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A Cross-National Comparison of UK vs US Press Coverage of Iraq War Protest

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Abstract / Although the UK and US were staunch allies before and during the Iraq War, differing sociopolitical milieus existed within the countries regarding support for the war. This cross-national content analysis compared stories on antiwar protest by leading newspapers in each country to determine if the differing sociopolitical environments were reflected in each nation's press coverage. Results indicate that the US press invoked the 'protest paradigm' to a greater extent than its UK counterpart by being more likely to implement marginalization techniques in its coverage of protesters. Additionally, a greater number of marginalization techniques were associated with negative overall story tone toward the protesters within US coverage when compared to UK coverage. These results underscore the importance of cross-national research in examining the generality of contemporary mass media theory.

Keywords / cross-national / Iraq War / media coverage / media marginalization / social protest

Scholars increasingly are conducting cross-national research to investigate the generality of commonly held mass communication theory and media paradigms. Recent studies have indicated that national differences can play a large role in affecting the dynamics associated with traditionally accepted mass-media theorizations, especially in areas such as framing (de Vreese et al., 2001), agenda-setting (Peter, 2003; Werder, 2002) and news cycles (Brossard et al., 2004). Further, much of this type of research advocates the need for testing traditionally US-oriented media precepts in other national contexts to either extend extant theory or to determine attributes that may qualify the commonly accepted paradigms.

Interestingly, although the marginalization of social protest groups by media is an oft-researched and well-established phenomenon in the US (e.g. Brasted, 2005; Hertog and McLeod, 1995; D.M. McLeod and Detenber, 1999; D.M. McLeod and Hertog, 1999), there is a dearth of research into the 'protest paradigm' in cross-national contexts. The current study is the first to quantitatively compare the presses of two different nations regarding their propensity to invoke the protest paradigm within coverage of the same social protest movement. Specifically, the author conducts a cross-national content analysis of press coverage in the UK vs US on antiwar protest regarding the Iraq War. Though the two countries' governments

were the staunchest of allies during the fractious world debate regarding the situation in Iraq and though the perceived destined course for each country basically was the same, public opinion about the necessity and urgency of military action differed in each nation. In short, many opinion polls showed that US citizens showed stronger support and approval for their government's position regarding Iraq than did their counterparts in the UK.¹

Through incorporating a typology of antiwar protest coverage used in prior content analysis research (Dardis, 2006), the current study seeks to discover if the topic of Iraq War protest was covered differently in the major newspapers of each nation. By comparing the presses of two nations that are quite similar in general (and which were in similar circumstances regarding the Iraq War during the time period under study), the current study offers an intriguing examination into a commonly held, traditionally US-oriented media paradigm. As suggested by prior research, such inquiry is important because it allows for a direct test of extant mass communication theory, which thus can be extended further across national settings or which can be shown to be qualified by certain cross-national attributes.

Literature Review

A Cross-National Media Comparison

Cross-national media comparisons are nothing new to mass communication research. Almost 20 years ago, scholars called for macro-level communication research that transcends the contexts or limitations of a specific nation or society (J.M. McLeod and Blumler, 1987), and political communication researchers continue to champion the importance of international comparison to investigate diverse sociopolitical and/or media systems (Pfetsch and Esser, 2004). However, most studies on media content and effects usually still are based on data from a single country (de Vreese et al., 2001).

Recent research has demonstrated the importance of the comparative method in testing existing media theory across national borders. In separate studies, Werder (2002) and Brossard et al. (2004) revealed that traditionally US-oriented media concepts such as agenda-setting and news cycles, respectively, either did not function identically or did not have the same applicability in various democratic European countries, depending on differing media systems and sociopolitical or cultural influences. Werder (2002) further suggested that applying predominantly US-oriented mass communication theory to other national and sociopolitical contexts broadens the scope of it while simultaneously challenging it. Similarly, Peter (2003: 701) stated that 'a cross-nationally comparative perspective may enrich our understanding' of mass-media theory and concluded that 'country characteristics may enable or impair the occurrence of agenda-setting'. Although the current research investigates a different theoretical paradigm, the aforementioned studies indicate that national differences can have tremendous influence on the applicability or universality of commonly held media-based precepts. Therefore, the current study is the first to conduct a cross-national investigation of the

traditionally US-oriented 'protest paradigm' to determine if country characteristics can affect its generality.

In particular, this study investigates the tendency of the UK vs US press to invoke the protest paradigm in coverage of Iraq War protest. The countries and the issue were deliberately selected to provide a 'most similar design' (Peter and de Vreese, 2003: 49), which 'reduces the number of potentially interacting variables' that can lead to muddled results based upon numerous fundamental differences between dissimilar countries. Though it is realized that the media systems and roles of the press are not exactly the same in the UK and US (Conboy, 2004; McNair, 2003), these two countries provided a meritorious choice for comparative analysis for several reasons. First, both countries exist in open democracies with similar perceptions of the role of government in relation to individual rights, liberties and freedoms. Further, the press in each nation is greatly admired for its tenacity regarding the ideals of freedom of the press and for embracing its role as the 'fourth estate', leaving it basically free from censorship or other government interference. This has led the press in each nation to adopt a generally more critical or antagonistic posture relative to the presses of other nations, even those of other 'western' democracies (Esser et al., 2001).

