

‘Objectivity’ and Legitimacy

Drawing on the work of a wide range of scholars, Chapter 8 highlighted how the ethos of ‘objectivity’ in news reporting was a staple component of notions of ‘professionalism’ in journalism. The chapter also found evidence that local newswriters justified their work on the basis that they strove to be ‘objective’ rather than partisan in their reporting. Yet when pressed to explain why they pursued ‘objective’ reporting in place of a partisan agenda, journalists’ explanations pointed towards some level of awareness that they had to appeal to as wide a cross-section of the local population as possible because, with the exception of the two weekly papers in the Slough area, each of the papers the interviewees worked for operated under monopoly conditions, which is the norm for the local newspaper landscape in the UK (Aldridge 2007: 58; Franklin and Murphy 1991). The rationale here is that:

If the news were to be reported in an overtly political or ideological manner, the market would be ripe for competition from news organisations that held opposing political or ideological points of view. By reporting the news objectively, reader loyalty to a newspaper is not a function of the ideology of that newspaper. (Soloski 1999: 311).

On one level, this means that whenever the local press confront a controversial political issue, like the Iraq crisis, they can be expected to steer a delicate path through that controversy being careful not to alienate one side or the other (as far as would be possible). A lot of the research presented in Chapter 9 lends support to this expectation. On another level though, it would be

profoundly mistaken to equate the absence of *overt* political or ideological leanings with the absence of any kind of political inflection.

Chapter 9 showed that the editorials on the Iraq crisis itself articulated elements from both sides of the argument without fully endorsing one side or the other in the debate. From the antiwar side of the argument, the editorials regularly expressed the fear that war might increase the threat of terrorism; and the editorials also expressed reservations about the rationale for the war believing that a convincing case for military action had yet to be made. At the same time though, editorial commentary routinely blamed Saddam Hussein for the crisis because of his reputed failure to cooperate with the inspections process and for being a menace to his own people – both of which were core components of pro-war reasoning. Similarly, Chapter 9 also observed that some of the assumptions that pervaded the reporting of the crisis supported a case for war, while other assumptions strengthened arguments against it. Supporting the ‘pro-war’ side of the argument, reports tended to assume that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction; strengthening ‘antiwar’ argumentation, the reporting was laced with comments that tended to cast the war as illegal and domestic public opinion as opposed to the war. Like the editorials then, the trends that emerged from the news reporting would suggest that the papers were reluctant to fully embrace one side or the other in debates over the Iraq crisis. Instead readers could find information and lines of reasoning from either side of the argument to support their preferred version of events from both the reporting and the editorials.

That said, there was a limited interpretative engagement with the issues surrounding the Iraq crisis in the pages of the local press, in that press coverage only touched upon some of the issues involved in the crisis. The rarity of discussions on such issues as to whether or not the war was legal for instance, can be explained in terms of the set of news values that are most applicable for a local newspaper:

We naturally wanted some sort of local slant on it, so whether something’s legal on a global basis isn’t as relevant to us as a letter attacking for instance, the conduct of one of the MPs who voted in favour of it. That has more local relevance.¹

It would however, be misleading to suggest that the reporting in the local papers was in any way politically innocent. This much was evident from the way that the military were represented in the reporting, and for reasons relating to the way the local press conferred differential levels of legitimacy on different forms of antiwar protest.

Representations of the military

As was shown in Chapter 9, although the local press's reporting of military affairs was, for the most part, characterised by a reluctance to embrace one side or the other in the controversy surrounding the war – which could, mistakenly, be considered an indication of 'objectivity' – the reporting of military affairs was in fact rich in its political implications. First of all, there were moments when military personnel spoke of the 'humanitarian' and 'reconstructive' aspects of the mission they were undertaking, and of how the Iraqi people welcomed them. Both these narratives serve to underscore the idea of a benevolent and beneficial mission that was a core component of all the pro-war schools of thought. But if that was a relatively minor sub-theme running through the reporting of 'military affairs' (as I argued it was in Chapter 9), far more prevalent was the tendency to obscure any suggestion that blood had been spilt by coalition hands: a) through the use of euphemisms like 'capture', 'go in', and 'repel', rather than words like 'kill' in the headlines (except for when Saddam Hussein was the target of military action), and b) because of the way the headlines masked the agency of the coalition's actions in Iraq. These lexical choices were rich in their political implications because they underscore the essential benevolence of the 'allied' mission.

That the reporting should have adopted this stance complimented the 'support the troops' narrative that was regularly articulated in other reports and in the editorials as the war came to be seen as imminent, because it carries the strong suggestion that any criticism of the military itself would be beyond the bounds of reasonable commentary. In this way the reporting and editorial commentary combined to sketch out the boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate criticisms of the war.

Handling the controversy surrounding the war and representations of the antiwar movement

Chapters 9 and 10 showed that the reporting and editorial commentary on the Iraq crisis itself took the line that to be opposed to this war was, at the very least, understandable. When, for example, a Leicestershire MP resigned as a Parliamentary Private Secretary over the crisis, the *Leicester Mercury* treated the MP in question with due deference in its reporting. The paper then proceeded to contact all the MPs in the county to gauge their views on the international situation, and gave the same amount of space to each of them so they could articulate their views without showing any preference for pro-war or antiwar MPs in terms of either the tone or placement of their comments. (Refer back to the previous Chapter for the details). By reporting on the crisis in

this way, the *Leicester Mercury*'s handling of the Iraq debate was fully consistent with the principles laid out in Bennett's (1990) 'indexing thesis', whereby the range of opinion in news reports tends to be confined to the parameters of opinion as can be found in 'elite' debate.

When I put this observation to the reporters, editors and columnists in the interviews, they declared their support for the normative principle underpinning the 'indexing thesis'. As one avowedly antiwar media worker put it:

People with a democratic mandate are always going to get a longer say in the media, and to be honest with you I don't really disagree with that.... [By contrast] just because you've organised a demo, why should you have any more say than somebody who lives next door to you who hasn't? Whereas MPs have got a democratic mandate.²

Yet at the same time, in addition to 'indexing' the range of opinion in news reporting so that it chimed with the views of political elites, the interviews with the journalists have led me to conclude that the local papers also sought to 'index' the range of opinion in their news reporting so that it was in line with the views of the local population. Indeed it may be recalled that some of the journalists interviewed in Chapter 8 explicitly justified their approach to reporting as being about capturing what 'ordinary people' felt and said about the issues of the day; and further that as journalists they felt they had an instinctive feel for the state of public opinion. This was why they felt able to, and perhaps even compelled to, confer a measure of legitimacy on the antiwar movement in the case of the Iraq crisis, and why it is also reasonable to suppose that under a different set of circumstances, or in relation to a different war, they might not have done so:

On a local newspaper you're always slightly wary of going to 'the usual suspects' about any story, and some of them were 'the usual suspects'. But there were enough people coming forward to get a sense that there was a big proportion of the local population against the war.³

So as far as the local press were concerned, such legitimacy as the antiwar movement had, and the reason why they merited being taken seriously, derived from the widespread support their cause had among the general public. There is also the strong implication in these comments, along with those from other journalists interviewed for this research, that they will seek out commentary from campaigning groups to the extent that they are thought to be representative of the wider public and no more than that.

However, as was shown in Chapter 10, the manifest features and the latent nuances of the reporting of antiwar activities implied, and in some cases explicitly stated, that there were acceptable and unacceptable ways of being antiwar. Furthermore, the research also revealed that the legitimacy of the antiwar movement declined and then partially rose again as the crisis rolled on. It is important to understand that these fluctuations in the legitimacy of the movement could not be read off from any changes to the levels of news coverage that opponents of the war received throughout the crisis. In fact Figure 10.6 (from Chapter 10) reveals that the antiwar movement actually received slightly more coverage from mid to late March than what it did from the beginning of the year until early March (by 32 reports to 30).⁴ More significantly though, as Figure 10.6 also indicated and as was discussed at length in the previous chapter, the legitimacy of the antiwar movement declined dramatically from mid-March onwards. So while the 15 February demonstration was nearly always reported on as a legitimate protest in the six papers studied here, once the war came to be considered inevitable the 'sphere of legitimate controversy' (Hallin 1986) narrowed and the reporting of protests came to invoke the classic preoccupations of the 'protest paradigm'. That this was so, lends support to the long-standing insight articulated by Ericson et al (1989) and Wolfsfeld (1997) that the news media have the power to either confer or to deny legitimacy upon their sources. This also means that for all the academic discussion surrounding the matter of whether elite sources have more power in influencing the news agenda than media outlets themselves do, there is, on the basis of this research, little reason to suppose that non-elite sources, like the antiwar movement, are in anything other than a subordinate position compared to the media outlets – at least at the local level. It is however, important to understand why this was so.

The decline in the legitimacy of antiwar activities from mid to late March followed by the partial reclamation of legitimacy for opponents of the war from the beginning of April onwards was, or so I argued in the previous chapter, not just down to the timing of these activities, but was also contingent upon the nature of the activities that were undertaken then, particularly if those activities happened to be demonstrations. Furthermore, if the activities in question were protests, the behaviour of the protesters along with the nature of the groups organising them, would appear to have been influential factors in determining the degree of legitimacy they were accorded. So when, for example, on the eve of the invasion – a time when each of the papers insisted that the public must 'support the troops' in their editorials – the radical socialist group, the International Socialist Resistance, organised a protest in Leicester city centre in which school children were encouraged to leave school to make their feelings about the war known, the reporting in the

Leicester Mercury cast the ‘truant protesters’ as either implicitly or explicitly deviant (see previous Chapter). Indeed to varying degrees all the papers, bar the *Enfield Gazette*, reported on the ‘truant protesters’ as being an unacceptable mode of protest. This was one of the most significant reasons why the legitimacy of the antiwar movement declined from the middle of March onwards.

Research by Murray et al (2008) into the national press’s reporting of antiwar dissent immediately prior to and after the invasion of Iraq broadly confirms this pattern. Their research shows how opponents of the military action – particularly ‘elite’ opponents such as former Cabinet Minister Robin Cook who resigned from the Government over the issue – were generally treated as having legitimate concerns in all the national newspapers (except for *The Sun*) during the run-up to the war. Once the invasion began however, opponents were usually either criticised by the pro-war papers (*The Daily Mail*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Sun*, and *The Times*) or ignored by the antiwar publications (*The Guardian*, *The Independent*, and *The Mirror*) (Ibid.), possibly because the antiwar papers had, by this stage in the crisis, come to regard (elite) opponents of the war as something of an embarrassment. So no matter how one looks at it, the legitimacy of ‘elite’ opponents of the war drastically declined once military action was underway. As was the case with the local press, this was not simply a matter of timing, but also hinged upon the agency of opponents of the war – Robin Cook was criticised by all the national papers when he appeared to call for troops to be withdrawn.

Other studies of the reporting of the role of challenger sources in relation to controversial issues have identified remarkably similar findings. For instance, in Manning’s (1996) study of the 1989 Ambulance dispute, the unions gradually lost legitimacy with the media as the dispute dragged on and talk of industrial action began to gain ground.⁵ These insights then, are the corollary to research that has (perceptively) argued that legitimacy is an achievement that can be won through what Schlesinger (1990: 77) calls ‘successful strategic action’,⁶ as the studies by Manning (1996), Murray (2008), and myself all suggest that for ‘challenger’ sources legitimacy can also be lost.

It is, at this point, worth remarking that activists themselves later reflected (in the interviews) that the ways in which they had engaged with the local media in their respective areas may have also had some bearing on the nature of the reporting they received. So, as was shown in Chapter 7, some groups felt able to trace the ‘favourable’ coverage they felt they received to the matter of how they had been organised to interact with the media on a regular basis, while other groups felt

that their mistakes in dealing with the media contributed to the less than fully successful coverage they received – or in some cases didn't receive. Specifically, those activists who felt that they received 'favourable' coverage were often able to account for this with reference to the fact that they proactively engaged with the local press, had established a 'rapport' with them, knew how to highlight the newsworthiness of their activities, and recognised that journalists had to work to tight deadlines which meant that they, as antiwar activists, had to cooperate with the local journalists.⁷ Other activists though, felt that in retrospect they had made a number of mistakes in their dealings with the local media. Hence they either lamented the fact that they had not been more proactive in dealing with the media, or they felt that they had not been sufficiently well organised to deal with the media on a regular basis (refer back to Chapter 7 for more details). Of course, as was also mentioned in Chapter 7, there were a minority of activists who held to an 'over-determined' set of understandings about the workings of the media. This meant (amongst other things) that they believed that even if they had shown more acumen in dealing with the media it would have most probably made very little difference to the coverage they received.

'Selective Objectivity'

The fact that the reporting should reveal such differences in treatment towards different forms of dissent did not surprise the reporters interviewed for this research when I put this finding from the research to them. Newswriters had an intuitive understanding that the media would confer different levels of legitimacy on different modes of dissent, and furthermore that this differential treatment could be related to the political economy of local papers. As one newswriter, who as it happens was very strongly opposed to the invasion of Iraq, put it:

I think that the antiwar movement had a fair crack at the whip in portraying it's arguments in the media, and at the end of the day the media can't afford to piss off it's readership, or its viewing or listening public. So it has to give a fair say to issues that it feels that a significant number of people in society are feeling....

The thing about the children bunking off school, I suppose that's always going to have a tone of disapproval from most newspapers and most media.... I suppose the editor would be sitting there and would be thinking 'well [I] might support what they're doing, but thinking about safety issues and the parents don't know where they are – especially when it's children involved'. I think children doing something like that is always going to cause a bit of concern.... So I think once people start getting into direct action there usually is a bit of antipathy towards them within the media.⁸

One insight that could be drawn from this, is that by reporting the 'truant protests' in such a negative way vis-à-vis the 15 February demonstration, the press abandoned any pretence of

practicing 'objectivity' in its reporting (or was revealed as never having been serious about 'objectivity' in the first place). What we have instead could perhaps be described as 'selective objectivity'. Hallin (1986) found something similar with the American media throughout most of the duration of Vietnam War. For all the reverence that the American media of the time had for notions of 'objectivity', they only ever felt obligated to practice 'objectivity' when reporting on elite disagreements, which is why he characterised the reporting of 'elite' debates about the Vietnam War as residing in the 'sphere of legitimate controversy'. By comparison, the US media felt they had no such obligation to report on the antiwar movement in a similarly 'objective' manner, with the result that reporting almost invariably placed the movement in the 'sphere of deviance', (with the exception of the brief moment when Senator Eugene McCarthy ran for the Presidency on an antiwar ticket in 1968). For this reason Hallin (1986) argues that one of the defining characteristics of the distinction between the 'sphere of legitimate controversy' and the 'sphere of deviance' is the matter of whether or not the media are inclined to report on the actors in question in an 'objective' manner.⁹ Admittedly, the research presented in Chapter 10 suggests that the local press in the UK were more generous in their treatment of the contemporary anti-Iraq War movement than the American media were a generation earlier, because the only time when local reporting and the editorial commentary regularly (but not always) placed the contemporary antiwar movement in the 'sphere of (implicit or explicit) deviance' was whenever opponents of the war were engaged in unlawful protests. But the fact remains that the reporting still betrays evidence of political judgements having been made about the acceptability of certain forms of protest. Furthermore, a strong case can be made for saying that these judgements were made on the basis of appealing to as wide a section of the local population as possible. After all, if the papers had portrayed *all* opposition to the Iraq War as though it was 'deviant' that would have alienated large sections of their readerships. By the same token, if the papers had been unduly sympathetic towards the 'truant protests' – which was a form of protest that invoked a considerable amount of public hostility judging by the letters to the editor that were published – the papers would have also been out of step with the feelings of a significant proportion of their readership. These insights then, lend weight to the argument that the decision to practice 'objectivity' is infused with commercial considerations.

