

Here, the previous emphasis on power relations and social inequalities is retained – yet translated into new concerns with the politics of domestic life, and with an uneven distribution of competences in what sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1996) would term the ‘cultural economy’.

Ethnography is a research method with its origins in anthropology and over recent years there has been a marked self-reflexive turn in certain parts of that discipline – with practitioners looking critically at their own relations to, and representations of, other cultures (Clifford and Marcus, 1986). This politics of the act of research has also been introduced into media reception studies by Valerie Walkerdine (1986) and Ien Ang (1989) – who have each posed some difficult yet necessary questions to do with the voyeurism of ethnographic observation, the styles of academic writing and the dynamics of knowledge production. A possible danger with their line of argument is that too much reflexivity might actually hinder rather than help qualitative inquiries into everyday media use – but they are quite right to connect epistemological matters with issues of social power and control.

Finally, it is worth mentioning another qualitative method which has been employed in investigations of media and everyday life – the technique of oral history. Initially developed by radical social historians as a means of recovering subordinated memories and experiences – thereby challenging the dominant narratives of the past – oral history interviews have since enabled audience researchers to challenge, or at least to supplement, existing institutional histories of the modern mass media. So in an attempt to reconstruct the entry and incorporation of television (O’Sullivan, 1991) or early radio (Moore, 1988) into the domestic sphere, viewers or listeners are asked to recall the place of those technologies in their daily routines and situated activities.

Shaun Moores

Media, social movements and history: an agenda-building case study

Victor Sampedro

Many social movements aim to influence policy agendas by defining new social problems through media coverage of their protest activities. Instead of lobbying or negotiating, social movements tend to ‘display’ protest activities. By resorting to demonstrations or civil disobedience, movement activists challenge the control that institutional actors (e.g. governmental, administrative, political and lobbying agencies) exert upon politics and mainstream media. Indeed, the effectiveness of social movements might be assessed by measuring: (1) how political elites set policy agendas that either reflect or ignore social movements’ demands; and (2) how media agendas are either shaped by or unresponsive to social movement tactics (Klandermans, 1989:387–9).

I will present here the interdependence of policy agenda building, media agenda building and social movement mobilisation as they apply to a major, yet under-reported, European social movement: the Spanish anti-military movement. The analysis focuses on how social movements, institutional actors and the media all bring to bear distinctive resources, strategies and alliances in an evolving and interrelated way. The outcome of media/movements relations can be located in terms of models of power that help media scholars to organise other case studies.

Building agendas for new politics

The agenda-building approach addresses the core questions of the two major schools for studying social movements. *New social movements* theorists (Touraine, 1981; Offe, 1985; Melucci, 1989, 1996) consider that protest mobilisation denounces structural problems in a society and challenges dominant ideologies. Changing social consensus moves the activists to search for a ‘space of public representation’ in the media (Melucci, 1996:218–28). The news may shape public opinion and how social issues are discussed (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989). Then, social movements use the media to project certain events and features in a particular ‘public image’ of their ideology and goals (Van Zoonen, 1996:213–14).

From a different perspective, the school of *resource mobilisation* examines social movements as policy entrepreneurs that demand access to official agendas (McCarthy and Zald, 1977, 1987). In order to attract support, pro-

testers must consider the external conditions that hinder or facilitate their success. A favourable 'political opportunity structure' consists of stable political alignments, formal channels of access and intra-elite conflict (Tarrow, 1988), where dominant groups do not have their own seamless consensus. In the same vein, the factors that affect the media agenda might be labelled the 'media opportunity structure' (Sampedro, 1997a) that helps social movements to challenge public policies, to demand access to institutional agendas and to attract potential supporters (Snow and Benford, 1988).

Recent research connects the ideological and the political dimensions of social movements. The use of rhetorical argument is assumed to increase the opportunity to act in a given political context (Diani, 1996; Tarrow, 1998), especially through 'master frames' - dominant arguments and associated images - which characterise cycles of protest (Snow and Benford, 1992). The basic idea here is that social movements energise their peculiar tension between claims for broad ideological change (vital to any 'master frame' of protest) and concrete policy demands when questioning official agendas and frames, both in politics and in the media. This perspective has always characterised the policy agenda literature.

Seminal authors, Cobb and Elder (1971; Elder and Cobb, 1984; Kingdon, 1984), pointed to three processes for insinuating new issues into governmental plans. First comes the ideological process of framing: attributing causes for collective privation, personifying responsibility and offering solutions. Second, movements' grievances cannot be attributable 'to fate, or nature' if they are to call for governmental action (Stone, 1989:299). For example, feminism and pacifism present their causes as issues of real politics linked to discrimination and militarism, respectively. Finally, social movements must advance policy solutions and find political authorities potentially receptive to the new policies.

As suggested, most political science and social movement theorists adopt a constructionist perspective when addressing the dynamics of social movements. Media scholars join the constructionist perspective when they study agenda building instead of agenda setting. Agenda-setting research (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Protes and McCombs, 1991) intends to demonstrate that news organisations offer audiences the issues to think about and the frames for how to think about them (Iyengar, 1991; McCombs, 1993:62). Media coverage could, in that sense, help activists to persuade the public (and even the political elites) of their demands and arguments. But most movement/media studies question that hypothesis (Kiebowicz and Scherer, 1986) against the background of work that demonstrates how striking differences exist among the frames presented by the media and those held by the audience (Graber, 1988; Neuman et al., 1992). Especially important are the news frames that might influence the audience's perception of its own capacity to affect institutional politics (Gamson, 1992). Media frames (Altheide, 1976; Entman, 1993) function, as social movement studies suggest: 'as forms of political rhetoric rather than as belief systems' (Diani, 1996:1057-8). As part of this rhetoric, news sources tend to impose their agendas and frames to position the audience as passive and detached from events and from the creation of public discourse - to demobilise the public (Gitlin, 1980; Entman and Rojecki, 1993).