This is especially important because both nations' governments were heading down the same path regarding the war in Iraq: both had made a military and political commitment to one another, both had made military and financial commitments to fight in Iraq, both were the staunchest of allies in advocating immediate attack of Iraq while many of their allies in the world wanted to proceed with UN sanctions, and so on. In short, the two countries' administrations were by far the most alike regarding their aggressive position toward Iraq. Further, the above similarities notwithstanding, several studies also have shown that the US and UK presses have been similar in their coverage of other events related to the Middle East (Christensen, 2005; Ravi, 2005). However, one important difference between the two nations regarding Iraq – perhaps *the* most important – was that, in the US, both governmental and popular opinion was well in favor of an invasion, whereas the corresponding sentiment in the UK was much more divided, among both government agents and the general populace (Ravi, 2005).

Along the same reasoning, the Iraq War was also an obvious issue on which to compare protest coverage within the two nations. Not only was protest of the war the largest contemporary, worldwide protest movement, but the similarities in policy between the US and UK regarding the situation in Iraq afforded an idyllic opportunity for media comparison. De Vreese et al. (2001) identified two major advantages of using a common event to investigate news coverage: (1) more valid cross-national measures can be obtained for a common event rather than comparing general coverage about unrelated events, and (2) the potential occurrence of similar patterns in coverage of the same event across national settings can help substantiate the pattern as generic. Thus, the current investigation is important because, if similar protest-paradigm patterns are shown to exist in different countries, it can increase the explanatory power and potential generality (Dogan and Pelassy, 1990) of the paradigm. However, if differences in media patterns are

discovered, this would indicate that perhaps the protest paradigm is not as universal as it is assumed to be, while also demonstrating that national factors can influence its generality.

Semetko and Mandelli (1997) suggested that cross-national research should focus on the formation of media agendas under different institutional constraints or political cultures. Further, de Vreese et al. (2001) suggested that influences both internal and external to media organizations can elicit cross-national differences in media coverage. External factors were described to 'encompass the nature of the issue covered and particularities of the economic-political context' (de Vreese et al., 2001: 117). Therefore, one could logically infer that the differing sociopolitical cultures that existed in the UK and US could have led the media in each nation to either be more or less critical of Iraq War protesters. After all, Werder (2002: 231) has noted that 'depending on the issue and the media's position toward it, . . . the media themselves can promote different positions about the same issue'. The current study aimed to discover if differences in news coverage of social protest would manifest between two similar countries experiencing a relatively similar sociopolitical situation. Of interest is determining if the sociopolitical milieu that existed in each nation – with UK public opinion decidedly less in favor than that of the US for an invasion of Iraq – was reflected in its corresponding press's coverage of protest against the Iraq War.

Protest Paradigm

Often, media act more as 'guard dogs' of status quo interests rather than critical watchdogs (Donohue et al., 1995). This is especially well demonstrated in coverage of social protest, in which media have shown a propensity for supporting elites and elite power structures over the views of protesters (Gitlin, 1980; Murdock, 1981), thereby providing the basis for the concept of the 'protest paradigm' (Chan and Lee, 1984). The media generally invoke the paradigm through implementing various 'techniques of delegitimization, marginalization, and demonization' (D.M. McLeod and Detenber, 1999: 5) of the protest groups.

Much investigation has demonstrated that media coverage of social protest tends to not focus on the actual intellectual or philosophical arguments under debate. Rather, coverage tends to include details about disruptions with police, general lawlessness, weird clothing and body decorations among the protesters, the mention of counter-demonstrators or the invocation of public opinion against the protesters, and various other techniques that basically imply that the protesters (and their views) are abnormal relative to the rest of society and only represent a small, aberrant faction (Brasted, 2005; Carragee, 1991; Hertog and McLeod, 1995; McFarlane and Hay, 2003; D.M. McLeod and Hertog, 1999). Beyond general social protest, media coverage that is specific to war protest in the US typically has presented antiwar demonstrators as traitorous, anarchistic or against the troops, in addition to other delegitimizing attributes (Beamish et al., 1995; Hackett and Zhao, 1994; Hallin, 1986). Further, in addition to merely analyzing news content, several studies have demonstrated that such coverage of social protest can have detrimental

effects on people's perceptions of protest groups or the groups' views on an issue (D.M. McLeod, 1995; D.M. McLeod and Detenber, 1999; Shoemaker, 1982).