Differences between the papers

The research presented in Chapters 9 and 10 also revealed that there were significant differences between the weekly and the evening press. Most significant of all, was that in proportional terms, the weekly press granted considerably more access to the local antiwar groups than the evening

papers did (see Table 10.2 and the discussion relating to it from the previous chapter for more details). One reason why this was so, was because the evening papers are much more competitive news arenas than their weekly counterparts. Evening newspapers serve wider circulation areas – the *Manchester Evening News* and the *Leicester Mercury* are citywide papers, which is not something that can be said of the papers in Slough, Bury St Edmunds or the London Borough of Enfield. Consequently it is likely that a greater number of potentially newsworthy events will occur in the larger urban areas than in mid-sized towns. The result was that antiwar activities almost inevitably faced more intense ‘competition’ for inclusion in papers like the *Manchester Evening News* and the *Leicester Mercury* than in papers like the *Slough Observer* and the *Bury Free Press* etc. Some of the antiwar activists interviewed for this research felt that they too had observed something of this tendency when they contrasted the responsiveness of the weekly newspapers in their respective localities with that of the evening publications. In the words of one activist, who said that he found the local weekly paper in his area to have been “a bit more friendly” than the local evening paper, this was “because they [the weekly paper] had much smaller resources. If you went to them and said ‘here’s a story’, they’d say, ‘thank God, we can now fill that blank space!’”¹⁰

Furthermore, the survey research investigating activists’ engagements with the media also found that a clear majority of the locally based antiwar groups felt that they received more coverage from the local media (i.e. local press and radio) than they did from regional media (such as Regional TV), which was generally regarded as more productive format than the national media (see Table 7.1 from Chapter 7). Since the local media is a less competitive news arena than the regional media, which is in turn less competitive than the national media, these findings also underscore the idea that the antiwar groups had their greatest amount of success with the less competitive news arenas.

Finally in this discussion, it is worth noting that evening papers are much more orientated towards breaking and unscheduled news than weekly papers are. As a result the evening papers were far better placed to report on the fast-paced diplomatic, political, and military developments surrounding the Iraq crisis than the weekly papers were. This was why a far higher proportion of the coverage in the evening papers was devoted to those matters than to reporting on whatever the local antiwar groups in their areas were doing.

Objectives

This section explores the matter of how far the media coverage that the locally based antiwar groups received could be said to have enabled them to fulfil the objectives that they had for pursuing media coverage. To begin with it is worth restating one of the key findings from Chapter 7 was that the antiwar movement sought media coverage primarily for the purposes of ‘event promotion’, ‘frame promotion’, and ‘profile promotion’, so we shall be well placed to consider how well or otherwise local press coverage helped the local groups realise those objectives. Before exploring this matter however, it is worth considering the significance of the fact that the Iraq war was very controversial in Britain.

Social movements have nearly always campaigned on issues that are in some way controversial, and the contemporary antiwar movement was certainly no exception. Yet, as I argued at greater length in Chapter 3, one of the most serious weaknesses in previous literature on the interactions between the media and social movements (and pressure groups) has been the failure to consider whether public opinion had any influence over the ways in which social movements went in pursuit of a media agenda. This is why my own research has sought to go beyond an acknowledgement of the banal observation that the general public hold a range of opinions on controversial issues, to investigate how the different communicative objectives resonate with different sections of public opinion.

In Chapter 7, it was argued that whenever the antiwar movement aspired to boost the number of people attending public meetings and public protests (‘event promotion’), media coverage was aimed at those who were already involved in the antiwar movement alongside people who were decidedly opposed to the war but who hadn’t (until then) been inclined to get involved in antiwar activism in any way. By contrast, making a case against the war through the media (‘frame promotion’) was an activity mainly aimed at those sections of public opinion that were yet to make up their minds on the arguments over the war.

Event and profile promotion

The content analysis research found that out of 126 news reports that focused on the activities of the antiwar movement, 33 reports (26 percent) served to promote events that the antiwar movement were set to stage in the near future. This may seem like a modest figure, but it still shows that the local press can be of service to the antiwar movement by promoting their events. This figure compares to 64 reports out of the 126 (or 51 percent) that were retrospective reports

on events that had already happened, and 29 reports (23 percent) where it was judged inappropriate to classify the reports in that way.¹¹ In one way or another though, all reports about the movement and/or antiwar activism served to raise the profile of opponents of the war.

What these statistics cannot tell us however, is the number of times that the locally based antiwar groups tried to use the media to promote events they were involved in, only for those groups to find that they failed to attract the media's attention. Most antiwar activists interviewed for this research found that they could successfully promote their events through the local press (at least most of the time). There were however, a minority of groups whose efforts failed to generate the desired amount of promotional reporting. In the interviews, representatives of this minority often said that they felt the local press had an unwritten policy of ignoring their activities (refer back to Chapter 7 for more details). Not surprisingly, for this minority of interviewees their lack of success in attracting the local press's attention for the purposes of 'frame promotion' was often a source of frustration, which contributed to them having negative views on the local papers in their areas.

Nor can content analysis research tell us anything about how successfully or otherwise media coverage of oppositional activities served to raise the profile of the movement. It is worth noting though, that the comments by activists that were reproduced in discussions of 'profile promotion' (from Chapter 7) indicated that they felt that the local media coverage served the movement's 'profile promotion' objectives rather well:

The way I see getting good media coverage is to try and maintain a profile.... We've been quite successful in that people know that there are these antiwar campaigns.¹²

Frame promotion

It is a curious irony of antiwar activism that the events that proved to be the best platform for promoting their preferred set of framings (i.e. public meetings) commanded less attention than some of their other events (such as public protests) that served the movement's 'frame promotion' needs less well. What is more, is that in contradistinction to the reporting of the 'truant protests' where the radicalism of the protests would appear to have been a factor in undermining the legitimacy of those protests, the radicalism of the arguments set forth by guest speakers at public meetings did not necessarily stand in the way of the reports conferring legitimacy on opponents of the war. The result was that 'antiwar radical' arguments against the war were often sketched

out in the local news reports in much the same way as the more ‘moderate’ ‘liberal dove’ position.

However, the problems for the antiwar movement here were twofold. Their first problem was that news reports in the local press rarely ever allowed for the detailed exposition of the political arguments of any inclination. This can be most appropriately understood as a product of the ‘limited carrying capacities’ (Hilgartner and Bosk 1988) of the local press. It was on this point that some local journalists were most candid:

I think lack of detail ... superficial analysis is common to the local media on any issue to be honest.... The local media – they just don’t cover anything with any degree of depth.¹³

And furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter 8, the journalists interviewed for this research felt that as employees of local newspapers, it was not part of their role to analyse and argue over the controversy surrounding the conflict – that, they insisted, was part of the national media’s remit. Instead, they argued, as *local* journalists their role was to report on local developments relating to the crisis and to try to capture ‘ordinary’ local people’s feelings about the issue.

The second problem confronting the movement, was that even though the antiwar movement often managed to secure a measure of legitimacy in the news reports, such legitimacy as opponents of the war acquired still rarely ever rose above ‘partial legitimacy’, which was in contrast to coalition actors, i.e. British and American government and military officials, who more often attained ‘full legitimacy’. This means that when the influence that the antiwar movement had in ‘frame promotion’ is contrasted with the influence of the coalition actors, the antiwar movement was doubly disadvantaged. For one thing, as was shown in Chapter 9, coalition forces combined featured in 36 percent of reports overall, which amounts to more than five times as much coverage as opponents of the war in all their manifestations combined managed to secure. For another, the research also found that coalition forces tended to be in a position of being able to promote their preferred set of framings on the Iraq crisis (i.e. the ‘official’ school of thought) far more expansively than the antiwar movement. (Indeed, this is the basis of the distinction between the ‘sphere of full legitimacy’ where coalition actors tended to reside and the ‘sphere of partial legitimacy’ where the reporting could be said to have most often placed the antiwar movement.) What we can see here then, is the confluence of two advantages

for British and American government officials and military spokespersons when contrasted with opponents of the war:

- Officials were quoted in the local media more often than the antiwar movement were;
- And official sources were able to articulate their preferred framings far more expansively than the antiwar movement were.

The net result was that the coalition sources exercised a far greater degree of influence in establishing and maintaining the ‘terms of the debate’ (Hall et al 1978; Hall 1982) about the Iraq crisis through the pages of the local press than the antiwar movement did.

More importantly though, the extent to which the reporting could be said to validate the protests had implications for the antiwar movement’s capacity for ‘frame promotion’. Whenever the reporting placed opponents of the war in the ‘sphere of implicit deviance’, this usually meant that they were not given any space to articulate their interpretations of events or their arguments against military action. Yet even when the reports of protests placed opponents of the war in the ‘sphere of partial legitimacy’, they were only ever granted a limited amount of space to sketch out the basis of their arguments against military action.

In summary then, the findings from the research underscore that the conditionality of whatever legitimacy the local groups may have acquired was dependent upon the timing and nature of their activities, the behaviour of protesters, the politics of whichever groups were organising them, and the extent to which the different publications were prepared to be indulgent towards them. Moreover though, while the research has found that for the locally based antiwar groups, the local press could sometimes be an effective means of publicising their activities and events, the research also suggests that it is unlikely that the local coverage itself influenced many people’s opinions about the war given the rarity of those occasions when groups acquired the opportunity to directly articulate their reasoning at length through the pages of local press.

End Notes:

¹ Journalist Interview 3.

² Journalist Interview 4.

³ Journalist Interview 3.

⁴ However, the Tindle chain of local newspapers, which consists of over 120 local papers that are mainly operative in the South West of England, *were* prohibited from publishing reports of antiwar activities and letters critical of the decision to go to war once the conflict began. The order is understood to have come from the proprietor Sir Ray Tindle (Bell and Alden 2003: 29). However, as Figure 10.1 (from Chapter 10) indicated, the antiwar movement received less coverage from April onwards. This was at least partially because the opponents of the war were less active from then on, as was discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

⁵ Although the Ambulance staff never actually went on strike.

⁶ One example of ‘successful strategic action’ would be the campaign by Communication Workers Union against the partial privatisation of the Post Office in 1994 (Davis’s 2000; see Chapter 2 of this study for more details).

⁷ See, for example, some of the comments by activists under the discussion on ‘successful strategic action’ from Chapter 7.

⁸ Journalist Interview 4.

⁹ Similarly, in the case of the ‘troubles’ in Northern Ireland, the BBC had no obligation extend the same principle of practicing ‘due impartiality’ in its coverage when reporting on the statements and activities of Sinn Féin, the IRA, and loyalist paramilitaries. Rather it is understood that ‘impartiality’ is only really ‘due’ when the reporting on disagreements that fall within the parameters of parliamentary opinion (Miller 1994; Schlesinger 1978).

¹⁰ Activists Interview 18.

¹¹ Examples of this last category include articles that reported on rumours about forthcoming protests, especially the ‘truant protests’, but, on the basis of the ways that these were reported on, my judgement is that those in the antiwar movement did not seek to use the mainstream media to promote activities of that kind.

¹² Activists Interview 1.

¹³ Journalist Interview 4.

Chapter 12: Conclusions

Research by media studies scholars who have taken it upon themselves to examine the various means by which social movements, pressure groups and other non-official sources have engaged with the media, has often been based on the assumption that because those sources are in a subordinate position compared to the media they are therefore more dependent on the media than vice versa. Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993), for instance, write that, 'movements are generally much more dependent on media than the reverse' (1993: 116). In part this is simply because the imbalance in power between the two forces means that the media have the power to either confer or to deny legitimacy and support upon social movements, their causes and their activities. But the *dependency* of social movements on the media goes beyond the matter of the imbalance of power. Dependency hinges on the potential utility of media coverage for social movements. And it is this dependency that has often been said to result in pressure groups and social movements becoming fixated with the pursuit of media coverage to the point where it may influence their priorities and activities (as Blumler 1989 argues), and perhaps even their social composition and sense of identity (as Gitlin 1980 argues). Yet to some extent, the central argument of this thesis is that the contemporary antiwar movement in the UK goes against the grain of these tendencies towards dependency and vulnerability. Certainly it is true to say that, as the previous chapter showed, the local antiwar groups were in a subordinate position compared to the local newspapers, in that the papers had the power to either confer or deny legitimacy on the movement. In this chapter though, I intend to show that even though the local groups may have been in a subordinate position to the press, this did not necessarily make them dependent on the local press because communicating through the mainstream mass media was generally regarded as a lower priority than past studies of political activism would suggest was the case with other movements and pressure groups. Here I intend to argue that in the case of the antiwar movement there were several reasons for this:

- Many of those in the movement had a variety of complaints and reservations about the mainstream mass media, even if these were held with varying degrees of intensity;
- The antiwar movement was reliant on a combination of new media, 'alternative media', and non-mediated channels as other ways to meet their communicative needs;
- And the antiwar movement had a number of priorities beyond communication.

The final part of this chapter explores the more general implications of this argument for the interactions between social movements and the media at the dawn of the Twenty-First Century. I shall begin though, by saying a few words about previous academic writing that has focused on the interactions between social movements and the media.

Consequences of engaging with the media

Whereas previous studies of the interactions between social movements and the media have identified a series of changes that social movements have undergone as a result of their dealings with the media (examples include Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993; Gitlin 1980), the evidence presented in this thesis suggests that the local antiwar groups remained largely unchanged by their engagements with the media. Even the most media conscious activists interviewed for this research declared that the group of which they were a part only ever treated engaging with the media as an additional task to enhance the success of their political activism, rather than approach media coverage as an end in itself around which all other priorities and organisational tasks revolved. To be sure, it was evident from the interviews – extracts from which were reproduced in Chapter 7 – that most groups worked hard to promote their public meetings (*event promotion*), and that they did so to maximise the number of people attending those meetings. (This was done through both media-related and non-mediated forms – e.g. press releases and by handing out leaflets in the local high street). But, for all that favourable media coverage of public meetings was desirable in the hope that it would raise the profile of opponents of the war (*profile promotion*) and reproduce the interpretations and analyses of the guest speakers (*frame promotion*), no group ever organised public meetings purely for the sake of attracting media coverage. When public meetings failed to attract the media's interest, groups were usually disappointed, but not to the extent that they felt the whole meeting had been a complete waste of their time.

Public protests, by their very nature, are a more public and visible form of expressing dissent than public meetings because the aim is to broadcast the politics of the demonstration to a wider public, the most important section of which is not so much 'the co-present public at demonstrations' but the far larger 'mass audience watching and reading the media coverage at home' (Cottle 2008: 854). Hence, in Chapter 3, I argued that demonstrations are most appropriately conceptualised as 'media events' that are distinguishable from 'ordinary' non-reflexive events on the one hand and Boorstin's (1962) concept of 'pseudo-events' on the other (see Negrine 1996: 170), because although demonstrations have an existence in their own right

and serve a number of non-media orientated functions such as consolidating movement solidarity, they are also planned and staged with media coverage in mind. More specifically, as Keeble (2000) has observed, there is much that happens on contemporary demonstrations to attract the media's attention, which is to say that many aspects of demonstrations are rich in 'news values': 'People carry banners with simple slogans, they wear eccentric costumes, they chant, they play music, they choose routes often heavy with symbolism, they distribute leaflets and they attract prominent speakers' (Keeble 2000: 119). Furthermore, on the Stop the War Coalition's marches, the stewards will always cordon off an area (roughly, say, 20 metres square) in front of the 'high profile' marchers so as to allow access to press and agency photographers along with camera operators from broadcasting, whilst denying access to ordinary members of the public (personal observation). This set-up also enables the STWC to ensure that the banners most visibly on display are those of the Coalition, along with those of CND and the Muslim Association of Britain, rather than, say, the banners and slogans of some of the more marginal and 'extremist' parties and organisations. Clearly then, this arrangement serves to both facilitate access for the media and control the image and message of the march. There is though, there is little else that happens on (antiwar) demonstrations that is specifically designed to meet the dictates of journalistic routines.

