

**"Dr. Blix and Muhamad Elbaradei"**

*The UN Weapons' Inspector Reports on Iraq in the US-American,  
British, and German Press*

(Draft, please don't quote without authors' consent)

**Thomas Koenig and Katie MacMillan**

**Department of Social Sciences**

**Loughborough University**

**Loughborough, LE11 3TU**

**United Kingdom**

**fax: +44 1509 223944**

**fon: +44 1509 223730**

**t.koenig@lboro.ac.uk**

## **Abstract**

Based on a sample of 281 articles from the US, the UK, and German newspapers, commonalities and differences in national reporting on the 2003 UN weapons reports on Iraq are examined. A content analysis confirms previous findings on the countries. Namely, the US press is the least state centered, the British press the most opinionated, and the German press the most internationalist. Each national reporting also favors sources from its own national polity. Despite these differences and starkly diverging political opportunity structures, reporting on the UN report shows little difference in content. All three countries exhibit a strong bias towards Western/G8 sources and neglects voices actors from Middle East, which is geographically speaking the most effected region. The treatment of the two Weapons' Inspectors, Hans Blix and Mohamed El Baradei, contains overtones of orientalism across the entire sample.

# "Dr. Blix and Muhamad Elbaradei"

*The UN Weapons' Inspectors Reports in the US-American, British, and German Press*

## **The Blix Report**

On January 27, 2003 Hans Blix, head of the UN inspection teams on chemical and biological weapons, and Mohamed El Baradei, chair of the IAEA inspection team, delivered their now famous progress reports on the weapons' inspections in Iraq. The interpretation of both reports, in particular the address delivered by Hans Blix, became an instant issue in the political debate on the question about, whether or not to launch a war against Iraq. The addresses of the UN weapons' inspectors to the UN Security Council were immediately claimed by both anti- and pro-war advocates as further evidence for their respective case. Citing the UN reports as proof for the futility of weapon's inspections, the United States, Britain, and Spain kept on pushing their war agenda, while some European countries, notably France, Russia and Germany, interpreted the same reports as proof for the efficiency of the inspections and a mandate for further investigations. Substantial protest marches against war were held in numerous countries, even though popular protest was comparatively scarce in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

The (print) media are major actors in the contest for interpretive power over the Report. How did the press mediate the statements by Hand Blix and Mohammed El Baradei to their audiences? To what extent are institutional and popular opinions reflected in and influenced by the newspapers? Who are the primary mover in the debate? These are the questions we want to illuminate with an analysis of newspaper articles that were published on the UN Reports.

The analysis comprises articles from three countries, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany. To assess influences from both political and larger cultural values, i.e. what Ferree et al. (2002: 61ff) have aptly termed the *discursive opportunity structure*,<sup>2</sup> on

---

<sup>1</sup> On the weekend of February 16, 2003, the largest turnout for anti-war demonstrations was counted. While 6 million people protested in Europe, the United States saw 'only' about half a million marchers ("Millions worldwide rally for peace," *The Guardian*, February 17, 2003, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/antiwar/story/0,12809,897098,00.html>, access date: June 2, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> Analogous to the famous *political opportunity structure* (Eisinger 1973), of which it is part, the discursive opportunity structure denotes "the framework of ideas and meaning-making institutions in a particular society"

media discourse, we chose three countries with different configurations of public and political elite opinions. The US serves as a case of a pro-war government with a largely acquiescent population. The British government and elites in their majority also overwhelmingly took a stern stance towards the Iraqi regime, but parts of the establishment and large chunks of the wider public were protesting war involvement. Later in the process, a few ministers from the ruling Labour Party even resigned over the issue of Britain's war involvement. In Germany, both government and even the oppositional elites as well as public opinion stood firmly against military action. Our sample thus stretches from an overwhelmingly pro-war political climate (US) over divided public and elite opinion (UK) to an almost unanimous anti-war environment (Germany). We will explore in this article, if these different starting points are mirrored in diverging discourses in the press.

## Data Set

Using the LEXIS/NEXIS data base as well as a number of online newspaper archives,<sup>3</sup> we collected data about the reporting on the so-called Blix (2003) and El Baradei (2003) reports on the status of the UN weapon inspections in Iraq. We were interested in how the Reports filtered through the press in the days immediately after their release.

We designed our sample to reflect the diverging press structures in the three countries. Since the US press market is very proliferated along local lines, eight of the eleven US papers in our sample are unambiguously local papers, with the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Washington Post* representing the prestige papers with national appeal (Dalton et al. 1998: 114; Norris 2000: 4). Germany also has a vibrant local press, but German elites usually read one of the eight major national broadsheets, five of which we analyzed along with the largest local paper for the Ruhr region, the *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*.<sup>4</sup> In contrast to the localized markets of the US and Germany, the British press market, notwithstanding its Scottish and Northern Irish variations, is unusually dominated by ten national papers (Sparks 1999: 44), all of which we entered in our sample. We searched the

---

(Ferree et al.2002: 70). (Quibbling about their use of the term "society" (see Luhmann 1992), we would prefer to substitute "political-cultural environment" for society.