On the other hand, the agenda-building approach (Gandy, 1982) also reveals

the privileges that the media grant to certain groups as active agents that monopolise public discourse. Media coverage may offer social movements a discursive platform for interacting with other such policy actors. The mass media have become 'the arena for the contended definition of what is political, of what belongs to the polis... transforming... the society's inner dilemmas... into politics (literally into something concerning the polis)' (Melucci, 1996:221). In fact, mass media are critical levers to foster and reallocate both public and institutional attention upon new issues. For example, social movements may go from police repression of protest activities to court litigations and then - or simultaneously - to political debates over their demands. This chain would hardly occur without media coverage of protest activities. Crucially, the social movement has here broken on to the discursive platform where the 'audience' as such is never represented.

In looking at this more closely, we need to know to what extent social movements can access, and frame their demands in, mainstream media. This implies studying the 'agenda game' (Protes et al., 1991) as it is played out among different policy actors and the media themselves through a symbolic struggle that filters new political issues and ways of thinking about them. More than stressing a coincidental history of different disciplines, the discussion here sustains a parallel analysis of political and communicative, or discursive, power.

Models of political and communicative power

Depending on the political context, newsworthy issues and events may be fixed by the controlling elite, through open debates or through institutional patterns for news and policy making. Following Michael Mann (1993:44-91), we can think of movements/media relations in terms of three models of power: pure elitism, pluralism and institutional elitism. These models are ideal-typical in that they locate real-world relations in terms of pure models based on the nature and degree of elite control (see table 3). They provide an analytically convenient way of organising and systematising complex relationships which are far from static. Regarding the Spanish anti-military movement, these models represent distillations of complex state-media relationships that exist over time.

Pure elitism depicts an exclusionary control of the political and media agendas by relatively cohesive ruling groups (Mills, 1956). Political access and freedom of expression are both curtailed. Officials respond to social protest by vetoing or delaying decision making that may threaten their interests. If protest cannot be ignored, authorities may simply repress it. Favourable publicity in support of a movement is greatly reduced, given the repression of coverage.

Media outcomes for protest are either *silence* or *marginalisation*. Silence typically results from authoritarian legal proscriptions or internal censorship. Journalists are forced to ignore those social demands dubbed 'irrelevant' or 'too risky' for official action. Frequently, common interests and/or background ties among political, business and media elites account for a material and ideological convergence (Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Parenti, 1993). Marginalisation means that, if official repression occurs, mainstream media

Table 3 Policy and media outcomes of social protest by models of media-state relations

Model of power	Policy agenda	Media agenda
Pure elitism	(a) Inactivity (b) Repression	(a) Silence (b) Marginalisation
Pluralism	Political innovation	Coverage of protest and/or of official controversy
Institutional elitism	(a) Co-option (b) Institutional marginalisation of conflict	(a) Institutionalisation of social movement sources. Sensationalism (b) Indifference

will frame protesters as anti-systemic, extreme, anarchic, inconsistent and uncohesive, or lacking public support (Entman and Rojecki, 1993).

Classic elitism was refined by theories of neo-Marxist hegemony and social control. Hegemony – the ideological dominion of ruling classes – implies that news organisations veil class struggle (Goldman and Rajagopal, 1991) or marginalise protesters (Gitlin, 1980). Social control research also shows the media imposing 'deviant' frames on unconventional collective action (Cohen, 1972; Young, 1990; Van Zoonen, 1992). Thus elitism explains why activists see the media as a target as much as a means of communication (Gamson and Wolsfeld, 1993). Ironically though, '[m]ost movement activists are media junkies' (Gamson, 1995:85); they seek news coverage constantly. Pluralism could explain why.

Pluralism is based on Robert Dahl's well-known description of democratic political competition between interest groups in which resources play a large role in determining success (Dahl, 1961). Exclusive control over the agendas becomes a minor problem because policy and news making respond to diverse competing interests without any pre-established bias. This bottom-up model contradicts the top-down model of elitism. Media coverage of social protest may reflect and/or foster popular support. If representative of meaningful social demands, a movement would gain the attention of the journalists who grant activists access (e.g. interviews, letters to the editor, opinion columns) and give ample coverage (sometimes favourable) to their demands. This happens before a policy innovation takes place and during mobilisations to challenge old policies. Pluralist media also report on conflict and controversy within established policy communities because these debates are accessible and are thought to be newsworthy. In this way, the movement's demands are legitimised to some degree.

In pluralist competition, movement organisations mobilise the media like a resource at their disposal. It has been suggested that a rational exchange of information for publicity – one that mirrors rational market transactions – occurs between journalists and news sources (Blumler and Gurevitch, 1981). Movements want exposure and the media want sensationalism, often

exchanged in a 'transaction model' (Wolsfeld, 1984, 1991). Protest activities provide the media with personalised, emotionally laden and conflictive dramas. These are highly valued media commodities which deserve high-visibility coverage, sometimes enabling a handful of activists to achieve broad public attention. However, a fair exchange between movements' sources and conventional journalists seems far from common. As Gamson and Wolsfeld (1993:117) argue, 'those who are most needy have least access to the media services they desire and pay a higher price for them – an example of the principle of cumulative inequality'. The pluralist exchange model, on the other hand, tends to consider the media as themselves neutral resources for reaching the audience, while acknowledging that institutional and political constraints can distort the exchange of news information.