As might be expected, and as this research has confirmed (in Chapter 7), opponents of the war hoped that their demonstrations and public meetings etc. would 'make the news', which is why they nearly always used the local media to promote their public events, and why activists typically declared themselves to be prepared to work in accordance with the values and routines of journalism. But, no one interviewed for this research ever said that the demonstrations or public meetings they organised were staged for the *sole purpose* of attracting the media's attention. With the exception of the occasional 'publicity stunt', which is something that only a handful of groups admitted to having done, the same is true of nearly all the activities opponents of the war organised.

Instead the pragmatic justification for marching, holding public meetings and partaking in other non-mass mediated forms of organisation and dissent that antiwar activists so often gave in the interviews, was that these activities have, in the past, been proven to be the most potent means of affecting change in advance of a whole range of progressive forces. As was also explored in Chapter 6, for some, but not all people in the movement, this repertoire of activism also included acts of civil disobedience, with the examples of the suffragettes, the 'draft dodgers' during the

Vietnam War, and the civil rights movement in America being the most frequently cited historical exemplars justifying this approach. (Radical writers such as Naomi Klein [2003] and John Pilger [2003] have also made this argument). But those who preferred to concentrate on civil disobedience (which, as mentioned in Chapter 6, tended to mean the anarchist wing of the movement), would appear to have had little concern for how favourably or otherwise their activities were reported on in the media.

Finally, in this section, it is worth reiterating the point made in Chapter 7 and the previous chapter, that none of the interviewees admitted to watering down their political analysis for the sake of being palatable to the local press.

Thus, from this section we may infer that while most antiwar groups usually informed the local media about events they were staging, the pursuit of media attention had only a limited bearing on the organisational dimension of the movement in terms of the activities opponents of the war engaged in. Crucially, dealing with the media was intended only enhance the movement's activism; gaining media coverage was never the *raison d'être* for any of the activities local antiwar groups organised (the occasional 'publicity stunt' notwithstanding). Moreover the pursuit of a media agenda had very little bearing on the public expression of the movement's politics. In this way then, the strategies adopted by the locally based antiwar groups were very different from, say, the strategies that were adopted by the Trade Union movement from the late 1980s until the beginning of the current decade,¹ because as was shown in Chapter 3, the unions' strategies largely revolved around carefully thought through considerations about which lines of arguments and which strategies were most palatable to both the media and the public at large.

The partial retreat away from dependency: Explaining the limits of media influence

In this, the penultimate section of the chapter, I shall outline what it means to say that the antiwar movement was only partially dependent on the mainstream mass media. In its first part the discussion here revolves around outlining the uses that the movement has for the new media and non-mediated forms of communication. The significance of these communicative formats is that they may have lessened, but will have by no means eradicated, activists' dependency on the mass media. In the second part, the discussion then turns to consider how mass media coverage can still be of service to the movement in ways that the new media and non-mediated forms of communication cannot be. The overall result then, is that it is still appropriate to speak of the antiwar movement as remaining partially dependent on the mainstream media.

Numerous studies have documented the tensions, the suspicions, and even the hostility between social movements and the media (e.g. Gitlin 1980; Tilly 2004: 85; Bennett 2003: 18). My own research lends qualified support to these conclusions because, as was shown in Chapter 7, most people involved in the antiwar movement were at least a little wary of the mainstream media, including even the local press which was generally regarded as being more favourably disposed towards the movement than most of the national media were. In some cases activists were very critical of the local media in their area. As a consequence of this antipathy then, social movements have long since relied upon 'alternative' media (Atton 2002) and non-mediated forms of communication to serve as a substitute for a reliance on the mass media. The contemporary antiwar movement is no exception.

In addition though, the past ten to fifteen years have also seen the activist community, including the antiwar movement, enthusiastically embrace the various forms of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) or 'new media', in order to realise at least some of the objectives that they might have previously sought mass media coverage for.² For instance, websites, email listings, electronic bulletin boards, and in some cases online alternative news sites such as Indymedia, allow the movement to promote their events by keeping members and sympathisers informed about forthcoming events (Chapter 7, see also Coyer 2005). The same new media formats also serve the 'frame promotion' needs to the movement by providing those involved with news of the latest developments from Iraq as seen from an antiwar perspective (Chapter 7, Coyer 2005). Thus there is something of an elective affinity between the movement and these various forms of new media, because the new media can be utilised to at least partially realise two of the movement's communicative functions, namely 'event promotion' and 'frame promotion'. To some extent then, the 'alternative' media and the new media have meant that the antiwar movement's dependency on the mass media is diminished compared to what would otherwise be the case.

The antiwar movement is not unique here. The anti-globalisation movement (Coyer 2005; Klein 2000; 2002), environmental campaigners (Pickerill 2003), and civil society organisations like Oxfam, Amnesty International, and the World Development Movement (Kavada 2005) have also, on the whole, enthusiastically embraced new media formats for communicative purposes. They have done so because they can control and trust its content, and because they too have found that they can use the new media to promote their own activities and their own preferred set of

framings about issues. In general terms then, without CMC social movements would be more dependent on the mainstream mass media than they currently are. In consequence the development of the Internet almost inevitably means that earlier studies of social movement and pressure group communications strategies are dated in certain respects. So whereas the 1960s saw the emergence of a more 'media-centric' approach to pressure group activity (Blumler 1989), it may well be that for pressure groups and social movements in the new millennium the high tide of *mass* 'media centrism' has passed. At the same time though, it would be premature to declare that the activist community has reached the point where it has no need for media coverage. The discussion now turns to consider why this is so.

First of all, it is important to keep a sense of perspective here so as not to fall for some of the more technologically determinist hype surrounding the Internet in relation to political activism. For one matter, this is because 'leftwing' campaigners have, for many years now, relied upon a wide variety of means to promote their activism and communicate their respective framings. More importantly than that, the various forms of CMC are limited in their capacity to reach beyond the antiwar movement in order to promote the movement's events and framings, and raise its profile with the wider public, because even when combined, new media, 'alternative' media, and the various non-mediated forms of communication, cannot hope to reach anywhere near as many people as the mainstream mass media can. Furthermore, we may also ask how much difference these non-mass mediated forms of communication combined made in the 'battle for the hearts and minds' of UK public opinion? It seems probable that the majority of the people who visited antiwar websites, or who read 'alternative' publications were most likely to have been opposed to the Iraq War all along. Similarly activists interviewed for this research, conceded that the majority of people who took leaflets from them in the high street were already opposed to the war. Communicating through the new media, 'alternative' media, and the various non-mediated forms of communication then, did little to reach out across the political spectrum; in fact it would seem as though it was little more than a matter of 'preaching to the converted'. That this was so, may well have had particularly serious implications for the movement's capacity to make its case against military action on Iraq, because as I argued in the previous chapter, 'frame promotion' was an activity mainly aimed at that section of public opinion in which people had yet to make up their minds about the war.

In addition, it is important to keep in mind the fact that mainstream media outlets have the 'appearance of impartiality' (Ericson et al 1989: 183). From this it follows that the mass media

potentially have the power to validate (or delegitimize) the antiwar movement in ways that the new media and the 'alternative' media do not. It is worth reminding ourselves that many activists felt they often had compelling, first-hand, evidence of the mass media's power to boost the number of people attending their public meetings (see Chapter 7). Indeed it would seem logical to suppose that this success in 'event promotion' partially stems from the mass media's ability to reach a wider audience combined with their capacity to confer (or deny) legitimacy on the movement.

It is for these reasons that it is too soon to declare that the antiwar movement has reached the point where it has no need for the mainstream media.

Priorities beyond communication

In addition to overlooking the significance of alternative means of communication, previous research on the interactions between the media and movements, pressure groups etc. has tended to overlook all the other non-media related challenges that movements in particular have to contend with, of which the most important, in the case of the contemporary antiwar movement, has been the need to maintain their unity.³ One of the key arguments of Chapter 6, was that the unity of some of the locally based antiwar groups was built on something of a 'false consensus' that could only be sustained through the avoidance of detailed discussions on policy. As was argued in Chapter 7, the upshot of all this was that spokespersons for such groups felt unable to articulate a fully coherent set of arguments against military action complete with rebuttals of pro-war logic and policy alternatives when talking to the media. This is partly why antiwar framings, and particularly the thinking underpinning the 'antiwar radical' school of thought, so rarely ever made the journey from movement to the media to the wider public. In this way the sociological imperative to maintain some semblance of unity triumphed over and constrained the movement's capacity to communicate effectively to a mass audience.

The absence of a coherent antiwar narrative mattered less when using Computer Mediated Communication because, as has already been mentioned, CMC 'facilitates the process of information sharing to such a degree that many groups can work in concert with one another without the need to achieve monolithic consensus' (Klein 2000: 396). But whether this order of priorities is applicable to most social movements and pressures groups, or whether the antiwar movement stands as an isolated exception, is something that only future comparative research can answer.

Of equal importance though, is the question of whether or not the collective decision to prioritise unity over communicating through the mainstream media best served the effectiveness of the antiwar movement. It is something that should be a matter for future discussion both inside and outside the movement.

End Notes

¹ Observers of the Trade Union movement have noted that in the new millennium, many unions have elected leaders who are generally considered to be further to the 'left' than the more moderate trade union bosses of the 1990s. Some have labelled this new generation of union leaders the 'awkward squad' (O'Neill 2007: 817). O'Neill's (2007) research into the fire-fighters dispute of 2002-2003 suggests that media orientated considerations weighed less heavily on the Fire Brigade Union's strategy during the dispute. But it remains to be seen whether this was a one-off or part of a more general shift in the unions' strategies.

² It is of course impossible to put a date on the rise of online activism. It is also worth remarking that political elites have also enthusiastically embraced certain forms of new media, notably websites (Stanyer 2005; 2008), so it would not be appropriate to claim that online activism is an exclusive preserve of new social movements.

³ By the same token many sociological analyses of Social Movements may well have paid insufficient attention to the role of the media. For instance, Zirakzadeh's otherwise excellent *Social Movement's in Politics* (2006) barely mentions the role of the media at all.

Appendixes

Appendix 1: Content analysis terminology

Sources

One of the central concerns of this thesis is the relationship between the local aspects of the antiwar movement and the local media. As such it is imperative that the content analysis should register the presence and identity not simply of the antiwar movement, but of all the sources quoted by and referred to in the news reports. In this way it becomes possible to comment on the comparative prevalence of different actors and contributors to the debate and see which had the greatest 'say' in public debate.

It was permissible to code up to five sources per article. If more than five sources were evident in a report, the five with the most space devoted to their comments and actions were selected.

Many of these categories, including 'serving British military', 'serving American military', 'UK or international pressure groups and charities', 'France, Germany, Russia', 'Local businesses', 'Local Councillors', 'Local MPs', 'Iraqi refugees in the UK', the 'Stop the War Coalition' (STWC), 'Academic, writer or think tank', the '(British) Police', 'Arab nation other than Iraq', and 'Iraqi civilians', ought to be self-explanatory. Others merit further exposition:

- Comments by senior members of the UK government were primarily restricted to four names: Prime Minister Tony Blair, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon, and Alistair Campbell, Director of Communications and Strategy, as well unnamed government spokespersons speaking on behalf of the UK government
- Similarly comments by senior figures in Washington tended to be restricted to just two individuals: President George Bush and Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.
- 'The Media' were categorised as functioning as a source whenever the reports referred to claims made by other media outlets. This does not include occasions when the papers reproduced Press Association reports.
- The 'UN' category included senior figures at the UN such as its then General Secretary Kofi Annan, and former weapons inspectors Hans Blix and Mohammed El-Baradei.
- 'Pressure groups and charities' may be UK based or international. This includes humanitarian organisations.
- 'Ordinary people' refers to ordinary members of the general public to have been quoted as giving their views in news reports through say, vox pop interviews. Occasions when

the reporters made ‘inferences about public opinion’ without specifically quoting anyone or ‘without reference to polling data or other systematic evidence’ (see Lewis et al 2005: 19) would have been placed in the ‘No actors’ category. Such occasions were very rare however.

- ‘Iraqi government and police’ refers to statements by the Saddam Hussein regime.
- ‘Local antiwar groups’ were the kind of groups outlined in Chapter 6.
- ‘Military families’ are the relatives of those serving in the armed forces out in the Gulf.
- ‘Religious representatives’ refers to priests, Archbishops, Imams etc of any religion.
- ‘Protesters’ are treated separately from any of the other ‘antiwar’ categories to account for occasions when the people protesting against the war were not associated with any particular antiwar organisation.
- ‘National antiwar others’ is a disparate category referring to a number of high-profile individuals in the UK who were opposed to the invasion, but who were at most only fleetingly connected with the national Stop the War Coalition. Examples include the then leader of the Liberal Democrats Charles Kennedy, former CND chair Bruce Kent, pop singer Ms Dynamite, and other people ‘in the public eye’ who took an active stance against the war.
- ‘Former military’ – people who were formerly in the British (or American) armed services.

Meanwhile, the ‘no actors’ category means the journalist wrote the report without referencing the claims made in it. As Table 9.4 (from Chapter 9) shows, one in five reports fell into this category, although they tended to be the shorter reports often being no more than a paragraph long.

Themes

It has been said that content analysis is particularly well suited to providing a map of the themes in any given issue (e.g. Deacon et al 2007: 119). Given that this is one of the strengths of content analysis, it is fitting that one of the main purposes of this aspect of the research was to identify the themes raised in the various reports and editorials. To be coded as a theme it was imperative that at least one sentence be devoted to the matter in hand.

The meanings of the twenty-one most prevalent themes deserve to be explained in more detail:

- For present purposes ‘military affairs’ incorporates any reference of one sentence or more to the military strategy and tactics used by any of the combatants including the use of cluster bombs and depleted uranium, the various aspects of the preparations the armed forces made before setting off to the war zone, the fears and anguish of their loved ones, reports of the latest military developments during the conflict itself, and reflections on the quality of the military equipment used.
- ‘Post conflict’ is shorthand for any reference to challenges faced by American and British forces in Iraq after the declared end of ‘major combat operations’ on 1 May 2003, and also to the stories that soldiers often told the local press after returning to the UK.
- The category ‘International politics’ encompasses references to International political manoeuvrings and diplomacy, the UN resolutions against Iraq, and the (potential) efficacy of the inspections process.
- References to the ‘antiwar movement’ include descriptive and evaluative accounts of the character of the movement and its activities such as protests and public meetings.
- ‘Bereavement’ incorporates news of the deaths of mainly British but also American soldiers, reports of their funerals and reflections on the sense of anguish felt by their loved ones.
- ‘WMD’ referred to speculation and statements about the status of Iraq’s putative Weapons of Mass Destruction programme.
- ‘Iraq under Saddam’ is fairly self-explanatory.
- ‘Morality’ refers to discussions of the moral arguments for and/or against war. The various narratives were explored in Chapter 4.
- ‘Iraq’s future’ focused on the vexed question of whether or not Iraq will be better off for having gone through the war/regime change.
- The ‘reaction of the Iraq people’: The report or claims made in it address such questions as to whether the Iraqi people will or will not, did or did not, welcome the invasion.
- The category of ‘US/UK motives and intentions’ concerns speculation and commentary about one of two matters. Why were Britain and/or America prepared to resort to military action? And were they serious about finding a peaceful solution to the crisis?
- The ‘terrorism’ category encompasses references to events such as the attacks on 11 September 2001, discussion of the putative pre-War links between Iraq and Al-Qaeda, and questions about whether or not a war against Iraq would be an effective means of combating terrorism.

- Statements calling on the public to ‘support the troops’ ought to be self-explanatory.
- ‘Deaths in Iraq’ refers to the reporting the news of Iraqi casualties.
- ‘UK public opinion’ can refer to either polling data or unsubstantiated claims made about the state of public opinion in the UK.
- The ‘Claims and predictions’ category concerns statements about the veracity and integrity of statements made by either the British or American governments as they made their case for war.
- ‘David Kelly/Hutton enquiry’ should also be self-explanatory.
- ‘Previous wars’ can include any conflict from before the Second World War to the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan.
- ‘The media’ category refers to either evaluative or descriptive accounts of (a section of) the media’s performance in reporting the war.
- ‘Legality’. Reports falling to this category focused on the controversy surrounding the legal status of the war.
- ‘Consequences for peace...’ refers to the impact that the war will have on the prospects for peace either in the Middle East or around the wider world.