Surprisingly, although much of the research cited here has identified 'ways' in which protest movements are marginalized in media coverage, my US study (Dardis, 2006) presented the first content analysis that quantitatively gauged the relative occurrence of the various marginalization techniques previously identified in the aforementioned literature. By developing a typology of 14 'war-protest marginalization devices' to investigate coverage of Iraq War protest in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *USA Today*, I demonstrated that certain techniques were implemented more commonly than others in these papers and that particular devices, when included in a story, were more associated with negative overall story tone toward the protesters. Relevant findings from the study are discussed in the following section (see the Appendix for definitions and examples of each device as described in the previous study and as operationalized currently).

Almost more surprisingly, the media's marginalization of protest groups remains underinvestigated in cross-national contexts. The current study is the first cross-national test of the protest paradigm to quantitatively compare the propensity of two nations' presses to marginalize protest groups. By applying the Dardis (2006) typology to study UK press coverage of Iraq War protest and comparing the results to those from the US study, this present study tests the potential generality of the protest paradigm in two ways: (1) by comparing the relative occurrence of each 'device' in each country's press coverage and (2) by examining if the findings from the US study regarding relationships between specific devices and overall story tone appear to the same extent in the UK.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

Because of the described similarities but dissimilar war-related support in the UK and US during the months surrounding the invasion of Iraq, I examined potential differences between the press of each nation by applying the typology in two ways: (1) applying it first only to UK press coverage of antiwar protest and comparing the results to those from the US study, and (2) using it to directly compare the two nations vis-a-vis each other in the same analyses. The premise was that differences in press coverage might appear due to the differing sociopolitical atmosphere that existed within each nation.

My earlier study (Dardis, 2006) demonstrated that the most commonly implemented marginalization devices among 124 US articles on Iraq War protest were, respectively, general lawlessness, police confrontation, official sources/definitions, freak show and protest as anti-troops. Therefore, the first research question, descriptive in nature, merely sought to gauge the propensity of the UK press to implement each device into its coverage of Iraq War protesters:

RQ1: Which marginalization devices were implemented most commonly in UK press coverage of Iraq War protest?

Further, my earlier study (Dardis, 2006) revealed that four particular devices – when implemented in a story – were disproportionately associated with a negative

overall story tone toward antiwar protesters, relative to a positive overall tone:² general lawlessness, police confrontation, official sources/definitions and romper room/idiots at large. In other words, relative to stories that did not contain these devices, stories that did contain them were more likely to be negative in overall tone toward the protesters. Therefore, the following hypothesis and research question were advanced:

H1: UK stories that include (a) the 'general lawlessness', (b) the 'police confrontation,' (c) the 'official sources/definitions' and (d) the 'romper room/idiots at large' marginalization device will be disproportionately associated with a negative overall story tone toward antiwar protesters.

RQ2: In UK press coverage of Iraq War protest, were any other marginalization devices disproportionately associated with either a negative or positive overall story tone toward antiwar protesters?

Results from the US study (Dardis, 2006) also indicated that stories negative in overall tone toward antiwar protesters contained more devices per story than did positive or neutral stories. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was offered:

H2: UK stories that are negative in overall story tone toward antiwar protesters will include more marginalization devices than will stories that are either positive or neutral in overall tone.

A related research question sought to determine if the UK press differed vis-a-vis the US press in its proclivity to implement marginalization devices in stories about antiwar protest:

RQ3: Did UK and US stories on Iraq War protest differ in the number of marginalization devices implemented per story?

In addition to comparing the two presses on mere number of devices implemented per story, a second meritorious comparison was to see if the presses differed in their proclivity to implement any *particular* device(s). Thus, RQ4 was posed:

RQ4: Was protest coverage in the UK more (less) likely than coverage in the US to contain any specific marginalization device(s)?

Methodology

UK Newspaper Selection

It is realized that determining newspapers for analysis is a selective process and that no one sample should be misconstrued to represent *all* of a nation's press or media. However, I attempted to select titles based on both circulation numbers and 'of-record' hegemony in order to provide a relatively representative sample of both the *most common* and *most likely seen* coverage of the Iraq War. Realizing that mainstream UK newspapers are somewhat different than US newspapers regarding sociopolitical affiliations and/or biases, including the supposed 'objectivity' claimed by papers in the different nations (Conboy, 2004; McNair, 2003), I decided to select three papers based on circulation figures and perceived – if not manifest – 'slant' (i.e. 'right' vs 'left'). Based on these criteria, the three papers chosen for analysis were: (1) The *Daily* (and *Sunday*) *Telegraph* – highest UK circulation,³ considered

traditional and conservative, but perhaps more commentary-oriented vs 'hard news'-oriented; (2) *The Times* (and *Sunday Times*) – the second-highest circulation, traditional British 'of-record' newspaper (Christensen, 2005); and (3) *The Guardian* – fourth in circulation, slightly behind the business-oriented *Financial Times*, and generally recognized as a traditionally non-conservative newspaper. Again, although this selection process does not encompass all UK press coverage of Iraq War protest, the circulation and potential readership of each paper selected qualify the current sample as a meritorious representation of the most common UK press coverage, while even incorporating different political ideologies.