<sup>3</sup> We searched the online archives of the *Detroit News* (<http://www.detnews.com/search/index.htm>) and the German papers in question (<http://fazarchiv.faz.net/>, <http://www.nd-online.de/suchdienst.asp>, <http://www.diz-muenchen.de/html/szarchiv.html>, <http://www.welt.de/finden/>, <http://www.taz.de/pt/archiv/suche.demo,1>, <http://www.waz.de/waz/waz.archiv.frameset.php>, access date: June 6, 2003); for all other papers we relied on NEXIS/LEXIS.

<sup>4</sup> We chose not to examine *Handelsblatt* and *Financial Times Deutschland*, whose business focus is not in line with our topic. Financial and logistic restrictions prompted us to omit *Bild* and *Frankfurter Rundschau*, which does not offer an online archive.

databases with the search strings "blix," or "baradei", or "un report", and "iraq", and their respective lemmata. In the case of *die tageszeitung*, whose archives do not support gratis string searches, the complete online issues for the dates in question were visually inspected. These searches yielded 281 articles that alluded to either of the UN Reports during a three day period that starts on January 27, 2003, the day Blix and El Baradei delivered their addresses to the UN Security Council.

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Cases</b>	<b>in %</b>			
Financial Times	22	7.8	Neues Deutschland	6	2.1
Guardian	15	5.3	tageszeitung	11	3.9
Independent	13	4.6	Süddeutsche Zeitung	19	6.8
Daily Telegraph	11	3.9	Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung	23	8.2
(London) Times	18	6.4	Die Welt	24	8.5
<i>British Broadsheets</i>	79	28.0	<i>National German Papers</i>	83	29.5
Express	4	1.4	Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung	7	2.5
Mail	8	2.8	<b>German Papers</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>32.0</b>
Mirror	8	2.8	<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100</b>
Star	4	1.4			
Sun	3	1.1			
<i>British Tabloids</i>	27	9.5			
<b>UK papers</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>37.7</b>			
New York Times	35	12.5			
Washington Post	14	5.0			
Los Angeles Times	8	2.8			
<i>National US Papers</i> <sup>5</sup>	57	20.3			
Wisconsin State Journal	1	0.4			
San Diego Union-Tribune	5	1.8			
Knoxville News Sentinel	1	0.4			
Detroit News	12	4.3			
El Paso Times	3	1.1			
Austin American Statesman	3	1.1			
Casper Star Tribune	3	1.1			
<i>Local US papers</i>	28	10.2			
<b>US Papers</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>30.2</b>			

**Table 1** Sample Distribution by Newspapers

For each of the sampled articles we coded

- which UN report or reports they referred to;
- which actors were mentioned in which order;

<sup>5</sup> To be sure, except for *USA Today* no real nationwide newspaper with a sizable circulation exists in the US, but the three papers listed do have some impact on the national arena, since their articles are widely syndicated in local papers.

- which type(s) of weapons and which UN documents were mentioned by which actor;
- how Iraq's compliance with UN resolutions was assessed by the article's protagonists;
- any explicit stance voiced by any of the protagonists of the article and/or the author of the article.

The resulting data set comprises up to 24 actors per article, which voice 141 "unique" stances towards the UN weapons reports.<sup>6</sup>

## **Importance of the UN Reports**

A first glance at the distribution of the sample articles' location within the papers (Table 2) shows that the weapons' reports story made important front-page headlines, and was widely commented on. We can thus safely assume that the discourse has not been compartmentalized, but was followed by large parts of the population. The results of our study bear on the wider area of political communication.

[Table 2 about here]

## **Results**

In a nutshell, we found that the themes in the reporting about the Blix report hardly varied with country. Roughly half of all papers in all three countries reported that either of the reports implied a call for prolonged inspections, while just about one quarter of all articles contained a voice that claimed had breached a UN resolution. Likewise, the most frequently quoted factual statement from the report, the dispute over missing amounts of the VX nerve gas, was evenly distributed across 18 US, 28 UK, and 17 German articles. Even the soundbites did not vary across countries. The most frequent direct quote of Blix, namely that his complaint to Iraq that "it is not enough to open doors" was found in 7 US and UK articles each, as well as in three German papers.

More interesting is the question, who was allowed to interpret the Blix and El Baradei reports. In this respect partiality to Western sources can be discerned.

---

<sup>6</sup> The full data set can be downloaded in SPSS format from <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/research/mmethods/blix/blix.sav>.

	Frequency	Percent
Front Page	45	16.0
Local Desk	1	.4
National Desk	52	18.5
Foreign Desk	82	29.2
Editorials	48	17.1
Business/Economics Desks	26	9.3
Unclear	24	8.5
Other	3	1.1

**Table 2** Sample Distribution by Location in Paper

## Looking through the Western Lens

Particularly center since the UN Reports in geographical terms on non-Western countries, the strong Western bias in international news reporting (Wu 2000) becomes all too apparent.

### *G8 Bias*

Who leads the debate about the Blix and El Baradei Reports? Table 3 shows that apart from the two UN chief inspectors themselves, the US president, his foreign secretary, Britain's prime minister and his foreign affairs minister are the persons with most voice in the media.