The ‘Attention Score’

Content analysis has often sought to quantify the prevalence of certain topics in news reporting by counting the total number of articles, or by measuring the total number of column inches, devoted to those topics (Budd 1964: 259). The weakness of this more traditional approach is that it cannot necessarily account for the differences in emphasis between articles that ‘simple observation’ would be alert to (Ibid.: 259). Budd’s (1964) ‘attention score’ system seeks to overcome those limitations by noting various aspects of the presentation of the report so as to produce an overall ‘attention score’ for each article. The relevant presentational features are:

- The article’s headline size;
- Its placement in the paper – i.e. whether the article was published on the front page, the editorial pages, or elsewhere in the paper;
- The article’s position on the page – i.e. does the article begin in the top half of the page?
- Its length – and specifically whether it exceeds three quarters of the length of the column;
- And, in an addition to the criteria recommended by Budd, my own criteria also records whether or not the article is accompanied by any photography.

If there are inevitably occasions when anomalies will arise, such as when an item begins just below the half way mark of the page and is just short of three-quarters of the length of the column and so will have a substantially lower attention score than an article that is only fractionally different, my own experience and reflections upon it have been that overall these discrepancies have been relatively rare and tend to cancel each other out.

Finally it is worth restating that, as mentioned in Chapter 10, the content analysis was complimented by critical discourse analysis to draw out some of the more subtle features by which legitimacy was either conferred upon, or denied to, opponents of the war in the reporting and editorials.

Appendix 2.1: Long version of survey

Please contact Ian Taylor at i.j.k.taylor@lboro.ac.uk or iantaylor89@hotmail.com to access survey.

Appendix 2.2: Short version of survey

Please contact Ian Taylor at i.j.k.taylor@lboro.ac.uk or iantaylor89@hotmail.com to access survey.

Appendix 3.1: Interview Diary - Activists

	Group	Representative	Date	Start time	Finish time	Length (Minutes)
1	Greater Manchester and District CND	Cath Bann	13/06/2006	11.00am	12.20pm	80
2	New Forest Peace Group	Ann Fannin	13/06/2006	6.00pm	6.48pm	48
3	Wandsworth Stop the War Coalition	Isabel McMillan	18/06/2006	3.00pm	3.54pm	54
4	Suffolk4peace	Mike Burbank-Clayton	23/06/2006	6.03pm	7.17pm	74
5	North Manchester Against Wars	Richard Searle	24/06/2006	3.00pm	7.30pm	180 recorded
6	Tower Hamlets Stop the War	Martin Empson	25/06/2006	10.00am	10.54am	54
7	Warwick and Leamington Green Party	Janet Alty	26/06/2006	3.00pm	3.41pm	41
8	North Lincolnshire Stop The War Coalition	Cath Whittington	26/06/2006	4.00pm	4.42pm	42
9	East Kent Stop the War	Joel Ormsby	26/06/2006	7.00pm	7.42pm	42
10	Enfield Stop the War	Marie Xenophontos	28/06/2006	8.00pm	9.18pm	78
11	York Against the War	Kester Edmunds	29/06/2006	7.00pm	8.13pm	73
12	LSE Staff	Tania Burchardt	03/07/2006	11.00pm	11.53pm	53
13	The Raging Grannies	Maureen Mooney	06/07/2006	11.00am	12.00pm	60
14	Coverntry Stop the War	Dave Goodfield	15/08/2006	7.00pm	7.57pm	57
15	Maidenhead Respect	Philip Wilson	14/08/2006	2.00pm	2.45pm	45
16	Knighton Action for Peace and Justice	Micheal Green	11/10/2006	2.30pm	3.15pm	45
17	Wrekin Stop War	Rachel Whittaker	11/10/2006	7.30pm	8.15pm	45
18	Norwich Stop the War Coalition	Peter Orford	13/10/2006	2.00pm	2.48pm	48
19	Chesterfield Stop the War Coalition	James Eaden	17/10/2006	10.20am	11.17am	57
21	Tavistock Peace Action Group	Margaret Quinn	24/10/2006	10.00am	11.09am	69
22	Oxford for Peace	Nuala Young	24/10/2006	10.00pm	11.10pm	70
23	Sussex Action for Peace	Glenn Williams	25/10/2006	11.00am	12.00pm	60
24	Peace Moves Coalition	Peter Lemare	25/10/2006	2.18pm	2.55pm	37
25	Blackpool Stop the War	Peter Marsden	25/10/2006	7.45pm	8.46pm	61
26	Bolton Stop the War	Paul Maurins	26/10/2006	3.18pm	4.45pm	87
27	Merseyside Stop the War Coalition	Mark Henzel	26/10/2006	7.10pm	8.34pm	84
28	PAGI (People Against Global Imperialism)	Kim Singleton	27/10/2006	2.00pm	2.45pm	45
29	Yorkshire CND	Neil Kingsnorth	28/10/2006	3.00pm	4.19pm	79
30	London Federation of Green Parties	Noel Lynch	30/10/2006	2.00pm	3.03pm	63
31	Rugby Stop the War	Pete McLaren	01/11/2006	1.25pm	2.09pm	44
32	Hastings CND	Rona Drennan	03/11/2006	9.00pm	10.04pm	64
33	Bath Stop the War	Judith Eversley	09/11/2006	3.00pm	3.58pm	58
34	Slough4peace	Liz Cochrane	26/06/2007	7.03pm	7.30pm	27
35	Leicester Campaign to Stop the War	Chris Talbot	13/11/2007	10.20am	10.45am	25
36	Leicester Campaign to Stop the War	Scott Herbert	14/11/2007	6.28pm	6.56pm	28
37	Leicester Campaign to Stop the War	Chris Williams	21/02/2008	11.00am	2.17pm	197
38	Greater Manchester Stop the War Coalition	Mark Krantz	23/06/2008	6.35pm	6.54pm	19

Appendix 3.2: Interview Diary - Journalists

Newspaper	Name	Job title	Date	Start time	Finish time	Length (Minutes)
Leicester Mercury	Andrea Smith	Columnist	05/09/2007	7.32pm	8.04pm	32
MEN	Martin Dillon	Former reporter	11/09/2007	12.00pm	12.42pm	42
MEN	Nicola Dowling	Reporter	11/09/2007	1.41pm	2.15pm	34
Leicester Mercury	Cairan Fagan	Reporter	20/11/2007	11.16am	11.55am	39
Bury Free Press	Lesley Anslow	News Editor	21/09/2007	11.07am	11.34am	27
Slough Express	Karl Plunkett	Reporter (Now v	21/09/2007	3.30pm	3.59pm	29
Enfield Gazette	Nick Golding	Reporter (Now v	22/09/2007	10.50am	11.14am	24
The Observer	Nick Cohen	Columnist	09/10/2007	1.24pm	1.35pm	11
Leicester Mercury	Liz Heron	Former reporter	*			

* Email correspondence received 28/10/07

Follow up interviews:

No. :	Group	Representative	Date	Start Time	Finish time	Length (Minutes)	Transcribed?
1	Greater Manchester STWC	Mark Krantz	23/06/2008	6.35pm	6.49pm	14	Y

Appendix 4.1: Coding Schedule

Units of analysis:

Any separate news report, article, editorial, letter, even isolated photograph counts a single unit of analysis – regardless of whether or not it is linked to another item on the same page, because the strengths of those kinds of relationships can vary and may be subject to interpretation and perspective. Best to keep things simple.

Background information/variables

Town: (Local press only) *Nominal*

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1 | Slough |
| 2 | Leicester |
| 3 | Manchester |
| 4 | Suffolk |
| 5 | Enfield |

Local newspaper: *Nominal*

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1 | Slough Observer |
| 2 | Slough Express |
| 3 | Leicester Mercury |
| 4 | Manchester Evening News |
| 5 | Bury Free Press |
| 6 | Enfield Gazette |

Daily or Weekly paper: *Ordinal*

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1 | Daily |
| 2 | Weekly |

Up to this point standardised formats a standard template can be applied for each paper.

Date: *Interval*
dd/mm/yy

Number of articles about the war: (per edition) *Ratio*

Title(s):

Section of newspaper: *Nominal*

- 1 Front page lead news
- 2 Front page other (non-lead or non-news)
- 3 News pages other than World View or Foreign News section
- 4 Letters
- 5 Regular columnists
- 6 Editorial
- 7 Features
- 8 'World View' or National and Foreign News section
- 9 Other

Page Number: *Ordinal*

Authored? If the name of a journalist or commentator is given, make a note of it. *Nominal*

- 1 No name given
- 2 Journalist or commentator named (give name)
- 3 News Agency (Give agency name)
- 4 Letters
- 5
- 6 Editorial

Reasons for inclusion:

- 1) **Article is about the Iraq war or the controversies surrounding it, BUT WITHOUT any mention of antiwar activism.**
Being 'about' the war means it *is mentioned in the heading, subheading, opening paragraph or on a page dedicated to it.*
- 2) **Article about Iraq War AND ANTIWAR activism.**
Minimal involvement would be *publicity for their events, demos* etc. Expressing sympathy or support is NOT enough – code those cases as 1. Letters only count under this code 2, *if the author(s) explicitly name themselves as part of an anti-war group.* Reports and letters on antiwar demonstrations also qualify.

Coverage/Impetus for study:

What impulses motivate the story?

- 1) 'The power elite: prominent national figures.' (Household names including royalty).
- 2) 'Celebrity.'

Local people: (If 3, 4 or 5 conflate pick whichever is most appropriate).

- 3) 'Views and statements of, and news concerning local MPs and MEPs.'
- 4) 'Views and statements of, and news concerning local councillors.'
- 5) 'Views and statements of, and news concerning prominent local persons, including prospective parliamentary candidates.' (Councillor status trumps parliamentary candidacy if both are held). (Count Community leaders, 'pillars of the community – code 375).
- 6) 'Views and statements of, and news concerning prominent local BUSINESS persons (code 374) including impact on local businesses.'
- 7) 'Vox pops. Views of local people (as supposedly canvassed at random).'

Military and Political affairs:

- 8) 'Stories, views and fears of relatives and close friends of serving soldiers.'
- 9) 'Soldiers stories – in their own words.'
- 10) 'Campaign to support the troops.' (Code 260)
- 11) 'News of the death(s) of soldier(s), including funeral and tributes.'
- 12) 'Latest dispatches from the front-line, or significant MILITARY developments in the conflict or pre-conflict or 'post-conflict' phases.'
- 13) 'Significant DIPLOMATIC or POLITICAL developments either before, during or after the conflict.'
- 14) 'The post-conflict insurgency.'
- 15) 'Humanitarian situation ('post'-conflict).'
- 16) 'The David Kelly affair/Hutton enquiry.'

National and Local activity and concerns:

- 17) 'Concern with regards to race relations (See impact on local or nationwide race relations).'
- 18) 'Public meetings, speeches, debates and the public screenings of films.'
- 19) 'Anti-war activism other than meetings. Like demos.'
- 20) 'Letters: PRO-WAR.'
- 21) 'Letters: ANTI-WAR.'
- 22) 'Letters: Mixed implications.'
- 23) 'Letters: Descriptive only.'
- 24) 'Other.'
- 25) 'Not applicable.'

Adjectival Codes

To give a picture of the overall orientation of the article in relation to the controversy of the case for or against the war and of the picture of the anti-war movement that emerges from the article. Only code **one** of each per article. Refer to headline or opening paragraph if fine judgements between mixed and mainly favourable/hostile have to be made. *Nominal*

The controversies surrounding the war

The controversy over military action in news or features reports. Use only 1 per article.

Report or actors in it mainly or solely make a case in favour of military action.	1
Report or actors in it mainly or solely make a case against military action. But this is NOT to be confused with publicity for anti-war activity – for that use code 2 below.	2
Mixed implications. Or the report features both sides of the controversy.	3
Descriptive account or acknowledgement of controversy WITHOUT ENTERING INTO IT. E.g. ‘There is a case for and against...’ ‘Whatever one’s feelings about the war...’	4
No mention of the controversy, but does look at or focus on the war.	5
No mention of the war at all. (Usually other stuff the peace group might have done).	6

Anti-War activism

Representations of anti-war activists & activity in news or features reports. Use only 1 per article.

Report (or actors in it) mainly cast the anti-war group/movement in a negative light.	1
Report (or actors in it) mainly cast the anti-war group/movement in a positive light. Includes publicity for any activities.	2
Mixed implications. Or the report features both sides of the argument about the character and motivations etc. about the anti-war movement.	3
Descriptive only. No evaluative aspect evident.	4
No mention of anti-war activism	5

What issues are raised?

Justification:

It provides a 'map' of the 'big picture'. There is no other reliable way of identifying general (thematic) patterns or getting a picture of whether or not the media are biased or skewed in any way, and if so how (Deacon et al, 2007: 119).

Rules:

Any stance taken, i.e. for or against, must be **clearly stated** not merely implied. If is implied, make a note of it.

If more than 5 themes are evident, select those 5 that have the most space devoted to them.

If the last place is contested by 2 or more themes, select the one that comes first in the article – privileged themes (and sources) tend to be included first (Deacon et al, 1999, 171).

Same rules for Actors.

Iraq war. Main issues and controversies:

Themes: (at least ONE full sentences devoted to it) *Nominal*

'Legality'

- 1 'War is legal'
- 2 'War is illegal' (Be careful not to confuse with 202)
- 3 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 4 'Descriptive only/Don't know/non-specific'
- 5 '

'WMD'

Distinguish between

- Claims and predictions 191 - 195
- David Kelly 337 – 349

Intelligence on or claims about:

- 6 'Existence not in doubt and constitutes to a threat'
- 7 'Existence accepted but it does not constitute a threat'
- 8 'Existence suspected but not proven, level of threat uncertain'
- 9 'Existence doubted, level of threat doubted'
- 10 'Existence denied: no threat'
- 11 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 12 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

Tackling WMD:

(Is war an effective or counter-productive way of tackling the proliferation of WMD?)