Time Period Selection, Unit of Analysis and Coding Procedure

For appropriate comparison, the time period of analysis for UK news articles was identical to that utilized in the US study: 11 September 2002 to 11 September 2003, which afforded an almost-perfect six months prior vs six months after timeline relative to the commencement of the invasion of Iraq by coalition forces on 20 March 2003.

The unit of analysis for the current study was every non-editorial UK newspaper story selected for examination after the same filtering process reported in the US study,⁴ resulting in 152 articles. Based on device descriptions provided in the Dardis (2006) study, two coders independently coded articles for the presence or absence of each device, as well as a final measure of 'overall tone' of the article toward antiwar protesters (positive, negative or neutral), which has been implemented in several cross-national studies (e.g. Stark and Kohler, 2003; Werder, 2002). The two coders independently recorded data for 45 common articles, accounting for 29.6 percent of all cases. Intercoder reliability on overall tone toward the protesters was measured via percentage agreement (.78) and the Scott's pi technique (.73). Regarding overall agreement in identification of the devices, each coder had to determine the presence (yes/no) of each of the 14 devices within each story. This resulted in a total of 630 dichotomous choices for each coder within the 45 commonly coded stories. Both coders matched on 416 of the 630 choices, providing an intercoder reliability of .66 using Holsti's (1969) technique. Although this is below the generally accepted level of .70, prior content analyses have demonstrated that, although reliability ratings can be lower than .70 when especially meticulous discrimination is demanded of the coders (as is the case in the current study), this does not imply that the findings or contributions of the research are without merit. Kaid and Wadsworth (1989) have noted that finer discriminations by coders typically will result in lower reliability scores. Further, 'lower intercoder agreement is a trade-off for more detailed data, and perhaps for increased validity' (Brossard et al., 2004: 374) when coding procedures demand more nuanced or sophisticated decisions on behalf of the coders. Thus, although it is a limitation, I suggest that the reliability rating for the especially demanding coding procedure currently undertaken is sufficient for analysis.

Results

Of the 152 articles selected, *The Times* comprised 74 articles (48.7 percent), followed by *The Guardian* ($N = 52$, 34.2 percent) and the *Telegraph* ($N = 26$, 17.1 percent) (see Table 1). More stories were deemed neutral toward the antiwar demonstrators ($N = 61$, 40.2 percent) than either positive ($N = 56$, 36.8 percent) or negative ($N = 35$, 23.0 percent). It is worth noting that a chi-square test indicated a significant association among the three newspapers and overall story tone, $\chi^2(4) = 20.75$, $p < .000$. Specifically, as might be expected, analysis of the adjusted residuals indicated that *The Guardian* was associated with a disproportionately low number of negative stories, while the *Daily Telegraph* was associated with a disproportionately high number of negative stories. However, due to this couched 'counter-balance' between the two titles and due to the fact that the number of stories from both papers combined is relatively equal to the number of stories from *The Times* – shown to be unassociated with overall story tone – the subsequent analysis of UK articles in general does not necessarily favor any one newspaper in the sample over another. Further, the focus of the current study was not to compare overall story tone by newspaper title, but rather to determine if overall story tone was related to the implementation of specific device(s), which were shown to not differ in ubiquity among the three newspaper titles.

Examination into RQ1 revealed that the marginalization device most implemented in the UK stories was 'general lawlessness', which appeared in 50 (32.9 percent) of the 152 stories (see Table 2). This device was followed by 'police confrontation' and 'official sources/definitions' (for each, $N = 34$, 22.4 percent), 'historical comparison' ($N = 31$, 20.4 percent) and the 'carnival' device ($N = 29$, 19.1 percent). In the previous study on US press coverage, the top five most prevalent devices in descending order were general lawlessness, police confrontation, official sources, 'protest as anti-troops' and the 'freak show' device.

To test H1a–H1d, separate 2×2 chi-square analyses⁵ were conducted to determine if the implementation (yes/no) of each particular device in UK stories was disproportionately associated with either a positive or negative overall story tone toward the antiwar protesters (see Table 2). H1a was supported; when comparing positive vs negative UK stories, stories containing the general lawlessness device were more associated with negative overall story tone ($N = 22$, 62.8 percent) than positive overall story tone ($N = 13$, 37.2 percent), $\chi^2(1) = 14.30$, $p < .000$. That is,

TABLE 1

Total Number of UK Stories by Newspaper and Overall Tone of Story toward Protesters