In order to manage news coverage effectively, a social movement needs (1) stable networks for media relations (e.g. established connections to responsive journalists); (2) internal division of labour between those members devoted to activism and those designated to press relations; (3) control over supporters to schedule and sustain protests easily covered by the journalists; and (4) a clear-cut collective 'identity' and demands to project to the media. Instead social movements typically produce 'cultural modes not governed by cost-benefit calculations but by symbolic waste' (Melucci, 1996:359). Often social movements pose ambiguous agendas in different and sometimes contradictory ways (Van Zoonen, 1996). Gamson (1995:104) observes that: '[media discourse] ... often obstructs and only rarely and unevenly contributes to the development of collective action frames'. Negative media effects upon social movements are rooted in journalistic working routines and professional news values. In particular, the explanation rests on the media's institutional 'logics'.

Institutional elitism is the model most characteristic of Western democracies. This recognises that news production is an institutionally embedded process, conditioned by political context, which has its own routines and norms. The media privilege certain interests while, at the same time, creating specific kinds of space for the expression of social demands. In a sense, the institutional model combines elitist and pluralist elements because it emphasises asymmetries of power and the unintended consequences of institutional patterns (Hall and Taylor, 1996). Power is distributed unevenly across social groups, and it tends to be monopolised by networks of the best-positioned actors. States, parties, courts, and so on – and media organisations themselves – structure power relations, since they maintain distinctive forms of interaction with pressure groups. Official agenda building often lurches from one extended phase of stability to another, as short periods of change are followed by new equilibria that re-establish the position of dominant groups. Agenda building reflects continually reorganised systems of 'limited participation' (Baumgartner and Jones, 1992). Officials and journalists establish new routines or alter existing ones to support their interests. Then the role of social movements is to demand new policies that have yet to become routinised and institutionalised. In limited cases, major mobilisations can break policy monopolies.

The institutional model also recognises how state structures shape social movements. David Meyer (1991) observes that social movements can be *co-opted* by being incorporated into existing institutions, for example putting

leaders of movements on advisory committees. One might also speak of *institutional marginalisation* in which conflict is managed by commissions of experts, detoured to the courts or confined to bureaucratic proceedings (at a bureaucratic pace). Enmeshing movements in the legal system is a common practice. The net effect of these official strategies is to shuttle movement demands out of the public eye.

The power of institutional structures also biases media agendas. Media coverage of protest is shaped by news organisations' organisational and epistemological features (Van Zoonen, 1996). Institutional conventions ingrained in daily journalistic practices structure the contest for representing policies in favour of those groups that already possess institutional resources. Mainstream media are 'path dependent' on 'legitimate politics' (Hallin, 1986) because official sources provide constant and reliable routes for obtaining new information and for making 'different' news stories on a regular basis. Institutional actors usually set the parameters of political conflict through the media because of their accessibility and predictability. More subtly, journalistic routines find legitimisation in institutional sources because their social authority implies objectivity (Tuchman, 1978; Gans, 1980; Fishman, 1988). In contrast, social protest must always carry the weight of proving its legitimacy. All this means that media agendas are more accessible to elites than to social activists. So, the political opportunity structures shape media opportunity structures (Sampedro, 1997a,b) and vice versa in a self-reinforcing spiral.

However, journalistic routines may also *facilitate* coverage of movements. Social movements may influence news agendas by moderating their demands and adopting a more consensual frame or working closely with official agencies that are regularly followed by journalists. In this case, the co-optation of a social movement often occurs in the form of institutionalising movement 'sources' ((a) in the bottom-right box of table 3). Such 'sources' can even attain brief celebrity status (as with anti-road-building protestors in rural England in the mid 1990s). When a movement refuses to moderate, another variety of co-optation derives from media structures. I have in mind activists' strategies to generate shocking and novel events that fit the news values of dramatisation and shock, and capitalise on journalists' attention. In these cases, it is a real possibility that journalists frame protestors as sensationalists, not because of state directives or elitist ties, but simply because of the commercial imperative to win market share. Shocking news stories are easier and faster to 'manufacture' than background reports, and they sell better. The result is that the movement is sensationalised, trivialised and then also co-opted. If movement leaders become media 'stars', increasingly preoccupied with gaining attention, they can further contribute to sensationalisation (Gitlin, 1980:146-78) and their own co-option. In sum, through media institutionalisation social movements may be co-opted by becoming either conventional or eccentric news sources.