	Frequency		Percent	
	total	outside country	total	outside country
UN <i>rapporteur</i> Hans Blix (Swedish)	177		63%	
UN <i>rapporteur</i> Mohamed El Baradei (Egyptian)	84		30%	
US president George W. Bush	82	55	29%	28%
US foreign secretary Colin Powell	76	44	27%	22%
UK prime minister Tony Blair	66	25	24%	14%
UK foreign minister Jack Straw	41	15	15%	9%
US ambassador John Negroponte	31	20	11%	10%
Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein	29		10%	
German chancellor Gerhard Schröder	24	10	9%	5%
UK ambassador Jeremy Greenstock	23	11	8%	6%
German foreign minister Joschka Fischer	20	5	7%	3%
Iraqi deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz	19		7%	
Iraqi foreign minister Naji Sabri	19		7%	
Russian President Vladimir Putin	16		6%	
UN general secretary Kofi Annan (Ghanese)	15		5%	
French president Jacques Chirac	14		5%	

**Table 3** Named Actors that appear in more than 5% of the articles

Since Jacques Chirac, Gerhard Schröder, Joschka Fischer, and Vladimir Putin, the main protagonists for the anti-war view on the international stage, get much less voice in the media, one might suspect a pro-war bias in the press. However, we will see below, that, if

anything, the newspapers contain an anti-war bias. The reason for Bush and Blair topping the voices table is instead the nationalist bias of the papers combined with the actual importance of these figures in the national and international arena.

What is interesting, however, is, that besides Iraqi villains Saddam Hussein, Naji Sabri, and Tariq Aziz, hardly any regional voices appear. Since a war against the Iraqi regimes was bound to (and actually did) involve Kurdish troops, it seems straightforward to expect a heightened amount of voices from Turkey, whose disenfranchised Kurdish minority could easily be drawn into the conflict. However, Turkish prime minister Abdullah Gül receives a lone mention, interestingly enough in a piece on the "Arab" (*sic*) stance towards a war against Iraq,<sup>7</sup> while Silvio Berlusconi, who did not even take an unequivocal stance on military action,<sup>8</sup> is quoted eight times.

That the Turkish state receives as many references as does the Italian, does not really alleviate the bias, as Turkey is clearly more affected by the Iraqi crisis than Italy. The parity on the abstract country level rather shows that with respect to the accreditation of personalities, the "Western" bias is even more pronounced. That finding confirms, of course, the persistence of orientalism in that it presents the "Arabs" and their Turkish neighbors as having a "collective self-consistency such as to wipe out any traces of individual Arabs with narratable life histories" (Said1978: 229).

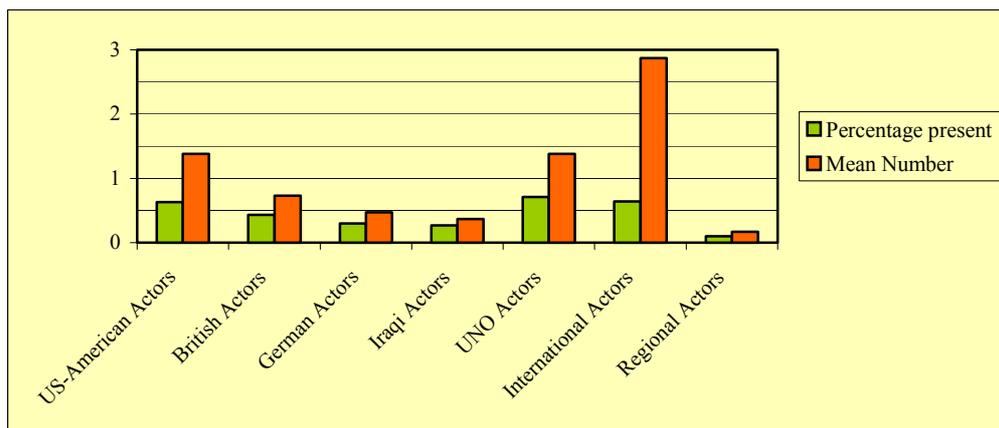
The familiar (Adams 1986; Wu 2000: 121) focus on G8<sup>9</sup> countries is compounded, when one consolidates all voices into larger categories, as it has been done in Figure 1. Even if one lumps all voices, governmental or not, that originate in Arab League countries or any country adjacent to Iraq, into a single category, on average only 0.17 voices originate in the region, where the conflict would and did take place. This compares to a mean 2.87 international governmental actors that are given a voice, a figure, which is more than 16 times the one of regional actors.

---

<sup>7</sup> Owen Bowcott: "Threat of war: Arab world: US flag burnt in protests," *The Guardian*, January 28, 2003, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> "Berlusconi e lo scontro sull'Iraq 'Adesso è inutile il vertice Ue'," *La Repubblica*, January 24, 2003, <http://www.repubblica.it/online/esteri/iraqventi/berlusconi/berlusconi.html>, June 10, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> The G8 countries comprise of the U.S., the U.K., Japan, Canada, France, Italy, Germany, and Russia.