- 13 'The war WILL BE EFFECTIVE in tackling the proliferation of WMD'
- 14 'The war HAS BEEN EFFECTIVE in tackling the proliferation of WMD'
- 15 'The war WILL BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE and encouraged the proliferation of WMD'
- 16 'The war HAS BEEN COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE and encouraged the proliferation of WMD'
- 17 'Overall the war WILL MAKE no difference either way'
- 18 'Overall the war HAS MADE no difference either way'
- 19 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 20 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

'Terrorism'

Views about terrorism:

- 21 'Views in article express or identify open support for Al-Qaeda or other international terrorism' (Not to be confused with allegations that others do e.g. 509).
- 22 'Opposition to'
- 23 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 24 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

Links between Iraq and Al-Qaeda or other International terrorism:

- 25 'Existence not in doubt and constitutes to a threat'
- 26 'Existence believed but it does not constitute a threat'
- 27 'Existence suspected but not proven, level of threat uncertain'
- 28 'Existence doubted, level of threat doubted'
- 29 'Existence denied: no threat'
- 30 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 31 'Descriptive only/Non-Specific'

Combating terrorism:

- 32 'War WILL DECREASE or effectively combat terrorism'
- 33 'War HAS DECREASED, reduced or effectively combated terrorism'
- 34 'War WILL INCREASE terrorism/be counter-productive'
- 35 'War HAS INCREASED terrorism/been counter-productive'
- 36 'Overall the war WILL not make much difference either way'
- 37 'Overall the war HAS not made much difference either way'
- 38 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 39 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

Terrorist acts:

- 40 'September 11'
- 41 ''
- 42 'Bali bombing'
- 43 'Palestinian suicide bombings'
- 44 'Other terrorist acts'

'Iraq'

‘Saddam Hussein/Ba’athism’:

Distinguish between

• **‘Human rights abuses ...’ 58 – 64**

- 45 ‘As dictator, tyrant, evil, war criminal etc.’
- 46 ‘As US puppet’
- 47 ‘US/UK support for’
- 48 ‘As direct beneficiary of US/CIA activity (1968)’
- 49 ‘As Arab nationalist’
- 50 ‘As Islamic fundamentalist’
- 51 ‘As secular’
- 52 ‘As stupid’
- 53 ‘As ‘madman’ (or insane in some other way)
- 54 ‘As cunning, intelligent’
- 55 ‘As threat to neighbours and/or world peace’
- 56 **‘Saddam must go’**
- 57 ‘Other’

Human rights abuses in Iraq/Saddam’s brutality/Oppression of the Iraqi people:

- 58 ‘Acknowledged or descriptive only/non-specific’
- 59 ‘Denied or played down’
- 60 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 61 **‘As case for war’**
- 62 **‘Specifically identified as ‘moral’ case for war’**
- 63 ‘Western complicity in’ (e.g. arms sales, logistical support) – *descriptive/non-specific only*
- 64 **‘Western complicity in’ (e.g. arms sales, logistical support) – as part of case against war**

Sanctions against Iraq:

- 65 ‘Saddam blamed’
- 66 ‘US/UK/UN blamed’
- 67 ‘Sanctions defended’
- 68 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about blame’
- 69 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

Iran-Iraq 1980-1988:

- 70 ‘Acknowledged or descriptive only/non-specific’
- 71 **‘As part of case for war’**
- 72 **‘As part of case against war’**
- 73 ‘As provoked by America’
- 74 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’

Arms sales and/or other logistical support for Saddam/Iraq in the 1980s:

- 75 'Critical of'
- 76 'Defended/excused'
- 77 'Denied or down played'
- 78 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 79 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

Refugees:

Distinguish between

- **'Asylum Seekers' 232 – 236**
- 80 'Number of Iraqi refugees already – Descriptive only/non-specific'
- 81 'Number of Iraqi refugees already – As part of case for war'
- 82 'Number of Iraqi refugees already – As case against war'
- 83 'Number of Iraqi refugees already – Mixed coverage'
- 84 'War will increase the number of refugees'
- 85 'War will reduce the number of refugees (as Iraqis feel safe to return home)'
- 86 'Descriptive /Non-specific' (Neutral discussion of the issue).
- 87 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about the likely impact of this'

On the reaction of the Iraqi people:

Distinguish between

- **Iraq – better/worse off, 94 – 101, if at all possible.**
- 88 'Ordinary Iraqis WILL welcome the invasion'
- 89 'Ordinary Iraqis DID welcome the invasion'
- 90 'Ordinary Iraqis WILL NOT welcome the invasion'
- 91 'Ordinary Iraqis DID NOT welcome the invasion'
- 92 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 93 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

Iraq: better or worse off as a result of the war?

(Generally. Including discussion of peace, freedom, and humanitarian & economic consequences).

Distinguish between

- **The insurgency if that is mentioned 102 – 110.**
- 94 'Iraq WILL BE better off'
- 95 'Iraq is BETTER off'
- 96 'Iraq WILL BE worse off'
- 97 'Iraq is WORSE off'
- 98 'Overall the situation in Iraq WILL BE about the same as it was before'
- 99 'Overall the situation in Iraq IS about the same as it was before'
- 100 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or uncertain claims about'
- 101 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

The Insurgency in ‘post-conflict’ Iraq:

(With or without specifically linking it to the invasion of Iraq or entering into the controversy over whether it results from the invasion or occupation).

Distinguish between

- **Claims about the World or Middle East being in more turmoil if possible. See Geo-Political factors 166 – 173).**

- 102 ‘Critical/ denunciation of insurgency. As terrorist.’
- 103 ‘Supportive of insurgency, or at least of the ‘right to resist’ occupation’
- 104 ‘Mixed implications/claims made about the insurgency’
- 105 ‘News of the latest attacks or other activities by the insurgents’
- 106 ‘Descriptive account of the insurgency as a phenomenon, or aspects of the insurgency, e.g. use of the internet, NOT RELATED TO DISCUSSION OF ITS CAUSES. Use 111 – 114 in those cases.
- 107 ‘As Islamic Fundamentalist /Al-Qaeda’
- 108 ‘As nationalist up-rising’
- 109 ‘As comprised of foreign i.e. non-Iraqi, fighters’
- 110 ‘As ‘Saddamist/ Ba’athist. Either for being directly supportive or comprised of former Ba’athists.

In relation to the invasion and occupation:

(The distinction between this and discussions about whether ‘Iraq is better/worse off now’ 94 – 101, might just depend on whether the words like ‘insurgency’, ‘terrorist’, ‘violence’ etc. are used; and whether the ‘post conflict’ situation is discussed in general terms or whether the discussion focused on the insurgency)._

Distinguish between

- **Post conflict challenges 622 – 641**

- 111 ‘As a direct consequence of the invasion and occupation of Iraq.’
- 112 ‘NOT a direct consequence of the invasion or occupation.’
- 113 ‘Mixed claims made about its causes’
- 114 ‘Descriptive account of the possible causes of the insurgency’ (NOT TO BE CONFUSED with 106).

‘The UN’:

UN resolutions and processes:

(In the run up to war including UN weapons inspections)

- 115 ‘Iraq in breach of resolutions and this amounts to a case for war’
- 116 ‘Iraq in breach of resolutions but this does not amount to a case for war’
- 117 ‘Iraq in breach of resolutions; no comment either way as to whether or not this amounts to a case for war’
- 118 ‘Crisis could be or should have been resolved through the UN, the International Community or by Arab states.’
- 119 ‘Coercion of smaller member states by US and UK’
- 120 ‘The French veto’
- 121 ‘Past US (or UK) vetoes’
- 122 ‘Dependence on threat of force to be enforced’
- 123 ‘Inspections working (or Iraq co-operating with inspections’
- 124 ‘Inspections not working (or Iraq not co-operating with inspections’
- 125 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about. Including ‘Iraq needs to do more’’
- 126 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

The future of the UN and International Law:

(Has the war strengthened the UN and/or International Law or undermined them?)

- 127 'The war WILL STRENGTHEN the UN and/or International Law'
- 128 'The war HAS STRENGTHENED the UN and/or International Law'
- 129 'The war WILL WEAKEN the UN and/or International Law'
- 130 'The war HAS WEAKENED the UN and/or International Law'
- 131 'Overall the war WILL MAKE no difference either way to the strength of either the UN or International Law'
- 132 'Overall the war HAS MADE no difference either way to the strength of either the UN or International Law'
- 133 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 134 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

UN resolutions – double standards:

(Resolutions being enforced against Iraq but not Israel [or India'])

Distinguish between

- 'UN resolutions & processes', 115 – 126;
- 'Motives ... protecting Israel' 157 – 160;
- 'Israel' 333 – 336.
- 135 'Critical of'
- 136 'Defended/excused'
- 137 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 138 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

'Motives and Intentions':

- 139 General suspicion of motives

As war on Islam:

- 140 'It is'
- 141 'It is not'
- 142 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'
- 143 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'

As war for oil/other commercial gains for Western companies:

- 144 'It is'
- 145 'It is not'
- 146 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'
- 147 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 148 'As related to globalisation'

As related to the possible fall of the House of Saud (Oil and hegemony related):

- 149 'It is'
- 150 'It is not'
- 151 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'
- 152 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'

As reaction to 9/11, or projection of power post-9/11:

- 153 'It is'
- 154 'It is not'
- 155 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 156 'Non-specific'

As means of protecting Israel:

Distinguish between

- UN resolutions – double standards, 135 – 138;
 - 'Israel' 333 – 336
- 157 'It is'
 - 158 'It is not'
 - 159 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
 - 160 'Non-specific'

Other motives (specify):

161

The UK Government's /US Administration's intentions:

- 162 'They WERE serious about finding a peaceful resolution to the crisis'
- 163 'They WERE NOT serious about finding a peaceful resolution to the crisis, or undermined efforts to secure one'
- 164 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 165 'Descriptive only/Non-specific. Includes Diplomacy in descriptive terms' (Includes diplomacy in descriptive terms).

Geo-Political factors:

The World /Middle East: More harmonious or less harmonious as a result of the war?

(Count references to the 'Peace process.') (The distinction between this category and 'terrorism' related ones or whether Iraq is better or worse off might just depend on which word is used!)

- 166 'The World and/or Middle East WILL BE more HARMONIOUS after the war'
- 167 'The World and/or Middle East IS more HARMONIOUS now'
- 168 'The World and/or Middle East WILL BE in (even) more TURMOIL after the war'
- 169 'The World and/or Middle East IS in (even) more TURMOIL now'
- 170 'Overall the situation in the Middle East WILL BE about the same as it is now'
- 171 'Overall the situation in the Middle East IS about the same as it was before'
- 172 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 173 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

International relations: Has the war aided or hindered harmonious international relations and co-operation internationally?

- 174 'The war WILL AID harmonious international relations and/or co-operation internationally'
- 175 'The war HAS AIDED harmonious international relations and/or co-operation internationally'
- 176 'The war WILL HINDER harmonious international relations and co-operation internationally'
- 177 'The war HAS HINDERED harmonious international relations and co-operation internationally'
- 178 'Overall the war WILL MAKE no difference either way to these matters'
- 179 'Overall the war HAS MADE no difference either way to these matters'
- 180 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 181 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

International Relations with countries other than America:

- 182 'Britain's relation status in UN due to Iraq War'
- 183 'Britain's relation status with EU nations due to Iraq War'
- 184 'Britain's relation status with other nations due to Iraq War'
- 185 'Britain's relation status with other international institutions (like NATO) due to Iraq War'
- 186 'Other Foreign Policy issues'

Other unspecified or general consequences:

- 187 'Things are or will be BETTER as a result of military action'
- 188 'Things are or will be WORSE as a result of military action'
- 189 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 190 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

'Claims and Predictions':

(Only count when specific mention of the UK government's alleged dishonesty or mistakenness is made. E.g. 'they got it right,' 'they got it wrong,' 'they lied.' Refers to WMD, Links with Al-Qaeda, and UN processes mainly)

Distinguish between

- **WMD: 6 – 12;**
- **Int. Terrorism: 25 – 39;**
- **On the prospect of an inquiry into the Iraq War: 664 – 667;**
- **Intelligence – Including the dodgy dossier: 687 – 690.**

The claims:

- 191 'UK Government /US Administration LIED' (intentionally misled Parliament/Congress and Public over)
- 192 'UK Government /US Administration was MISTAKEN' (unintentionally misled Parliament/Congress and Public over)
- 193 'Government & the Administration were RIGHT – neither lied nor mistaken'
- 194 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 195 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

‘Morality, brutality and other issues’:

Morality:

- 196 ‘Opposition to killing’
- 197 ‘Opposition to invading another country’
- 198 ‘Opposition to unprovoked aggression’
- 199 ‘Opposition to notion of “pre-emptive warfare”’
- 200 ‘Fears for the lives of UK soldiers – as opposition to war’
- Distinguish between ‘Military affairs’, especially 260, 277, 285, 294, 658 & 659**
- 201 ‘As humiliation of Iraqis, Arabs or Muslims’
- 202 ‘Belief it was morally wrong BECAUSE it was illegal’
- 203 ‘General opposition’ (Either no reasons given or a long list of reasons are given without being elaborated on.)
- 204 ‘Other (moral) objections’
- 205 ‘Mixed coverage – the issues on both sides of the argument are morally ambiguous’

General support for military action:

- 206 ‘General support for war – unspecified reasons.’

Brutality of war:

- 207 ‘Acknowledged/Descriptive only/Non-specific’
- 208 ‘Denied or down played’
- 209 ‘As case against war’
- 210 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’

Guantanamo Bay, Abu Graib, Bagram Airbase or allegations of torture:

- 211 ‘Excused, defended or down played’
- 212 ‘Criticism of any of these practices’
- 213 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 214 ‘Acknowledged/Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘Islam and race relations’:

Impact on local or nationwide race relations:

- 215 ‘Positive (more harmonious) as a result’
- 216 ‘Negative (more antagonistic or concern that this will be the result)’
- 217 ‘No impact either way’
- 218 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 219 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

Islam

Moderate or non-fundamentalist Islam:

- 220 'Defended'
- 221 'Criticised'
- 222 'As undermined by the war on Iraq/war on terror'
- 223 'As bolstered by the war on Iraq/war on terror'
- 224 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 225 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

Islamic Fundamentalism:

- 226 'Defended'
- 227 'Criticised'
- 228 'As undermined by the war on Iraq/war on terror'
- 229 'As bolstered by the war on Iraq/war on terror'
- 230 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 231 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

Asylum Seekers:

Distinguish between

- **Refugees 80 – 87.**
- 232 'Concern about levels of Asylum Seekers'
- 233 'Concern about intolerance towards and victimization of Asylum Seekers'
- 234 'STWC opposition to intolerance and victimization of Asylum Seekers'
- 235 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 236 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

Other issues relating to race, religion or migration etc.:

- 237 'Other issues relating to race, religion or migration etc.'

Economic and Environmental Consequences:

Expenditure on war:

- 238 'Critical of'
- 239 'Defended/excused/played down'
- 240 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 241 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

Impact on local economy and businesses:

- 242 'Positive'
- 243 'Negative'
- 244 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 245 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

National economic consequences of war for Britain:

- 246 'Positive'
- 247 'Negative'
- 248 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 249 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

Global Economic consequences of war:

- 250 'Positive'
- 251 'Negative'
- 252 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 253 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'
- 254 'As related to globalisation'

Environmental impact:

- 255 'Positive'
- 256 'Negative'
- 257 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 258 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

Other Economic and Environmental Consequences:

259

Military Affairs:

- 260 'Support for troops' (general). As either part of a campaign to or comment on ... code as such no matter who says it.