Finally, institutionalised media agendas may react to social movements with indifference. This corresponds to the shift of contention to bureaucratic processes sketched above. Contention that is shifted to judicial or administrative arenas where conflict simmers without resolution, claims are asserted without drama and debates rage without clear villains or victims, is not often

newsworthy. Lengthy and intricate institutional proceedings obscure the broader storyline and make a news plot that is hard for audiences to follow (Cook, 1996). If any storyline is forthcoming at all, it will coincide with the 'trail of power' (Bennett, 1996), drawing upon institutional and bureaucratized politics. If activists are unable to generate elite disagreement or innovative reframings of their demands, protest will fade from the media.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will apply these three models in a longitudinal study of incremental – although not continuous – institutionalisation of relations between the anti-military movement and the Spanish media. Some of the processes observed will be generalisable to other issues and other political contexts, but the chapter is also intended as a working example of how knowledge can be reliably produced about the media and their role in a society. So it is important that we are not generalising here: we are focusing on a particular historical moment and a particular social context. Prior to 1976, the Spanish anti-military movement was effectively marginalised by Francoist dictatorship and media control. At the other end of the study's temporal frame (1996), we encounter news agenda building integrated into institutionalised relations with political elites but opening public discourse to anti-draft protests.

(cont. p. 33)

Media history

Everyday, familiar contact and interaction with the various media is very much a part of modern cultural life. This contact plays an important part in the process of 'anchoring' the social present, synchronising the here and now of the moment, the day, week, year or season, marking the passage of social time, of self and generation. Contact with mediated information and imagery plays an important role in the construction of a sense of the past, of history and of speculation about the future. The role of the media in the construction of social time and identity and media representations, especially of national history, are significant topics for study. We all have biographies and belong to generational cultures which are in part defined by a familiarity with a particular range of media at a particular phase of their technical, economic and social development. In other words, our taken-for-granted daily media contacts are historically contingent, dependent upon the institutional, political and technological forms which the media assume in any given era. Compare, for example, the forms and patterns of media consumption and production characteristic of the 1990s with the 'mediascapes' – the media environments – of the 1950s, the 1920s, the 1890s and the 1820s. You will find that the range and types of media available to audiences have changed considerably in the last two hundred years.

As a result, the analysis of the historical development of the media is an essential component of media studies. But so, too, is the analysis of media histories themselves, which cannot always be taken for granted as the only possible accounts of this development. The underlying rationale here suggests that the study of the historical formation and evolution of the various media – how they have emerged and under what conditions – makes possible a more informed understanding of their present forms of organisation, regulation and use, and of their likely patterns of development and change in the future.

If this broad rationale is accepted, there are a number of issues which warrant further consideration.

The first of these concerns the nature of historical study and analysis. The study of history is often associated with identifying and uncovering lists of dates: successions of undeniable, often isolated, historical events. 'Great Media Inventions' and the lives and work of 'Great People' (often men): press proprietors and editors, film directors and stars, for instance, have frequently been presented in this way. Many modern historians have argued, however, that historical study involves much more than the uncritical listing of self-evidently important dates, people and events. From this point of view, historical analysis always entails a sense of how certain events and processes, and their dates, are selected as significant and how their significance should be interpreted and understood. In other words, historical analysis is not solely concerned with the 'cult of facts'; it should be motivated by theories, ideas and debates which go beyond the purely descriptive and attempt to offer explanations of large-scale institutional process and change.

In approaching the study of media history it is useful, as Golding (1974:14) has suggested, to remember that: 'The growth of mass communications is a dual process. On the one hand it describes the development of an industry, on the other the evolution of an audience. The relationship between the two is one of supply and demand for two basic social commodities; leisure facilities and information'. Although this model of supply and demand is deceptively simple one, it directs attention to the most general factors which have shaped and historically determined this fundamental relationship. It also enables specific historical concerns – for instance, understanding shifts in radio programming during the Second World War or press coverage in Spain after Franco – to be related and situated with regard to the broader picture or historical context.

Factors and forces which have historically conditioned the activities of media producers, their products and processes of media production – supply, in the model above – can be reduced to three principal areas of concern. These include: the economic organisation and consequences of commercial market forces; and the structure and operations of legal, statutory and political powers and their interaction with the technological conditions and developments prevalent at any one point in time. If these factors combine to constitute the historical conditions of media production, there are others that need to be considered in assessing the historical formation of media consumption – demand, in the model above. The conditions of media consumption have been related to what at first sight might seem mundane considerations: the time available to social groups in their use of the media; the amounts of money that they have been able and willing to spend on media consumption; and a number of related and important cultural factors – ranging from literacy to lifestyle – which have structured the access, use and reception of media products by readers and audiences.

The real challenge to historical analysis of the media is to relate the specific to the general, to do justice to the local and the particular, and at the same time to the global and the all-embracing. This is best accomplished by consideration of some particular historical case studies and instances. In

approaching these, it is important to bear in mind that the particular focus of historical analysis and the questions posed may entail attention to very different kinds of source material as well as to the use of different kinds of research method. Sources may include large-scale quantitative or statistical data and records (wherever and however they have been compiled) concerning industrial production, circulation, attendance, ratings or news promoters, for example. They may also include work on archives of the films, newspapers, radio or TV programmes, or the media texts themselves (wherever and however these have been archived). In addition, historical studies will often draw on biographical and other literary sources and records, and may well utilise the resources and the methods of oral history.

In a period when the 'end of history' has been proclaimed, it should be noted in conclusion that history as a discipline faced, in the 1990s, a series of totalising critiques and challenges associated with the rise of postmodernism. These have foregrounded and amplified the idea of history as a narrow, ideologically constructed and privileged set of discourses, rather than as an objective discipline. The positions, motives and possibilities for historical study and analysis have, as a result, been called into question in the context of post-modern times. From the point of view of media studies, there are at least two related issues which deserve consideration. The first concerns the tendency for media history to have focused on media production at the expense of forms of media reception or social use. Finally, media histories have also tended to mean histories of media in the West, to the exclusion of other cultures and national media systems.