**Figure 1** Prominence of Actors in the UN Weapons' Reports Debate

### *Differential Treatment of Blix and El Baradei*

The Western bias is also mirrored in the media's treatment of Blix and El Baradei. The press turned weapons' reports into the "Blix story." More than three quarters of all articles we examined (199) presented Hans Blix as the main author of the report, while Mohamed El Baradei was mentioned in four of the 281 (1%) articles as a primary reporter. Indeed, more than half of all articles treated Blix as the only UN *rappporteur*, and when Mohamed El Baradei is mentioned, the chances that the article contained an anti-war bias rise.<sup>10</sup> In fact Hans Blix became so prominent over the following weeks that the *Daily Mail* even ran a front page title that turned him into a verb: "Blair blixed agin!"<sup>11</sup>

Since the conflict frame is central to news coverage (Neuman et al.1992: 61f; Price et al. 1997: 484; Tankard Jr. 2001: 97; Semetko and Valkenburg 2000: 95), one might argue that the reason for Hans Blix being quoted more than twice as frequently as Mohamed El Baradei is that the policy implications of IAEA report (presented by El Baradei) are much less controversial than those presented in the UNMOVIC report (presented by Blix). After all, El Baradei (2003) "found no evidence that Iraq has revived its nuclear weapons programme since the elimination of the programme in the 1990s," which prompted him to ask unequivocally for a continuation of the inspections. His speech therefore left very little room for a pro-war interpretation.

If a low degree of contestation would have been the sole cause of the relative frequency of Blix and El Baradei reports, we would expect to find a similar ratio in the referral frequency counts of the organizations the two Reporters were respectively heading. However, the ratio

<sup>10</sup> Kendall's  $\tau_b = .16$ .

<sup>11</sup> David Hughes: "Blair blixed again," *Daily Mail*, March 6, 2003.

actually reverses: El Baradei's IAEA is cited 18 times as source in its own right, more than thrice as often than Blix' UNMOVIC, which picks up five counts.

The following sentence from a *Times (London)* article epitomizes the differential treatment of Hans Blix and Mohammed El Baradei in the media:

"Germany has asked Dr Blix and Muhamad Elbaradei, Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to give a second report to the Security Council on February 14."<sup>12</sup>

While Hans Blix' academic title is spelled out, we find El Baradei's misspelled first name in the place of his PhD. Even more indicative is however, that "Dr. Blix" is accredited on his own right, while El Baradei becomes certified through his affiliation with the IEAE. This differential treatment is by no means an accident. *The Express* and *The Mirror*, while spelling El Baradei's name more appropriately,<sup>13</sup> use almost exactly the same procedure in legitimizing the two Weapon's Inspectors:

"In contrast to Dr Blix, Mohamed ElBaradei, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency -- the UN body conducting the hunt for nuclear weapons -- made a direct appeal to the security council for more time for the inspectors to do their work."<sup>14</sup>

"Earlier Dr Blix and International Atomic Energy Agency head Mohamed ElBaradei gave a progress report to the 15-member Security Council in New York on their two-month search for weapons."<sup>15</sup>

The *Mirror* even repeats Blix' academic title throughout the entire article, while it later refers to "Mr. El Baradei" in the article. In these cases it becomes apparent that Blix' "accreditation" as an individual is portable, while El Baradei becomes only certified by his affiliation with the IAEA.

But even when Blix academic title is not mentioned, he appears as the more authoritative voice. The *tageszeitung* with its more egalitarian diction does not mention Blix' doctoral degree, but still writes that "US chief weapons' inspector Hans Blix" released the "Blix report", to whom his "IAEA colleague El Baradei" merely commented.<sup>16</sup> The *Detroit News*, politically and culturally at the other end of the political spectrum, uses the same language

---

<sup>12</sup> James Bone, Robert Thomson, and Richard Beeston: "Britain pushes UN to set new Iraq ultimatum," *The Times*, January 27, 2003, p.1, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,5041-556764,00.html>, June 22, 2003.

<sup>13</sup> There is no uniform rule on how to transcribe from Arabic into English (Brian Whitaker: "Lost in Translation," *The Guardian*, June 10, 2002, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/elsewhere/journalist/story/0,7792,730805,00.html>, June 22, 2003.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Palmer and Kirsty Walker: " Countdown as Saddam's Lies Are Exposed: It's War," *The Express*, January 28, 2003, p. 4f.

<sup>15</sup> Richard Wallace: "UN Weapons Inspectors' Verdict on Saddam Threat: More Blix ... No Blitz; 300 Checks So Far, Nothing Found, No Evidence that Iraq Has Nukes," *The Mirror*, January 28, 2003, p. 4f.

<sup>16</sup> Bernd Pickert: "Es geht nicht um Einsicht," *die tageszeitung*, January 28, 2003, p. 1.

when speaking in an AP story of "chief U.N. inspector Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency."<sup>17</sup>

In altogether 24 of the 82 articles, in which Blix and El Baradei co-occur, Blix is either recognized as the sole chief inspector or lone PhD holder. Conversely, in only two articles -- both in the New York Times -- El Baradei's doctorate is mentioned while Blix' title is omitted. El Baradei is never mentioned as the only chief inspector.<sup>18</sup>

In sum, it is not merely the content of the speech that is important in the selection and representation of international voices, but there is a demonstrable tendency to ignore and/or discount personal sources from non-Western countries.

## National Variations

We can thus safely assert that the discourse is West-centered, and as well contains a G8-bias although, even from the standpoint of military strategy or regional stability, let alone fair representation of the parties involved in the conflict, regional voices should have made substantial inroads into the reporting. This reluctance to rely on non-Western sources is uniform throughout the three nations we surveyed: An ANOVA of the ratio of regional actors to all actors mentioned in an article on the country of publication shows no significant differences ( $F=1.6$ ).