Overall tone	<i>The Times</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Telegraph</i>	Total (%)
Positive	24	24	8	56 (36.8)
Negative	19	3	13	35 (23.0)
Neutral	31	25	5	61 (40.2)
Total (%)	74 (48.7)	52 (34.2)	26 (17.1)	152 (100)

TABLE 2

Number of UK Stories with War Protest Marginalization Devices by Overall Tone of Story toward Protesters

	<i>N</i>	Pos. (% of <i>N</i>)	Neg. (%)	Neutral (%)	Chi-square ^a
General lawlessness	50	13 (26.0)	22 (44.0)	15 (30.0)	14.30***
Police confrontation	34	10 (29.4)	12 (35.3)	12 (35.3)	3.17
Official sources/def.	34	10 (29.4)	11 (32.4)	13 (38.2)	2.24
Historical comparison	31	16 (51.6)	4 (12.9)	11 (35.5)	3.69
Carnival	29	11 (37.9)	6 (20.7)	12 (41.4)	0.09
Generalizations	23	15 (65.2)	3 (13.0)	5 (21.8)	4.50*
Freak show	15	5 (33.3)	3 (20.0)	7 (46.7)	0.01
Statistics	14	11 (78.6)	1 (7.1)	2 (14.3)	5.30*
Protest as anti-troops	14	9 (64.3)	1 (7.1)	4 (28.6)	3.85*
Counter-demonstrators	10	2 (20.0)	3 (30.0)	5 (50.0)	1.04
Romper room/idiots	9	1 (11.1)	6 (66.7)	2 (22.2)	7.15**
Protest as anarchy	7	2 (28.6)	3 (42.8)	2 (28.6)	1.04
Protest as treason	5	0 (0.0)	2 (40.0)	3 (60.0)	3.27
Witness accounts	4	2 (50.0)	0 (50.0)	2 (40.0)	1.28

Note: Row percentages shown in parentheses.

^a 2 × 2 chi-square analyses run with presence of device (yes/no) by story tone (positive/negative).

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

compared to stories that did not contain the general lawlessness device, stories that contained it were more likely to be negative, rather than positive, in overall story tone toward the antiwar protesters.

Similar analysis did not support H1b; stories containing the police confrontation device were not significantly associated with either a negative or positive overall tone, $\chi^2(1) = 3.17$, $p = .075$. Nor was a significant relationship revealed for the official sources/definitions device (H1c), $\chi^2(1) = 2.23$, $p = .135$. In testing H1d, a Fisher's Exact Test of proportions ($p = .007$) did reveal a disproportionate relationship between the romper room/idiots at large device and a negative overall story tone toward the antiwar protesters. Similar investigation into RQ2 demonstrated that three of the devices actually were disproportionately associated with *positive* overall tone in UK press coverage: generalizations, $\chi^2(1) = 4.50$, $p = .034$; statistics, Fisher's Exact $p = .025$; and 'protest as anti-troops', Fisher's Exact $p = .050$. In the prior study on US press coverage, no devices were found to be associated disproportionately with positive overall story tone toward antiwar protesters.

H2, which predicted that UK stories that were negative in overall tone toward antiwar protesters would contain more devices per story than would stories that were positive or neutral, was not supported (see Table 3). Although the mean numbers of devices implemented per story were somewhat in the hypothesized direction (for negative, positive and neutral stories, $M = 2.20$, 1.91 and 1.56, respectively), ANOVA indicated that these means did not differ significantly, $F(2, 149) = 2.39$, $p = .095$.

TABLE 3

UK vs US Mean Number of War Protest Marginalization Devices Implemented per Story by Overall Tone of Story toward Protesters

Overall tone of story	UK		US ^a	
	N	Mean (SD)	N	Mean (SD)
Negative	35	2.20 (1.13)	42	3.33 (1.84)
Positive	56	1.91 (1.61)	44	2.02 (1.32)
Neutral	61	1.56 (1.39)	38	2.47 (1.54)
Total	152	1.84 (1.43)	124	2.60 (1.66)

Note: ^a US data from content analysis of *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *USA Today* (Dardis, 2006).

Investigation of RQ3, which inquired about the number of different devices implemented per story between UK and US newspapers, demonstrated that US stories overall contained more devices per story ($M = 2.60$) than did UK stories ($M = 1.84$), $F(1, 274) = 17.02$, $p < .000$ (see Table 3). Though not part of a current hypothesis or research question, it is important to note that US stories had a significantly higher average word count ($M = 789.29$) than UK stories ($M = 476.49$), $F(1, 274) = 42.57$, $p < .000$. But, when controlling for word count, ANCOVA still demonstrated a significant difference in devices implemented per story between the UK and US, $F(1, 273) = 6.38$, $p = .012$.