Tim O'Sullivan

Anti-militarism, politics and information as a social commodity

Military service for adult males is still compulsory in Spain. Serious consideration of conscientious objection (hereafter CO) as an alternative was denied for fifty years: during the Francoist dictatorship (1939–75), during Spain's democratic transition (1976–82) and during the democratic consolidation (1982–96). Policies ranged from repression and imprisonment under Franco to bureaucratic stonewalling, symbolic pronouncements and temporary deferments after Franco's death (1975). The first cases of CO were mostly religiously inspired. After 1975, politically oriented CO appeared, with numbers of objectors growing each year.

The military was the major antagonist against the democratic transition and considered CO as a direct attack. Even though the 1978 constitution provided a right to CO, and a CO law had been passed in 1984, it took until 1989 to put into effect a civilian service in the place of military conscription. The main social movement, the Movimiento de Objeción de Conciencia (MOC), and other anti-military organisations, responded by launching a campaign of civil disobedience (*insubmisión*) against all compulsory military and civilian service, thereby risking imprisonment. They argued that accepting the alternative service continued to legitimate not only the draft but the military itself. As a result, the Spanish anti-draft movement grew at an unprecedented rate (see table 4).

Table 4 Recognitions of conscientious objectors by the Spanish state, 1986-97

1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
6,407	8,897	11,049	13,140	27,389	28,051	42,454	68,209	77,121	72,832	93,272	127,304

Source: *El País*, 17 February, 1998, p. 18.

Spanish CO rates are the highest in the world. By 1993, those choosing total rejection of the conscripted system, including compulsory civilian service (called *insuñisios*), reached 9,000 and enjoyed broad popular support (Ibarra, 1992; Sampedro, 1997b; Ibarra *et al.*, 1998). Forced by this pressure, in 1996 the government announced the end of military conscription by 2000. Spain may be considered the first case where a social movement forced the transition to a fully professional armed forces in peacetime.

Agendas of protest and information

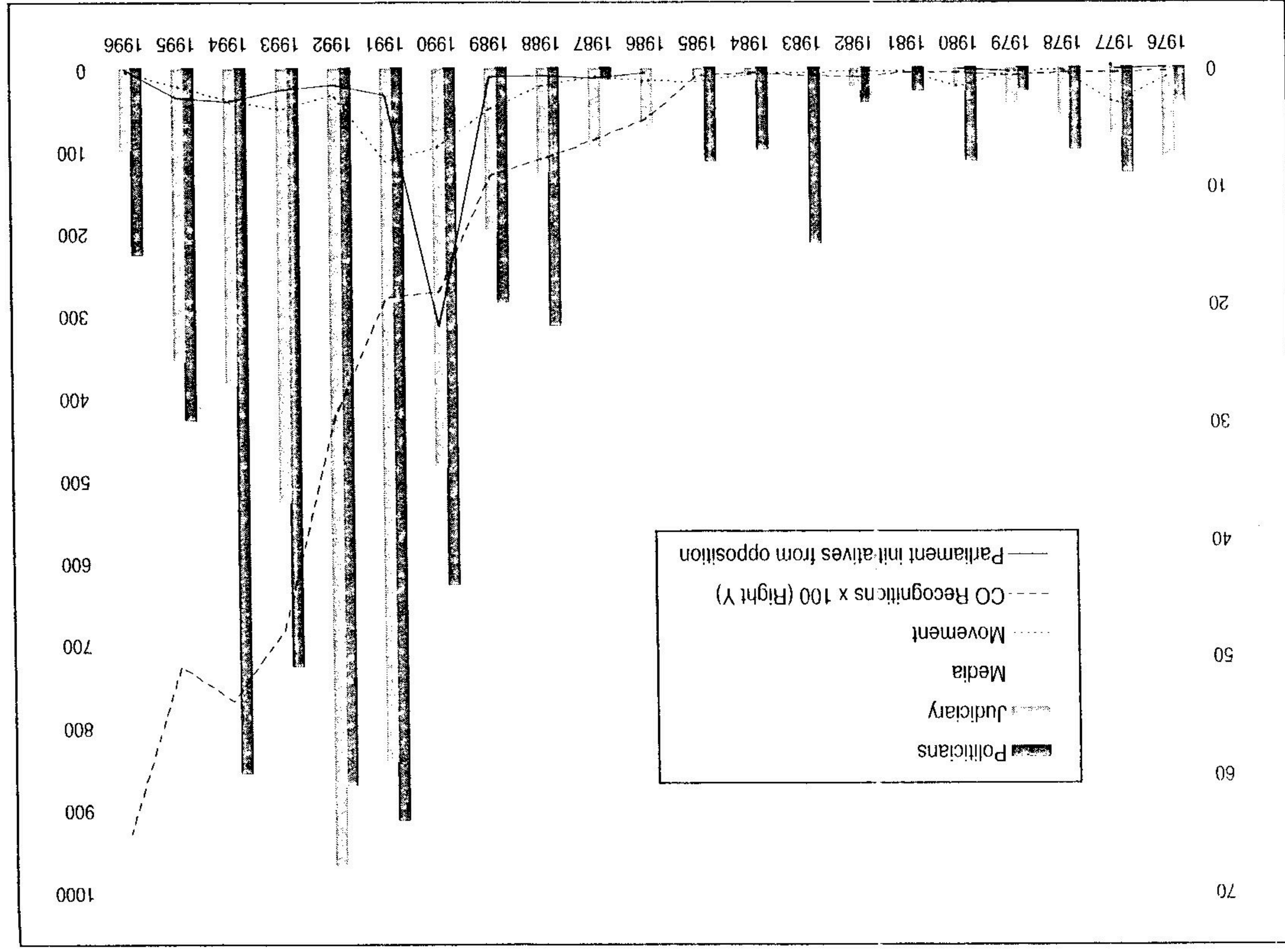
Figure 18 shows the media coverage of the CO issue and the changing ability of the different actors to promote their position as measured by main 'news promoters' (a concept defined by Molotch and Lester, 1974), in terms of what activities, statements, and so on, had prompted journalists to write the news stories. We coded all CO coverage of the three main national newspapers from 1976 to 1996. The influential *El País* (aligned with the socialists), *ABC* (conservative) and *El Mundo* (a more popular and adversarial daily that began printing in 1989) were here taken to set the agendas for other media to some degree through a 'cascade effect' (Noelle-Neumann and Mathes, 1987).