Yet, the discourse has not only a Western bias, but also contains strong national slant. In what follows, we will first affirm the *nationalist* bias of the newspapers and subsequently analyze their *national* idiosyncrasies.

### *Nationalist Bias*

As is well known, newspapers on the whole tend to accept a national(ist) framework as a major point of reference (e.g., Billig1995). On the most basic level, we would thus expect the respective national actors to be over represented in media coverage in the respective publication countries. As Table 4 shows, this is indeed the case; even though in the case of US-American actors, the overrepresentation is barely significant, which, however, can be explained by the paramount importance of the United States for the Iraq conflict.

---

<sup>17</sup> Edith M. Lederer and Dafna Linzer: "U.N. allies rebuke Bush," *Detroit News*, January 30, 2003, <http://www.detnews.com/2003/nation/0301/30/a04-72701.htm> (accessed: March 20, 2003).

<sup>18</sup> The cross tabulation of these attributes yields a  $X^2$  of approximately 16, which is significant at the  $p<.001$  level.

Presence of Actors	US-American Actors	British Actors	German Actors
within country of publication	72%	62%	41%
outside country of publication	60%	32%	25%
significance level <sup>19</sup>	<.1	<.001	<.01

**Table 4** Representation of National Actors in their respective National of Foreign Press

Unfortunately, the results of the differential rates of nationalism, read -- somewhat imprecisely -- "nation-centeredness," are equally predictable. We would expect Germany with its XX century history, which has shattered its national identity and restricted its leverage in the United Nations, to rank lowest., and the US as the only remaining superpower, which disdains the inefficiency of the international order, to rank highest on the parochialism scale.

Table 5, which displays the results of regression analyses of the ratio of the number of homeland actors to the number of international actors mentioned in the articles on the publication countries of the newspapers, confirms these expectations. To adjust for the uneven distribution of so-called "quality papers" (e.g., Kaase 2000: 376) across our sample countries, we initially entered a dummy variable for broadsheet papers into the regression equation (model 1), which, however, made no significant impact.<sup>20</sup> Left with the "pure" differences between publication countries, we can once again detect a nationalist bias, as in all three countries national actors outnumber international actors, even in a topic as the Iraq conflict, which involves numerous countries as well as the UN and, thus, would lent itself to coverage of extra-national sources. In Germany, which was no major actor in the Iraq conflict, national actors still outnumbered international ones by four to three (b=0.76). In the US, which clearly has the most parochial press coverage, this figure rises to more than 2 in three actors being from the US-American context.

	Model 1		Model 2		Significance Level <sup>21</sup>
	b	$\beta$	b	$\beta$	
(Constant)	.84		.76		n/a
Publication Country: US	-.35	-.43	-.32	-.41	p<.001
Publication Country: UK	-.12	-.16	-.11	-.15	p<.05
Broadsheet	-.07	-.08			n.s.

**Table 5** Linear Regression: Ratio International/Homeland Actors by Country ( $R^2=.13$ )

<sup>19</sup> Significance levels are based on the  $X^2$ -test.

<sup>20</sup> In fact, the insignificance could be construed as being in line with theoretical exceptions. Although conventional wisdom would expect tabloid readership to be "more nationalistic," nationalism is, of course, a product of the intellectual elites (e.g., Hobsbawm and Ranger, Terence O.1983), which tend to read broadsheet papers.

<sup>21</sup> Significance levels are identical for both models.

### *Types of News Sources*

Several studies have shown that German news coverage is heavily biased in favor of the major political parties (Pfetsch 1998: 81; Ferree et al.2002: 81), while the US press is far more open to voices that are not entrenched in formal in the polity (Gans1980: 40; Ferree et al.2002: 82). Britain has been characterized by proactive government involvement and spin-doctoring, which is most conducive to dissenting voices in times of elite fissures (Manning2001: 112f).<sup>22</sup> Even in these times, British journalists seem to rely mainly on voices from the political establishment, (Ernst1988: 28), although their sense for fair representation of relevant actors is much closer to the one of US-American (Donsbach and Klett 1993: 66f). In terms of its focus on political institutions, we would thus expect the British press to fall in-between the German and US-American cases.

An inspection of Table 6, which shows the percentage of articles that contain the voice of at least one extra-institutional actor, confirms that the US press is the least state-centered. In roughly two in five of all US articles, we find voices from extra-institutional actors, while only about a quarter of all news articles in the European papers contain actors that are not from the national or international institutional framework. Quite to the point, the localized American papers tend to rely on local sources, if possible. For example, one of the three articles from the El Paso Times portrays the views of a professor for international relations and several students from the University of Texas campus in town.<sup>23</sup> The reliance on extra-extra-institutional actor is by no means a mere artifact of the localization of American press market. The *Westdeutsche Zeitung* ran no story with local actors' perspectives on the UN reports. A brief cross-check with other local German papers available on the web confirmed that this is no sampling accident. The *Lausitzer Rundschau* (Cottbus) ran 28 articles that mentioned Blix during our sampling time, only one of which referred to a local war veteran with his views on an attack on Iraq; the *Rhein Zeitung* (Coblence) published 8 relevant articles, none of which mentioned a local actor, neither did any article in the *Täglicher Anzeiger Holzminden*.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> To be sure, Manning (2001: 117) himself does not make a distinction between the discursive opportunity structures in Europe and the US.