RQ4 inquired about the propensity of the UK vs US press to implement specific device(s) in its coverage of antiwar protesters (see Table 4). Separate 2×2 chi-square analyses testing the presence of each device in a news story (yes/no) by country (US/UK) indicated a significant associative difference with several of the devices. Most importantly, although the general lawlessness and police confrontation devices were the most commonly implemented in both UK and US press coverage, these devices appeared in a disproportionately greater percentage of total US stories (45.2 percent and 33.9 percent, respectively) relative to total UK stories (32.9 percent and 22.4 percent, respectively), $\chi^2(1) = 4.34$, $p = .037$; $\chi^2(1) = 4.53$, $p = .033$, respectively.

Other chi-square tests indicated that six other devices were implemented in a disproportionately greater percentage of total US stories relative to total UK stories, respectively: freak show (21.8 percent vs 9.9 percent), $\chi^2(1) = 7.50$, $p = .006$; protest as anti-troops (23.4 percent vs 9.2 percent), $\chi^2(1) = 10.44$, $p = .001$; mention of counter-demonstrators (19.4 percent vs 6.6 percent), $\chi^2(1) = 10.32$, $p = .001$; romper room/idiots at large (16.1 percent vs 5.9 percent), $\chi^2(1) = 7.57$, $p = .006$; protest as treason (20.2 percent vs 3.3 percent), $\chi^2(1) = 20.07$, $p < .000$; and witness accounts (8.1 percent vs 2.6 percent), $\chi^2(1) = 4.19$, $p = .041$. None of the marginalization devices were disproportionately more likely to appear in UK coverage vs US coverage.

TABLE 4
Number of Stories in which War Protest Marginalization Devices Implemented by Country

Device	UK (N = 152)		US ^a (N = 124)		Chi-square
	N	% of UK	N	% of US	
General lawlessness	50	32.9	56	45.2	4.34*
Police confrontation	34	22.4	42	33.9	4.53*
Official sources/def.	34	22.4	38	30.6	2.43
Historical comparison	31	20.4	25	20.2	0.01
Carnival	29	19.1	21	16.9	0.21
Generalizations	23	15.1	24	19.4	0.86
Freak show	15	9.9	27	21.8	7.50**
Statistics	14	9.2	16	12.9	0.96
Protest as anti-troops	14	9.2	29	23.4	10.44***
Counter-demonstrators	10	6.6	24	19.4	10.32***
Romper room/idiots	9	5.9	20	16.1	7.57**
Protest as anarchy	7	4.6	8	6.5	0.45
Protest as treason	5	3.3	25	20.2	20.07***
Witness accounts	4	2.6	10	8.1	4.19*

^a US data from content analysis of *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *USA Today* (Dardis, 2006).

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Discussion

This study demonstrated that there were differences between the UK and US presses in invoking the protest paradigm in coverage of Iraq War protest. Mainly, it showed that the US press demonstrated a greater penchant to invoke the protest paradigm than did its UK counterpart. This was revealed in several ways. First, the US press generally implemented more marginalization devices per story than did the UK press. Second, eight of the 14 devices appeared in disproportionately more US stories relative to UK stories, whereas none of the devices were disproportionately more likely to appear in UK coverage. Further, although four devices were shown to be associated with negative overall story tone toward the protesters in the previous US study, this was the case with only two devices in the UK press. In fact, three devices actually were associated with *positive* overall story tone in UK press coverage.

This is not to say that the US-oriented research paradigm is faulty, of course. On the contrary, the current study indicated that the paradigm appears to be quite accurate in describing the US press. However, the current findings suggest that the protest paradigm may not apply to the same extent outside the US, due to different media-related and, more importantly to the current study, sociopolitical factors in other countries. This was demonstrated even in a country generally quite similar to the US and during a time in which both nations were undergoing similar circumstances regarding the Iraq War. Thus, in accordance with Peter's (2003) investigation

into agenda-setting, the current findings indicate that differing nation-based characteristics indeed can 'enable or impair' (Peter, 2003: 701) the protest paradigm.

That said, the current research does not imply that UK papers were totally sympathetic toward antiwar protesters or that protest groups were exempt from delegitimization at the hands of the press outside US borders. For example, recall that general lawlessness was the most commonly implemented device in UK coverage, as it was in US coverage. Further, not only was this device used most often in the UK, but it also was disproportionately associated with negative overall coverage to the protesters in that country. But, it just happened that the US press implemented this device disproportionately more than did the UK press, and in the US it was also associated with negative overall tone toward the protesters. Thus, the current study is not implying that the UK press necessarily espoused the antiwar protest movement; however, it does suggest that protesters fared relatively better in UK press coverage when compared to US press coverage. This is especially insightful when considering that many times the US press is accused of having a 'liberal bias', but in this case the US press actually provided more support for the 'status quo' establishment than did its UK counterpart, concordant with the 'guard dog' proposition (Donohue et al., 1995).