Military tactics: (See also Iraqi military tactics 613 – 617)

- 261 'Effective'
- 262 'Ineffective'
- 263 'As excessive, contrary to international law, or war crimes' (BE CAREFUL TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN 'US/UK ... cluster bombs ... DU' 270 – 274).
- 264 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 265 'Descriptive only/non-specific'

Possession or past use of Nuclear weapons and/or other WMD by US or UK:

- 266 'Critical of'
- 267 'Defended/excused'
- 268 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 269 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

US/UK use of cluster bombs and/or depleted uranium in Iraq or other wars:

- 270 'Critical of'
- 271 'Defended/excused'
- 272 'Denied or down played'
- 273 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 274 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

Soldier's stories of those serving in Iraq: (*By soldiers or their families*)

Distinguish between

- **Military Equipment 609 – 612;**
- **Iraqi Military Tactics 613 – 617;**
- **Post-Conflict Challenges 622 – 641;**
- **Capture of Saddam 643 – 646;**
- **Trial of Saddam 647 – 650**
- **How do you explain it all to the children? – 656**
- **'Friendly Fire' incidents – 657**
- **Troops returning home – 658**
- **Thanks for the support (say military) – 659**
- **Military developments (not coming from soldier's stories) 660 – 663**
- **The Jessica Lynch Saga – 680.**

Pre-War – or before setting off:

- 275 'For the war or willingness to go'
- 276 'Against the war or reluctance to go'
- 277 'Emphasis on fears & anguish of loved ones etc.'
- 278 'Comment on opposition to the war'
- 279 '
- 280 'Other aspects of army life or serving in warfare' (E.g. medical care, emergency relief etc.)
- 281 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 282 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

During the war' (20/03/03 – 01/05/03):

(Word from soldiers or families of them in the middle of their tours of duty)

- 283 'For the war or willingness to be there'
- 284 'Against the war or reluctance to be there'
- 285 'Emphasis on fears & anguish of loved ones etc.'
- 286 'Comment on opposition to the war'
- 287 '
- 288 'Reports of military progress, obstacles and latest military developments – Descriptive'
- 289 'Other aspects of army life or serving in warfare' (E.g. medical care, emergency relief etc.)
- 290 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 291 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

‘Post-Conflict’ (after 01/05/03):

(Word from soldiers or their families after they have completed their tours of duty)

- 292 ‘For the war’
- 293 ‘Against the war’
- 294 ‘Emphasis on fears, horror of war, anguish of loved ones etc.’
- 295 ‘Comment on opposition to the war’
- 296 ‘
- 297 ‘Other aspects of army life or serving in warfare’ (E.g. medical care, emergency relief etc.)
- 298 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 299 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

Bereavement:

- 300 ‘For the war’
- 301 ‘Against the war’
- 302 ‘Emphasis on fears, horror of war etc.’
- 303 ‘Comment on opposition to the war’
- 304 ‘Focus on inadequate equipment’
- 305 ‘Emphasis on loss, anguish, devastation, etc.’
- 306 ‘News of death of soldiers’
- 307 ‘Funerals and tributes’ (Verbal and floral)
- 308 ‘Emphasis on moral support for the bereaved’
- 309 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 310 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

Deaths in Iraq:

- 311 ‘Of Iraqi civilians’
- 312 ‘Of Iraqi military or senior Ba’athists’
- 313 ‘Of insurgents/Al Qaeda’

Prospect of more military interventions:

- 314 ‘General/non-specific’
- 315 ‘Against Iran’
- 316 ‘Against North Korea’
- 317 ‘Against Syria’
- 318 ‘Against other specified or unspecified nations’

Other Military considerations, issues stories:

- 319

‘America’ (See also Actors):

Neo-conservatism:

- 320 ‘Critical of’
- 321 ‘Defended /denied /downplayed /excused’
- 322 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 323 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

As Empire or Imperial/Colonial Power:

- 324 'Critical of'
- 325 'Defended /denied /downplayed /excused'
- 326 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 327 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

Britain's Special Relationship with America:

- 328 'Critical of'
- 329 'Defended /denied /downplayed /excused'
- 330 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 331 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

Other issues, considerations or stories relating America to the Iraq War:

- 332 'Other issues, considerations or stories relating America to the Iraq War':

'Israel':

Distinguish between

- 'UN resolutions – double standards' 135 – 138;
- 'Motives ... protecting Israel' 157 – 160;
- 333 'Critical of'
- 334 'Defended/excused'
- 335 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 336 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

The David Kelly affair/Hutton inquiry:

Distinguish between

- WMD related issues 6 – 12
- On the prospect of an inquiry into the Iraq War: 664 - 667
- Intelligence including the Dodgy dossier: 687 – 690.
- 337 'News of Dr Kelly's death'
- 338 'Bereavement/family reaction'
- 339 'His death as 'suicide''
- 340 'His death as 'murder''
- 341 'Blame directed at the Government'
- 342 'Blame directed at the BBC /Andrew Gilligan'
- 343 'No-one blamed – descriptive account'
- 344 'Blame game ... mixed implications'
- 345 'News of establishment of Hutton Enquiry'
- 346 'Progress of the Hutton Enquiry – descriptive account'
- 347 'Probity of Lord Hutton/ his inquiry'
- 348 'Suspicion about the Hutton enquiry e.g. that it will be a 'whitewash''
- 349 'Mixed implications of the claims made about the Hutton enquiry'

Media-coverage (Meta Coverage):

(References to how the war is being covered by the media)

- 350 'Media are criticised for their anti-war 'bias''
- 351 'Media are criticised for their pro-war 'bias''
- 352 'Media are criticised for inaccurate or inadequate reporting''
- 353 'Media are praised for their 'fair and balanced' coverage'
- 354 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 355 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'
- 356 'No discussion of this issue'

References to other conflicts:**Afghanistan 2001 – present:**

'Necessity/Justness of':

- 357 'Necessary or justified'
- 358 'Unnecessary or unjustified'
- 359 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 360 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

'Success/failure':

- 361 'Success'
- 362 'Failure'
- 363 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 364 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

'Projected comparison with war on Iraq':

- 365 'Iraq war is/will be similar'
- 366 'War on Iraq is not/will not be comparable'
- 367 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 368 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

'As basis for war on Iraq':

- 369 'Part of the basis of the case for war on Iraq'
- 370 'Part of the basis of the case against war on Iraq'
- 371 'Not relevant either way'
- 372 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 373 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

- 374 'Soldier's stories from'

Kosovo 1999:

'Necessity/Justness of':

- 375 'Necessary or justified'
- 376 'Unnecessary or unjustified'
- 377 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 378 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

‘Success/failure’:

- 379 ‘Success’
- 380 ‘Failure’
- 381 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
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- 390 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 391 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

- 392 ‘Soldier’s stories from’

Gulf War 1990-1991:

‘Necessity/Justness of’:

- 393 ‘Necessary or justified’
- 394 ‘Unnecessary or unjustified’
- 395 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 396 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘Success/failure’:

- 397 ‘Success’
- 398 ‘Failure’
- 399 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 400 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘Projected comparison with war on Iraq’

- 401 ‘Iraq war is/will be similar’
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- 407 ‘Not relevant either way’
- 408 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 409 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

- 410 ‘Soldier’s stories from’

Vietnam 1962-1975:

‘Necessity/Justness of’:

- 411 ‘Necessary or justified’
- 412 ‘Unnecessary or unjustified’
- 413 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 414 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘Success/failure’:

- 415 ‘Success’
- 416 ‘Failure’
- 417 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 418 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘Projected comparison with war on Iraq’:

- 419 ‘Iraq war is/will be similar’
- 420 ‘War on Iraq is not/will not be comparable’
- 421 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 422 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘As basis for war on Iraq’:

- 423 ‘Part of the basis of the case for war on Iraq’
- 424 ‘Part of the basis of the case against war on Iraq’
- 425 ‘Not relevant either way’
- 426 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 427 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

- 428 ‘Soldier’s stories from’

World War II 1939-1945:

‘Necessity/Justness of’:

- 429 ‘Necessary or justified’
- 430 ‘Unnecessary or unjustified’
- 431 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 432 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘Success/failure’:

- 433 ‘Success’
- 434 ‘Failure’
- 435 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 436 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘Projected comparison with war on Iraq’:

- 437 ‘Iraq war is/will be similar’
- 438 ‘War on Iraq is not/will not be comparable’
- 439 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 440 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘As basis for war on Iraq’:

- 441 ‘Part of the basis of the case for war on Iraq’
- 442 ‘Part of the basis of the case against war on Iraq’
- 443 ‘Not relevant either way’
- 444 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 445 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

- 446 ‘Soldier’s stories from’

Other conflicts:

Specify:

‘Necessity/Justness of’:

- 447 ‘Necessary or justified’
- 448 ‘Unnecessary or unjustified’
- 449 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 450 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘Success/failure’:

- 451 ‘Success’
- 452 ‘Failure’
- 453 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 454 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘Projected comparison with war on Iraq’:

- 455 ‘Iraq war is/will be similar’
- 456 ‘War on Iraq is not/will not be comparable’
- 457 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 458 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘As basis for war on Iraq’:

- 459 ‘Part of the basis of the case for war on Iraq’
- 460 ‘Part of the basis of the case against war on Iraq’
- 461 ‘Not relevant either way’
- 462 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 463 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

- 464 ‘Soldier’s stories from’

Impact on Party Politics in the UK:

Public opinion/Opinion Polls:

- 465 ‘As showing support for war or popularity of the war’
- 466 ‘As showing opposition to the war or unpopularity of the war’
- 467 ‘Showing public opinion as divided’
- 468 ‘As irrelevant or no basis for the case for or against’
- 469 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

Tony Blair / the government – listening to the people?

Distinguish between

- **Tony Blair 569 - 572;**

- 470 'Failing to listen to or represent the people'
- 471 'The are listening to/representing the people'
- 472 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 473 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

Politicians' responses (Generally):

- 474 'Failing to listen to or represent the people'
- 475 'The are listening to/representing the people'
- 476 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 477 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

Changing voting habits:

- 478 'Will change voting habits as a result or consider doing so'
- 479 'Will NOT change voting habits as a result/not consider doing so'
- 480 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views/Don't know/undecided'
- 481 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

Apathy or feeling disinclined to vote:

- 482 'It makes people apathetic or less disinclined to vote'
- 483 'It does not make people apathetic or less disinclined to vote'
- 484 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views'
- 485 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

Divisions or unrest within political parties (at local or national levels):

Distinguish between

- **Resignations 683 – 686**

- 486 'Within the Labour party'
- 487 'Within the Conservative party'
- 488 'Within the Liberal Democrats party'
- 489 'Within some other party'

Other party political issues:

Distinguish between

- **Party Political spats – 651**
- **Developments in domestic politics relating to the Iraq war (other than resignations) - 682**
- 490 All other political matters

‘Civil Liberties and Anti-terrorism’:

Civil Liberties and anti-terrorist legislation:

Distinguish between

- **Domestic counter-terrorism policing 652 – 655**

- 491 ‘Comes down on the side of Civil liberties’
- 492 ‘Comes down on the side of anti-terrorist legislation’
- 493 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views’
- 494 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

The right to protest:

- 495 ‘Right to protest defended’
- 496 ‘Right to protest criticised or needs to be curtailed’
- 497 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views’
- 498 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

Other Civil Liberties or anti-terrorist legislation based issues:

499

‘Other issues’:

Iraq other:

- 500 ‘For military action’
- 501 ‘Against military action’
- 502 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 503 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

Other:

- 504 ‘Other local issues’
- 505 ‘Other national issues’
- 506 ‘Other international issues’
- 507 ‘Other other issues’

‘The anti-war movement’:

‘Portrayal of it or individuals associated with it... **NATIONALLY** or in general – its size, breath and character of the anti-war movement’:

- 508 “‘Positive” portrayal – emphasis on size, diversity, moderation, representative of the public at large etc.’
- 509 “‘Negative” portrayal – emphasis on smallness, supposed far-left character, extremism, irresponsible, unrepresentative of the public at large etc.’
- 510 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 511 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘Portrayal of it or local people associated with it... **LOCALLY** – I.e. the size, breath and character of the local anti-war movement’:

- 512 “‘Positive” portrayal – emphasis on size, diversity, moderation, representative of the community at large etc.’
- 513 “‘Negative” portrayal – emphasis on smallness, supposed far-left character, extremism, irresponsible, unrepresentative of the community at large etc.’
- 514 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 515 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

National protests and demonstrations:

Distinguish between

- **Civil Disobedience 668 – 671;**
- **Human shield actions 672 – 675;**
- **International protest / protest abroad 676 – 679.**

- 516 ‘Positive portrayal of’
- 517 ‘Negative portrayal of’
- 518 ‘Trouble at marches’
- 519 ‘Trouble predicted’
- 520 ‘Trouble doesn’t happen or is averted. Protest passes off peacefully’
- 521 ‘Publicity for national protests, demos, meetings or other anti-war activism’
- 522 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 523 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

Local protests and demonstrations:

Distinguish between

- **Civil Disobedience 668 – 671;**
- **Human shield actions 672 – 675;**

- 524 ‘Positive portrayal of’
- 525 ‘Negative portrayal of’
- 526 ‘Trouble at marches’
- 527 ‘Trouble predicted’
- 528 ‘Trouble doesn’t happen or is averted. Protest passes off peacefully’
- 529 ‘Publicity for local protests, demos, meetings or other anti-war activism’
- 530 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 531 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

George Galloway:

Concerning comments he allegedly made calling on British forces not to serve:

- 532 'Galloway made those comments and is criticised for it.'
- 533 'Galloway made those comments and is defended/ applauded for it.'
- 534 'His comments were taken out of context, but he should have been more careful.'
- 535 'His comments have been taken out of context i.e. 'distorted' by others. He is defended.'
- 536 'He did not make those comments.'
- 537 'Mixed implications for him.'
- 538 'Descriptive account only.'

Concerning comments addressed to Saddam Hussein back in 1994 **praising his “courage and indefatigability”**:

- 539 'Galloway made those comments and is criticised for it.'
- 540 'Galloway made those comments and is defended/ applauded for it.'
- 541 'His comments were taken out of context, but he should have been more careful.'
- 542 'His comments have been taken out of context by others; or he had no choice under the circumstances. He is defended.'
- 543 'Mixed implications for him.'
- 544 'Descriptive account only.'

Concerning allegations that he was on **Saddam’s payroll by selling oil** for him:

- 545 'The allegations are supported.'
- 546 'The allegations are refuted.'
- 547 'Mixed claims made in relation to the allegations – evidence for and against is presented.'
- 548 'Descriptive account of the allegations'

General character and political views:

(Not to be confused with any of the above or comments on his oratory skills).

Distinguish between

- **Biographical profile of speaker 618 – 621**

- 549 'Galloway is defended/praised'
- 550 'Galloway is criticised'
- 551 'Mixed implications'
- 552 'Descriptive account only'

Key personnel: (As presence not actors, and as themes i.e. when their character is an issue):

Americans:

'George W Bush'

- 553 'Positive portrayal of, (not necessarily making a case for war)'
- 554 'Negative portrayal of, (not necessarily making case against war)'
- 555 'Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about'
- 556 'Descriptive only/Non-specific'

‘Other pro-war American’

- 557 ‘Positive portrayal of, (not necessarily making a case for war)’
- 558 ‘Negative portrayal of, (not necessarily making case against war)’
- 559 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 560 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘Other anti-war American’

- 561 ‘Positive portrayal of, (not necessarily making a case for war)’
- 562 ‘Negative portrayal of, (not necessarily making case against war)’
- 563 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 564 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘Other non-aligned American’

- 565 ‘Positive portrayal of, (not necessarily making a case for war)’
- 566 ‘Negative portrayal of, (not necessarily making case against war)’
- 567 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 568 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

Britons:

‘Tony Blair’

Distinguish between

• **Tony Blair – listening to the people? 470 – 473**

- 569 ‘Positive portrayal of, (not necessarily making a case for war)’
- 570 ‘Negative portrayal of, (not necessarily making case against war)’
- 571 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 572 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘Other pro-war Briton’

- 573 ‘Positive portrayal of, (not necessarily making a case for war)’
- 574 ‘Negative portrayal of, (not necessarily making case against war)’
- 575 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 576 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘Other anti-war Briton’

- 577 ‘Positive portrayal of, (not necessarily making a case for war)’
- 578 ‘Negative portrayal of, (not necessarily making case against war)’
- 579 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 580 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘Other non-aligned Briton’

- 581 ‘Positive portrayal of, (not necessarily making a case for war)’
- 582 ‘Negative portrayal of, (not necessarily making case against war)’
- 583 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 584 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

Other Nations:

‘France or Jacques Chirac’

Distinguish between

- **The ‘French Veto’ 120**

- 585 ‘Positive portrayal of, (not necessarily making a case against war)’
- 586 ‘Negative portrayal of, (not necessarily making case for war)’
- 587 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 588 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘Germany or Gerhard Schroder’

- 589 ‘Positive portrayal of, (not necessarily making a case against war)’
- 590 ‘Negative portrayal of, (not necessarily making case for war)’
- 591 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 592 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘Russia or Vladimir Putin’

- 593 ‘Positive portrayal of, (not necessarily making a case against war)’
- 594 ‘Negative portrayal of, (not necessarily making case for war)’
- 595 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 596 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘The UN’**Distinguish between**

- **UN resolutions and processes 115 – 126**
- **The future of the UN and International Law 127 – 134**
- **UN resolutions – double standards 135 – 138**

- 597 ‘Positive portrayal of, (not necessarily making a case for or against war)’
- 598 ‘Negative portrayal of, (not necessarily making case for or against war)’
- 599 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 600 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘Hans Blix’

- 601 ‘Positive portrayal of, (not necessarily making a case for or against war)’
- 602 ‘Negative portrayal of, (not necessarily making case for or against war)’
- 603 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 604 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

‘Kofi Annan or other UN source’

- 605 ‘Positive portrayal of, (not necessarily making a case for or against war)’
- 606 ‘Negative portrayal of, (not necessarily making case for or against war)’
- 607 ‘Mixed coverage/contrasting views or claims about’
- 608 ‘Descriptive only/Non-specific’

Additional themes:

Military Equipment:

- 609 Good or adequate
- 610 Bad or inadequate
- 611 Mixed claims about it's quality
- 612 Descriptive

Iraqi Military Tactics:

- 613 Effective
- 614 Ineffective
- 615 Mixed
- 616 Descriptive
- 617 As violation of the rules of war

Biographical profile of guest speaker:

- 618 Favourable
- 619 Unfavourable
- 620 Mixed
- 621 Descriptive

Post-Conflict Challenges (Be careful not to confuse with predictions about Iraq's future)

Anarchy:

- 622 Progress being made in bringing the situation under control / against looters
- 623 Events are running out of control
- 624 Mixed
- 625 Descriptive

Reconstruction / Humanitarian relief:

- 626 Progress being made in bringing the situation under control
- 627 No progress is being made
- 628 Mixed
- 629 Descriptive

Civil War:

- 630 Civil war will be averted
- 631 The situation will slide into civil war
- 632 Mixed / Uncertain
- 633 Descriptive

Democracy in Iraq:

- 634 Calls for
- 635 Dismissal of the idea or prospect of it
- 636 Mixed
- 637 Descriptive account of the progress towards / obstacles between

US/UK preparedness for occupation:

- 638 Well prepared to meet the challenges of
- 639 Ill prepared to meet the challenges of
- 640 Mixed
- 641 Descriptive

Horror of war:

- 642 Horror / Ugliness of war (outside of soldier's accounts)

Capture of Saddam:

- 643 Welcomed
- 644 An unwelcome development
- 645 Mixed
- 646 Descriptive

Trial of Saddam:

- 647 Insistence on a 'fair trial'
- 648 Dismissal of the idea of a fair trial or any sort of trial
- 649 Mixed
- 650 Descriptive account of the prospect or process leading up to it
- 651 Party political spats (Be careful not to confuse with 490)

Domestic counter-terrorism policing:

Distinguish between

- **Anti-terrorist legislation: 491 – 494**
- 652 Praise for / defence of
- 653 Criticism of
- 654 Mixed
- 655 Descriptive

Other military matters:

- 656 How do you explain it all to the children?
- 657 Friendly Fire incidents
- 658 Troops returning home
- 659 Thanks for the support (say the military)

Military developments (not related to soldier's stories):

- 660 Military progress being made
- 661 Military progress NOT being made / setbacks
- 662 Descriptive / Things are difficult ...
- 663 Descriptive

On the prospect of an inquiry into the Iraq War:

- 664 Calls for an inquiry into the Iraq War
- 665 Dismissal of an inquiry
- 666 Mixed
- 667 Descriptive

Civil Descriptive / NVDA:

- 668 Positive / Defended
- 669 Negative / Criticised
- 670 Mixed
- 671 Descriptive

Human shield actions

- 672 Positive / Defended
- 673 Negative / Criticised
- 674 Mixed
- 675 Descriptive

International protests / protests abroad:

- 676 Positive accounts / comments
- 677 Negative accounts / comments
- 678 Mixed
- 679 Descriptive

Other:

- 680 The Jessica Lynch Saga
- 681 Political developments at the UN
- 682 Developments in domestic politics relating to the Iraq war (other than resignations)

Resignations (of MPs and from the Labour party etc.):

- 683 Resignation defended / praised
- 684 Resignation criticised
- 685 Mixed response
- 686 Descriptive account of

Intelligence (including the ‘Dodgy dossier’):

- 687 Defended / excused
- 688 Criticised
- 689 Mixed
- 690 Descriptive account of

Who says so?

Who is making these claims? Journalists including leader writers and regular columnists employed by the paper and presumably writing especially for it? The people (actors) who were interviewed? The wire services? Or letter writers?

Not the same as ‘who is quoted?’ The question is: ‘who are the statements attributed to?’

Attributing claims:

- 1 Journalist, columnist or editorial opinion
- 2 Actor i.e. non-media source (See below)
- 3 Wire service or other media outlet
- 4 Letter

Number of sources identified: *Ratio*

Based on the content of the article, how many people have supplied information for the article? – *Regardless of whether they are directly quoted or not.*

- Does not apply to letters.
- Usually not for editorials.

Actors *Nominal*

What to count:

How to categorize the prominence of actors when the number who can be recorded in any given article is limited?

Answer: By position rather than by proportional presence.

‘In the overall configuration of sources’ those making the paper’s case ‘are given sequential priority’ over those presenting the opposite case. ‘Their newsworthiness is routinely prioritized, and their institutional credibility hierarchically ranked’ (Deacon *et al*, 1999, p.171).

The distinction between actor and presence:

An ‘actor’ is any person or institution whose actions are mentioned in the article (not usually counting letters). They must have independent status within the article, meaning that they must have an active presence rather than merely be mentioned or discussed by another actor.

E.g. ‘Tony Blair said, “John Prescott will be visiting the North East tomorrow to explain our plans.”’

Here *only* TB is an actor. JP has no active presence.

Compared with: ‘Tony Blair said, “John Prescott will be visiting the North East tomorrow to explain our plans.”... Mr Prescott addressed a large public meeting in Newcastle the next day.’ Here *both* TB and JP are actors. JP because even though he is not quoted directly he has ‘escaped the quotation marks’ and thus has an active presence even though no actual words are attributed to him (example taken from Deacon *et al*, 2005).

So a person can be considered an actor even if s/he is not quoted directly.

The question then is, **are they a source of the news reporting or commentary?**

Position on War (for MPs)?

The MPs are classified according to how they voted on 18 March 2003 (between Divisions 117, see The Public Whip:

<http://www.publicwhip.org.uk/division.php?date=2003-03-18&number117>).

It is not dependent on any specific statement made in the article in question.

How to link themes to actors:

- Identify the top 5 themes per article and list them.
- Who is raising these themes actor wise?

- If, during the course of article the same actor raises more than one theme/makes more than one point, put their actor number in the ‘actors’ column once for each statement they make.
- If two people from the same group (same actor number) raise different themes – so what? Use the same actor number twice just as you would if it was the same person.

Make a note if individuals can fall into more than one category. E.g. Kurdish protesters.

Individuals

(Only include people who have just resigned from particular party or group if they have just done so).

- 1 No actors present (Will include both number 1 & 3 under ‘Who says?’)

Politicians

Labour Politicians (Be sure that ‘the Government’ or the ‘Labour Party’ 234 & 235 respectively are not more appropriate).

- 2 Tony Blair
3 David Blunkett
4 Gordon Brown
5 Charles Clarke
6 Robin Cook
7 Peter Hain
8 Patricia Hewitt
9 Geoff Hoon
10 John Prescott
11 John Reid
12 Clare Short
13 Jack Straw

Senior Figures:

- 14 Alistair Campbell (or Prime Minister’s official spokesman)
15 Frank Dobson
16 Roy Hattersley
17 Adam Ingram
18 Peter Mandelson
19 Mo Mowlam
20 Chris Smith

Strongly Anti-War (See also STW Coalition)

- 21 Dianne Abbott
22 Alan Simpson
23 Bob Marshall-Andrews

24 Other Labour MP, or national party figure (Pro-War) Not local MP (include MEPs)
25 Other Labour MP, or national party figure (Anti-War) Not local MP (include MEPs)
26 Other Labour MP, or national party figure (Neutral or avoiding the controversy) Not local MP (include MEPs)

Shadow Cabinet (Be sure that ‘the Conservative Party’ 236 is not more appropriate).

- 27 Ian Duncan-Smith
28 Michael Ancram

- 29 David Davis
- 30 Michael Howard
- 31 Teresa May
- 32 Nicholas Soames

Others:

- 33 Kenneth Clarke
- 34 William Hague
- 35 Michael Heseltine
- 36 Douglas Hurd
- 37 John Major
- 38 Michael Portillo
- 39 Margaret Thatcher
- 40 Other Conservative MP, or national party figure (Pro-War) (include MEPs)
- 41 Other Conservative MP, or national party figure (Anti-War) (include MEPs)
- 42 Other Conservative MP, or national party figure (Neutral or avoiding the controversy) (include MEPs)

Liberal Democrats (Be sure that 'the Liberal Democratic Party' 237 is not more appropriate).

- 43 Charles Kennedy
- 44 Menzies Campbell
- 45 Other Lib-Dem MP, or national party figure (Anti-War) (include MEPs)
- 46 Other Lib-Dem MP, or national party figure (Pro-War) (include MEPs)
- 47 Other Lib-Dem MP, or national party figure (Neutral or avoiding the controversy) (include MEPs)

Other Parties

- 48 Independent MPs
- 49 Alex Salmond or other SNP
- 50 Plaid Cymru
- 51 David Trimble or other Ulster Unionist
- 52 Ian Paisley or Democratic Unionist
- 53 Mark Durkan or other SDLP
- 54 Gerry Adams or other Sinn Féin
- 55 UKIP
- 56 Nick Griffin or other BNP

Local Representatives

'Local' Labour MPs (Pro-war)

- 57 Fiona MacTaggart
- 58 Keith Vaz
- 59 Andrew Robathan (Blaby MP)
- 60 '
- 61 '
- 62 '
- 63 '
- 64 '
- 65 '
- 66 '
- 67 '

68 ‘
69 ‘

‘Local’ Labour MPs (Anti-war)

70 David Taylor
71 ‘
72 Andy Reed
73 ‘
74 ‘
75 ‘
76 ‘
77 ‘
78 ‘

‘Local’ Conservative MPs (Pro-war)

79 Dominic Grieve
80 Michael Trend
81 ‘
82 ‘
83 ‘
84 ‘
85 ‘
86 ‘
87 ‘
88 ‘

‘Local’ Conservative MPs (Anti-war)

89 ‘
90 ‘
91 ‘
92 ‘
93 ‘
94 ‘
95 ‘
96 ‘

‘Local’ Lib Dem MPs (Anti-war)

97 ‘
98 ‘
99 ‘
100 ‘
101 ‘
102 ‘
103 ‘

‘Local’ Other MPs (Pro-war)

104 ‘
105 ‘
106 ‘

‘Local’ Other MPs (Anti-war)

- 107 ‘
- 108 ‘
- 109 ‘

Local Councillors or other local party figures, including prospective candidates

- 110 Labour councillor or other local party figure (Pro-War)
- 111 Labour councillor or other local party figure (Anti-War)
- 112 Labour councillor or other local party figure (Neutral or avoiding the controversy)

- 113 Conservative councillor or other local party figure (Pro-War)
- 114 Conservative councillor or other local party figure (Anti-War)
- 115 Conservative councillor or other local party figure (Neutral or avoiding the controversy)

- 116 Lib Dem councillor or other local party figure (Pro-War)
- 117 Lib Dem councillor or other local party figure (Anti-War)
- 118 Lib Dem councillor or other local party figure (Neutral or avoiding the controversy)

- 119 Green councillor or local party figure (Pro-War)
- 120 Green councillor or local party figure (Anti-War)
- 121 Green councillor or local party figure (Neutral/No mention of the controversy made in article)

- 122 Respect councillor or local party figure (Anti-War)
- 123 Respect councillor or local party figure (Neutral/Making no mention of controversy)

- 124 Independent councillor or local party figure (Pro-War)
- 125 Independent councillor or local party figure (Anti-War)
- 126 Independent councillor or local party figure (Neutral/No mention of the controversy made in article)

- 127 Non-identified councillor (Pro-War)
- 128 Non-identified councillor or local party figure (Anti-War)
- 129 Non-identified councillor or local party figure (Neutral/No mention of the controversy made in article)

The Stop the War Coalition (Individuals)

- 130 Tariq Ali
- 131 Tony Benn
- 132 Jeremy Corbyn MP
- 133 Tam Dalyell MP
- 134 George Galloway MP
- 135 Lindsey German
- 136 Alice Mahon MP
- 137 Andrew Murray
- 138 Caroline Lucas MEP
- 139 John Rees
- 140 Salma Yacoob

- 141 Kate Hudson (CND)
- 142 Dr Tamini (MAB)
- 143 Other individual representative or spokesperson

Other key or 'famous' figures (varying degrees of affiliation to the anti-war movement):

- 144 Damon Albarn
- 145 Noam Chomsky
- 146 Ms Dynamite
- 147 Rose Gentle
- 148 Bruce Kent
- 149 Reg Keys
- 150 Ken Livingstone
- 151 Ken Loach
- 152 George Monbiot
- 153 John Pilger
- 154 Harold Pinter
- 155 Edwards Said
- 156 The Redgraves
- 157 Tim Robbins
- 158 Others

The ANTI-WAR General public:

- 159 'Person selected because of their representative status of a particular section of society WHICH IS THOUGHT TO BE ANTI-WAR.' E.g. Muslims, the young perhaps. Do not confuse with 283.
- 160 'Person selected because of their representative status of ANTI-WAR Opinion in general.' Do not confuse with 284. Includes general references to protesters whether named or not – so as an aggregate, including, of course, protesters at demos. Includes general references to protesters as an aggregate including at demos.

From Washington:

- 161 George W Bush
- 162 Dick Cheney
- 163 Donald Rumsfeld
- 164 Paul Wolfowitz
- 165 Colin Powell
- 166 Condoleezza Rice
- 167 Paul Bremer
- 168 Jay Garnier
- 169 David Kay
- 170 Bill Clinton
- 171 General Tommy Franks

- 172 Other (Pro-war) American Politician(s), organisation or institution including ambassadors.
- 173 Other (Anti-war) American Politician(s), organisation or institution
- 174 Other (Neutral, mixed or non-specific) American Politician(s), organisation or institution
- 175 Ordinary Americans /American Public opinion

Other Nations:

France

- 176 Jacques Chirac
- 177 Dominic de Villepin
- 178 Other (Anti-war) French politician(s), organisation or institution including ambassadors.
- 179 Other (Pro-war) French politician(s), organisation or institution
- 180 Other (Neutral, mixed or non-specific) French Politician(s), organisation or institution
- 181 Ordinary French people /French Public opinion

Germany

- 182 Gerhard Schroeder
- 183 Joschka Fischer
- 184 Other (Anti-war) German politician(s), organisation or institution including ambassadors.
- 185 Other (Pro-war) German politician(s), organisation or institution
- 186 Other (Neutral, mixed or non-specific) German Politician(s), organisation or institution
- 187 Ordinary Germans /German Public opinion

Russia

- 188 Vladimir Putin
- 189 Other (Anti-war) Russian politician(s), organisation or institution including ambassadors.
- 190 Other (Pro-war) Russian politician(s), organisation or institution
- 191 Other (Neutral, mixed or non-specific) Russian Politician(s), organisation or institution
- 192 Ordinary Russians /Russian Public opinion

China

- 193 Wen Jiabao (Chinese premier)
- 194 Other (Anti-war) Chinese politician(s), organisation or institution including ambassadors.
- 195 Other (Pro-war) Chinese politician(s), organisation or institution
- 196 Other (Neutral, mixed or non-specific) Chinese Politician(s), organisation or institution
- 197 Ordinary Chinese people /Chinese Public opinion

Spain

- 198 Jose Anzar
- 199 Other (Pro-war) Spanish politician(s), organisation or institution including ambassadors.
- 200 Other (Anti-war) Spanish politician(s), organisation or institution
- 201 Other (Neutral, mixed or non-specific) Spain Politician(s), organisation or institution
- 202 Ordinary Spaniards /Spanish Public opinion

Australia

- 203 John Howard
- 204 Other (Pro-war) Australian politician(s), organisation or institution including ambassadors.
- 205 Other (Anti-war) Australian politician(s), organisation or institution
- 206 Other (Neutral, mixed or non-specific) Australian Politician(s), organisation or institution
- 207 Ordinary Australians /Australain Public opinion

International bodies:

The UN (Countries Ambassador's count as representatives of their countries)

- 208 Kofi Annan
- 209 Hans Blix
- 210 Mohammed ElBaradei
- 211 Other UN source (but not the ambassadors to individual countries).