<sup>23</sup> Laura Cruz: "El Pasoans predict U.S. will go to war with Iraq," *El Paso Times*, January 27, 2003, p. 2A.

<sup>24</sup> The searched archives are located at <http://www.lr-online.de/archiv/>, <http://rhein-zeitung.de/suche/>, <http://www.tah.de/archiv/archiv.php> (access date: October 20, 2003).

Despite the disregard for local views in the German papers, the British press relies even less on non-institutional voices than the German one.<sup>25</sup> That is all the more surprising on the background that in Britain the peace movement was a major adversary of the government. With the higher conflict potential, we would have expected more extra-institutional coverage than in Germany, where peace movement, government, and even most parts of the institutional opposition were united in their war opposition. That the traditionally institution-focused German press offers more room to challengers than its British counterpart, suggests therefore that that the latter is even more focused on government, official opposition and QUANGOs.

	United States	United Kingdom	FR Germany
extra-institutional actor(s) present	41%	22%	28%

**Table 6** Voices of Non-institutional Actors,  $p(X^2) < .05$

Does the stronger representation of non-governmental actors in the US-American media discourse imply that the latter encompasses a wider range of opinions and fulfills its democratic function more efficiently? At this point, and – we hasten to add – also at the end of this essay, this question cannot be adequately answered.

Nevertheless, a further inspection of our data might give some hints about the question, if the newspaper discourses in the US approximate Habermasian (1981) discourse ideals better than their European counterparts. To do so, we have to take not only a look at *who* receives voice in the papers, but also, *what* are these voices saying. For instance, while we do know that political outsiders receive more coverage in the US press, we do not know the function of these outsiders in the US, as it might be that they are quoted to discredit non-establishment (in this case, anti-war) frames as being held by unreasonable outsiders. We therefore have to take a closer look at who are the carriers of anti- and pro war frames and in which way (if any) they enhance the framing of the newspapers.

### *Diversity of Public Opinion*

To get a clearer picture of the diversity of public discourse in the press, we took an initial look at the policy prescriptions that are favored by the media themselves. To get a rough idea about the editorial opinions, we coded articles according to their explicit stance towards a war against the Iraqi regime. That is, if an article openly called for the continuation of the UN inspections or spelled out an anti-war stance, it was coded as being against the war.

<sup>25</sup> The differences between Germany and Britain are not significant ( $p > .05$ ) according to the  $X^2$ -test.

Conversely, if an article deemed the Inspections futile, called to end of inspections, or demanded military action, it was coded as anti-war.

Table 7 shows that the debate in Germany was effectively closed. With both government and demonstrators taking an anti-war stance, a lone article in the conservative *Die Welt* accuses Iraq of non-cooperation, but even this article merely reiterates Blix' call for more inspections and the stern policies pursued by Britain and the United States.<sup>26</sup> Surprisingly, not the US-American media but the British media seem to be tilted towards a pro-war-opinion. One might suspect this finding to result from a liberal bias in our sample selection, as the *New York Times*, the flagship liberal paper in the US, comprises 41% of our sample (for similar criticism, see Entman1989: 32), but even if we exclude the *New York Times* from our sample, the British press remains on the surface significantly more slanted towards an pro-war opinion.

	United States	United Kingdom	FR Germany
against war, in favor of further inspections	9%	10%	13%
undecided, ambivalent, unclear	75%	58%	86%
pro war, tougher line against Iraq	15%	32%	0%

**Table 7** Newspaper Stance towards Policy on Iraq,  $p(X^2) < .001$

Notice, however that in all three countries, the bulk of articles does not take an unequivocal stance. Even in the UK, which has by far the most "opinionated" press (Ernst1988: 28), well over half of all articles do not contain an explicit opinion. In the US and Germany that figure rises to three quarters and six in seven, respectively. The apparent evenhandedness result, of course, from most journalists' professional ethos to fulfill their notion of objectivity. One of the most common practices to achieve journalistic objectivity is the presentation of conflicting voices (Tuchman 1972: 666f). But, of course, not all voices carry the same credibility, or even a homogeneous credibility, in the eyes of audiences. In Western democracies, Iraqi officials will on average be considered less credible than, say, UNO officials. US president George W. Bush will probably have much higher credibility in the US than in Germany, while in the case of Gerhard Schröder the legitimacy gap will reverse.

<sup>26</sup> Uwe Schmitt: "Bushs Ärger mit Blix," *Die Welt*, January 28, 2003, p. 2.

<b>Anti-war voices</b>	<b>U.K.</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>Germany</b>	<b>Ø</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Extra-institutional Actors	12%	21%	17%	84%	n . s .
Establishment Representatives	9%	13%	26%	16%	p < . 01
International Actors	44%	41%	38%	41%	n . s .
UNO representatives	28%	28%	40%	32%	n . s .
Iraqi representatives	5%	9%	7%	7%	n . s .