Figure 18 also shows the relationship between news coverage and CO numbers increasing rapidly after 1989, when the *insuñisios* campaign began. Also, it represents a further influence on news coverage: the level of elite disagreement, measured by the parliamentary initiatives from opposition parties. The dates are grouped below according to five periods that distinguish different media agenda/policy agenda models. I will discuss how the main players' strategies to influence both CO politics and public debate evolved across these five periods.

Period I: transition from Francoism (1976-77)

Francoist repression was replaced by benign governmental inactivity. In 1976 an executive decree recognised CO on religious grounds only, and condemned secularly motivated conscientious objectors to prosecution. Coverage of protest demanding new legislation peaked in 1977, suggesting a pluralist model. Because of movement resistance and media attention to innovative non-violent protests, the 1976 decree was never implemented. In November 1977, the Ministry of Defence privately provided for the 'unofficial exemption' of all the objectors who dared to apply, while maintaining a hard-line position against protesters. This measure was never printed in official bulletins and its publication was punishable as an offence against the armed forces, effectively

Figure 18 News promoters in *El País* and *ABC* (May 1976-June 1993) and *El Mundo* (Oct. 1989-June 1996)



silencing the media for the next six years and ending pluralistic coverage (with two exceptions that I discuss below).

Period II: conflict management by 'hidden agenda' (1978-84)

Most senior officers were holdovers from Francoism, and gave rise to continuous rumours of *coups d'état*. On 23 February 1981, the Spanish Parliament was seized by a colonel in the Civil Guard. The government avoided a permanent political solution to CO while simultaneously implementing a 'hidden agenda': between 1977 and 1984, many objectors were amnestied and subsequent objectors were exempted from military duty until 1989 – a policy of 'concealment by postponement'. This way, politicians placated the military by sidestepping the pressure of a social movement that had already defined itself as 'anti-militaristic'.

The policy of 'unofficial exemption' noted above was kept secret by pressure, self censorship and threat of military tribunal. As figure 18 demonstrates, media reaction was to avoid or deny coverage except for two peaks in 1980 and 1983. The first represented coverage by *El País* of twenty CO activists who had been imprisoned for making public the 'unofficial draft exemption'. The second peak occurred in 1983 during heated parliamentary debates over the first secular CO law presented by the socialists. Figure 18 shows that politicians predominated over other news promoters at this time.

Period III: enlargement of conflict and debate (1985-88)

Media coverage suggests pluralist competition during this period. The movement's presence in the news resulted from mobilisations against yearly draft calls that preceded the *insuñsion* campaign. The Spanish socialist party swept into office in 1982 but, contrary to the hopes of many activists, its policy was intransigence and stonewalling rather than accommodation of the movement's demands. The Ministry of Defence imposed severe limitations on the right to claim CO in 1985. Facing the movement's mobilisation, the socialists shifted the movement's challenges to bureaucratic agencies. Moreover, changes to the CO laws had to be sanctioned by the highest courts, further delaying a resolution and removing the issue from public scrutiny until 1988, when lengthy CO legislation was concluded. In the end, this legislation was challenged by the *insuñsion* campaign (1989). Mobilisation of increasing numbers of CO and total objectors made it impossible to keep the conscription issue on the back burner of the official agenda any longer.

Period IV: outburst of conflict and debate (1989-92)

News coverage increased significantly each year during the *insuñsion* campaign and peaked in 1991. Figure 18 shows that movement organisations reached their peak as news promoters. The substantial news share on the part of the politicians and the judiciary reflected heated parliamentary debates over the model for the armed forces, and ongoing judicial proceedings against the *insuñsion*. A second peak of information occurred in March 1992 when a 'not guilty' sentence was passed, generating an impressive news share for the judiciary.

Period V: institutionalisation (July 1992-March 1996)

Media coverage now declined, ignoring the increase of activism, judicial proceedings and court sentences – some favourable to *insuñsion* and others upholding their prosecution. Several news-making patterns account for the news decline. Journalistic routines and professional norms led to some indifference towards the movement because of the shift of conflict to the less easily reported judicial arena. Influential political elites agreed in late 1991 that the movement's goal of draft abolition was simply unattainable. Many journalists evidently accepted the official definition of the movement as 'unrealistic' and no longer relevant. Reports about new CO policies in 1994 and electoral promises in 1996 generated the high news shares of politicians and of media (see figure 18). But the overall decline of coverage suggests a characteristic pattern of 'either feast or famine' (Baumgartner and Jones, 1992) in which the media remain attentive to intense conflict but soon become saturated. How this process played out warrants closer attention.