NATO:

- 212 Lord Robertson
- 213 Other NATO source

The Middle East:

Iraq

- 214 Saddam Hussein (As actor not presence)
- 215 Tariq Aziz
- 216 Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhat – 'Comical Ali'
- 217 Kurdish groups (PUK or KDP)
- 218 Other (Anti-war) Iraq politician(s), organisation or institution (other than Kurdish groups)
- 219 Other (Pro-war) Iraq politician(s), organisation or institution (other than Kurdish groups)
- 220 Iraqi Neutrals
- 221 Ordinary Iraqis /Iraqi Public opinion
- 222 Iyad Allawi
- 223 Ayatollah Sistani

Al-Qaeda

- 224 Osama Bin Laden (As actor not presence)
- 225 Other Al-Qaeda source
- 226 Other *International* Terrorist Organisation. (Not Hamas or other Palestinian groups).

Egypt

- 227 Hosni Mubarak
- 228 Other Egyptian source
- 229 Ordinary Egyptians /Egyptian public opinion

Israel

- 230 Ariel Sharon
- 231 Other Israeli source
- 232 Ordinary Israelis /Israeli public opinion

Iran

- 233 Ayatollah Ali Hoseini Khamenei
- 234 Other Iran source
- 235 Ordinary Jordanians /Jordanian public opinion

Jordan

- 236 King Abdullah II
- 237 Other Jordanian source
- 238 Ordinary Egyptians /Egyptian public opinion

Pakistan

- 239 General Perez Musharraf
- 240 Other Pakistani source
- 241 Ordinary Pakistanis /Pakistani public opinion

Palestine

- 242 Yasser Arafat
- 243 Other PLO source
- 244 Ordinary Palestinians /Palestinian public opinion
- 245 Hamas or other 'terrorist' group

Saudi Arabia

- 246 King Fahd
- 247 Other Saudi source
- 248 Ordinary Saudis /Saudi public opinion

Syria

- 249 President Bashar al-Assad
- 250 Other Syrian source
- 251 Ordinary Syrians /Syrian public opinion

Turkey

- 252 President Ahmet Neudet Sezer
- 253 Other Turkish source
- 254 Ordinary Turks /Turkish public opinion
- 255 People of other or unspecified Middle Eastern origin

Other International figures:

- 256 Nelson Mandela
- 257 Rev Jesse Jackson
- 258 Archbishop Desmond Tutu
- 259 Pope John Paul II

Groups:

Establishment parties

- 260 The Government (No specific individual mentioned, except serving ambassadors)
- 261 The Labour Party (General reference to)
- 262 The Conservative Party (General reference to)
- 263 The Lib Dems (General reference to)

Stop the War Coalition:

- 264 Stop the War Coalition (General reference to)
- 265 CND
- 266 MAB
- 267 MFAW
- 268 SWP
- 269 The Green Party
- 270 Respect
- 271 Individual Trade Unions associated with the STWC – FBU, GMB, NUJ, NUS, NATFHE, NUT, T&GWU
- 272 Muslim Council of Britain
- 273
- 274
- 275
- 276
- 277
- 278 Labour Against the War
- 279 Globalise Resistance
- 280 The Communist Party

Anti-War movement (Not necessarily affiliated to STW):

- 281 Other national anti-war/peace groups
- 282 Anarchist groups
- 283 EPGs
- 284 Trade Unions / TUC (Be careful to distinguish between 271 – those unions associated with the STWC.
- 285 Other ‘fringe’ socialist groups e.g. ISR
- 286 Anti-Globalisation groups
- 287 Other national groups, opposed to the war, but for whom anti-war activity is not their *raison d’être*.

Local anti-war Groups:

- 288 Leicester CND
- 289 Slough4peace / Slough Stop the War
- 290 Leicester campaign to stop the war
- 291 Manchester Stop the War Coalition (Includes smaller groups who are a part of it).
- 292 Greater Manchester and District CND
- 293 Other smaller groups associated with Manchester STW
- 294 Suffolk4peace / Bury St Edmunds Against the War
- 295 Enfield Stop the War / Enfield Peace Campaign
- 296 Bath Stop the War
- 297 Other local antiwar groups

Pro-war groups or coalitions (includes ‘Patriots’ or ‘Support the troops’ groups):

- 298 Pro-war groups
- 299 Pro-war protesters

Other groups:

- 300 Other cause based pressure group
- 301 Other sectional based pressure group

- 302 Other charity – voluntary sector organisation
- 303 The Police
- 304 Academic source, writer or think tank

Ordinary People:

- 305 ‘Person selected because of their representative status of a particular section of society,’ other than specifically anti-war opinion. Do not confuse with 159.
- 306 ‘Person selected because of their representative status of British Public Opinion in general,’ other than specifically anti-war opinion. Do not confuse with 160.
- 307 ‘Local person or other VOXPOP’ (Includes most but not all letters)

David Kelly affair:

- 308 David Kelly
- 309 Friends of David Kelly and members of his family

Religious spokespersons: (Can include local priests, rabbis or Imans but it depends on the context in which they are speaking)

- 310 Archbishop Rowan Williams
- 311 Other representative of Church of England or other Protestant denomination
- 312 Representative of Catholic Church (other than the Pope)
- 313 Representative of Islamic faith other than MAB or MCB
- 314 Representative of Jewish faith
- 315 Representative of Hindu faith
- 316 Other religious representative

The Military:

Military families: (Who are not a part of Military Families Against the War – 267)

- 317 Families (and friends) of serving soldiers
- 318 Families (and friends) of wounded soldiers
- 319 Families (and friends) of dead soldiers

Military spokespersons: (See also General Tommy Franks) (All whilst serving on duty) (See Appendix 2.

- 320 Top ranking US military officer (1 Star to 5 Star General)
- 321 Middle ranking US military officer (Second Lieutenant to Colonel)
- 322 Low ranking US military officer (e.g. Private or fusilier)
- 323 DOD spokesperson of unspecified rank
- 324 Top ranking UK military officer (E.g. Brigadier to Field Marshall)
- 325 Middle ranking UK military officer (Second Lieutenant to Colonel)
- 326 Low ranking UK military officer (e.g. Private, fusilier or TA officer)
- 327 MOD spokesperson of unspecified rank

Formerly of the Military:

- 328 Former top ranking US military officer (1 Star to 5 Star General)
- 329 Former middle ranking US military officer (Second Lieutenant to Colonel)
- 330 Former low ranking US military officer (e.g. Private or fusilier)
- 331 Former top ranking UK military officer (E.g. Brigadier to Field Marshall)
- 332 Former middle ranking UK military officer (Second Lieutenant to Colonel)
- 333 Former low ranking US military officer (e.g. Private or fusilier)

The National media

The Daily Press (UK):

- 334 Daily Sport
- 335 Sun
- 336 Daily Star
- 337 Daily Mirror
- 338 Daily Mail
- 339 Daily Express
- 340 Daily Telegraph
- 341 Times
- 342 Guardian
- 343 Independent
- 344 Financial Times

The Sunday Papers (UK):

- 345 Sunday Sport
- 346 News of the World
- 347 Daily Star Sunday
- 348 Sunday Mirror
- 349 Mail on Sunday
- 350 Sunday Express
- 351 People
- 352 Sunday Telegraph
- 353 Sunday Times
- 354 Observer
- 355 Independent on Sunday

Broadcasting (UK):

- 356 BBC
- 357 Andrew Gilligan
- 358 ITV/ITN
- 359 Channel 4
- 360 Channel Five
- 361 Sky (News)

Other British media outlets:

- 362 The internet
- 363 Weekly magazines including 'alternatives'
- 364 Wire Services

Global or foreign media:

- 365 New York Times
- 366 LA Times
- 367 Washington Post
- 368 CNN
- 369 Fox News
- 370 Other non-Islamic broadcaster or newspaper
- 371 Al-Jazeera
- 372 Other Arabic/Islamic broadcaster

Business:

- 373 Representative of big business or major companies (includes CBI)
- 374 Local business person

Other:

- 375 Prominent local figures. ('Community leaders', 'pillars of the community' types. Can include local priests. If this conflates with 345 use whichever is emphasised or which best captures the capacity in which they are speaking). (See also Head teachers 398).
- 376 Lord Hutton

Additional actors:

Veterans of past wars from:

- 376
- 377 WWII
- 378 Wars from Korea to Vietnam
- 379 Wars from the Falklands to the Gulf War I
- 380 Wars since the Gulf War up to Afghanistan

Iraqis:

- 381 Iraqi refugees living in the UK
- 382 Iraqi refugees living in other countries
- 383 Iraqi police
- 384 Iraqi officials
- 385 Iraqi military
- 386 Iraqi intelligence

America:

- 387 Republicans
- 388 Democrats
- 389 CIA / US Intelligence
- 390 George Tenet
- 391 Jessica Lynch

Britain

- 392 JIC / British Intelligence

Intelligence from other countries

- 393 Allied
- 394 Opposed to the invasion

Antiwar protesters

- 395 Antiwar protesters (**Hitherto coded as 160. Keep this for when generally opposed. Separate out those people from protesters at demos for which we use this code).**)
- 396 Truant protesters

General Arab opinion

397 General Arab opinion

Head teachers

398 Head teachers

Human rights orgs

399 Human rights organisations like Amnesty International and HRW (**hitherto coded as 300**)

Human shields

400 Human shields

Public figures

401 For the war

402 Against the war

403 Mixed views on the war

404 Giving a descriptive account / commentary

How the Actor appears: *Nominal*

1 'Actor is mentioned only'

2 'Actor pictured, caption only'

3 'Actor directly quoted NOT pictured'

4 'Actor directly quoted AND pictured'

5 'Not applicable/no actor'

6 'Not applicable - **LETTER**

7 'Subject pictured, caption only' (Mainly for families' accounts of serving soldiers)

Budd's attention score: *Ordinal or pseudo-interval*

1 point If headline is 2 or more columns in width.

2 points If headline went more than half way across the page.

1 point Any story whose first line of text appeared above the fold.

1 point If article occupied 3/4 of a column. Includes pictures.

1 point If the article appeared on page 1 or the editorial page.

1 point If a photo accompanies the article.

(Adapted from Budd, 1964, p.260).

Local Papers only:

Local anti-war activity: *Ordinal*

Activist led, participating or absent?

- 1 'Activist led and named' (the 'event' was organised by a local group and they were specifically named in the article. E.g. 'Slough4peace...')
- 2 'Activist led but not named' (the 'event' was organised by a local group but they were not specifically named in the article. E.g. 'local anti-war activists...')
- 3 'Activist led but this is not even mentioned' (the 'event' was organised by a local group but there was no reference to them at all in the article)
- 4 'Participating and named' (local group just participating in the event and they are specifically named in the article. E.g. 'Slough4peace...')
- 5 'Participating but not named' (local group just participating in the event but they were not specifically named in the article. E.g. 'local anti-war activists...')
- 6 'Absent' (or if a local group was present at the event there was no mention of them in the article)

Pre-publicity or an after the event report? *Nominal*

- 1 'Pre-publicity'
- 2 'Report from after the event'
- 3 'Not applicable/no actor' (Corresponds to 6 from above)

Naming the group: (If more than one, pick the most prominent position. List below is of descending order of prominence) *Nominal*

- 1 Local group is named in the front page headlines (or subheading) lead story
- 2 Local group is named in the front page headlines (or subheading) non-lead story
- 3 Local group is named on the front page, not in the headlines (or subheading), but still in the lead story
- 4 Local group is named on the front Page, not in the headlines (or subheading) , in a non-lead story
- 5 Local group is named in the title (or subheading) of an inside article (news, features, letters etc).
- 6 Local group is not named in the title (or subheading) of an inside article, but is named in the opening paragraph
- 7 Local group is not named in the title (or subheading) of an inside article or in the opening paragraph, but is mentioned in the second paragraph
- 8 Local group is not named in the title (subheading) or opening paragraph of the piece but is mentioned later on in the article
- 9 Local group is not mentioned at all in the article

Photos of the group and/or their activities: (Not publicity shots of guest speakers. The test is if the group are named in the caption) (If more than one, pick the most prominent position. List below is of descending order of prominence) (Includes publicity photos) *Ordinal*

- 1 Local group or its events are pictured on the front page lead story
- 2 Local group or its events are pictured on the front page non-lead story
- 3 Local group or its events are pictured on the inside pages
- 4 Local group or its events are not pictured at all

Website mentioned? *Nominal*

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

National Papers only:

National antiwar activity: *Ordinal*

Activist led, participating or absent?

- 1 'Activist led and named' (the 'event' was organised by a national group and they were specifically named in the article. E.g. 'Stop the War, Voices...')
- 2 'Activist led but not named' (the 'event' was organised by a national group but they were not specifically named in the article. E.g. 'Anti-war activists...')
- 3 'Activist led but this is not even mentioned' (the 'event' was organised by a national group but there was no reference to them at all in the article)
- 4 'Participating and named' (national group just participating in the event and they are specifically named in the article. E.g. 'Stop the War...')
- 5 'Participating but not named' (national group just participating in the event but they were not specifically named in the article. E.g. 'anti-war activists...')
- 6 'Absent' (or if a national group was present at the event there was no mention of them in the article)

Pre-publicity or an after the event report? *Nominal*

- 1 'Pre-publicity'
- 2 'Report from after the event'
- 3 'Not applicable/no actor' (Corresponds to 6 from above)

Naming the group: (If more than one, pick the most prominent position. List below is of descending order of prominence) *Nominal*

- 1 National group is named in the front page headlines (or subheading) lead story
- 2 National group is named in the front page headlines (or subheading) non-lead story
- 3 National group is named on the front page, not in the headlines (or subheading), but still in the lead story
- 4 National group is named on the front Page, not in the headlines (or subheading) , in a non-lead story
- 5 National group is named in the title (or subheading) of an inside article (news, features, letters etc).
- 6 National group is not named in the title (or subheading) of an inside article, but is named in the opening paragraph
- 7 National group is not named in the title (or subheading) of an inside article or in the opening paragraph, but is mentioned in the second paragraph
- 8 National group is not named in the title (subheading) or opening paragraph of the piece but is mentioned later on in the article
- 9 National group is not mentioned at all in the article

Photos of the group and/or their activities: (Not publicity shots of guest speakers. The test is if the group are named in the caption) (If more than one, pick the most prominent position. List below is of descending order of prominence) (Includes publicity photos) *Ordinal*

- 1 National group or its events are pictured on the front page lead story
- 2 National group or its events are pictured on the front page non-lead story
- 3 National group or its events are pictured on the inside pages
- 4 National group or its events are not pictured at all

Website mentioned? *Nominal*

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Block of Controversy (Based on Hallin 1986): *Nominal*

(Only applies to News reports, editorials, and Op-Ed pieces because the media police the boundaries of controversies [see Hallin 1986] on the activities and statements of antiwar groups. That is Reason for Inclusion codes 2 and 3. It does not apply to letters).

- 1 Sphere of Consensus
- 2 Sphere of Full Legitimacy
- 3 Sphere of Partial Legitimacy
- 4 Sphere of Implicit Deviance
- 5 Sphere of Explicit Deviance

Return to? *Nominal*

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Appendix 4.3: Sample Coding Sheet				
CASE NUMBER	Article title		Newspaper	Date
Authored & name (1-6)		Section of paper (1-9)	Page No	Reason for inclusion in study (1-2)
Coverage/ Impetus for story (1-25)	Adjectival codes. Controversy (1-6)	Anti-war activity (1-5)	Sphere of Legitimacy (1-5)	Number of sources identified
Themes: Main Issues. Limit to 5 (1-690)	Says who? (1-4)	Actors. Limit to 5 (1-404)	How actor appears. Corres to E (1-7)	Length of quotation
<u>Attention score:</u> Headline size: 2 columns or more in width (1): More than half way across page (2): Total (6):				
1st line above the fold (1): 3/4 of column or more inc pics (1): Page 1 or editorial page (1): Photo (1):				
Local anti-war activity (1-6)	Pre-publicity /after report (Local) (1-3)	Naming the group (1-9)	Photos of the group/their activities (1-4)	Website mentioned (1-2)
Return to at a latter date (1-2)	Any other comments (includes quotation prefix):			

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