**Table 8** Percentage of Articles that contain anti-war voices<sup>27</sup>

<b>Pro-war voices</b>	<b>U.K.</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>Germany</b>	<b>Ø</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Extra-institutional Actors	11%	14%	19%	15%	n . s .
Establishment Representatives	29%	26%	14%	24%	p < . 05
International Actors	36%	32%	29%	32%	n . s .
UNO representatives	16%	18%	16%	16%	n . s .
Iraqi representatives	5%	9%	1%	5%	p < . 05

**Table 9** Percentage of Articles that contain pro-war voices

We therefore investigated the question, which actors voice pro- and anti-war sentiments in the sample articles. To do so, we not only considered statements with an explicit stance towards military action as prescriptive statements, but also coded those statements that refer to documents, and or Iraqi policies that were overwhelmingly cited in favor or against military action as opinionated statements as pro- and anti-war, respectively.<sup>28</sup>

Table 8 and Table 9 show the percentage of articles that contain pro- and/or anti-war statements from the different actor groups. Surprisingly, anti-war and pro-war voices are similarly distributed across the three countries, with the exception of those statements made by actors from the polity, in which a publication originates. That German government actors are more likely to utter anti-war statements is, however, simply due to the fact that the anti-

<sup>27</sup> The 'liberalism' of the US press is not an artifact of the strong influence of the New York Times in the US sample. All figures remain substantively the same, when one exclude the New York Time coverage.

<sup>28</sup> For pro war these are

- "UN reports justify war";
- Iraq's future, past, or present non-compliance with UN resolutions;
- Iraq's hampering of inspections;
- Iraq's production of nerve gas, long-range scud missiles, chemical weapon's production, mustard gas precursor;
- Iraq's breach of UN resolution 1441;
- Iraq's refusal to guarantee safety of U2 spy planes.

As anti-war statements, we treated:

- insufficient evidence
- more time for inspections needed;
- long term monitoring needed;
- Iraq's co-operation with UN inspectors.

war stance actually *is* German government policy. More interestingly, however, there hardly seems to be any difference in the portrayal of indigenous elites in the US and the U.K. In fact, at a time, when the Liberal Democrats were already firmly opposed to the war, and a rift on the policies towards Iraq was appearing within both the Tories and the government-backing Labour Party, the British media portrayed the establishment voices slightly *more* slanted in favor of immediate military action than their American counterparts. Thus, the most effective voices in both countries that later went to war, were backing military action. Additionally, British and US-American newspapers also portrayed Iraqis significantly more frequently as openly defiant, and hence pro-war, than the German press. The bulk of the anti-war voices came instead from international and UN representatives. Anti-war discourses in the US and Britain were thus primarily presented by less culturally resonant actors, which might have facilitated the later change in British public opinion towards a pro-war stance. As we will see below, this change occurred, even though British editorials treated the UN Reports as being supportive of further UN inspections.

If media from all three countries give voice to similar pro- and anti-war voices, maybe a bias can still be detected in the number of voices that are quoted in an article. To test this thesis, we constructed a measure for anti- or pro-war bias, simply by subtracting the number of anti-war voices from the number of pro-war voices. To avoid an overrepresentation of lengthy articles with many actors,<sup>29</sup> we then adjusted this bias divided by the number of actors in an article.

	<b>b</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>Significance</b>
(Constant)	-.177		p<.001
Publication Country: US	.141	.212	p<.01
Publication Country: UK	.100	.160	p<.05

**Table 10** Regression Analysis of adjusted Bias on Publication Country

Table 10 shows the result of an regression analysis of this score on publication country. It can be seen that all papers display an anti-war bias ranging from 20% more anti- than pro-war voices in Germany to 5% in the US. This bias is most likely the result of Blix' request for more inspection time, which easily can be read as an anti-war stance. The US and UK press are, however, significantly less biased than Germany, which, of course, can be read as reflection of the actual policy stance of these countries.

<sup>29</sup> Results of the regression on the unadjusted bias score are substantially the same.

## Conclusion

Despite diverging journalistic practices, professional values, and political climates, the reporting on the Blix and El Baradei reports in the US, the U.K. and Germany is surprisingly similar. Our data do confirm well-known differences between the national characters of reporting in the three countries analyzed. The more opinionated British press does convey the most policy prescriptions in its articles. The state-centered European presses do depend far more on state-sponsored sources than the American press, who is more inclined to grant local actors space for their interpretation of the Blix report. Each press does also substantially favor the respective national government voices. In this respect, German newspapers are the most cosmopolitan, because of the comparatively weak German nationalism. Yet, despite of all these divergences, the *substantive representation* of the Blix and El Baradei Reports hardly varies across countries.

The most striking feature in the uniformity of the media discourse in the three countries we examined is probably the *absence* of regional sources. Surely, the most affected populations of the impending war on and in Iraq were the inhabitants of Iraq and neighboring countries. Nevertheless, the Western press in a traditional orientalist manner reported at most the voices of the (often unelected) leaders from the region and concurrently framed these voices in terms of homogenous nations. But even these voices are thoroughly underrepresented in comparison to those from the G8 countries.

Equally prominent and just as orientalist is the focus on Blix' speech and the downplay of the El Baradei report. Again, the orientalist bias might have contributed to the low coverage of El Baradei's speech. Even though the low volume of references to El Baradei might equally be a result of the low conflict potential of his report, it has been shown above. The weaker accreditation of , it did certainly contribute on the matter for the way El Baradei was presented as a mere representative of the IAEA, rather than as an independent, well-educated, and opinionated individual like Blix was presented. As its implications were uncontested among the major actors in the Iraq conflict, the Report could also not be framed in terms of conflict, one of the few most common media frames.