Feast, famine and indifference

No newspaper could avoid reporting the impact of the *insuñsion* campaign when it coincided with Spain's participation in the Gulf War during 1991. News shares of the movement peaked. Coverage in 1992 changed dramatically, with judicial and political elites becoming the primary news promoters. Social protest was replaced by institutional conflicts within the political class and between the government and the judiciary. In March 1992 a judge absolved a young Catholic *insuñsion* – the first to be set free – but socialist President Felipe González asked the Attorney General to imprison all *insuñsion*. A year later, a second activist was found not guilty. A breakdown of news coverage for these two trials demonstrates the media saturation by 1993. The sentence of March 1992 attracted sixty news stories in the three newspapers, compared with just five stories for the next acquittal. *El País* and *ABC* offered just one story each (four and three paragraphs long, respectively). However, this last case deserved much more media attention because of its social implications. The 1993 sentence applied to 200,000 draftees because the *insuñsion* had refused to perform military service. Previously, the 1992 sentence had been more limited in its impact, affecting only 40,000 men, because this *insuñsion* was tried for refusing to perform the alternative civilian duty, but the story was more extensively covered.

A plausible explanation must take all the actors into account as shown in table 3. First, the government decreased the media appeal of the *insuñsion* by shifting the debate to judiciary processes. Contradictory court sentences (which did not carry the message of either imprisonment or freedom for all *insuñsion*) blurred the differences between civil disobedience, CO and draft dodging. Officials took advantage by simply ignoring the sentences that threatened their own position, thereby marginalising or confusing the successes of the movement. Second, in 1991 a parliamentary consensus was reached on attaining a semi-professional army by 2000. This was an apparent success for the movement, but it was accompanied by an increase in penalties for *insuñsion*.

Table 5 Promoters of news stories for the first two *insumiso* acquittals

<i>Insumiso</i> trial	CO movement	Politicians	Judiciary	Media
March 1992	9	19	22	10
February 1993	0	1	4	0

isión and new legislation to decrease the number of CO recognitions. After these laws were passed, the number of parliamentary initiatives from the opposition decreased dramatically (see figure 18), leading effectively to media silence.

Third, 'judicial marginalisation' was reflected in news-gathering routines. Journalists increasingly turned to institutional sources, such as those associated with the judiciary, as shown in table 5. Figure 18 also shows how political news promoters and the judiciary elites enjoyed the highest shares from 1993 onwards. In 1995 and 1996 the movement achieved the smallest news share, while the trials of *insumisos* and recognitions of CO outnumbered those of previous years. Compared with the drama of the Gulf War mobilisations and the first trials, subsequent judiciary episodes evidently seemed uninteresting.

In sum, the institutional patterns that had previously impelled the movement's media presence lost strength. The CO movement was thwarted by a mix of political strategy, media saturation and journalistic routine. The all-volunteer armed forces, announced in 1996, demanded an enormous military budget and full integration into NATO, both contrary to majority public opinion. The fortunes of the anti-military movement in questioning this policy agenda were shaped by a constricting media agenda which clearly gave advantage to the political class as the main news promoter during the last five years of the study (see figure 18).

It is important to emphasise, however, that the media are not just a simple tool of politicians. Had it not been for the CO stories of *El Pais* between 1978 and 1988, the movement would probably have been heading for extinction. The climax of the *insumisión* campaign (1989-91) set in motion a wave of media interest (open to different proposals for draft abolition), of court trials and journalistic efforts to report, comment on and measure the turmoil. Thus the media were *both* the vehicles by which the movement was brought into the public arena and the means that officials used to stake out their own positions.

An intensive content analysis of the 1988 coverage in *El Pais* and *ABC* traced how the media may have helped the movement in framing the *insumisión* campaign (Sampedro, 1997b:263-94). We found that the media played a partially positive role for activists. Half of the relevant paragraphs, both in *El Pais* and *ABC*, framed *insumisión* as legitimate social protest. Most policy proposals that were printed demanded alternative CO policies. Moreover, only 2 per cent of policy proposals presented by *El Pais* and 6 per cent in *ABC* defended legal punishment. The compulsory military conscription was labelled as too conservative and militaristic. Clearly, this coverage opened the policy debate when it had seemed to be closed.

While the mainstream press performed as a 'space of opposition', during 1988 it nonetheless privileged institutional sources. Routine news such as press conferences, leaks and press releases amounted to almost half of the information provided by both dailies. They also preferred sources closest to their editorial lines. The Ministry of Defence relied on conservative *ABC* to criticise the initiatives of the Ministry of Justice, which were all advanced by *El Pais*. Journalistic routines and editorial bias imposed additional constraints. The newspapers printed stories about peaceful demonstrations on pages dominated by stories of terrorism or on the crime pages. Evidently the media considered only the activities of professional politicians worthy of the political pages. Movement-related stories grouped with coverage of military issues occurred only 20 per cent of the time in *El Pais* and a scant 2 per cent in *ABC*. Thus the movement was framed by *juxtaposition*, suggesting a conscious editorial decision by *ABC*. Established options on draft policy were clearly favoured in both newspapers, which never portrayed the *insumisión* master frame as globally anti-militaristic (i.e. not 'No to the armed forces' but only 'No to the draft'). The general conclusion is that while news coverage of a social movement might play a key role, it must nevertheless pass through several filters: routine practices of journalism, constraints of layout, sequencing and composition, and congruence with institutional elites aligned with the media.