The preceding paragraph speaks to an important point about this article. It does not seem that protest – especially *disruptive* protest – would be welcomingly embraced in the UK press merely because public opposition to the war was greater there than in the US. Indeed, social protest is still not considered a 'mainstream' activity in the UK and therefore it should not have generated completely opposite press coverage relative to that in the US. Hence, one would not expect press coverage in the UK and US to be *vastly* different regarding the situation in and protest about Iraq.

However, the results of the study do indicate that there were differences in more subtle aspects of media coverage relating to the protest paradigm. This study took a more nuanced approach by comparing the countries' leading newspapers on their propensity to insert into news coverage certain marginalization devices that have demonstrated potentially detrimental effects to antiwar protest groups. It was surmised that, because of the differences in public opinion and the political auras that existed within the two countries regarding the situation in Iraq, the tendency of each press to implement these devices and the ways in which the devices were related to overall story tone would differ. This supposition was upheld.

Conclusion

The current study was the first to compare the presses of two nations regarding their proclivity to invoke the 'protest paradigm' in coverage of social protest. Although the US press demonstrated a greater penchant for invoking the paradigm in its coverage, findings do not suggest that the paradigm was non-existent in UK press coverage. However, the press of each nation was shown to differ in a more nuanced manner regarding both the quantity and style in which the paradigm was implemented.

Like most research, the generalizability of the findings presented in the current study is limited by the selections of the issue, countries and newspapers under investigation. Although many factors in the selection process afforded a comparison of 'most similar design', there could still be idiosyncratic influences that could qualify the study's results. Additionally, future research could further contribute to testing the external validity of both this study and the protest paradigm in general by conducting similar investigations into other countries, media systems, issues under protest, time periods and other contexts. Lastly, this study re-emphasized the importance of the proposition that more cross-national mass media research be conducted to test and/or extend extant theory within more macrosocial contexts (J.M. McLeod and Blumler, 1987; Semetko and Mandelli, 1997), especially beyond predominantly US-oriented domains.

Notes

1. See, for example, Pew Research Center for the People and the Press Survey Reports, at: people-press.org/reports/print.php3?PageID=885; Travis (2003).
2. 'Because neutral coverage is the standard default assumption of traditional news articles, examination into neutral-story attributes likely would not produce inspired insight. Therefore, only negative and positive stories were analyzed vis-à-vis each other, although the number of neutral stories was determined and is presented in the study's results' (Dardis, 2006).
3. UK newspaper (non-tabloid) daily circulations for December 2002–May 2003: (1) *Daily Telegraph* 933,028; (2) *The Times* 659,292; (3) *Financial Times* 463,209; (4) *The Guardian* 403,580; (5) *The Independent* 222,524. Source: ABC/*Daily Telegraph*, at: www.telegraph.co.uk/pressoffice/graphics/research/abcdec03may04.pdf
4. The articles were retrieved from the Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe database in February 2004. For the time period under study, the following terms were entered under the 'headline and lead paragraph' search function for the three newspapers: [(antiwar or anti-war or war) and protest*], [(antiwar or anti-war or war) and demonstrat*], and [(antiwar or anti-war or war) and rall*]. The initial result list contained 225 articles. The headline and initial paragraphs of each article were examined and the story was scanned to determine if the article actually covered some form of protest against the Iraq War or if the key search terms were only mentioned as ancillary to some other main content. Additionally, because this research focuses on traditional, 'objective' news coverage, all stories that appeared in the editorial section (whether columns, opinions or letters to the editor) were disqualified from analysis.
5. In cases of an expected cell count below 5, a Fisher's Exact Test of proportions was utilized, which did not result in a change in significance.

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Appendix: Marginalization Devices, Definitions, and Examples

Device (source)	Definition	Example (article citation)
General lawlessness (McFarlane and Hay, 2003; D.M. McLeod and Hertog, 1999)	Mention of arrests and illegal activity during a protest	Protesters in Washington took their opposition to war with Iraq to Capitol Hill, the White House and Dupont Circle yesterday, in a series of hastily planned actions that led to nearly 30 arrests and the closing of Lafayette Square (Fernandez, 2003).
Police confrontation (McFarlane and Hay, 2003; D.M. McLeod and Hertog, 1999)	Specific mention of strife ('battle') between protesters and police	Police opened fire with non-lethal projectiles during an antiwar protest at the Port of Oakland today, injuring at least six demonstrators and six longshoremen standing nearby. Most of the 500 demonstrators at the port were dispersed peacefully, but at two gates, police said, officers opened fire when protesters refused to move and some demonstrators threw rocks and bolts (Mendoza, 2003).
Freak show (Hackett and Zhao, 1994; D.M. McLeod and Hertog, 1999)	Emphasis on protesters' 'aberrant' appearances	There were students in tie-dyed shirts playing hacky sack and grandmothers selling antiwar pins (Lichtblau, 2003).
Romper room (McFarlane and Hay, 2003; D.M. McLeod and Hertog, 1999)	Emphasis on protesters' mental ability as displayed through 'immature' behavior	As the demonstrators marched, many blew whistles, a shrill sound that competed with music from a 25-piece band. Others ate pizza as they walked, while a few glided along on in-line skates. A young woman with face paint that resembled a clown's climbed up a tree, then swung around the branches as if they were uneven parallel bars (Bruni, 2002).
Carnival (McFarlane and Hay, 2003; D.M. McLeod and Hertog, 1999)	Highlights spectacle; 'protest as performance', which includes mention of celebrities	Energized by the British band Chumbawamba, which opened the Washington demonstration with a performance of a new antiwar song . . . there were several celebrity speakers. Among them were the Rev. Jesse Jackson and the Rev. Al Sharpton, the actresses Jessica Lange and Tyne Daly, and Ron Kovic, the Vietnam veteran and antiwar activist. In San Francisco, the actor Martin Sheen and the singer Joan Baez participated in events (Clemetson, 2003).