We can here only speculate about further factors that have lead to the similarities in the coverage of the UN Reports. Apart from the already mentioned "Western" orientalism, the ubiquitous reliance on wire services level differences between countries on the international level, where only few papers have their own reports (Lang 1974: 348). Globalization tendencies – e.g., the global tendency to report on countries depending on their place in the

international political economy (Mueller 1997: 824) -- compounded by an increase in global communication, might also exacerbate discourse uniformity.

Any combination of these and other factors might be the reason for the converging of newspaper reporting on the UN weapons' inspection reports. The validity of any of these explanations cannot be decided here, though.

## References

- Adams, W. C. 1986. "Whose Lives Count - TV Coverage of Natural Disasters." *Journal of Communication* 36 (2): 113-22.
- Billig, Michael. 1995. *Banal nationalism*. London, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Blix, Hans. 2003. *An Update on Inspection*. Accessed: May 28, 2003 <<http://www0.un.org/apps/news/printinfocusnews.asp?nid=354>>.
- Dalton, Russell J., Paul A. Beck, and Robert Huckfeldt. 1998. "Partisan Cues and the Media: Information Flows in the 1992 Presidential Election." *American Political Science Review* 92 (1): 111-26.
- Donsbach, Wolfgang and Bettina Klett. 1993. "Subjective Objectivity: How Journalists in Four Countries Define a Key Term of their Profession." *Gazette* 51: 53-83.
- Eisinger, Peter K. 1973. "The conditions of protest behavior in American cities." *American Political Science Review* 67 (1): 11-28.
- El Baradei, Mohamed. 2003. *The Status of Nuclear Inspections in Iraq*. Accessed: May 28, 2003 <<http://www.iaea.org/worldatom/Press/Statements/2003/ebsp2003n003.shtml>>.
- Entman, Robert M. 1989. *Democracy without Citizens: Media and the Decay of American Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ernst, Josef. 1988. *The Structures of Political Communication in the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Federal Republic of Germany: A Comparative Media Study of the Economist, Time, and Der Spiegel*. Frankfurt am Main, New York: Peter Lang.
- Ferree, Myra Marx, William Anthony Gamson, Jürgen Gerhards, and Dieter Rucht. 2002. *Shaping abortion discourse democracy and the public sphere in Germany and the United States*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Gans, Herbert J. 1980. *Deciding what's news a study of CBS evening news, NBC nightly news, Newsweek, and Time*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Habermas, Jürgen. 1981. *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns, Band 2*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Hobsbawm, Eric J. and Terence O. Ranger. 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge Cambridgeshire, New York: Cambridge University Press.

---

<sup>30</sup> Significance levels are based on the X<sup>2</sup>-test.

- Kaase, Max. 2000. Germany: A Society and Media System in Transition. In *Democracy and the media a comparative perspective*, Ed. Richard Gunther and Anthony Mughan. Cambridge, U.K, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Lang, Kurt. 1974. "Images of Society: Media Research in Germany ." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 38 (3): 335-51.
- Luhmann, Niklas. 1992. "The Concept of Society." *Thesis Eleven* 31: 67-80.
- Manning, Paul. 2001. *News and news sources a critical introduction*. London, Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Mueller, Carol. 1997. "International Press Coverage of East German Protest Events." *American Sociological Review* 62 (5): 820-32.
- Neuman, W. Russell, Marion R Just, and Ann N Crigler. 1992. *Common Knowledge: News and the Construction of Political Meaning*. Chicago : University of Chicago Press.
- Norris, Pippa. The Decline of Newspapers? Ed. Norris, Pippa. *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Postindustrial Societies*. 2000. Cambridge, UK & New York, NY, Cambridge University Press. Communication, society, and politics: Communication, society, and politics.
- Pfetsch, Barbara. 1998. Government News Management. In *The Politics of News, the News of Politics*, Ed. Doris A Graber, Denis McQuail, and Pippa Norris. Washington, D.C: CQ Press.
- Price, Vincent, David Tewksbury, and Elisabeth Powers. 1997. "Switching Trains of Thought: The Impact of News Frames on Readers' Cognitive Responses." *Communication Research* 24 (5): 481-506.
- Said, Edward W. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Semetko, Holli A. and Patti M. Valkenburg. 2000. "Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News." *Journal of Communication* 50 (2): 93-109.
- Sparks, Colin. 1999. The Press. In *The media in Britain current debates and developments*, Ed. Jane C Stokes and Anna Reading. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire & New York, NY: Macmillan & St. Martin's Press.
- Tankard Jr., James W. 2001. The Empirical Approach to the Study of Media Framing. In *Framing Public Life: Perspectives on Media and our Understanding of the Social World*, Ed. Stephen D Reese, Oscar H Gandy, and August E Grant. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Tuchman, Gaye. 1972. "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity." *American Journal of Sociology* 77 (4): 660-79.
- Wu, H. Denis. 2000. "Systemic determinants of international news coverage: A comparison of 38 countries." *Journal of Communication* 50 (2): 110-30.