Until 1991, the media opened the policy agenda by introducing new issues, participants and solutions that officials were forced to take into consideration. Media coverage also reset the official agenda by discussing flaws and fissures in official policy, thereby rekindling debate that had been artificially dampened down. And, ultimately, the media's critical coverage blocked the official plans for implementation of CO laws. Media coverage clearly influenced the political agenda. But powerful structural constraints, such as elite alliances, economic considerations, news-making routines and political inertia, cushioned media effects.

What we might call 'a media politics of social protest' (Sampedro, 1997a) consists of spreading and accelerating policy controversies in front of the public: that is, strategically positioning certain demands in order to encourage political debates and competition among policy actors. This strategy may eventually result in policy innovation but, as the case of the CO movement in Spain demonstrates, change is incrementally slow and may not necessarily coincide with the movement's core demands.

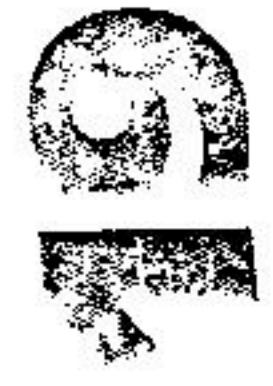
Conclusion

In contemporary societies, the best that a social movement might expect is that protest mobilisation demonstrates (and in some cases deepens) contradictions or insufficiencies in existing policy alternatives. Through media coverage of protest, the activists might open the institutionalised controversy, reset its contours or block unpopular initiatives. Rarely are the activists able to determine the policy agenda. For short pluralistic periods, movements may react to and counteract the elitist control of the agenda, but in the long run they are faced with institutional pressures to close the policy agendas they have opened to

challenge. These institutional pressures are reinforced by parallel processes in the media. Political elites have resources that enable them to co-opt movements by bureaucratising protest and diffusing original demands. Under these circumstances, media attention reaches saturation point quite soon. Another response is to trivialise and sensationalise a movement, although we did not see much of this in the present case.

News organisations can be active contributors to the policy agenda. While institutional constraints are always at work, the media may offer a *space of representation* for new ideologies or even a *space of opposition* by injecting alternative issues into decision-making circles. Because journalistic attention focuses mainly on official activities, media opportunities of which a social movement might take advantage are typically dependent on existing political opportunities, especially the level of institutional controversy. When the state exercises greater influence over the media, as in the elitist model, 'symbolic politics' based on artificial consensus and mere rethoric (Edelman, 1987) – or 'placebo politics' which mask social injustices (Stringer and Richardson, 1980) – can easily close the media agenda.

The general conclusion is that political control and news management usually go hand in hand, guaranteeing the stability of official agendas. A 'soft' version of the elite hegemony model consequently seems most appropriate here. In advanced democracies, elites do not baldly 'manufacture consent' through the media nor are the major media simply propaganda organs of the state or parties. But mass communication mostly inhibits the expansion of ideological alternatives and collective action through its own rules and practices. The media's institutional rules undeniably tend, in the long run, to dilute social protest. Nonetheless, change occurs, and it remains important for media studies to document, detail and analyse – to produce knowledge about – how social movements, institutional actors and the media all bring to bear their resources, strategies and alliances in the interrelated ways demonstrated by this case study.



Interpretation, semiology and the 'Warriors of Democracy'

Tereza Batista

The late Roland Barthes, famed French cultural critic and semiologist, had this to say about our understanding of the *text*: 'We now know that the text is not a line of words releasing a single "theological" meaning (the "message" of an Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash' (1977:146). It is quite difficult for us to recover in 2000 and beyond just how exciting that was for cultural and media studies in the second half of the twentieth century. Barthes did not originate the idea of course – his text is not itself exempt from the insight – but he articulated it in especially influential ways. Others extended the insight to audio-visual texts as well as written ones, and much adventurous thinking then went into developing ways of understanding the 'multidimensional' spaces of broadcast texts, filmic texts, photographic texts, and so on. In fact, even thinking of some of these things as 'texts' (rather than, say, 'pictures') is itself dependent on recognising them as multidimensional spaces criss-crossed by the ebb and flow of multiple meanings.

For some, the resultant 'blending and clashing' was entirely circumstantial and unpredictable; for others it derived from the power struggles among different discourses for dominance; for still others it represented something that true Author-Gods attempted to contain and master. So it was still possible to pursue authorship studies (the works of this film director, that TV dramatist, etc.) but such scholarship has had to work much harder to demonstrate authorial intentions and achievements, as texts are now widely held to spill beyond any individual control. Indeed, some of the most rigorous textual studies (sometimes styling themselves 'deconstructionist') have focused closely on the ways in which seemingly coherent texts lay traps for themselves and unravel like intertwined strings when pulled apart in the right places. ('Deconstruction' is not just a fancy word for analysis and should only be used to refer to such work of textual unravelling around texts' own internal contradictions and their secret dependence on things that have seemingly been excluded in the interests of coherence.) So not only is authorial coherence challenged but, even where the idea of authorial control is largely abandoned, textual coherence is itself now questioned as reliant on carefully papered over cracks.

All of this is exciting and different from the older approach of reading a novel and, by extension, a film or TV drama for example, as straightforwardly the