Continued

Device (source)	Definition	Example (article citation)
<p>Statistics (D.M. McLeod and Hertog, 1992, 1999)</p>	<p>The invocation of 'mainstream' public opinion through specific results of polls and studies</p>	<p>However, public support for an invasion of Iraq remains strong – 56% approve of sending troops to oust Saddam Hussein, according to the latest USA TODAY/CNN Gallup Poll (Ritter, 2003).</p>
<p>Generalizations (D.M. McLeod and Hertog, 1992, 1999; Swank, 1997)</p>	<p>The invocation of 'mainstream' public opinion through more general allusion</p>	<p>... a substantial majority of Americans now support the war (Jehl, 2003).</p>
<p>Witness accounts (D.M. McLeod and Hertog, 1992, 1999)</p>	<p>The invocation of 'mainstream' public opinion through witness accounts highlighting the aberrance of protesters' behaviors or viewpoints</p>	<p>But as the protesters invaded a crowded food court, their call failed to draw diners to their feet. A few students booed the guy with the bullhorn; the rest rolled their eyes or kept them lowered toward their books. 'I'd rather there be peace', said Brittany Neal, a sophomore who assessed the protest from a distant booth, 'but I don't support this' (Argetsinger, 2003).</p>
<p>Official sources (D.M. McLeod and Hertog, 1999; Reese and Buckalew, 1995; Ryan et al., 2001)</p>	<p>Reliance on official sources and their interpretations of events</p>	<p>Mayor Jerry Brown said in an interview this afternoon that he had 'full confidence' that Chief Word had used the minimum force necessary. Mr. Brown said that he had not received a full report about the incident but that preliminary information indicated that the police had been justified in their actions (Murphy, 2003).</p>
<p>Protest as treason (Hackett and Zhao, 1994; Hallin, 1986)</p>	<p>Presenting antiwar protesters as traitorous to the country</p>	<p>Many cars and pickup trucks headed to the rally bore bumper stickers that expressed sentiments like this one: 'God, Guns and Guts Made America – Let's Keep All of Them.' The barbershop chorus, men in black blazers who call themselves the Virginians, sang tunes like 'This Is Our Country.' Mr. Witt carried a placard that said, 'Saddam and Bin Laden Love War Protesters' (Jehl, 2003).</p>

Continued

Device (source)	Definition	Example (article citation)
Protest as anarchy (Hackett and Zhao, 1994; Hallin, 1986)	Presenting antiwar protesters as having no regard for traditional authority or social organization or norms	[Protesters] vomited on the pavement outside a federal building and linked themselves with metal chains, forcing firefighters to use circular saws to separate them. By late in the day . . . the situation in San Francisco deteriorated into 'absolute anarchy' (Zernike and Murphy, 2003).
Protest as anti-troops (Beamish et al., 1995; Reese and Buckalew, 1995)	Presenting antiwar protesters as disrespectful to (and therefore 'against') the actual military personnel fighting a war	The rally here, just north of Richmond, was one of many events around the country supporting the military on this first weekend of the war. It was meant as a show of support for United States policy and troops, and it was meant as an angry protest against the antiwar sentiment that has been more visible elsewhere, particularly in large cities (Jehli, 2003).
Counter-demonstrators (Parenti, 1991)	Including or overemphasizing counter-demonstrators to highlight aberrance of protesters' behaviors and views, or to mitigate their position	Anthony Nardella, 49, a retired Navy commander who served in the Persian Gulf war, said he regarded the event as 'a counterdemonstration against all the antiwar glitz.' He added, 'I'm pretty sure you're not going to see people here looting stores or lying down in the streets' (Jehli, 2003).
Historical comparison (Hackett and Zhao, 1994)	Compares contemporary antiwar movements with those of the past	Of the war protesters, Dornan said, 'They were wrong during Vietnam, and they're wrong today' (Timberg, 2003).

Source: Dardis (2006), adapted with permission.